

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide parents with helpful parenting tips and useful resources.

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Children and Sleep

Sleep is an essential part of our day that often gets neglected. Many people feel they are unproductive when they sleep; however, sleep is essential (along with exercise and healthy eating) for people to be able to function at their fullest. By teaching children the importance of proper sleep habits, they will be more likely to carry on these healthy habits into adulthood.

Not getting enough sleep or having sleep difficulties can:

- Limit your ability to listen, learn, concentrate and solve problems. Forgetting important information like names, numbers, homework or an appointment can also happen.
- Lead to aggressive or inappropriate behavior such becoming irritable or impatient with others.
- Cause you to eat too much or eat unhealthy foods like sweets and fried foods.
- Contribute to illness.

Here is a helpful sleep chart depicting the number of hours of sleep for children in different stages of development (from the National Sleep Foundation):

Age	Hours of Sleep
Newborns (0-3 months)	10.5-18 hours sleep, irregular patterns
Infants (4-11 months)	9-12 hours at night, 30 min-2 hour naps 1-4 times/day
Toddlers (1-2 years)	11-14 hours of sleep total, naps usually decrease to once/day
Preschoolers (3-5 years)	11-13 hours of sleep total, naps usually end by age 5
School-age children (6-13 years)	9-11 hours of sleep at night
Adolescents (13-19 years)	8-10 hours of sleep at night



Establishing Healthy Sleep Habits



Research shows that a good night's sleep is essential for children to excel in school. In fact, at least nine to eleven hours of sleep a night is recommended for school aged children. Sleep is especially important for children who have learning and attentional difficulties. Promoting and modeling healthy sleep habits is important as a parent, as it can help to ensure that your child is more alert and available for learning throughout their day. Below are recommendations that may assist with creating healthy sleep habits and a sleep schedule for your child.

- **Plan ahead.** In the summer time, about a week before school begins, begin by getting your child up earlier. Come up with fun activities so she's motivated to get out of bed.
- **Take it in stages.** If your child has been sleeping in two hours past school wake-up time, start by getting her up an hour earlier for a few days. Then gradually wake her up earlier and earlier.
- **Make sure your child gets exercise.** Being physically active throughout the day helps your child sleep at night. Perhaps consider engaging in physical activities as a family such as bike riding, hiking, or playing a game of soccer in the backyard. However, it is important to avoid exercise about three hours before bedtime.
- **Keep your child awake all afternoon, when not in school.** Try to run errands together, plan playdates. If your child takes a nap in the afternoon, he or she may be wide-awake at bedtime. This can throw off a healthy sleep schedule.
- **Phase out electronics one hour before bedtime.** Computers and video games may prevent your child from winding down. Create a family rule that all electronics are away at least one hour before bedtime. Instead engage in other activities, such as reading books together.
- **Gradually move up bedtime.** Again, adjust your child's schedule in stages. If he gets up an hour earlier, put her to bed an hour earlier, and so on.
- **Establish a bedtime routine.** A bedtime routine should be fairly consistent each evening. Putting on pajamas, brushing teeth and reading a story together can be a peaceful and soothing way to end the day.
- **Create a sleep-friendly environment.** Turn off the lights, shut the blinds and keep the temperature of your child's bedroom cool and comfortable.
- **If your child has a cell phone, don't leave it in her room.** The light and noise of the cell phone may keep your child awake. She may also be tempted to play on her phone instead of sleeping. Similarly, if your child has a television in her room, ensure that it is off all night, as the light and noise may affect a sound sleep.



Helpful Resources

Learn about sleep disorder symptoms and the types of sleep disorders treated at the Pediatric Sleep Disorder Center at Goryeb Children's Hospital:

<http://www.atlantichealth.org/goryeb/our+services/pediatric+pulmonology/learn/pediatric+sleep+disorder+center/learning+about+pediatric+sleep+disorders>

Understood.org provides parents with knowledge on learning and attentional difficulties
www.understood.org

<http://www.sleepforkids.org/>

<http://kidshealth.org/en/kids/not-tired.html>

<http://sleepfoundation.org>

