NEWS RELEASE

Back To School Spells "G-E-R-M-S"

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RECENT STUDY REVEALS
CLASSROOMS RANK #1 FOR GERMS

OAKLAND, Calif., Aug. 21, 2006 - Ask moms, and they'll tell you teachers have their sympathy.

According to a new survey, nine out of 10 moms of kids under 18 years old understand that teachers have a tough job. Some even say teachers have the toughest job in America − more than one-third of respondents rank teachers just above firefighters and police officers. University of Arizona researchers concur after finding teachers to have the germiest job. Classrooms came in as the #1 workplace for germs.

Researchers found that bacteria levels on surfaces in teachers' classrooms were nearly 20 times higher than those found in lawyers' offices, and seven times higher than doctors' and TV producers' offices. In fact, teachers were found to have the "germiest" job of the nine professions the researchers studied.

The results aren't too surprising considering nearly 40 percent of parents report they've sent their child to school sick in the past year, according to a new survey released today by The Clorox Company. Moreover, 14 percent of the 2,000 parents surveyed said they've sent a child to school despite running a fever higher than 100 degrees.

"Because people can touch 300 surfaces in 30 minutes, transporting germs from surface to surface can happen in a matter of seconds," said Dr. Paul S. Horowitz, M.D., F.A.A.P. and American Academy of Pediatrics member. "With the new school year upon us, we have to face the facts that germs will inevitably find a place in classrooms across the nation."

According to the Centers for Disease Control, there are more than 52 million cases of the common cold each year among Americans under the age of 17. With illness keeping students out of school for a national average of four days a year, experts advise parents to devise a plan of action for how to deal with their kids' sick days.

With more parents in the workforce and various daily pressures, missing work to care for a sick child is challenging, the survey showed. Nearly half (45 percent) of respondents missed up to six days of work last year while caring for a sick child and 36 percent lost wages.

Missing School: A Kid's Perspective

Contrary to popular belief, kids themselves aren't thrilled with the idea of sick days, according to the survey, which also polled kids 5-10 years old. If given a choice between getting rid of homework or doing away with being sick, children would most like to wipe out illness.

Help to Expel Germs

"Germs can spread like wildfire in a classroom," said Dr. Horowitz. "The best defense in decreasing germ levels on surfaces is a good offense. Frequent hand-washing, proper hygiene like elbow coughing, and disinfecting surfaces daily will help prevent the spread of germs."

Dr. Horowitz offers the following tips for helping to reduce the spread of germs in the classroom:

- Use warm, soapy water and rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds (about the same time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice).
- Use disinfecting wipes regularly on commonly touched classroom surfaces to decrease the level of germs and to help reduce the spread of bacteria and viruses that can cause illness.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth, as these are easy ways to transmit germs after coming in contact with contaminated surfaces.

Clorox is providing tips and tools for teachers to help them expel germs from their classroom. For more information on promoting a healthy classroom, teachers can sign up at **www.cloroxclassrooms.com** to receive a free "Clean Up The Classroom Kit" and coupon for a free canister of Clorox® disinfecting wipes.

About the Surveys

The June 2006 survey queried more than 2,000 parents of children ages five to 10 across the U.S., and looked at

trends throughout the U.S. nationally and in specific metropolitan areas including Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Los Angeles, Miami, Phoenix, San Francisco, St. Paul, Minn., and Washington, D.C.

In addition, in July 2006, more than 1,000 parents of kids under 18 years of age were polled to determine their perceptions of teaching. For complete survey results, please contact Sharon.foldes@ketchum.com.

The Clorox Company

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