

Yale *Center for Emotional Intelligence*

Spring 2015

Dear Teacher/Paraprofessional,

We are pleased to be partnering with your school on a research project that involves your classroom. The title of the research project is: The Yale RELATE Project. The purpose of this research project is to develop a tool for understanding the interactions that occur in learning environments in classrooms serving students with special needs.

If you agree to participate in the project, one or more members of the Yale University Research Team will be spending some time in your classroom observing what happens throughout the day. We will not interfere with classroom instruction but will stand on the periphery of the room and take notes about the behaviors of the educators and the students in the classroom, with the goal of better understanding teaching and learning practices. In our notes, we will not use the names of the students or the teachers or paraprofessionals; we will just describe the behaviors we observe. We also will film the classrooms for the purposes of the research, and it is possible that you will appear in the footage. The film footage will be used only for the purposes of the Yale research project, and will not be available to anyone in your district, your school, or the public. The research team also will ask you to complete an online survey about the number of years you have been a teacher, your educational background, your demographics, and your beliefs about and experiences related to teaching in special education classrooms.

Participation in this research, which includes allowing the researchers to observe your classroom as well as responding to the surveys, is voluntary. You may withdraw from the research at any time without penalty.

All information collected is completely confidential. Your identity will be protected always. No one at your school will see the film footage. Information about an individual teacher or child will never be published or shared with anyone at the school, or the students and their parents or guardians. Film footage will be stored in a locked storage unit in the Principal Investigator's laboratory at Yale University. All information collected by the Yale research team will be grouped with other data, analyzed, and may be published in summary form. The videotapes will be erased or destroyed when the research is completed.

Teachers are sometimes concerned about how their videotape may be used. First, it is important to know that the research team has the utmost regard and respect for teachers. We know that what happens in the classroom is a reflection of all members of the learning community and their respective challenges and achievements. The purpose of the observations and film footage is to better understand what happens in different types of classrooms throughout the day.

Your classroom may be observed and filmed for up to three days throughout the year. The researchers will be responsible for all the filming equipment including setting it up and its security. Students generally do not mind the videotaping; they typically ignore the camera after a few minutes. If you feel that the filming is disruptive in any way, you are free to communicate directly with the research team during data collection or at one of the numbers or email addresses listed at the bottom of this letter. At any point, you can ask the researchers to stop filming, leave the classroom, or both.

Some students may appear on the film footage, so we also are seeking assent from your students and informed consent from their parents or guardians. Students whose parents do not want them to be part of the videotaping should be placed out of the camera's view but can participate in discussions. (In other words, their voices but not their faces can be recorded.)

The Yale Research Team will sponsor a staff meeting at your school at the beginning of the study, to further explain the study's goals and to answer any questions you may have. After the study's completion, we will sponsor another meeting to describe the study's findings.

Yale *Center for Emotional Intelligence*

Consenting to the videotaping is completely voluntary. Please sign the consent form below if you are willing to participate in the observations, videotaping, and surveys. Then, please return your signed form to the research team.

Thank you very much for your assistance. Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.

We greatly appreciate your cooperation and your contribution to your students' academic and social development. If you have any questions or concerns about this project or your or your students' rights as research participants, please contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Christina Crowe of Yale University's Department of Psychology at christina.crowe@yale.edu, or the Project Director, Dr. Tia Barnes, at tia.barnes@yale.edu or 203-432-2676 (toll-free: 1-866-609-3031). The Yale University Human Subjects Committee can be reached at human.subjects@yale.edu or 203-785-4688 (toll-free: 1-866-609-3032).

Sincerely,

Christina Crowe and the Yale University Research Team

I have read this letter explaining the details of the research study. My signature indicates that I agree to participate. I have been provided with a copy of this letter for my records. If I am uncomfortable with the taping session, I understand that I do not have to submit that videotape to the Yale Research Team or if I have already returned the tape, I can ask them to destroy it.

Teacher's Name (please print): _____ Teacher's Signature: _____

Date: _____

School Name: _____

Teacher Role (Primary Teacher or Para Professional) _____

Names of Other Adults in Classroom (please print) _____

Total Number of Students in Class _____