

For immediate release

Back-to-School Stress Relief for Parents and Kids

Calgary, AB. (August 17, 2006) - As Alberta children prepare to return to school, the **Psychologists' Association of Alberta** (PAA) asks parents to remember that stress and anxiety may underline that seasonal excitement. To make back-to-school a positive emotional time for all, the PAA offers a list of ways in which parents can "check in" with their children's feelings, as well as their own.

"Children feel some anxiety at this time of year because many will be developing new social contacts, and/or the presence of learning problems and disabilities may now become evident again," says **Dr. Paulene Kamps**, a practicing psychologist in Calgary. "The new beginning associated with going back to school is an ideal time for parents to start talking with their children about what is going on in their lives."

The PAA offers the following back-to-school tips for parents.

- 1. Make time to talk to your children about going back to school. Ask them what they are feeling, and let them know how you are feeling.**
- 2. One to two weeks before school starts, ease your child into a consistent school-night routine.**
- 3. Be an active listener. When your children talk, show interest in what they have to say and focus on their feelings (rather than yours).**
- 4. For the first week of school, consider adjusting your own schedule so that you are home at the end of the school day. If your work does not give you that flexibility, try to arrange your evenings so that you can give your child as much attention as he or she needs.**
- 5. Emphasize the positive things about going back to school, like seeing old friends (or making new ones) and learning new things.**
- 6. Resolve to eat dinner together as a family a few times a week. This is a good time to find out what your child has been up to, both in and out of school.**

"It is often seen that as children get older, the time they spend talking with their parents drops dramatically," says Dr. Greg Schoepp, an Edmonton psychologist. "But with regular communication children are more apt to listen to important parental messages that will improve the quality of parent-child relationships, and help protect against dangerous behaviours such as alcohol use and early sexual activity. In fact, being involved in your child's life can be a bigger factor in his or her success than money or education."

The **Psychologists' Association of Alberta** is a voluntary organization whose mission is to enhance and promote the profession of psychology. For more information, visit www.psychologistsassociation.ab.ca

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Media can contact the following PAA spokespeople:

Calgary	Edmonton
Dr. Paulene Kamps	Dr. Greg Schoepp
403- 217-5749	780- 407-7075