

Mary Ellen Buning, PhD, OTR, ATP  
Assistive Technology Partners  
Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation  
School of Medicine  
University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center

## **Assessing the Impact of WC19 Wheelchairs on the Transportation Safety of Wheelchair Seated Students.**

### ***Abstract***

We know little about the experience of children with intellectual and physical disabilities traveling to and from school while using a wheelchair as a seat in the school bus. The regulation for school bus transportation for wheelchair-riding students (FMVSS 222) has been in place for 12 years and in 2001 ANSI/RESNA released standards for crash-tested wheelchairs. Enforcement of Department of Transportation regulation varies, wheelchair standards are voluntary and driver training is covers the range. In partnership with the National Congress Student Transportation, we will survey 50 State Directors of Pupil Transportation regarding the number of reported bus incidents involving wheelchair-seated students and request copies of their statewide policies and procedures for securing students riding on wheelchairs on school buses. To gain information from the local level, we will implement a web-based survey to query school bus drivers across the United States regarding their experience of securing wheelchairs that comply with WC19 I. We expect that in addition to easier and more efficient securement, drivers will report fewer incidents involving students who ride seated in WC19-compliant wheelchairs. The newly re-authorized Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center on Wheelchair Transportation Safety will fund this project through the National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research in the Department of Education.