

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Research Project: Reading and dyslexia in deaf children II: The special case of deaf children who sign

Dear Parent,

We are researchers from City University London and Bedford University. We are writing to you because we would like to invite you and your child to take part in the above project which is looking at reading in deaf signing children.

Many deaf children have reading difficulties but there are no reading tests designed specially for deaf children. Our research will produce scores for deaf children on a number of deaf-friendly reading tests. In future, teachers will be able to use these tests to check on the reading progress of deaf children in their class.

As part of the same project, we are investigating dyslexia in deaf children. At the moment, it is very difficult for teachers to spot dyslexia in a deaf child because there are no suitable tests. This means that deaf children with dyslexia are not identified and cannot benefit from the specialist help that other dyslexic children receive.

What the study will involve?

Stage 1: If you agree to participate, we will ask you to complete two questionnaires about your child's development and behaviour, including a brief medical history and information about their hearing aid or cochlear implant use. We will also ask you about any language and reading problems in the immediate and extended family and some background information about yourselves such as where you live and your occupation. We will send these questionnaires to you to complete and return to us in a stamped addressed envelope. Alternatively, if you prefer, we are happy to conduct the questionnaires as interviews over the telephone or at a place convenient to you. As before, we will also seek your permission to contact your child's teacher and ask them to complete similar questionnaires.

Stage 2: At this stage, we will want to see your child for three-four sessions, each lasting about 1 hour, when we will carry out a set of established assessments of language, nonverbal skills, reading and spelling. We will be happy to conduct these sessions at school, at times chosen by your child's teacher. We will write down your child's responses on record sheets.

All information about children will be confidential and anonymous. For some of these assessments, we will need to video record your child's responses in order to check these after the session. All records and video recordings will be labelled only with the number that we allocate to your child. All information will be archived after the end of the research and destroyed after 10 years.

Talking to your child about the project

We will only include children if they are willing to join the researcher and participate in the activities. We enclose an information sheet for your child, and would be grateful if you could go through the information and talk about the project with him/her.

Note: Your child does not have to take part in this study if you do not want them to, and even if you and your child do agree to take part, you may withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

What to do now

If you and your child agree to participate, please could you fill in and sign the attached consent forms, and return these in the stamped addressed envelope. We will then contact you with information about the next steps. If you or your child have any questions or would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact us by post, e-mail or telephone (see contact details in box below).

We look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,

Ros Herman, Penny Roy, Fiona Kyle & Catherine Barnett

Contact details

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All proposals for research using human subjects are reviewed by an ethics committee before they can proceed. This proposal was reviewed by the School of Community and Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee. If there is an aspect of the study which concerns you, you may make a complaint. City University has established a complaints procedure via the Secretary to the Research Ethics Committee. To complain about the study, you need to phone 020 7040 3040. You can then ask to speak to the Secretary of the Ethics Committee and inform them that the name of the project is 'Reading and dyslexia in deaf children. You could also write to the Secretary at:

Anna Ramberg, Secretary to Senate Ethics Committee, CRIDO, City University, Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB Email: anna.ramberg.1@city.ac.uk