**INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARAEDUCATOR’S ROLES IN SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES RESEARCH PARTICIPATION**

**KEY INFORMATION:**

Research is being conducted by Dr. Mary Murray, Bowling Green State University Professor Emerita, and Dr. Mark Seals, Bowling Green State University Director for the School of Teaching and Learning. Your insight and feedback will help us learn how we can better prepare paraeducators to support students with disabilities. This study intends to analyze the perspectives of paraeducators. Contact information was gathered from an online program in education at Central State University. Specific courses providing students an opportunity to participate are as follows: EDU 3266 (Children with Exceptionalities), EDU 3340 (Special Education Law), EDU 3341 (Survey Mild-Moderate), and INS 3005 (Behavior Management). Faculty teaching those courses provided the research participation link to over 200 students who are all in the role of a paraeducator and are going back to school to obtain a bachelor’s degree.

As a participant in the study, you will be asked to complete a 15-20-minute Qualtrics survey focused on the practices used by paraeducators to effectively support students with disabilities and participate in a 30-minute follow-up interview with other paraeducators. No compensation or gifts are offered for completion of this survey. All participation is voluntary. You may decide to skip questions (or not do a particular task) or discontinue participation at any time without explanation or penalty. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University.

**PURPOSE:**

This study focuses on the use of paraeducators to support children with disabilities in PK-grade 12 settings in multiple states in the country. The aim of the study is to produce a practice guide with recommendations for how paraprofessionals could/should contribute to improved learning outcomes for children with disabilities.

This study benefits all stakeholders by reviewing and learning about current paraeducator practices and sharing the results to improve the outcomes for all students with disabilities. Knowing the extent to which best practices are utilized is important to provide the best possible education for all students, particularly students with disabilities. It is necessary to gather information from paraeducators so that we may gain their insight on working with students with disabilities. By participating in this study, you will be providing the information necessary to enhance the way future paraeducators are prepared to serve students with disabilities and benefiting Institutions of Higher Education, educators, paraeducators, parents and students.

**PROCEDURE:**

Paraeducators working with students with disabilities will be asked to complete a 15-20-minute demographic Qualtrics survey by the PI and Key Personnel to gather some background information as well as practices utilized by paraeducators to effectively support children with disabilities. The paraeducator survey consists of a consent form, two open response, thirteen multiple choice, three matrix tables and two side by side tables. At the end of the Qualtrics survey, paraeducators will answer a question to determine the best day of the week and time to participate in a follow-up interview, if selected.

Any paraeducator completing the survey will be invited to participate in the follow-up interview. The follow-up interviews will take place in December, via Zoom. Paraeducators will receive a link for the follow-up interview via the provided email address. Paraeducators will then participate in a follow-up interview to determine how well they felt their training prepared them to support students with disabilities. Participants will be in a follow-up interview with other paraeducators across the nation.

Participants can determine if they turn on their camera within the group and what personal information to share when introducing themselves to the group. You can use a pseudonym and choose to not share your name or any identifiable information.

Follow-up interviews will last around 30 minutes and include no more than 20 people in each group, for a total of no more than 100 paraeducators.

**VOLUNTARY NATURE:**

The study adheres to current BGSU COVID-19 guidelines. Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions (or not do a particular task) or discontinue participation at any time without explanation or penalty. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University.

**CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY PROTECTION:**

To protect confidentiality within the Qualtrics surveys, participants will receive a unique email/link to complete the electronic survey. Participants will also have the option of providing their name and contact information for focus group contact and survey clarification. If you choose to not be re-contacted or participate in focus groups, we will not reach out to you any further.

For electronic surveys, we suggest that you consider the following; (1) some employers may use tracking software so you may want to complete the survey on a personal computer, (2) you should not leave the survey open if using a public computer or a computer that others may have access to, and (3) you should clear browser cache and page history after completing the survey.

Follow-up interviews will be recorded and transcribed. No one else will be able to record the session and you may choose to use a pseudonym if you like. At the start of the interview, participants will be reminded to maintain confidentiality for what other participants say and what is said in the focus group stays in the focus group. If you are chosen to participate in a focus group and agree to participate, we cannot guarantee that other group members will maintain the confidentiality of what is said in the group. We ask that you do not share anything you do not want others to know within the focus group setting.

To increase confidentiality, all data will be reported in aggregate without any identifiers and names will be redacted. Focus group data will be coded and organized into common themes, not by individual response. Contact information will not be shared or provided within the research.

Physical data (Ex. printed reports), will be store in Bowling Green State University’s Education Building., Suite 529A inside a locked cabinet. The only people with access to the data are Dr. Mary Murray and Dr. Mark Seals. Survey data will be stored in Qualtrics, a secure surveying platform. Once all survey data is exported and organized from Qualtrics, the data will then be stores in a password protected computer. Data will be stored for four years before it is destroyed to maintain confidentiality.

**RISKS:**

The risks of participating in this research study are no greater than those experienced in everyday life.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

If you have any questions about the research or your participation in the research, you may contact Dr. Mark Seals, at 419-372-7622 or [mseals@bgsu.edu](mailto:mseals@bgsu.edu), or Dr. Mary Murray, at 419-266-3210 or [mmurray@bgsu.edu](mailto:mmurray@bgsu.edu). If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of the Bowling Green State University Institutional Review Board in the Office of Research Compliance, at 419-372-7716 or [irb@bgsu.edu](mailto:irb@bgsu.edu).

Thank you for your time.

**CONSENT:**

I have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits of this study. I have had the opportunity to have all my questions answered and I have been informed that my participation is completely voluntary. I agree to participate in this research.

**By continuing to the survey, you are indicating your consent to participate in the research, including the paraeducator follow-up interview.**