Understood Launches Take N.O.T.E., A Free Digital Tool That Helps Families Identify Early Signs of Learning Disabilities and ADHD

*Developed and launched in partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the memory device empowers families to seek support for the 1 in 5 children in the U.S. who learn and think differently*

*Understood/YouGov survey finds 69% of parents have become more aware of their child’s challenges during COVID-19*

NEW YORK (September 9, 2020) – Understood, a social impact organization that empowers individuals with learning and thinking differences, today launched Take N.O.T.E.™, an initiative developed in partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). This initiative centers on the memory device “Take N.O.T.E.” to help families spot signs of possible learning disabilities and ADHD in their children. The initiative — at [u.org/takenote](http://u.org/takenote) — includes free, digital-first resources in English and Spanish for families to use when they notice their child struggling with behavior changes or are concerned about developmental delays.

Take N.O.T.E. guides families with the following steps:

- Notice if anything is out of the ordinary
- Observe behaviors to determine patterns
- Talk to a teacher, social worker, or caregiver to validate
- Engage with trusted resources, like pediatricians

**Comprehensive Survey Reveals Parents Now Noticing Changes in Children’s Behavior**
With many families spending more time together during the COVID-19 pandemic, parents and caregivers may notice things about their children’s behavior that they don’t fully understand.

A new Understood/YouGov survey of more than 2,000 parents of 5- to 17-year-olds found that 69% have become more aware of the challenges their child faces in school than before the pandemic, and more than a third (37%) report noticing changes in their child’s behavior. Yet among the parents who noticed changes in their child’s behavior, fewer than 1 in 3 (28%) sought guidance or support from a health care provider.

Learning and thinking differences are variations in how the brain processes information and can affect reading, writing, math, focus, and following directions. Common examples include dyslexia and ADHD. Signs of learning and thinking differences are often overlooked or misinterpreted by families. Lack of awareness, misinformation, stigma, and other barriers such as cost can stand in the way of children getting the support they need. The survey also found that 57% of parents of children diagnosed with a learning and thinking difference report that it took a long time for their child to be diagnosed. And among these same parents, 62% wish they’d had a tool or resource to help them track changes in their child’s behavior before the diagnosis.

“The signs of learning and thinking differences aren’t always clear, and not knowing what they mean or how to help can feel stressful and overwhelming,” said Fred Poses, president and CEO of Understood. “With children returning to an uncertain school environment, families need a tool to help notice whether their children are struggling. By providing free, easy-to-use resources, our goal with Take N.O.T.E. is to help caregivers take control, spot the signs, and engage with trusted experts to get the guidance they need.”

“With the increased use of virtual learning this year in many school districts, pediatricians may see more questions from parents because children and teens are not physically in school. For parents who are concerned their child may be struggling, the Take N.O.T.E. campaign offers a helpful guide to getting help,” said AAP President Sally Goza, MD, FAAP. “We want parents to know that pediatricians are ready to
help, and can be a resource when a child is not making expected progress in school.”

**Concerns About Schooling and COVID Also Revealed in Survey**

Additional insights from the survey of families show a range of concern about the return to school and impacts of the “COVID Slide,” especially from Black and Hispanic families:

**Facing an Uncertain Return to School With Unease**

- Parents (71%) are concerned that their child will face challenges this coming school year.
- Black and Hispanic parents are more concerned than White parents (75%, 78%, and 68% respectively)
- Among parents of children who are symptomatic of or diagnosed with a learning and thinking difference, nearly 8 in 10 (79%) feel this concern, compared to 63% of parents of “typical” children.

**The System Needs Fixing**

- Parents agree (73%) that the gaps in our education system have become extremely clear.
- This is especially true for Black parents (84%) and parents of children who are symptomatic of or diagnosed with a learning and thinking difference (78%).
- For a majority (63%) of parents, going back to “normal” isn’t an option.

**Fearful of the “COVID Slide,” Parents More Aware of New Challenges**

- Among the surveyed parents, 48% are worried that their child will be left behind due to COVID-19.
• This worry is more pronounced among Hispanic parents (59%) and parents of children symptomatic or diagnosed with learning and thinking differences (also 59%).

• Hispanic and Black parents are more likely than White parents to report that while at home, they’ve become more aware of challenges their child faces (76%, 73%, and 66% respectively).

Families can go to u.org/takenote to get curated content around developmental milestones, learning and thinking differences, common signs, and what to look for while observing their child.

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About Understood

Understood is a social impact organization dedicated to shaping the world for difference. Our mission is to shape a world where people with all types of disabilities have the opportunity to enjoy meaningful careers, and where families, educators, and employers have the resources to become better allies and advocates. More than 2 million people access our online resources, experts, and supportive communities each month. Understood is a 501(c)(3) private operating foundation based in New York. For more information, or to become a partner, visit u.org/media and follow us on our social channels.

About the American Academy of Pediatrics

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 67,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. For more information, visit www.aap.org and follow us on Twitter @AmerAcadPeds.

Survey Methodology
YouGov, on behalf of Understood, conducted an online survey among parents of children ages 5–17 (referred to throughout as “parents”) in the U.S. A total of 2,049 parents were surveyed. For the purposes of this survey, parents of “typical” children are defined as those whose children have not exhibited signs of learning differences or have not been diagnosed with a learning difference. This is in contrast to parents of children who are symptomatic or have been diagnosed with a learning disability or ADHD. The survey was conducted between July 22 and August 3, 2020.

https://mediacenter.understood.org/understood-launches-take-n-o-t-e-a-free-digital-tool-that-helps-families