

# MAKING LIFE MORE FUN

## Sweet Dreams More Important Than You Think

(NAPSA)—According to health experts, it is very important for children to get enough sleep, from birth to adolescence.

But how much is “enough” sleep? Although each child is unique and has different sleep requirements—for example, most (but not all) children under the age of 4 require daytime naps—there are reasonable expectations. Consider that the average 2-year-old needs about 13 hours of sleep per night, while a 4-year-old can get by with about 11½ hours.

Kids ages 6 to 9 need about 10 hours of sleep a night. Bedtime difficulties can arise at this age from a child’s need for private time with parents, without siblings around. Try to make a little private time just before bedtime and use it to share confidences and have small discussions, which will also prepare your child for sleep.

Sleep is important for growing and developing children. Not only does sleep provide an opportunity for the body to physically rest, it’s the time during which, according to recent research, the brain consolidates or reinforces what a child has learned or observed during the day. Not surprisingly, sleep-deprived children tend to not do well at school. Other symptoms of sleep deprivation in children include fatigue, inattentiveness and listlessness. There can also be less obvious symptoms including irritability, impatience, fussiness and even aggressive behavior.

Another positive aspect of sleep is the opportunity for children to



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dream. In “slumberland,” the imagination can run wild, filling youngsters’ heads with fanciful thoughts and magical wishes.

One popular movie, now available on DVD, presents a unique child’s-eye view of dream time, as well as important life lessons about friendship and working together. “The Sweet Dreams Movie”—Strawberry Shortcake’s first big-screen adventure—follows Strawberry and her pals to the Land of Dreams as they try to stop the Peculiar Purple Pie Man’s evil plan to take over Sandman’s Dream Factory and steal all of the dreams. Along the way, these “berry” special friends learn the value of working together to help make dreams come true.

“The Sweet Dreams Movie” DVD, from Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, comes packaged with special strawberry seeds so girls everywhere can create their berry own Strawberryland. To learn more, visit [www.foxhome.com/strawberryshortcake/](http://www.foxhome.com/strawberryshortcake/).