

PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION IN NOONAN SYNDROME CHILDREN

failure which may be causal. Of the 27 children for whom teachers' ratings were obtained, three quarters had scores in the problematic range which would tend to support this, though not, of course, prove it.

CONCLUSION

No-one can predict whether an individual child with NS will have a low level of intelligence. A few will prove to have a high IQ but they will be outnumbered by those who have an IQ in the lowest part of the average range and some with a definitely low IQ. It is not thought that there is anything extra the average well-intentioned parent can do about this. It is doubted that there is anything extra that a concerned parents can do, over and above what they are already doing that would substantially improve the IQ of their own child.

Co-ordination difficulties frequently attract criticism and disparaging comments. The sorts of difficulties shown by the children seen cannot be helped by the child themselves and there is no value in telling the child to stop being clumsy. If the problem is very noticeable, seek the advice of an occupational therapist or interested physiotherapist, but do not expect miracles.

As a general suggestion, parents and teachers should listen carefully to their children, especially with regard to school life. If there are sources of stress, they should be dealt with very promptly, rather than waiting in the hope that things will improve. Parents probably need to be very patient with their own children but impatient with a school's slowness in dealing with a problem impinging on a child. The general impression gained from parents and children was that the child's difficulties were not always taken seriously by their schools. Schools and carers, it seemed, were often somewhat hesitant of how best to help the children with NS, which is understandable.

In the main, those dealing with a child with NS should be encouraged by parents to see them as children first, who may or may not have special needs in particular areas of their life, i.e. various health aspects including cardiac, growth, repeated infection, co-ordination, IQ, verbal function, eating function, etc.

*published and compiled by Noonan Syndrome Society from research. "The Psychological Characteristics of Children with Noonan Syndrome" - Prof. Peter Hill, Section of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, Department of Mental Health Sciences. St. George's Hospital Medical School, Cranmer Terrace, London, SW17 0RE.*