

Back-To-School: A Fresh Start For Families Impacted By ADHD

(NAPSA)—Back-to-school time often means making an adjustment from the relaxed days of summer to the more structured routine of school that requires more organization and focus for families. Making this transition can be especially challenging for children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 4.5 million children and adolescents in the US are diagnosed with ADHD, a common and treatable medical condition characterized by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity. The start of a new school year offers families affected by ADHD a fresh start to managing ADHD.

With more than 30 years of experience as a developmental pediatrician, author and mother of three children with ADHD, Patricia Quinn, M.D., knows how important it is to be proactive at the beginning of a school year. "As the school year approaches, the two biggest issues that parents of children with ADHD seem to dread the most are getting their children up and out to school in the morning and homework," said Dr. Quinn.

Based on her experience, Dr. Quinn suggests parents reflect on techniques that have been successful for their children with ADHD in years past and introduce these routines in advance of the return to school, such as:

- To ease the morning routine, set up a schedule or checklist for all tasks that need to be completed so your child knows exactly what to do and at what time.

- If your child is newly diagnosed with ADHD, provide your child's teacher, school psychologist and special education staff with information about his diagnosis, treatment and academic recom-



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mendations, to help put an action plan in place.

- During the first two weeks of school, request a meeting with your child's educators to share concerns for the upcoming year and discuss strategies that have worked well in the past. Keep in constant communication throughout the school year via phone, e-mail or by creating a notebook that travels back and forth between home and school.

- For homework, observe your child to know when and how he works best. Some kids need vigorous exercise before tackling homework, while others do better if they complete their homework before dinner. Remove distractions that interfere with homework completion.

- If your child takes medication for ADHD, schedule difficult assignments for times when the medication is most effective. Many of the newer medications used to treat ADHD last well into the evening and may help with concentration.

Before the school year starts, Dr. Quinn also recommends scheduling an appointment with your child's physician to reevaluate your child's

needs and discuss goals and expectations for treatment, which may include behavioral modifications, medication or a combination of both. In one recent study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), children with ADHD who were on ADHD medication scored higher on standardized math and reading tests than those who were not on medication. While no definite conclusions can be drawn from one single study, this research supports the need for more studies looking at the relationship between medication use and academic achievement in children with ADHD. Visit www.pediatrics.org for more information on the study.

"I have seen medication help children in academic areas for many years, but I also know that every child is different. It's critical that a parent discuss all treatment options with the healthcare professional to determine what's best for their child," said Dr. Quinn. "It's also important parents observe how ADHD symptoms impact their child outside the classroom, including his or her social interactions, and consider a treatment plan that is both effective and well-tolerated."

For more of Dr. Quinn's tips, visit www.facebook.com/ADHDMoms, sponsored by McNeil Pediatrics™, Division of Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. Dr. Quinn is a paid consultant and speaker for McNeil Pediatrics™.

Find tools to help your child with ADHD get on track for the school year by visiting <http://www.facebook.com/ADHDMoms>. Download an ADHD symptom assessment screener and discuss the results in your child's next healthcare professional appointment.