



Sesame

Reaching the Open University community worldwide

Celebrating *Child of our Time*. facts and figures

The BBC 1 television series *Child of our Time* was a co-production with the Open University and was accompanied by a website which contained essays on child development, 'test yourself' questionnaires on themes in the programmes and an online survey of self-image in people aged four to 60+. It also carried advice on study with the OU related to aspects of child development, childhood and working with children, and offered a pack of activity cards for fun, educational things for parents to do with their children.

Both the programmes and the website have been an outstanding success:

- More than 6 million people watched each programme;
- In the one hour after the last programme 10,000 people completed the online survey;
- 44,000 people in total completed the online survey and the results are being analysed in preparation for publication;
- 50,000 copies of the activity pack were printed and all of them have now been distributed in response to requests;
- There was a great deal of interest in the OU's study offerings, with more than 5,000 telephone enquiries on the morning after the first broadcast;
- After the programmes there was a significant increase in reservations

and registrations for the *Understanding children* course. Demand was such that the target number of students for the March presentation had to be raised from 400 to 600. Also, the May presentation has already achieved its target numbers.

In response to this success, the BBC and the OU have agreed to extend their collaboration for the next series. Planning is underway for a new project that will be extending towards all children born at the turn of the millennium. They are all just starting school, and this new project will involve primary schools in exciting activities and data collection around the themes in the next broadcast series. These will contribute to a national survey which will be completed for the broadcasts and some of the schools that participate will be featured in the programmes.

The three themes are:

- *Identity*: How are the millennium children seeing themselves? What are their aspirations? How is their gender, ethnic and national identities beginning to form?
- *Use of time*: How much of their lives are taken up with 'screen time', with TV viewing and with computers? How are their days structured?
- *Families*: What is life like in their families? What roles do fathers, mothers and siblings take on? What do the children expect their mothers and fathers to be like?