

October 2nd, 2020

Dear Indiana Autism Alliance,

Greetings from the Coronavirus and Autism Behavioral Study!

Our research team at The Ohio State University is seeking to evaluate the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on children with autism and their families, while also identifying the factors that contribute to child and family risk and resiliency within this population. As you know, the COVID-19 pandemic is a widely experienced, traumatic, and (hopefully) rare event, and individuals with autism are a unique and potentially vulnerable group. In our pursuits to understand how children with autism and their families are specifically affected by a pandemic across different demographic contexts, and to offer information that is helpful for designing effective treatments and services in the future, we are recruiting adult parents of young children (ages 3 – 10) with a diagnosed case of autism for our research study. The purpose for my letter today is to request your consideration in reviewing our study proposal and materials, and upon your approval, providing us an opportunity to disseminate this call for research to the parents of children with autism within your network.

For families, taking part in the study is exciting, easy, and enjoyable. Our study is conducted entirely online/virtually, in the home of the participants and at a time of their convenience. Each participant will be asked to complete a phone screening, a series of questionnaires designed to understand the child and his/her family's experiences, and join a researcher for two video interviews meant to discuss the child's development in-depth. We anticipate each participant to commit to 5.5 – 6 hours overall, over the course of about 3 months. All of the information we collect will be kept completely confidential, and we compensate participants for their time. If you have any questions about specific eligibility requirements, we would be more than happy to discuss our research in greater detail.

Presently, we are working to recruit 200 families for our study, primarily from national autism centers or as self-referrals from social media. Additionally, we have been in contact with several community centers, treatment clinics, service providers, schools, and autism support groups. Should you decide to support the recruitment of our study, we request that you be willing to distribute information about this research to parents of a child with autism within your network. This might include a posting on your official website or social media page, directly sending our parent letter and/or brochure to families (email, mail, in-person, etc.), and/or posting our flyer in common places where people can view the advertisement and reach out to us if they are interested. Importantly, we will *not* contact any family directly. Instead, we simply ask that you share our information with parents of a child with autism, and if they are interested, they will be asked to self-identify by calling or emailing our team. In no way will we ask for any names or numbers of any children or parents associated with your organization. From that point on, you would not be expected to follow up with these families for any reason, or answer any of their questions. For your review, I have attached a copy of the flyer explaining our study to potential families, as well as a parent letter that can be included with the flyer to address any concerns families may have.



Moving forward, I am grateful to answer any questions or concerns you may have in regard to the study, or perhaps any general questions you may have about our research. If you should wish to reach out to our team, we can be contacted using the phone number or email address provided below. In the meantime, please feel free to visit our website (<https://u.osu.edu/cabs/>) for more information.

We thank you in advance for your time, and we look forward to hearing from you soon!

Cordially,

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