

## **Professor Annette Karmiloff-Smith**

We regretfully bring you the sad news that Professor Annette Karmiloff-Smith passed away just before Christmas, after battling cancer since summer 2016. She had been actively involved in Down syndrome research (as a member of the LonDownS consortium in London, UK) until she died.

Professor Karmiloff-Smith was an influential researcher in the field of child development. She began her career as a United Nations translator in Geneva but her interests soon turned to the emergence of language in children. She trained in Geneva under Bärbel Inhelder and the renowned developmental psychologist Jean Piaget. Her first article in 1975 ("If you want to get ahead, get a theory!") encapsulated her view that understanding cognitive processes was the key to understanding developing abilities. Annette always emphasised the importance of understanding developmental processes when trying to understand both typically and atypically developing children ("Development itself is the key to understanding developmental disorders", 1998). Under this view, typical and atypical development are construed as different life trajectories driven by the same underlying mechanisms. This perspective led her to take substantial steps forward in understanding the cognitive phenotypes of children with William's and Down syndromes.

Professor Karmiloff-Smith was a prolific author and co-author of very influential books. Her most notable scientific books, *Beyond Modularity: A Developmental Perspective on Cognitive Science* (1992) and *Rethinking Innateness: A Connectionist Perspective on Development* (1996) have been translated into several languages. She received dozens of accolades during her career, including a Fellowship of the British Academy, Fellowships of the Cognitive Science Society, Fellowship of the Academy of Medical Sciences and honorary doctorates from universities across the world.

Professor Karmiloff-Smith was a founding member of the LonDownS Consortium (2012) and headed the workstream assessing babies and infants with Down syndrome. Annette was a valued and prominent leader in the Consortium and always emphasised her view that it is vital to understand development in order to understand outcomes in later life, including Alzheimer's disease.

Annette had an incisive intellect, an irrepressible enthusiasm, a strong will, a completely global outlook and remarkably huge drive to understand human psychological development; she was also a sensible and kind collaborator and an excellent mentor. She will be greatly missed by her colleagues, students, and families of children with Down syndrome.