



Dear [insert name],

RE: Longitudinal Study - Visual Communication and Reading Development – Deaf Children

We are a team of researchers at University College London who are conducting research (funded by Wellcome) into reading development in deaf and hearing children over three years – from Reception to Year 2. Our research aims to fill a gap in current research by identifying the role of visual language inputs (e.g., lipreading; British Sign Language) and other language skills in reading development in deaf and hearing children.

Schools will be given £50 voucher as thank you for their support at the end of the study.

To do this we need to identify deaf children currently at preschool. If the child and parents agree to participate in the study, we would then conduct a set of language and literacy tasks with the child in their first few weeks in Reception. It is important to go through the tasks at this stage so that we can assess the child before they have had a large amount of phonics training. We would then conduct the tasks with the child once again in Reception, twice in Year 1 and twice in Year 2. We will then be able to track what factors influence their reading development over time.

The Parent/ Carer information sheet attached includes more information about the study.

Are you interested in helping us recruit deaf children for this study by sending this information to parents of deaf children at your school?

We are looking for deaf children to participate who:

- will be in Reception in the school year 2022/23
- were diagnosed as severely or profoundly deaf before the age of 3yrs
- have lived in the UK for at least the last 6 months
- have no disabilities that would prevent them from completing 30mins of tasks on a computer

We are very aware that schools continue to be under great pressure following COVID. A small room, or rooms (if available), will be required for use by the research team. Testing will be conducted by the research team. The researcher will ask the teacher/ teaching assistant to indicate the next child to be taken to the room to conduct the test, but this will be the only requirement on the time of the staff.

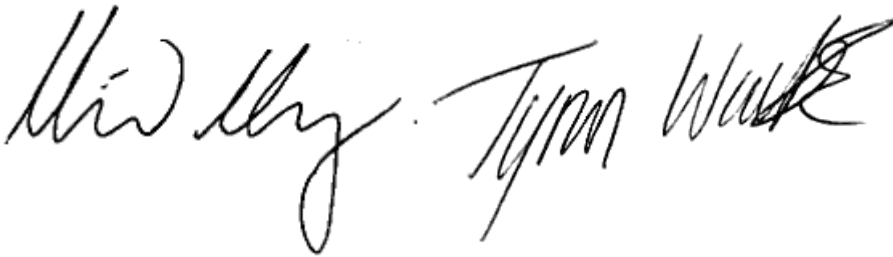
We may also ask you to share some data about the children in the study – e.g., phonics screening data; child's level of deafness (if the parent has requested that the school complete this questionnaire in place of them). Consent will have been obtained from the parent for this. If you are happy for your school to be involved in the project, we would need a confirmation email from you including acknowledgment that you are willing to share this information. We can provide a secure link for the data transfer.

You can contact the research team for more information VisualCR@ucl.ac.uk. We will also be happy to provide an online session if you would like this. This can be fully accessible – BSL interpreters and captions will be provided. Please contact the research team if you want one.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information. We hope you are keen to support this research project.

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee, Project ID 3612/012.

Yours

Handwritten signatures of Prof. Mairead MacSweeney and Dr Tyron Woolfe. The signature on the left is 'Mairead MacSweeney' and the signature on the right is 'Tyron Woolfe'.

Prof. Mairead MacSweeney
Dr Tyron Woolfe