

Lights On MUMS

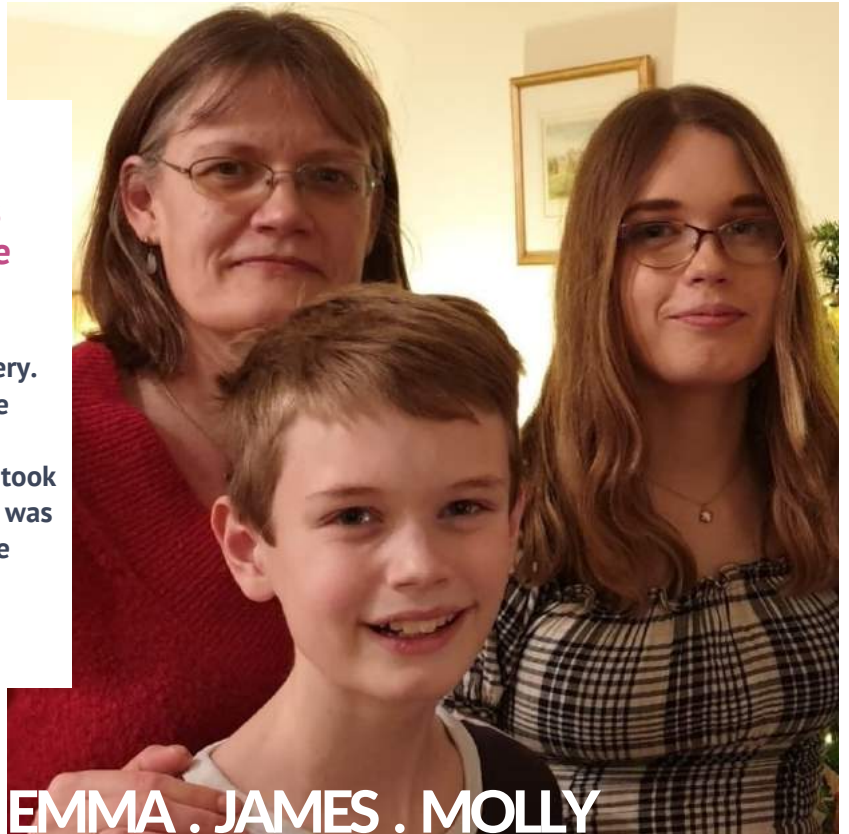
IN MY OWN WORDS by Emma Dyke

The idea seemed so simple, 'Switch your child's lights on, find their passions...'

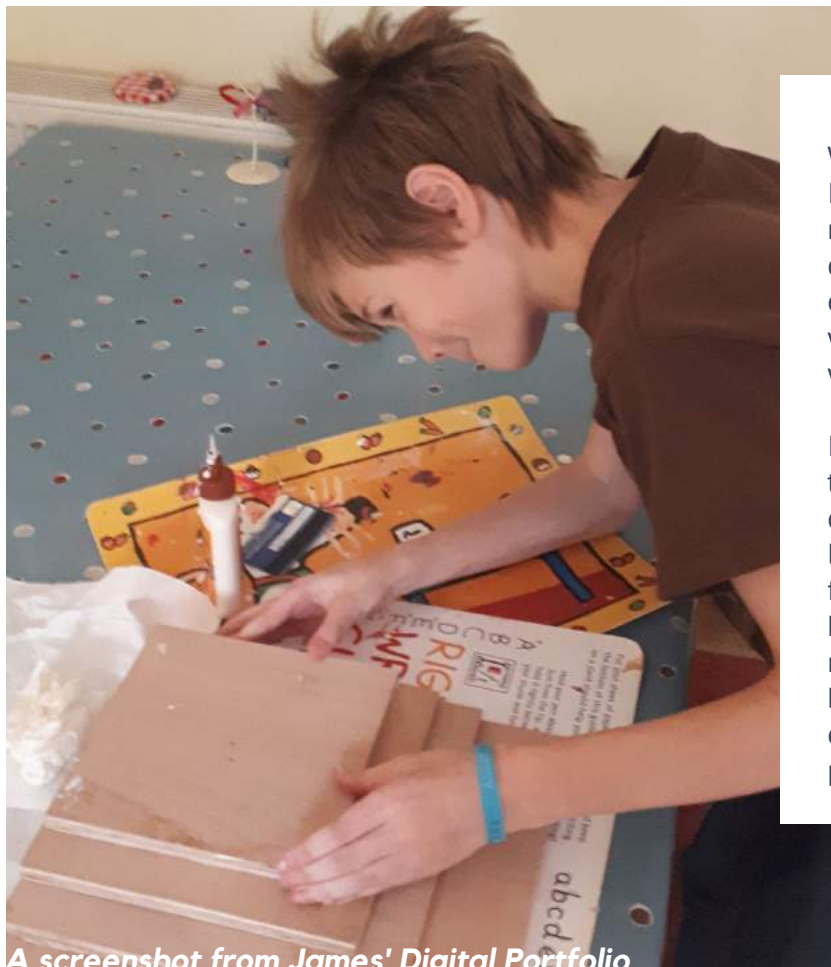


I felt I'd lost my way a bit since starting Home Ed with my son James and felt Explorium could help get me get back on track.

That first year was a fabulous journey of discovery. Following the activities and exercises inside The Academy helped me understand my children's switches and my family's mindset. The children took big steps forward in owning their learning and I was able to facilitate some fantastic projects I'd have never thought possible.



EMMA . JAMES . MOLLY



A screenshot from James' Digital Portfolio

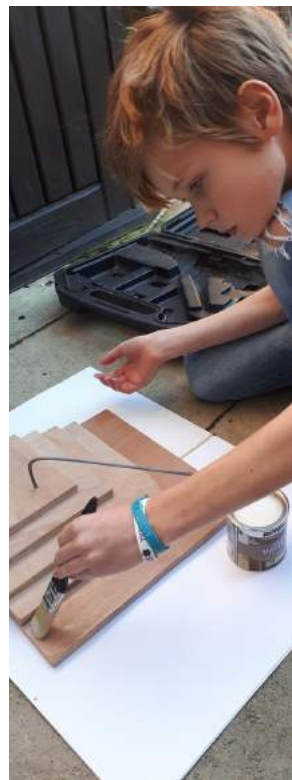
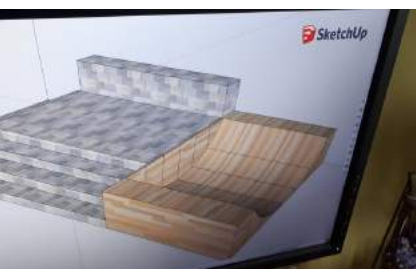
We'd made good progress inside the academy but I recognised what Julia had said about how our mindset and past experiences can impact on our children and limit their growth. I wanted to explore this further and was curious about what would come out of the Switch Your Lights On 8 week programme.

I was also more than a little daunted at the thought of what might come up, and the commitment required, but I felt that although our learning as a family had come a long way, our family dynamic wasn't working properly and I was keen to bring more respect and kindness into our relationships. I wanted to understand myself better and how I could support my family, especially my children, to meet their full potential. I signed up.

The live sessions with Julia and her questions around my daughter Molly's approach to school gave me the confidence to ask Molly tough questions, and really get her thinking about where she wanted to take her performing, and what it involved. I realised that my own experiences of school had subconsciously affected how I viewed Molly, that I had been over-anxious about her getting the labels I'd given myself, and not dealing with failure because I had struggled with failure. This was affecting the way I was interacting with her and it wasn't good.

Once I recognised what I'd been doing I was able to see Molly in a different light, step back and relax. I started to notice all the things she was doing rather than what she wasn't, and Molly just kept stepping up more and more - singing more, taking up ballet, eating more healthily, doing workouts regularly. None of which she'd been interested in before we really focused on her big dream of being on the stage.

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Julia also helped me see the creative projects that my son James was already doing, and this allowed me to then grab the opportunities to take those projects to a much deeper level of learning.

In the past, James' project suggestions had filled me with dread and I'd have my excuses ready. I'm now curious about his latest project ideas, even though I don't know how we'll do them. I now recognise we work well as a team, with him having the big ideas and much of the knowledge around how things might work, and with me helping him fill in the detailed steps and moving the project forward.

I realised that I needed to come alongside and support James' learning rather than totally step back. Because he was getting older I had felt he didn't need so much input, but I discovered that when I really engaged with both my children through their interests they actually became more engaged themselves, more motivated.

Now James is more willing and open to trying new things and Molly (who has dreamed of doing musical theatre professionally for a few years) has gone from thinking it would come to her with little effort to now working incredibly hard to realise her dream.



A photo of one of Molly's performances



James' hand-made 'Snake whips'

The turning point for me was when I started to look at my children's progress in a more positive light and saw that they were already achieving so much. I felt more confident to step back, be less controlling and let them take more responsibility for their learning with me playing more of a facilitation and collaborative role .

I shared my old beliefs and how I rewired them with Molly and used the ANTS process (where you rewire your Automatic Negative Thoughts) on things with her. She sees how powerful these techniques are and is starting to notice her emotions and triggers.

Molly recently said to me, 'You're the reason why I feel it's okay to fail'. I was so thrilled to hear this as I now know she really understands what learning is, something I wish I'd properly understood at her age.



Within the family I am now seeing relationships improving as I model respectful, considerate interaction. We often talk about choices and that the choices we make and the way we turn up can hugely influence a good or a bad day.

We still have challenging days and there is a long journey ahead, but we are making real progress. I know that when I am calm and fully present with my family the ripple effect is massive. My challenge is to find that calmness on the harder days.

Thanks to the work I've done through SYLO I feel I know myself much better. I have identified deep rooted beliefs that were holding both me and my children back and I have started to rewire those beliefs and see the true me. I feel excited about the future and about supporting my children 100% to follow their passions and to develop the mindset and resilience they need to go out into a competitive world.

I am recognising the things that really matter to me and investing more time in those and stepping back from other, now less relevant roles. I'm more energised and open to saying yes to adventures and ideas. I can tell that I am experiencing excitement, an emotion that had disappeared for many years.

Now that the whole family is recognising what real learning is and know their passions we are happier, more driven and really believe we can follow our dreams.

Written by Emma Dyke
Edited by Corinne Williams

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"We even made it onto Blue Peter!"