

# Pointers For Parents

## Talking With Children About Mental Health

(NAPSA)—The human brain is the most complex structure in the known universe. While scientists are learning more every day about this fascinating organ, there is still a lot we don't understand.

Despite an apparent willingness to openly discuss important issues, experts say many parents shy away from the subject of mental illness when they talk with their kids.

Approximately 38 percent of American adults have a family member with a brain-related disorder, such as Alzheimer's disease, yet only 16 percent of parents report having very thoroughly discussed mental illness and neurological diseases with their children. For many young people, that lack of discussion can lead to unfounded fears.

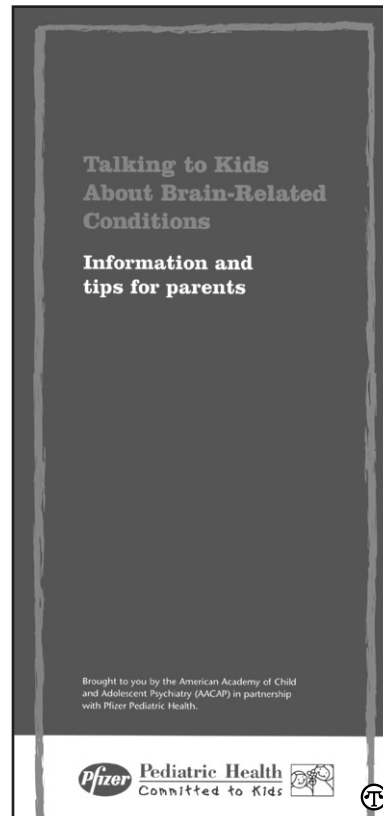
"When a friend or family member with a brain-related condition has symptoms or acts differently, it can be scary or confusing for kids," says Dr. Randall Kaye, director of pediatric health for Pfizer Inc. "It's very important for parents to allay their fears and help their children understand and cope."

Kaye says parents should be certain that children understand brain-based conditions—and their resultant behavior—have physical causes and treatments are available.

To help parents explain the effects of brain disorders, Kaye's team partnered with the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry to design a brochure to help facilitate discussions between young people and adults about these issues.

The group's goal is to make the subject more understandable—and approachable—for parents and their children.

Called *Talking to Kids About Brain-related Conditions*, the free



### **A new brochure can help parents speak more openly with their children about mental health.**

brochure was released in conjunction with the exhibit, "BRAIN: The World Inside Your Head," currently at the Smithsonian Institution's Arts and Industries Building. This exhibit, sponsored by Pfizer, will travel across the country until 2007.

"With this education campaign, we want to give parents and adult caregivers the tools they need to open up an ongoing dialogue with their children," says Kaye.

To obtain the brochure, parents can call 1-800-882-3718 or download it online at [www.pfizer.com/brain](http://www.pfizer.com/brain).