

THE IMPORTANCE OF *Bedtime Routines*

Getting a child in bed at a regular time can be a mental tug of war.

If your child falls into this category, don't surrender. It's crucial to enforce bedtime routines regardless of the age of your son or daughter.

Studies show that a child or adolescent who lacks quality sleep may do poorly in school, behave more negatively, struggle to reach developmental milestones and experience difficulties reaching his or her potential.

A lack of sleep may cause:

- **Accidents and injuries**
- **Learning problems**
- **Behavior issues**
- **Mood problems**
- **Overeating**
- **Delayed reaction times**



Is your child having difficulty waking up relaxed, rested and refreshed?

First, make sure the problem with sleeping is not a sleeping problem. Sleep disorders occur in more than a third of school-aged children, according to the Sleep Health Foundation.

If you suspect your child suffers from a sleep disorder, which includes breathing problems, habitual snoring, sleepwalking and nightmares, seek medical attention.



If your child is resistant to sleeping for fear he or she will miss out on something, here are some guidelines to promote good sleeping habits:

- **Set a schedule.** Ensure your child gets enough rest by establishing a regular time to sleep and wake.
- **Be consistent.** Enforce bedtime hours and try not to deviate too much on weekends and holidays.
- **Create a relaxing bedtime routine** such as reading a book or taking a bath.
- **Make the house quiet.** Turn off or lower the volume on TVs. If school age, consider taking your child's cell phone overnight.
- **Share bedtime schedules** with caregivers. When co-parenting in separate households, it benefits your child to keep the same sleeping hours.
- **Make the bedroom comfortable** for sleeping. Ensure it's not too warm or cold. Provide a night light if needed.

Sleeping is essential for good health. Teach your child that a positive nighttime routine should be a habit for life.