

## HENRY and me



Busy working mum, Gemma Priestley, 31, has recently completed HENRY's (Healthy Exercise Nutrition for the Really Young) one-to-one programme, offered through Better Start Bradford. In this blog Gemma shares the difference HENRY has made to her family's life.

### Gemma's Story

I often struggle to attend family courses and activities as I only have Monday's free. When I found out about HENRY's one-to-one programme, I jumped at the chance to take part as they offered to do it in my home on my day off.

My two-year-old son Logan and I have on going reflux conditions, which impacts on the food we can eat. I could only get Logan's medicine down with his formula milk; I thought if I took the formula away I would not get his medicine down, and it was holding me back from improving his eating habits. Doing the HENRY course gave me a push to make the change he needed.

Through the course, I was able to swap his formula for real milk. I realised that just because he had refused at the start, his initial issue had become my issue. In the end, it was not so hard to make the change after all.

I had also taken his snacks away, thinking that was a good thing, but that meant he was really hungry at mealtimes and eating too much and too fast, which was probably affecting his reflux.

The course offered much more than advice around nutrition though. I realised that I was making Logan older than his time and trying to do more advanced activities with him. HENRY provides you with lots of suggestions for what's good and healthy for young children. Some I use and some I don't, but that's the beauty of the course: you take from it what you need to take.

## Activity Wall



I have developed an 'activity wall', and because Logan is only two, I am taking photos of all of the activities we do and stick them on the wall. Logan simply points to the photos to show me which activity he would like to do. It's such a lovely way to display his work and for him to easily communicate with me. I even have friends that have copied the idea from me!

Initially I was doing the course to help with feeding Logan, but it really helps you to look at other habits you may get into. We were one of those families that would use the television as a 'babysitter'. My husband Richard, Logan and I would all eat in front of the television and we would let Logan watch it before bedtime, thinking it was a calming influence.

## Healthy changes

We have now looked again at our TV habits. Logan's bedtime routine is now amazing; we have a little quiet time play in his bedroom, get pyjamas on, settle down and read books and then leave him in his bedroom to go to sleep. He has even started shutting the bedroom door on me so I will go!

As for meals, I got rid of Logan's highchair and he now has a seat on his chair and sits at the table with us for meals. We have real family time with no television. We also have a meal reward chart, and even when Logan has gone to bed, me and Richard will reward ourselves with stickers if we sit down and have a meal together.

Thanks to the HENRY course, I feel a lot more confident as a parent, and we have not only learned a lot of things that we can do as a family to be healthier, but also how to take time out for yourself. I did the course just because I wanted a healthier balance. You don't get judged and I think everyone who does the course will take something away that they didn't consider before starting it.