

# Achievements of Deaf Pupils in

## Family Questionnaire

In the last three issues of this newsletter we described developments in our national survey of deaf children and young people in Scotland. We are now beginning to publish findings from the first year of data collection, 2000/01, including articles in the national magazines of the National Deaf Children's Society and the British Association of Teachers of the Deaf as well as presentations to groups of parents and professionals. Watch this space for further news.

For this article we decided to concentrate on developments with our **Family Questionnaire** which will be distributed later in the year.



Concentrating on completing the Family Questionnaires

## Why a Family Questionnaire?

Right from the start, representatives from parent groups have indicated their willingness to be directly involved in the ADPS project. Frances Dolan from the West of Scotland Deaf Children's Society summed this up when she said:

*'We as parents would be only too happy to help – please use us to get the information'*

Also, it makes more sense generally to ask information relating to home life directly from families themselves rather than via deaf

education services and schools who are already providing a lot of information to us.

## How was the questionnaire developed?

A working group was formed of ADPS staff, representatives from local Deaf Children's Societies throughout Scotland and other parents who had expressed their interest. NDCS offered to set up a network of volunteers who could encourage local members to complete the questionnaires and be contact points for any local parent who may need help in this. Ideas were pooled about what information should be collected and the first draft of a questionnaire was produced. It was decided to test out the draft questionnaire with a larger group of parents, so a Questionnaire Pilot Day was planned for 30th November, 2002.

## Family Questionnaire Pilot Day, 30th November, 2002

Twenty four parents attended the Pilot Day at Moray House School of Education in Edinburgh on a very wet November Saturday. Five crèche workers (including three care staff from Donaldson's College) ably entertained the 19 accompanying children while their parents concentrated on the day's work. The parents came from a variety of areas in Scotland and included BSL and Arabic language-users. Interpreters for both of these languages worked throughout the day.

## Morning session

The morning session consisted of parents taking a questionnaire each and completing it. While they did so, they wrote down any comments on a separate sheet: for example if a question was hard to complete for some reason, or could be left out altogether. People also wrote down ideas for extra questions which could be asked.

# Scotland - project update

## Lunch

Families got together again over a buffet lunch while the crèche workers had a well-earned rest. It was a chance to catch up with old friends as well as meet new people.



SSC resource manager, Sheila Mackenzie, had opened the Resource Library for the day and, in addition to supervising the use of the CD-ROM facilities by some of the older children, she was able to show parents around the Centre over lunch time and sign up a few new members!



## Afternoon session

The crèche got back into business while parents and ADPS staff got together for the afternoon feedback session. A constructive, honest, and sometimes emotional, discussion session was

held where parents asked questions, raised specific concerns and debated challenging issues. Some hearing parents said that they found it a particularly powerful experience to share a discussion like this with Deaf parents for the first time.

At the end of the day there was a lot of positive feedback about how the day had gone. Alan McQueen, NDCS Family Officer, summed up a few days later:

*"It went very well, and the feedback I had was very positive . . . it reinforces to us the very need for the project . . . It was an excellent day"*

## Next steps

The ADPS team noted down comments made both on the feedback sheets and during the afternoon discussion. Comments from parents unable to make the Pilot Day were also included. At the time of writing, the questionnaire is being amended accordingly. Plans are being made for providing training to local volunteers and distributing the questionnaires via deaf education services in the summer term.

If you are a parent reading this, please do complete and return the questionnaire when you receive it. If you have any questions or comments, contact Marian Grimes as follows:

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