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## **HOW MUCH WOULD YOU SPEND TO BEGIN THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR STRESS FREE?**

**Dr. Kathleen Hall offers simple tips to start this year off without chaos**

**ATLANTA, August 1, 2006-** Beginning a new school year should be a time for rejuvenation, and a chance for kids to reconnect with friends and teachers. For many parents and children across the nation, it is a time of fear, depression and anxiety. While America is engulfed in the advertisements promoting the “must-haves” of the new school season, our children are flooded with mixed emotions and their parents feel the strain on their budgets. According to a recent study, back to school spending will top \$17 billion dollars, an average of \$550 per family.

Dr. Kathleen Hall, a leading expert on stress management and author of multiple award-winning books offers simple tips to alleviate stress and anxiety caused at the beginning of the school year. The following are a few examples of ways to start the school year in an organized, planned manner:

- **Create a concern box:** This allows sharing of each other’s lives in our busy world without the intimidation of scrutiny. There is a lot going on in those first weeks of school; new friends, bullies, new teachers, new classes, lots of peer pressure, fear and instability.
- **Word of the Week:** Put many words in a container: fear, anger, grief, laughter, confidence etc. Pick a word and put it on the refrigerator. This is the word of the week that you discuss at the dinner table. This opens up conversation and intimacy in the family.
- **Family time each night.** Each night go for a family walk for 20 minutes, play waffle ball, basketball. Healthy active parents create active children.
- **Encourage quiet-reflective time for your family:** By doing this, you are planting the seeds of peace, wisdom and reflection in your children. Encourage them to read at least 10 minutes a day. This instills wisdom and thinking. This is also their time to explore individual prayer and meditation.
- **Parents Practice Self Care.** When you practice self care you teach your children the vital importance of caring for their own mind, body and soul. Create a date with your self; get a massage, meet a friend, go to a new art exhibit, get nourished!
- **Laugh:** Laughing is an immediate stress reducer and teaches our children to not take themselves and life too seriously. See comedy movies regularly. Take turns once a week one person in the family tells a joke at the family meeting or at dinner.

(MORE)

Stress is a natural element of life, and most children do not know stress can make them sick, depressed or angry. Parents can ease the tensions of stress by altering the family lifestyle and creating a peaceful home environment.

**Dr. Kathleen Hall**

Dr. Kathleen Hall is a nationally recognized stress and work-life balance expert, and founder and director of The Stress Institute. She has been featured on all major television networks including NBC's Today Show, FOX, and CNN, as well as other reliable media outlets such as Good Morning America Radio, ESPN.com, USA Today, Fortune, Redbook, and Real Simple. Author of *A Life in Balance: Nourishing the Four Roots of True Happiness* (AMACOM, January 2006) and *Alter Your Life: Overbooked? Overworked? Overwhelmed?* (Oak Haven, April 2005), she offers simple methods for reducing stress and living a balanced life of true happiness. For more information about Dr. Hall, and The Stress Institute, please visit [www.drkathleenhall.com](http://www.drkathleenhall.com).

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**For more tips on how to avoid back to school stress, or to set up an interview with Dr. Kathleen Hall, please contact:**

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