Safe kids Healthy kids Happy kids

Improved Sleep May Improve Grades

Lack of sleep can result in health, school and behavior problems. Quality sleep helps develop a healthy brain. School age children need 9 – 12 hours of sleep per night. Studies show, however, that almost 40% of school age children are sleepy during the day.

Lack of sleep or poor quality sleep can affect a child's mood, attention span and ability to concentrate. It directly interferes with a child's ability to do well in school. Studies show that poor sleepers:

- May be depressed, irritable, tense and moody.
- Are more likely to have a negative self-image.
- Have daytime fatigue and may sleep during class.
- May have decreased levels of social skills and learning difficulties.
- Have poor coping skills.
- Report behavior problems at home and at school.
- Are more prone to illness. A lack of sleep lowers a child's immune system.

It is easy to overlook sleeping problems with a school age child. Children rarely complain that they are not getting enough sleep. In fact, they beg to stay up late to play video games, watch TV or spend time on the computer.

Family life is busy with work, activities, and homework.

Keeping an 8-9 p.m. bedtime can be hard. Also, parents can overlook the amount of time it takes for a child to get to sleep.

Bedtime might be 8:30, but their child may not go to sleep until 9:30 or 10.



If your child has school problems, consider his sleep pattern as a possible cause. Talk with your child's doctor about sleeping problems, especially if your child is obese or has other medical conditions.

How can a parent insure a child gets enough sleep?

- Schedule an early and regular bedtime on school nights. Stick to the schedule.
- Have a 20 to 30 minute calming bedtime routine.
 Do relaxing activities such as a bath or shower, light snack and reading a book.
- Say no to computer use, video games and television for at least 1 hour before bedtime. These activities stimulate the brain and interfere with sleep.
- Reduce family stress. Studies show that children of families in stress sleep poorly.
- Take TVs, phones and computers out of your child's bedroom. Shade windows. The use of a small fan makes white noise that might aid in sleep.
- Schedule some one-onone time with each child every night. Just a few minutes allows your child to talk about fears or worries.
- 7. Eliminate foods and drink that contain caffeine.

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