Using Special Themes to Boost Your Numbers in Club

Are you finding yourself in the situation where you are considering closing on a certain day, due to low numbers at after school club?

Have you ever considered Manic Mondays, Terrific Tuesdays, Wacky Wednesdays, Thrilling Thursdays or Fantastic Fridays?!

Within my own experience in running an after school club a Friday after school club session was a particularly quiet session – sometimes only having 1 child booked in! This was clearly not a viable situation, financially, with staffing and rental costs. I was seriously considering closing on Fridays, however I didn't want to take the provision away from those who needed it – I'd always strived on being a flexible provision – only there for when parents needed it, and hoped that if they needed a Friday the option would still be there. It worried me that if I closed on a Friday, parents would find other options and take children from the setting for other days as well, leading to less viability overall. Also, if A Friday were taken away, this would in turn mean less hours for staff.

FANTASTIC FRIDAYS were born!! Once a month we would run a themed session with plenty of play opportunities for all – as much fun as the children could take!

We would

- Charge less – enticing more parents to book their children in.
- Advertise over social media and send colourful and enticing posters home with every child within the school we were attached to.

Some of the themed events we had were:

- Cardboard Chaos
- I'm a celeb .....get me out of here!
- Splash Party
- Chocoholics party
- Christmas/Halloween party
- Balloontastic
- Fantastic Funfair
- Forest fun

These sessions were a hit from the start! I couldn't believe it, the first Fantastic Friday session we held was Chocoholics – a week after we had started advertising we were already fully booked. The children thoroughly enjoyed the sessions and spoke to their friends who hadn't attended, telling them all about it – resulting in more wanting to be booked on to the next Fantastic Friday. With some of the themed sessions, we had to put two on a month, to ensure that all children had the opportunity of attending.

We even had some instances of parents asking what was the Fantastic session of a particular month, as their child had requested that's what they wanted to do for their birthday party!

With some of the themed sessions, there were higher outgoing costs, to provide the fun opportunities for all e.g. Balloontastic – buying the different balloons etc, Chocoholics – ensuring a range of chocolate and sweets, however the incomings and the benefits outweighed these. We were now able to continue opening on Fridays, as these busy sessions, would cover the costs for quieter sessions, meeting the needs of all and overall increasing our sustainability and popularity as we had reached out to children who may not have attended for the usual after club sessions.

We always took care to ensure parents were also aware of the benefits of the club being registered with Care Inspectorate Wales, which included having trained and qualified staff, and we always celebrated staff gaining their Playwork qualifications via social media. With CIW registration, we could also register and offer Tax Free Childcare, which effectively part funded fees for eligible families.

By Beth Jones (Happy Days Sennybridge), May 2024

Defnyddio Themâu Arbennig i Hybu'r Niferoedd yn eich Clwb

A ydych yn cael eich hun yn y sefyllfa lle'r ydych yn ystyried cau ar ddiwrnod penodol, oherwydd niferoedd isel mewn clwb ar ôl ysgol?

Ydych chi erioed wedi ystyried cynnal dyddiau Llun Lloerig, Mawrth Mwynhau, Mercher Mwydro, Iau Iasol neu Gwener Gwych?

Yn fy mhrofiad fy hun o redeg clwb ôl-ysgol roedd y sesiwn clwb ar ôl ysgol dydd Gwener yn sesiwn arbennig o dawel – weithiau dim ond 1 plentyn wedi archebu lle! Roedd yn amlwg nad oedd hon yn sefyllfa ymarferol, yn ariannol, gyda chostau staffio a rhentu. Roeddwn i o ddifrif yn ystyried cau ar ddydd Gwener, ond doeddwn i ddim eisiau tynnu'r ddarpariaeth oddi wrth y rhai oedd ei angen – roeddwn i wastad wedi ymdrechu i fod yn ddarpariaeth hyblyg – dim ond yno ar gyfer pan oedd ei angen ar rieni, ac yn gobeithio, petaent angen Dydd Gwener, y byddai'r opsiwn yn dal i fod yno. Roedd yn fy mhoeni pe bawn i'n cau ar Ddydd Gwener, byddai rhieni'n dod o hyd i opsiynau eraill ac yn mynd â phlant o'r lleoliad am ddyddiau eraill hefyd, gan arwain at lai o hyfywedd yn gyffredinol. Hefyd, pe bai Dydd Gwener yn cael ei gymryd i ffwrdd, y byddai hyn yn ei dro yn golygu llai o oriau i staff.
Ganwyd GWENER GWYCH!! Unwaith y mis byddem yn cynnal sesiwn thema gyda digon o gyfleoedd chwarae i bawb - cymaint o hwyl ag y gallai'r plant ei gymryd!

Byddem yn

- Codi tâl llai – denu mwy o rieni i fwcio eu plant i mewn.
- Hysbysebu dros gyfryngau cymdeithasol ac anfon posteri lliwgar a deniadol adref gyda phob plentyn yn yr ysgol yr oeddem yn gysylltiedig â hi.

Rhai o'r digwyddiadau thema a gawsom oedd

- Cawdel Cardbord 📦
- "Dwi'n Seleb .....dowch â fi mas o fan hyn!" 🐒
- Parti Sblash 🛟
- Parti Siocoholigs 🍫
- Parti Nadolig/ Calan Gaeaf 🎅 🎃
- Balŵntastig 🎈
- Ffair Ffantastig 🎪
- Cyffro Coedwigol 🌲

Roedd y sesiynau hyn yn hynod boblogaidd o'r dechrau! Allwn i ddim credu'r peth, y sesiwn Gwener Gwych cyntaf i ni ei gynnal oedd Siocoholigs – wythnos ar ôl i ni ddechrau hysbysebu roedden ni'n llawn yn barod. Mwynhaodd y plant y sesiynau yn fawr a siarad â'u ffrindiau nad oedd wedi mynychu, a dweud popeth wrthyn nhw amdano – gan arwain at fwy am archebu'u lle ar gyfer y dydd Gwener Gwych. Gyda rhai o'r sesiynau thema, roedd yn rhaid i ni gynnal dau y mis er mwyn sicrhau bod pob plentyn yn cael cyfle i fynychu.

Cawsom hyd yn oed rai enghreifftiau o rieni yn gofyn beth oedd sesiwn Gwener Gwych mis penodol, gan fod eu plentyn wedi gofyn mai dyna beth oeddent am ei wneud ar gyfer eu parti pen-blwydd!

Yn achos rhai o'r sesiynau thema, roedd y costau gwario'n mynd yn uwch i ddarparu cyfleoedd hwyliog i bawb e.e. Balŵntastig – prynu'r gwahanol falŵns ac ati, Siocoholigs – sicrhau amrywiaeth o siocledi a losin, ond roedd yr incwm a ddeuai i mewn a'r buddion yn gorbwyso'r rhain. Roeddem bellach yn gallu parhau i agor ar ddydd Gwener, gan y byddai'r sesiynau prysur hyn yn talu costau sesiynau tawelach, yn diwallu anghenion pawb ac yn cynyddu ein cynaliadwyedd a'n poblogrwydd yn gyffredinol gan ein bod wedi estyn allan at blant nad oeddent efallai wedi mynychu'r sesiynau clwb ôl-ysgol arferol.

Roeddem bob amser yn cymryd gofal i sicrhau bod rhieni hefyd yn ymwybodol o fanteision cofrestru'r clwb ag Arolygiaeth Gofal Cymru, a oedd yn cynnwys cael staff hyfforddedig a chymwys, ac roeddem bob amser yn dathlu staff yn ennill eu cymwysterau Gwaith Chwarae trwy gyfryngau cymdeithasol. Gyda chofrestriad AGC, roedd modd i ni hefyd gofrestru am Ofal Plant Di-dreth a'i gynnig; mae hwn i bob pwrpas yn ariannu ffioedd yn rhannol i deuluoedd cymwys.

gan Beth Jones ('Happy Days' Pontsenni), Mai 2024