

The Link Between Sleep and Success in School

Getting enough sleep is vital for students to succeed. Children who are well rested have fewer behavioral and emotional challenges, they are better able to cope with stress, and they generally feel more positive and happier.

If getting your kids to bed on time is a struggle for your family, you are not alone. Studies show that a majority of Canadian teens get less than the recommended amount of sleep.

Why does it matter? Research shows the following.

- ▶ Adequate sleep raises students' academic achievement and participation in extracurricular activities.
- ▶ Children and teens who get enough sleep are less likely to be hyperactive, stressed, and report poor mental health.
- ▶ Over time, lack of sleep can contribute to anxiety and depression.
- ▶ Sometimes, student behaviours may be misunderstood because of a sleep issue. For example, students who need more sleep may appear to be aggressive, irritable, or disinterested in school – when really, they are just overtired.
- ▶ Getting enough sleep is tied to healthy growth and development, and it can help children and teens maintain a healthy weight.
- ▶ Adequate sleep benefits immune function and lowers risk of accidents.
- ▶ Learning, memory, focus, and attention are all connected to the quantity and quality of sleep children and teens get each night.
- ▶ Children and teens who get enough sleep are more creative and better problem-solvers. They also have more energy, and they are better able to build and maintain positive relationships with others.

Getting more sleep can promote:

- ▶ Physical health
- ▶ Emotional well-being
- ▶ Quality of life

How much sleep is enough?

The Canadian Sleep Society recommends the following average amount of sleep, but every individual is different. Some children and teens need more sleep than average.

Infants	12 - 15 hours total, including naps
Toddlers (1-3 years)	12 hours, including naps
Preschoolers (3-5 years old)	11.5 hours
School-age children (5-12 years old)	9 hours
Teens	8 - 9 hours
Adults	6 - 9 hours

These family habits can help everyone in your household get enough zzzzzzz's.

- ▶ Try to go to bed at the same time every night. Going to bed a little later than usual once in a while for a special occasion is ok, but try to get back to your regular routine as soon as possible.
- ▶ Don't drink pop, tea or coffee with caffeine past noon and avoid sugary snacks or treats in the evening.
- ▶ Exercise (run, jump, and play) three hours before bed to help get ready for sleep.
- ▶ Avoid big meals right before bed.
- ▶ Create a bedtime routine that can act as a "cue" for sleep, like having a bath, listening to quiet music, reading, storytelling, etc.
- ▶ Turn off electronics 2 hours before bed and don't keep electronics in the bedroom.
- ▶ Get proper rest and go to bed early yourself. Your health and well-being are important, too.

References

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