



Children's sleep is a subject that puzzles many parents. Lack of sleep in children can affect their mood, energy levels, happy nature as well as cause development and behavior problems. Many parents wonder how long their child should sleep at night or during naps. Often children as young as six months of age can learn to sleep at least nine hours at night, without interruption. Regardless of sleeping arrangements, it is important to establish a pattern that promotes quality sleep at night, and during daytime naps. But maybe most important is being able to recognize

problems in your child's sleep so that you can start to solve them.

Signs of a problem with your child's sleep:

- You spend too much time "helping" your child fall asleep.
- Your child wakes up repeatedly throughout the night.
- Your child's behavior and mood are affected by poor sleep.
- You lose sleep as a result of your child's nighttime patterns.
- Your child's poor sleep causes your relationship with your child to suffer

"Common sleep problems that can occur in children can be corrected quickly once they are identified and treated."

BEDTIME ROUTINE

It's important to make bedtime a priority. A predictable, calming bedtime routine is often the key to a good night's sleep for the whole family. Bedtime routines can be one of the richest ways for you and your children to spend time together. When you plan a routine it is important to set 15 to 30 minutes to do something special with your child before he or she goes to sleep. The activity should not be over stimulating (running, jumping, wrestling, scary stories etc.) Your child needs to know the time limits and that they will not be exceeded. Giving into requests for extra time, more juice or another story will teach your child that bedtime can always be put off. Without established routines, the evening is more likely to be filled with tension and anxiety.

Three Common Sleep Problems in Young Children.

- Sleep-onset association.
- Nighttime eating/Drinking disorder
- Limit-Setting Problems

Sleep-Onset association occurs when parents feel the natural need to comfort their child when the child awakens. The parents or caregiver may comfort their child by feeding, rocking, holding or lying down with him or her. But by doing so, they teach their child that his "help" pattern will occur regularly.

Nighttime eating/drinking disorder is often a problem for infants and young children. Children who become hungry during the night can wake up often and are unable to fall asleep return to sleep without being fed. To eliminate the habit of nighttime feedings, start by gradually reducing the number and frequency of feedings.

Limit-setting problems usually begin after age two. When your child refuses to go to bed, stalls, or makes it difficult for you to leave the bedside, he or she probably has a limit-setting problem. A firm and consistent approach to these delays will help avoid strengthening those behaviors.