

FASD and SLEEP



"We need to focus as much on the sleeping half of children's lives as we do on the waking half."
Jodi A. Mindell, PhD

WHY IS SLEEP IMPORTANT? Sleep is vital to human life. While we are sleeping:

- muscles, bones, and skin are repairing themselves
- the immune system is strengthening itself
- the brain is sorting through the input it received during the day, discarding what it doesn't need, and solidifying what it does need

HOW MUCH SLEEP DO WE NEED IN A DAY?

0-3 Years: 16-20 hours in 1-4 hour periods

3-6 Years: 10-11 hours

6-12 Years: 10-11 hours; daytime sleepiness is rare

13-19 Years: 8-9 hours; daytime sleepiness is common

SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD MAY HAVE A SLEEP PROBLEM:

- apnea (snoring, pauses in breathing, or gasping for breath during sleep)
- difficulty falling asleep at night
- frequent waking in the night
- complaints of leg pain or restlessness in the night
- night terrors
- sleepwalking/sleep talking
- behaviour problems, hyperactivity, problems with attention and/or memory, mood swings
- difficulty staying awake during the day

A COMMON MYTH is that if children have a lot of energy, they must be getting enough sleep. In fact, hyperactivity or "being wired" can be a red flag that your child is not getting enough sleep, and that their body is compensating for being over-tired.

FASD AND SLEEP

Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder have permanent changes to structures in their brain, and this can have an impact on their sleep patterns. One preliminary study showed that up to 90% of children with FASD may have a sleep disorder. Please talk with your physician for a referral to the Youthdale Child and Adolescent Sleep Centre if you believe your child had a sleep disorder.

QUICK TIPS FOR HEALTHY SLEEP

- use a visual schedule depicting bedtime routine (make your own at www.connectability.ca/visuals-engine)
- if your child has sensory issues, your Occupational Therapist may recommend massage, white noise, ear plugs, turning pajamas inside out, avoiding scented laundry detergents or other ways of addressing sensory challenges
- remove all electronics from the bedroom
- decorate the room with calming paint colours and minimal wall decorations
- keep the bedroom as a space for sleeping, not daytime play or time-outs
- maintain a consistent bedtime and wake-up time
- develop a calming bedtime routine

WEB RESOURCES

www.sleepforkids.org

www.youthdalesleep.com

www.akronchildrens.org/cms/sleep_center/index.html

