

Supporting Early Learning For Families (SELF)

Feedback from the Five Families Who Participated in the 7 week SELF Program

March to April 2019

Anne who is mother of 3 year old Robbie who has developmental delays including communication and sensory issues.

“When reflecting back at the SELF programme we would highly recommend to other parents and families in our position. When we first heard about the SELF programme we were in amongst the roller coaster cycle of assessments both State and Private appointments and at the time I couldn't even explain what we needed, we had no diagnosis and the obvious challenge would be that Robbie is not talking but with that said there were other challenges for him and yet I was getting nowhere and unsure what help we needed or what to do next...

I was initially overwhelmed with the idea to be joining the programme, the parent participation and videos were a new concept for me, however now looking back this was one of the key elements to the success of the SELF programme. Being able to hear others stories and share your experiences means that you do not feel as alone. The videos were an amazing tool to review your sessions, your actions and interactions with your child and then sharing this at home with my husband meant he could get an understanding of what was going on.

Although confronting at the start, to be a part of the SELF programme, gave us the turn around and insight we needed at the best possible time. Robbie did not have a diagnosis but we knew he needed help and we needed help as parents. After completing the programme I understand Robbie better, I can parent better to help him and his individual differences, we like each other more and the frustration although still there, has lessened as I'm getting to understand him better.

This wasn't just a programme for our child this was a gift for our whole family and the opportunity to learn the skills to enjoy our time as a family.

We are hugely grateful for the amazing people who make this possible, thank you to Kathy and Laura, so many words of encouragement and guidance....and to Sim & Bre, Kai and your family,(Kai Botsis Charitable Foundation) without you this would not be possible. We are so thankful and hope we are in the position one day to pay it forward. “

Sunni who is 4 year old Ashton's parent

“SELF helped me understand my child, his needs and it also helped me grow as a parent of a child with autism. I thought I knew everything there is to know to help my son but I was so wrong. Self is the best gift you can give to yourself if you have a child/ children with special needs. It is a gift, a blessing

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and a reward. The whole team including Kathy Walmsley, Laura Vickery, and the Botsis family has put their heart and soul into this and I have personally experienced it. It's helpful for the whole family as it helps you navigate through this overwhelming journey of a parent a child who you are trying to understand and connect with each day. This program has helped me and my family in ways you can only understand when you experience it. It has changed our lives forever for the better. “

Susan who is parent of 3 year old Jack

“I have been coming to Sensory Connections for nearly a year now and I have done lots of reading / watching Profectum videos so the concepts of SELF were not new BUT it was invaluable in the way it helped me pull all the different bits of information into a clear, viable framework. The (personal) videos, particularly with the analysis/ narrative written are gold. I have watched them many times and have learned so much about Jack I didn't know. I also really valued the interaction with other parents. I have always been reluctant to go to parent groups for autism. However I found interacting with the other parents with the same goals while focusing on each child's strengths and differences really uplifting. I was inspired by all these gorgeous kids and their amazing strengths. It also helped me develop a “ Language “ to talk about Jack and his strengths and differences so I can better advocate for him with people who care for him, and to bring the other people who love him along for the journey. “

Jane who is 5 year old Harry's parent.

“SELF has been the most valuable therapy/ parent training course I've done to date. We have been on a journey for over 5 years before 2 of our 3 children were diagnosed with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. We have undertaken many therapies over the years. I have been to many parent training sessions and read profusely. Nothing has been able to help me put into action on a daily basis the way in which I can engage with my children to help bring along their development the way in which the SELF course has. Before SELF I felt like I had an idea of what to do, but I just couldn't figure out how to do it. I feel I now have a bit more of the HOW. It still won't be easy, and I will need help but I feel we now have a map for the road that is ahead of us, instead of wandering around trying to find the light switch when the power's gone out! Thank you so much Bre and Sim from the Kai Botsis Foundation and Sensory Connections for this opportunity. We have been able to extend what we have learned in SELF with our 5 year old to our 9 and 11 year old. The change in 7 short weeks is already starting to have positive

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effects on all the family. There is more to be done but we are on a path now and will be forever grateful for what you have given us. “

Teresa who is Parent to 4 year old Mark who has Down Syndrome and sensory challenges

“SELF is a wonderful program that helps you by playing with your child to bring together a stronger bond and communication which I believe will build better relationships outside the family home. The program looks at your child’s personality and works on their individual way of communication and also what can derail the child from progressing. I felt it took away my child’s diagnosis and helped me to learn how to play with my child instead of just doing tasks. Having the group experience also allows you to see cues from your child which you might not have seen on your own. This is invaluable as I now play with my child and we both are sharing moments together which is building a stronger bond and a much more confident child. “