

'I CAN SPEND MORE TIME WITH MY FAMILY'

Regan Anderton, 39, lives in Kent with her husband, Robert, 40, and their son, Sidney, three.

When I head down to my garden shed, I'm not on the hunt for a watering can or the lawnmower. No, armed with flour and a wooden spoon, I'm about to whip up a loaf of crusty bread...

I was just two years old when my dad began teaching me how to cook. First it was just marmite on toast but, as I got older, he'd show me how to mix spices and ingredients to make delicious dishes.

So when I had my own son, Sidney, in September 2013, keen to pass on my culinary skills, I'd sit him on the kitchen counter while I cooked. I bought him an apron and child-friendly knives and, by the age of 18 months, he was chopping strawberries for fruit salads and mushrooms for Bolognese.

I loved those times together, but working long hours in my

marketing job meant they were rare. I started to wonder what else I could do that would allow me to spend more time with my family.

It was November 2015, during a conversation with my husband about a leak in our garage roof that the idea came to me. I could start my own cookery school for mums and their children – Sidney loved being my sous chef so much, surely other children would too.

Robert was supportive – and my dad thought it was a great idea. So, I went on a business course run by Successful Mums and, using our £10,000 savings, we tore down that leaky garage and turned it into a beautiful shed – complete with a country kitchen. After promoting my business online, I launched The Cooking Shed in February 2016 – every class that first day was fully booked! I still worked in marketing for a year – the idea of leaving my job to start my own venture seemed terrifying. But, as each month passed, and my client base grew, I knew I was finally ready to leave the nine to five.

Nowadays I run my own schedule, so I have time to spend with my family. And Sidney, now three, still loves cooking as much as I do – I'm convinced he'll be the next Jamie Oliver!

* thecookingshed.com



Regan's cookery classes have proved hugely popular with other parents and their kids