

## **Parent Gym Programme – Inese Oren**

**(09/06/2021 – 14/07/2021)**

I had the pleasure to attend the Parent Gym Programme. The programme is run by an experienced mentor who is a parent and a teacher herself. Sessions were run remotely via Zoom, which I thought worked well for most of the parents as it was accessible even on the go. Although, having face to face sessions could be more effective building relationships with other parents. The programme was planned over six weeks and each week different discussion topic. Regarding the running hours from 10am till 12pm, it worked well for me, however, I feel that it might not work for other parents because of work responsibilities. Perhaps evening sessions would encourage more parents to attend.

Every week's topic had three or four missions. The mentor went through each mission giving us lots of examples, advice and information. The sessions were fairly relaxed, well planed and engaging. What I found interesting is that we were put into break out rooms to discuss between us parents, any difficulties or situations that we struggle with our children's behaviours or our own behaviours. I found the rooms very useful as they provided the platform to talk to each other, realise that we all are having similar struggles and that we are not the only ones having difficulties with parenting.

At the end of each session, we were asked to select the mission for that week and practice it at home. At the following session mentor always ensured to get the feedback from us on how it went? Did we notice any change and is it something that we would like to continue doing? It was really interesting to hear other parent experiences and being able to share my own.

I have learned so much from these sessions and have realised things where I have been going wrong with my own children. I am now continuing with most of the missions, and I have noticed such a difference in children's behaviour. Our household is calmer now. We stop, really listen to each other and find a solution together. We have been provided newsletters where all the missions are explained, full of advice and information. So, it is something to go through when feeling stuck.

From my own personal experience, I can say that the programme does work if you stick to it. At first it might take a lot of time, effort and feel unnatural carrying out the missions, however, if you persevere it becomes a second nature. I would suggest this programme to every parent. So, if you have the opportunity, do it and you will be surprised how much you will learn.