**The Aston Literacy Project (ALP)**



Teacher information sheet

**Who is conducting the study?**

This project is being conducted at the School of Life and Health sciences at Aston University. It is led by Dr Laura Shapiro (Principal Investigator) and Dr Anna Cunningham (Research Fellow) and coordinated by Amy Fox (Research Coordinator). Research Assistants are employed to conduct the testing in schools. The project is funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, an independent government-funded body.

Our project website is: [www.aston.ac.uk/alp](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alp)

**What is the purpose of the study?**

Our aim is to investigate the relationship between auditory skills, phonology, and reading in children at the beginning and intermediate stages of literacy development. Importantly, we are attempting to understand whether children who go on to develop reading difficulties have poor levels of phonology, auditory skills, or both at the beginning of school. In order to establish this, it is necessary to follow the same group of children from Reception through to Year 4 to see how they progress. We aim to work with all children who started Reception in 2011, attending 16 schools within the Birmingham area.

**Children in my class will be tested as part of this project; what does this involve?**

The parents of all children in your class will be sent a letter (through school) giving them information about the project. They are given the chance to ‘opt-out’ if they would not like their child to participate. We will then arrange a time for two research assistants to visit the school to work with the children in your class who previously participated in the study. Each child in your class will be asked to participate in 3 sessions of approximately 20 minutes. Two researchers would need to be present in your school for approximately one and a half weeks per class. Children will be ‘borrowed’ one by one from the classroom and taken to a quiet area to complete the tasks. Our researchers will inform you in the morning or at lunchtime if they will be borrowing children from your class that day and whether there are any particular times that you would like them to avoid.

**What will I have to do?**

This project should not create extra work for you. All the testing is conducted and marked by our trained research assistants. However, there a few things that we ask of the school;

* A quiet room or quiet area outside the classroom to administer the tasks.
* A class list including dates of birth. It is also useful to include a note of which children have EAL and SEN.
* We ask that you tolerate brief absences from class of individual pupils.

**What will happen if a child refuses to take part?**

At the start of each session, children will be asked if they would like to do the tasks. No child will be forced to participate, although they will get a sticker as a reward for taking part! Great care has been taken to ensure that the tasks are age-appropriate and engaging for young children.

The majority of tasks will be administered on a laptop computer with headphones. This is to ensure that they are conducted fairly and in the same way for all children.

**What will I get in return for taking part?**

We will write a report for each class teacher summarising the performance of the children who took part (as a whole) on all standardised assessments. This report will not be available to parents or anyone outside the research team.

In the long term, this research will help to inform teachers and parents about which children are likely to develop reading difficulties and which children will not. This will help schools to target certain children for the correct intervention from a young age.

**Will the results be kept confidential?**

Yes. We will not release information about individual children to anyone. The information about each child will be stored anonymously. At the end of the study, the final anonymous data file will be uploaded onto the UK data archive, which is a resource for researchers and teachers. No schools or children will be identifiable from the final anonymous data set.

**Has this research been reviewed?**

The research has been reviewed by peer reviewers at the Economic and Social Research Council to ensure that it is valid, timely and appropriate research.

It has also been reviewed by the Aston Research Ethics Committee. All researchers have DBS clearance to work with young children.

**What if I have a query or concern?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should speak first to the research assistants assessing your class who will do their best to answer your questions. Alternatively, contact Laura (L.R.Shapiro@aston.ac.uk, 0121 204 4052) directly.

**Further information**

If you would like further information about this project please visit:

[www.aston.ac.uk/alp](http://www.aston.ac.uk/alp)