

# Counsellor with a difference

By Anupama Jayaraman

December 28

**M**EERA Ravi knew she was meant to be a counsellor, as a listener for starters early in her childhood. Today, she is a well known name for her yeoman work in the field of child counselling.

As a child people would come over to talk to her regarding their problems but it struck her when she was volunteering at a rehabilitation centre for Schizophrenics in 1998.

"I was a volunteer at a centre and children used to come for help and I realised I could counsel them and slowly moved into the field of Child and Adolescent Counselling," says Meera.

Today several children with their parents come over to 'Prerana', her academy for growth and guidance. It is not easy being a child in today's day and age," she adds.

"Major cause for a child to have stress and pain are parental conflicts and their unrealistic expectation," says Meera. "Even unrealistic expectations of parents pressurise children. The most important cause is losing out on family time these days."

Children from the age of six to sixteen years visit her centre. She employs creative ways to express their pain and anger through 'Play therapy'. Miniature animals, story-telling, drawing, clay modelling, puppets, soft toys and work sheets help children project their true feelings.

Children understand subtle signals and non-verbal behavior says Meera. "Ninety-three per cent of most of our communication takes place through non-verbal communication, only three per cent is verbal. So if there is a conflict at home, children understand the messages."

Interestingly, she also manages a tyre business! She has her hands full, but nothing stops

her from spending time with children, she helps. Her husband and children are her source of encouragement. Meera who has two books under her sleeve, 'A Guide to Study Skills' and 'Teaching through the Heart', plans on embarking on another writing stint. She will soon write a book on 'Parenting'. She is also conducting a parenting skills workshop for five days beginning on January 16 and a workshop on 'Facing Examination' for children on the last Saturday of January.

Meera is happy where she is and adds, "I was searching for something and this is where my heart lies, counselling children."

