



**“I’m going to be here long after you’ve gone”
Sibling Perspectives of the Future**

Hollie Rawson (Research Assistant)

Sunfield places a great deal of emphasis on including and supporting siblings of the students who reside at the school. By involving them in their brother or sister’s life in childhood it is hoped that their relationship will strengthen and develop into adulthood when they often naturally become the advocate for their disabled sibling. This preparing for the future relies on understanding their individual perceptions of what the future may hold for them and their disabled sibling.

Following on from preliminary sibling research (cf. Conway and O’Neill, 2004), the project aims to identify the issues faced by teenage siblings about their own future and the role they will play in their disabled sibling’s life. This will enable Sunfield to develop services to address the specific needs of this population of siblings. Data will be gathered via semi-structured interviews with siblings of Sunfield students, both past and present, between the ages of 15 and 25 years. This will be followed by a focus group for those willing to discuss and develop issues raised in the interviews. In order to keep the research grounded in sibling perspective, a focus group of adult siblings has been invited to form a Research Advisory Group (RAG) to inform the question design and the corroboration of data analysis. This project will be running from January to December 2008.

Reference:

Conway, S. and O’Neill, K. (2004). Home and away. *Learning Disability Practice*, 7, 34-38.