MORE THAN HALF OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER 18 IDENTIFY BACK-TO-SCHOOL SEASON AS THE MOST STRESSFUL TIME OF THE YEAR, ACCORDING TO UNDERSTOOD.ORG STUDY

87% of parents of children under 18 say the back-to-school season causes them stress and anxiety.

Parents of neurodivergent children are more likely to feel stressed, unprepared, scared, and lonely about back-to-school season.

NEW YORK, Aug. 15, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, Understood.org, the nonprofit dedicated to serving the 70 million people in the U.S. with learning and thinking differences like ADHD and dyslexia, released findings from its "Back-To-School Stress Study," conducted online by The Harris Poll, among over 550 U.S. parents of children under age 18. It reveals that the back-to-school season is often the most stressful time of year for parents across the country. Notably, nearly 9 in 10 (87%) parents of children under 18 report that back-to-school season causes them stress or anxiety. And parents of children who have learning and thinking differences — i.e., are neurodivergent or have been diagnosed with ADHD, dyslexia, or dyscalculia — are more likely than other parents to say they feel stressed (39% vs. 28%, respectively), unprepared (19% vs. 12%), scared (17% vs. 9%), and/or lonely (10% vs. 3%) when it comes to back-to-school season.

"The reality is that, contrary to what we see in popular culture, back-to-school season is often a challenging time for most parents," said Dr. Andrew Kahn, Understood.org's associate director of behavior change and expertise. "Back-to-school season presents a series of stressors for every parent, and for parents of a child with learning and thinking differences, it can be extremely isolating. When it comes to
education, these parents often feel that their children are trying to navigate an obstacle course rather than the usual playing field of neurotypical children, and they need support."

Additionally, Understood.org's new survey found:

- Over half (53%) of parents of children under 18 agree that back-to-school season is the most stressful time of year.
- Over 4 in 5 (81%) parents of children under 18 agree that not all parents are excited to send their kids back to school.
- Nearly half (48%) of parents of children under 18 say that the stigma surrounding neurodiversity is stronger than ever.
- More than 9 in 10 (94%) parents of neurodivergent children say that something about back-to-school season causes them stress or anxiety, including nearly 1 in 4 (23%) who report stress or anxiety about managing their child's IEP (Individualized Education Program).
- While 43% of parents of children under 18 say they are excited about the back-to-school season, about 1 in 3 report being stressed (33%) or anxious (30%).

According to our new survey, 2 in 5 parents of children under 18 (42%) have at least one child who is neurodivergent, has learning and thinking differences, and/or has been diagnosed with ADHD, dyslexia, or dyscalculia. And while 1 in 5 children in the U.S. have learning and thinking differences, finding reliable and accurate sources to help navigate back-to-school challenges can be difficult for parents. It can be especially hard to find an accessible, supportive community that fits parents' individual needs.

"Parents of children with learning and thinking differences can easily feel alone. That is why it is so important that they feel that they have a voice, community, and safe space to connect with other parents and experts who understand what they are going through," said Co-President and Chief Product Officer Jenny Wu. "That is why we created Wunder by Understood®. Having access to this type of personalized, judgment-free experience that's accessible anytime allows parents the chance to make connections and feel the assurance of a support system."

Wunder is a free, first-of-its-kind community app designed for parents raising kids with learning and thinking differences. It helps them get support from each other, experts, and credible resources on everyday life and education-related topics. The community app has thousands of parents and caregivers in 20 different community groups; over 100 curated articles, videos, activities, and tips; and sparks over 700 conversations among users every month.

Wunder is available on both Android and iOS devices. For more information about Wunder, visit https://www.understood.org/en/wunder, or download it
About Understood.org

Understood.org is a nonprofit focused on shaping the world for difference. We raise awareness of the challenges, skills, and strengths of people who learn and think differently. Our resources help people navigate challenges, gain confidence, and find support and community so they can thrive. Together, we can build a world where everyone can reach their full potential. Understood.org is a 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in New York. For more information, to donate, or to partner, visit u.org/media and follow us @UnderstoodOrg.

Survey Methodology

This survey was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Understood.org from June 28–30, 2023, among 2,061 adults ages 18-plus, among whom 563 were parents of children under 18. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within +/- 2.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.

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For further information: For further information on the survey methodology or for press inquiries, please contact Megan Trivelli, The Sway Effect, megan.trivelli@theswayeffect.com

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