**Children's learning disabilities, special education and the Knesset:**

**the story of MK Inbar Bezeq**

**Note: Translated by Googletranslate)**

The dyslexia of the spouse, the illiterate child, the stigma about special education and why she is jealous of other mothers:

In a special interview with **Ynet,** ) Sunday 29 May 2022) MK Inbar Bezeq, mother of three children with learning disabilities, talks about everything

MK Inbar Bezeq (Yesh Atid) did not plan to enter national politics until a protest she initiated as a social activist was formed into the law on the payment of maternity benefits for independence. A first and unplanned nightly speech in the Knesset, in which she spoke about the difficulty of parents filling out an application form for tax credit points for children with learning disabilities, distilled for her the continuation of the action.

The content of Bezeq's speech may not have been planned, but it is also not really surprising because it is based on personal and close experience: Bezeq's three children and her partner Ziv - Moore (16), Raz (14) and Gil (11), were diagnosed with learnig disabilities. Ziv, also in his 20s, was diagnosed with dyslexia.

"When Ziv was diagnosed, even before we got married, we were already told that there was a high chance that our future children would also deal with such and such learning disabilities. When the children were born I knew the subject, and when they grew up I was alert to it. Regardless, I was not scared of it. I do not see a difference between them and a disability such as vision. I wear glasses from the age of 10, this is my disability. The only difference is that I got my glasses when I needed them. However, there are so many children with learning disabilities who do not receive a suitable "Even before that, they were not diagnosed at all."

And the data support that. The findings of the study conducted at Bezeq's request, led by Prof. Avi Degani and Dr. Rina Degani of the Geocartography Group, indicate the extent of the various disabilities and the lack of response: one in five children currently suffers from dyslexia with varying degrees of difficulty. Most children go to regular classes, and more than two-thirds o30 May 2022 them do not receive any assistance at all.

What do you think is the reason for the lack of response? Parental awareness, diagnostic processes?

"Yes, awareness, detection, and also the types of responses that exist in the system. In the special education law, which is good and correct in its foundation, there is no distinction for example between 'special needs' and learning disabilities and ADHD. The gaps between these worlds can be huge. "Learning disabilities are taught in the classroom alongside children with completely different needs, but the response they need is very different. I think it also ultimately contributes to the stigma that exists about special education."

Parents shy away from this definition.

"True, and it's a shame. There are so many children walking around the world feeling like they are a failure, when in fact they just have to learn differently, in a way that suits them. Around this issue. "

You are not embarrassed, you even talk about the children in the Knesset.

"Certainly, there is no reason for embarrassment. On the contrary, awareness is very significant, in its power to help a lot of children, to a great many families who are already facing a complex journey. Today we know that learning disabilities are not related to motivation, certainly not intelligence. ".

And the complexity that parents experience, Bezeq's perception, goes one step further - the late and expensive diagnostic processes, the fact that parents have to decide for themselves whether to keep their children in a regular class or move to special education, adjustments that are not always accepted in schools and more.

"The amount of support a child with a learning disability needs is huge," she says. "Today there is more awareness, and a little more tools, but it is certainly not enough. There is a lot to improve in the processes, in the decisions that are placed on the shoulders of the parents, in diagnoses that are usually made in later stages. About a child over these years who feels failed, that the environment does not understand him, who is told ‘there is no can, there is no want.’ The key is to adapt for them the world of learning, the methods and the ways.

"My daughter, who is in a second grade in a small class, that is, in special education, could not carry math studies. She was afraid of numbers, the whole quantitative thing scared her. After a while she was in a small class, we were driving and suddenly she eagerly asked me to give her exercises. She succeeded in it, right up to a grade of 100, and more than that - she learned how to love learning it. "Next school he went back to a small class, and of course he learned that too. It changes everything."

Zack herself was an excellent student, graduating with two academic degrees. She was also the Israeli champion and the Maccabiah youth champion in medium-distance running, and the founder of the "Independents Make a Change" social movement in 2015. Today she heads the Lobby for Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, alongside MK Shirley Pinto.

"We have comprehensive work teams, we collaborate with bodies like the Nitzan Association, which is a parent organization founded by parents that has been working on the subject for 60 years and has a lot of knowledge and experience. We try to change diagnostic methods, for example. The diagnoses must be much more accessible to everyone, to all the children and parents, both procedurally and financially, and much earlier.

"The situation is that even after the official diagnosis, adjustments to students are not given automatically. Schools formulate recommendations for each one, a special committee of the Ministry of Education examines them, and decides whether to approve them - without meeting children. "Required for children with dyslexia or dysgraphia."

Let's talk about you. What does life look like as a Member of Knesset?

"Wow. First of all, I really like what I do, and I do it because I saw for myself, after the Maternity Allowance for Independence Act, that you can really make a difference and change. It's not easy, no doubt. For half a week I'm in Jerusalem, and in the other half at home Of course there are feelings of guilt, I think like all parents. I remember that when I ran in the local elections, in 2018, and went out every night to missions and events, the children sadly asked if I would read more stories to them before bed. Not long "Then my girl came home and said she was running for the student council, followed by my son. I smiled to myself, and said, 'Okay, it's worth it. Still, they get an example and values.'"

What is difficult? What do you give up?

"Honestly? I'm sometimes jealous of other mothers. For example of mothers who downshifted after having children, or mothers who wait for children at lunch at home with a pot of chicken and potatoes. "My children's war, now I'm fighting for all the other children."