

A B C D E F G H Children's Health

Kids Need Enough Sleep To Do Well In School

(NAPSA)—Most young children need at least nine hours of sleep each night. That's an important message to keep in mind.

Getting enough sleep each night, like eating right and being active, is essential for our minds and bodies to function at their best. In fact, according to the National Center on Sleep Disorders Research (NCSDR) at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, sleep appears to be required for survival. Studies have shown that total lack of sleep for just two to three weeks can result in death.

When we get less sleep than we need each night—even one hour less—we develop a “sleep debt.” If the sleep debt grows too big, it can lead to problem sleepiness—sleepiness that interferes with our ability to carry out our daily activities. Even if children do not feel sleepy, the sleep debt still has a powerful negative effect on their daytime performance, thinking, and mood and can result in their falling asleep at inappropriate and even dangerous times.

Problem sleepiness has serious consequences—it increases the chances of accidents and injuries. And it can interfere with children's performance in school, on the playground, in extracurricular activities, and even in relationships.

A child who does not get enough sleep each night is more likely to have symptoms of physical and/or mental problems. The



child may have difficulty concentrating or even fall asleep in school. Sleepy children can exhibit learning and behavioral problems. They may become agitated, rather than lethargic, and may be incorrectly thought to be hyperactive.

Not getting enough sleep is one cause of problem sleepiness. Undiagnosed/untreated sleep disorders can also cause problem sleepiness. The NCSDR recommends that you talk to your pediatrician if your child has any of the following: loud and frequent snoring, breathing pauses during sleep, problems with falling asleep or staying asleep at night or staying awake during the day, or unexplained problems with daytime performance.

For more information, you and your child can visit the NCSDR's Garfield Star Sleeper Web site at <http://starsleep.nhlbi.nih.gov>.