



## Acorn Parent-Infant Attachment Group

The aim the Acorn group is to provide an opportunity for parents who have experienced some mental health struggles to come together and be supported in their relationship with their child. The Acorn group is structured to strengthen your relationship with your child through experiences of shared play, music and movement, and some dedicated parent only time for reflection.

The groups run for two hours and there are 15 sessions.

Check out the Acorn video here: <https://youtu.be/-OfmYc-29Q>

Generally the sessions will go like this:

### ***Meet and greet***

In the very beginning you will meet the other group participants, as well as the Acorn team.

The team –

- Dance Worker: facilitates the Dance Play component of the group sessions
- Parent-Infant Attachment Practitioner (PIAP): provides infant mental health support to group participants
- Family Support Worker: leads the journaling and reflection component
- Support Workers/Volunteers: who support participants & facilitators during group time

### ***Dance-Play***

The Dance-Play component provides an opportunity for you and your child to explore new ways of being together through music and movement. The purpose of this part of the group is to provide opportunities to experience shared play, with support and structured activities to assist you to connect with your child. The activities in this session are specifically designed for parents to participate with their children. Each week there will be an emphasis on supporting your child's exploration and managing their feelings in the context of your relationship.

We start off each Dance-Play session by all singing a special 'Hello Song' to your child. Generally children love this part of the groups. They have a moment where they are the centre of everyone's attention and after a couple of weeks we see children delighting in their special moment!

### ***Journaling***

Over the 15 weeks you will be involved in a journaling program designed to provide opportunities for you to explore, discover and celebrate your parenting strengths, but also to look at where you might be struggling. This program aims to increase opportunities for you to reflect creatively through creative writing, art, collage, and scrap booking. At this point don't worry too much if you are not feeling very creative or talented in this area - you will be supported through a range of activities that will engage you in ways that will be fun and yet will lead to helpful reflections about your parenting.

During Journaling, your child/ren will be cared for onsite by the Acorn support team.

## ***Support Letters***

After the first week of the group you will receive a weekly support letter from all members of the Support Team with feedback for you and your baby. Special moments, highlights and/or information to support you and your child's involvement in the group, as well as any other details important for the group as a whole, will be provided in these letters until the final week. The Support Letters will be emailed to both you and the Support Team.

## ***Cost***

Absolutely free! There is no fee to attend the Acorn groups.

## ***Meeting your needs***

We will occasionally with your full knowledge and consent, speak with other professionals who are in contact with you to ensure that you and your child are as supported as you can be. Please discuss this with us if you have concerns.

## ***Useful things to know***

- We wear loose and comfortable clothing
- We take our shoes off for the Acorn session
- We put our phones on silent and keep them in our bags unless there is an emergency
- Food or drinks to be consumed during the Journaling/Crèche time
- We ask that you do not take photographs during Acorn
- Acorn is a safe place for women only

Please feel free to call or email the Coordinator on the below details if you have any questions about the Acorn group.

Louise Byrne

*Coordinator Acorn-Parent Infant Attachment Groups*

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