

Establishing Healthy Sleep Habits in Young Children

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Presentation Outline

Theory

- How sleep is classified

- Sleep architecture across the night

Practical information

- Recommended sleep in young children

- Establishing healthy sleep habits

- Common sleep problems & causes

- Sleep training – What it is

- Guidelines for napping

- Safe sleep practices

- Medical problems and sleep

Classification of Sleep: Adult & Children

Two major sleep states:

1. REM – “dreaming” sleep

2. Non-REM: 3 stages

Stage 1 – feel drowsy, start to fall asleep

Stage 2 – more easily woken, but clearly asleep

Stage 3 – deep sleep, most restorative, harder to wake

REM=Rapid Eye Movement

Sleep Architecture

Deep sleep

- Predominant 1/3 of the night

Light sleep & REM sleep

- Predominant last 2/3 of the night
- Periods of REM sleep get longer as the night progresses

Brief arousals throughout the night

-normal and common

Recommended Sleep by Age

Age	Night	Day	Total
1.5-3 years	11 hrs	1½-3 hrs	12½-14 hrs
3-5 years	11-12 hrs*	0-2 hrs	11-13 hrs
6 years +	10-12 hrs	n/a	10-12 hrs

*Children may sleep longer at night after they drop their nap

Source: modified from The Sleepeasy Solution, 2007 &
Canadian Paediatric Society

Establishing Healthy Sleep Habits

Develop regular sleep & wake schedule

- Bedtime: ~7:00-8:00pm

Sleep routines important

- Bedtime routine, briefer nap routine

Encourage falling asleep independently

- Put to bed “tired but awake”
- Start with nighttime sleep-onset

Healthy Sleep Habits cont.

Make crib/bed area all about sleep

- No toys in sleep space, no music playing

Maintain comfortable sleeping environment

- Little to no light & noise, temperature on the 'cool side of comfortable'

Don'ts!

- Don't give your child drinks with caffeine
- Avoid TV and other screens before bed
- Avoid TV, computer, and other screens in a child's bedroom

Common Sleep Problems

Bedtime stalling and resistance (“curtain calls”)

Not falling asleep independently

Delayed sleep-onset

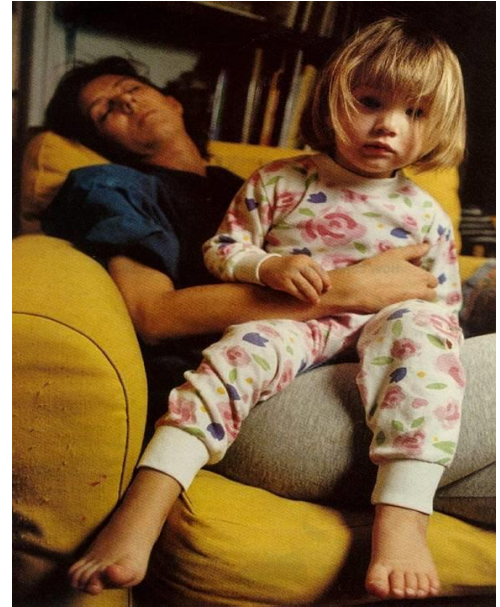
Night wakings (can be prolonged)

-require parental intervention

Insufficient sleep/sleep deprivation

-affect all areas of functioning (emotional, behavioural, social, cognitive, academic)

-parental sleep disruption, parental/family distress, compromises parenting



Common Causes of Sleep Problems

Main 2 causes:

1) Not falling asleep independently

- “Positive” vs. “negative” sleep-onset associations
- Need same or similar conditions when wake
- Pacifier use: helpful or problematic?
 - Usually depends on age of child

2) Inappropriate or inconsistent responding

- Continued night feeds or night drinks, co-sleeping, other types of “responding”

Causes of Sleep Problems cont.

Poor sleep schedule

- Mis-timed sleep periods
- Late bedtime, late nap, too much day sleep

Environmental factors

- Too much light (internal/external)

Greater cognitive awareness

- Nighttime fears and nightmares

Sleep Training 101

What is Sleep Training?

Learning how to fall asleep independently

- Falling asleep truly independently (self-soothing to sleep) for all sleep periods
- Under same conditions as child wakes during the night
- Set appropriate limits at bedtime (and during bedtime routine)

Appropriate and consistent responding

- Bedtime and following night wakings
- Naps important

Also Important in a Sleep Plan...

Age appropriate & well-timed sleep schedule

Bedtime/naptime routine

- Calming & predictable (cue for sleep)
- Last part in child's bedroom, low lighting
- No 'dozing' during bedtime routine

Security object: small "blankies", avoid toys

Environment: dark, quiet, & cool

White noise

- Constant and even sound, on all night, low-level

Napping Guidelines

Nap in same environment as night sleep

Napping by age:

- 3-4 years drop final nap, bedtime ~7:00pm

Common causes of poor napping:

- 'Negative' sleep-onset associations, hidden cat-naps

Ensure daytime wakeful windows are appropriate

- 2-3 year olds – 6-7 hours awake before nap
- 3+ year olds – 7-8 hours awake before nap

Sleep Training Outcomes

Nights:

Usually very quick to resolve

- 4-7 nights significant improvement (infants)
- 1-3 weeks (toddlers & preschoolers and up)

Naps:

May take 1-3 weeks to consistently improve

Depriving young children of naps – not effective

Sleep begets sleep

Very beneficial

- Longer attention spans, less fussy, better mood

Staying on Track

Falling asleep independently

Returning to sleep on own

Avoid co-sleeping and room-sharing

Maintain environment conducive to sleep

- Avoid light in child's room
- Single source of low-level lighting is fine (if nighttime fears are present)

Nighttime Fears & Nightmares

- Usually normal developmental phenomenon
- Content often related to development and age appropriate concerns and/or exposure to something “scary”

Management:

- Reassurance, comfort, validate
- Coping mechanisms (e.g., “monsters are pretend”)
- Security object
- Low-level night-light
- Bedroom door slightly open (if needed)
- Avoid exposure to potentially frightening material

Safe Sleep Practices: Health Canada & CPS guidelines:

Avoid soft, non-breathable materials in crib

- Including loose blankets, bumper pads, stuffed animals, pillows
- Can prevent air circulation around face
- Sleep-sack/wearable-blanket recommended for cooler months

Avoid overheating

- Keep room temperature on cool side of comfortable
- Do not overdress
- Being overheated can lead to restless sleep and sleep disruption

Safe Sleep Practices cont.

Bed-sharing: Adult bed “not safest place for a baby to sleep”

- Can become trapped, can fall off bed, suffocated by adult
- Soft bedding: overheating, suffocation
- High-risk groups: alcohol consumption, sedating drugs, sleep deprived = less responsive

Guard-rails on young child's bed recommended

Medical Problems and Sleep

Consult child's physician

Ensure no medical cause for sleep disruption

Medical problems that disturb sleep

- Reflux: common cause of sleep problems
- Pain: ear infections, teething
- Sleep Apnoea: snoring, pauses in breathing during sleep

Recommended Readings

The Sleepeasy Solution: The Exhausted Parent's Guide to Getting Your Child to Sleep – from Birth to Age 5. (Jennifer Waldburger & Jill Spivak, 2007)

Sleeping Through the Night: How Infants, Toddlers, and Their Parents Can Get a Good Night's Sleep (Revised Edition). (Jodi A. Mindell, 2005)

Take Charge of Your Child's Sleep: The All-in-One Resource for Solving Sleep Problems in Kids and Teens (Judith A. Owens & Jodi A. Mindell, 2005)

For Further Information:

Canadian Paediatric Society - www.cps.ca

Canadian Sleep Society - www.css.to

National Sleep Foundation - www.sleepfoundation.org



PLEASANT DREAMS!
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