

NURSES CORNER

How tired is your Child?



Is your child showing signs of Sleep Deprivation? The school age children should be able to fall asleep quickly, wake up easily, and stay awake all day without naps.

<http://www.med.umich.edu/1libr/yourchild/sleep.htm>.

Children suffering from sleep deprivation can be moody, irritable, show hyperactivity and behavior problems.

http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/BHCV2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Sleep_deprivation?OpenDocument.

Adequate sleep helps children to learn. Avi Sadeh, at Tel Aviv University found that children who got an hour more sleep a night did better on tests, while those that got an hour less did not do as well.

<http://www.webmd.com/baby/news/20030304/our-more-sleep-may-help-kids-learn>.

In fact, the National Center for Research on Sleep Disorders says that an association between sleep deprivation and behavioral and learning problems has been discovered. Also, disturbed sleep can be related to behavioral problems.

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/prof/sleep/resplan/section2/section2a.html>.

Many other effects on health have been found to be associated with sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation may increase the risk of diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure. All of these diseases are beginning to develop in children now and are no longer exclusively adult diseases.

<http://www.fi.edu/learn/brain/sleep.html>.

So how do you get your child to get enough sleep? Find the time that your child normally starts to wind down and get tired. Don't let them get a second wind, but have a short, special bedtime routine. I always found that a quiet time of about a half hour of story time or quiet music

helped my children sleep better. Make sure that the light is down low at bedtime and that the light is bright in the morning. It also helps to keep the same schedule, whether weekend, holidays, or school day.

What keeps a child from sleeping well? Things that distract your child such as too many toys in their bed, and electronics in their room contribute to lack of sleep. Avoiding sugared snacks or caffeinated beverages before bedtime help children sleep well. Making bed a safe desirable place to be helps reduce bedtime anxiety. Using bed as a punishment at other times is counterproductive to a smooth bedtime.

So how long should your child sleep? Well it varies per child, but not by very much. You should look at how easily your child goes to sleep, how easily they wake, and how they are behaving during the daytime. An estimate of the number of hours for the students found in our preschool to school-age population is:

3 year old 10 ½ hours with a 1 ½ hour nap.

4 year old 11 ½ hours

5 -7 year old 11 hours

8-9 year old 10-11 hours

Gradually over several weeks, work with your child to move their bedtime to an earlier time. Try 5 – 15 minutes earlier each night. You will find that over time their behavior, learning, and physical health improve. As an extra bonus, you might actually find time to get the sleep you need as a busy parent.

Share this web site from Neuroscience for kids with your child.

<http://faculty.washington.edu/chudler/sleepd.html>.



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