

Child psychology under the spotlight

More than 150 local children took part in the first Lincoln Summer Scientist week, organized by the School of Psychology and held in the Business and Law building during the last week of August.

Children from the age of three months to 11 years and their parents joined us for a morning or afternoon of fun. Children took part in a variety of developmental studies which were designed to be fun games and they investigated topics including the development of language, motor control, emotion regulation, altruism and decision making.

In between these research games, children were entertained by a host of other fun activities, led by a team of 10 psychology student volunteers. This allowed parents to find out more about our research from poster displays and by talking to researchers, watching their children take part in the different activities or simply relaxing with a good book.

The event was a tremendous success for everyone involved! Academics had the opportunity to collect a large amount of data in a short amount of time and engage with members of the public to explain more about

the research we do and how it helps us understand more about development. Our student volunteers were carefully selected through interview and fully trained to help with the research activities and the fun activities. They created such a positive and brilliant impression that they were often singled out for praise in parents' feedback.

We were delighted that all parents rated their and their child's experience at the event as positive, that they would recommend the event to someone else and come again next year. Parents were pleased to give their children a first hand experience of what university is like and gain more of an understanding of the work we do, with more than 75% of parents saying that the event has improved their understanding of scientific research carried out by psychologists at the University.

The comments made by parents in their feedback highlights the diverse impact of the event: "A far better knowledge of the types of research that are ongoing. Good to meet students involved in the course. Makes it feel more like a community and that we can take part and help"; "Very interesting to see the research in action and it is good to see how a

fun day can also be important in terms of learning"; "Children can have fun doing research!"; "Presented the human face of research" and "Science is more interesting now".

Children received a Summer Scientist graduation t-shirt, which was popular and you might have seen some around Lincoln.

Plans are already in place for next year's event in August. To help us design the logo for 2012 we held a colouring competition for all children at the event. Professors Mary Stuart and Harriet Gross were the main judges of the competition and visited Summer Scientist week to look at the many wonderful drawings. You will see the winning entry on the advertisement for Summer Scientist week 2012.

I'd like to also express my thanks to Children's Links for their financial contribution towards the cost of the event and Alison Wilson (Research Administrator for HLSS) for her outstanding support.

Dr Fenja Zeigler
Senior Lecturer



(Top) Children take part in the fun and (Bottom) Dr Fenja Zeigler with three of the young volunteers.