

'Let them climb trees'

Usha Patel talks to **Melanie Dakin** on how the Raviv Method can help children with learning difficulties to realise their full potential

AS our children's lives become increasingly defined by educational targets it's comforting to know that one practitioner's advice is to urge parents to let their offspring "climb trees".

Using an innovative neuro-cognitive programme called the Raviv Method, Usha Patel, who moved from Enfield to Northolt Village six years ago, has been helping children with learning difficulties realise their full potential for the past three and a half years.

"From my point of view we're not doing enough tree climbing," says Usha. "We're not challenging the physical aspect of a child's development. Here in the UK we are more worried about formal education from an early age but if we're not challenging their fundamental skills,

Usha and her daughter Nisha
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how are children going to be good enough to cope with the academic side? We're just not climbing enough trees and enjoying experimental play."

A graduate in Interior Architecture used to managing teams and major projects, Usha came across people who had learning gaps at work and wondered at what stage these were developed. She discovered the Raviv Method while on maternity leave and found it held the answers to many of her questions.

After studying the Raviv Method, Usha decided to specialise in helping children with learning difficulties, exploring how these gaps can hold children back in their achievements if they are not bridged at some point.

Usha feels the pace of modern life doesn't help either as it's becoming increasingly challenging for children.

"The advances in technology means children are developing faster because of their exposure to so many different stimuli and quite often their learning is one-sided, but there is a possibility to rebuild the skills and understanding a child might have missed.

"We need to look towards the things we did before television was invented such as board games, hopscotch, and skipping, games that encourage social interaction. Otherwise how can we relate to others?"

"Play is a fundamental aspect of exploring and learning as a child – if they come back with ripped trousers and scuffed shoes so much the better. Those children who have the most physical exposure have superb motor skills."

The Raviv Method's neuro-cognitive approaches are

designed to develop and correct learning and attention skills.

Repetition and activity are key to the learning process. The frequency and intensity of actions has been found to strengthen neural pathways and keep them at this receptive level, long after training has been completed.

Usha says the programmes are tailor-made to be in keeping with how the individual takes in information.

"All the exercises are game based with an emphasis on getting the child to relax. Initially you observe the child until you find what fits and can employ the appropriate resources."

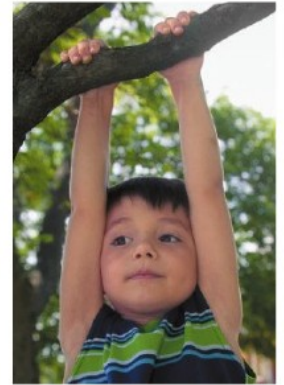
Usha tells me some children respond well to visual stimuli while others are more language-based.

"If they have particular strengths such as visual ability this can be channelled to help another area of weakness such as memory problems."

Usha has helped children with dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, ADHD and poor concentration. She says the Raviv Method can also assist adults.

"The method can also be used to achieve learning excellence in adults and improve conditions resulting from brain trauma. It also helps with problems such as spatial awareness and organisational skills. Basically we're training the brain to learn again."

● Details: 07766 837616,
www.ravivpracticelondon.co.uk



Children should climb trees

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