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Working mum

Local mum *Usha Patel* talks to *Sunshine* about her change of career since having children

Many mums change their careers after having children and interior designer Usha Patel is no exception. After ten years involved with building new schools and hospitals around the world, when her daughter Nisha (now 3) came along, Northolt-based Usha decided it was time for a change.

"I became interested in learning difficulties at university when I was studying for my Interior Architecture degree," Usha said. "I met people who, despite being exceptionally creatively talented, had problems with written work and organisational skills. I learnt later that in many cases, it was due to childhood learning difficulties."

Whilst on maternity leave, Usha researched learning difficulties and discovered the Raviv method and decided to

train. The Raviv Method is an exercise based programme for children and adults with learning difficulties. It is a neuro-cognitive therapy from Israel and is formally recognised there and used in schools to help children with learning difficulties.

The programme works on the premise that in some children there are gaps in the neural development of the brain. These gaps result in impairment of visual, auditory or kinaesthetic (movement) processing abilities. The Raviv programme uses special movement based exercises which help create new neural pathways in the brain thus bridging the gaps.

The Raviv programme offers a non-academic approach to overcoming learning difficulties. This makes it more appealing to children. "I also incorporate

the 'Alpha to Omega' reading and writing programme by the Dyslexia association for those with reading, comprehension and spelling difficulties," says Usha.

Usha works with children of all ages and with all kinds of special educational needs in and around Hillingdon. She's recently worked with a boy attending Queensmead School and has collaborated with the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. She says, "The parents are pleased their son is working more independently with his new found confidence in reading and the school have also noticed a change."

Usha continues, "I get a lot of satisfaction when a child's reading age is re-assessed after the programme. Often it has increased in a short space of time when previously it had been static. I also help children

with their writing skills. It is remarkable how their confidence and self-esteem grows once they are able to see the progress they have made in a few weeks with their handwriting."

Usha enjoys spending time in Hillingdon with her daughter, "We enjoy the trampolines at Swallows in South Ruislip and make-believe coastal visits at Ruislip Lido. From my work I know children need to explore the world around through play and movement." She continues, "I am fortunate in having a very good nursery on our doorstep – Hungry Caterpillar in Northolt. They often fit my daughter in at short notice when I am interviewing new clients or visiting a school."

To find out more about the Raviv Method or to contact Usha call 07766 837 616 or email ushapatel.raviv@gmail.com