



Dear [ *Head Teacher* ]

We are developing a new test of speechreading (lipreading) for children and I would like to invite your school to become involved in this project. Until now, no speechreading tests have been designed to fit the abilities of the child who has been deaf or hearing impaired from early in life. For the child born deaf, or who becomes deaf young, we need a sensitive test of speechreading before undertaking intervention such as cochlear implants, or in relation to schooling needs. But it is also important to see how well children with normal hearing can follow seen speech. In work with (hearing) adults we find that speechreading skill is related to literacy, while in (deaf) children, it is very closely connected with their reading and spelling skills.

We are seeking to recruit deaf and hearing school children aged between 5 and 12 years for this study. There are three parts to the study. First, a questionnaire about the child's language and education status (for parents), second, the child completes four short tests of language and intellectual function. Third, the child completes a computer-based test of English speechreading. We are developing the speechreading test to be completely interactive, with many child-friendly and deaf-friendly features, which we will be happy to demonstrate to you. The questionnaire can be completed at home, over the internet/by post, or by a home visit from the researcher (with an interpreter, if needed). For testing the child, we would welcome the chance to do this in school. We would need a quiet room. The tests would take one hour per child: half an hour for the psychometric tests and a further half-hour for the lipreading test. We videotape the session, so that we can be sure that we have recorded the correct responses for each child – and this allows BSL and other gestural responses to be taken into account. These tests can be done on different days. We would bring BSL interpreters if needed, but would also hope to make use of your support staff to ensure every child understands the task.

We will collect the following data from each child: identifying data (name, age, gender), language background, nonverbal IQ (short form), BSL proficiency (production test), a short reading test – and accuracy and speed measures of speechreading. Once we have collected all the speechreading scores, we can identify the relative speechreading abilities of each child. We will be happy to come to your school once the data collection is complete to tell the school about what general findings the study reveals – answers to questions such as: are Deaf children better than hearing? Does IQ have an effect? We usually compensate schools for their time and effort by vouchers (eg Argos or Amazon) to buy books and/or equipment. This would be arranged on the basis of the number of children to be tested and the extent of support needed to take each child out of class for a total of one hour. Please contact me for details. Please also contact me if you believe that the *individual* test results would be useful for the child's confidential record. This will require additional consent from the parents and the child in advance of testing.

The data we collect will be completely confidential, and the study is covered under the Data Protection Act 1998 through registration with UCL Data protection procedures. The researcher, Dr Fiona Kyle, has clearance to work with persons aged under 18 (registration.....). She also has level 2 BSL. The project (has been approved/is being submitted for approval) by UCL ethics committee. If you are agreeable to helping us, or would like further information about the project, please return the form below in the franked addressed envelope provided. Even if you do not want to take part in the study, we would appreciate your return of the form for our files. Thankyou for reading this communication,

Yours sincerely

Ruth Campbell

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**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM**

*Please circle the option that applies, and complete where necessary*

To

Professor Ruth Campbell

Deputy Director DCAL

University College London, 49 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0PD

I have read the outline of your study Developing a Test of Child Speechreading

**1**

I am prepared for your research officer, Dr Kyle, to contact the school to make further arrangements to circulate parents and test children. Her contact will be

*Please complete with name, title and contact details of the school official*

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**2**

I would like more information about the project/ Research officer. Please contact me on the following number

Name.....

Title....., phone or email.....

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**3**

I do not wish to be involved with this project

*We would welcome any comments and reasons for this choice, if you care to give them. We will not contact you again about this unless you ask us to.*

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Signed.....(and print name here please).....

School title.....

school.....