

HANDOUT #5

TIPS FOR GETTING TO SCHOOL REGULARLY AND ON TIME

The Importance of a Good Night's Sleep

- ▶ Almost all families can relate to the challenge of getting everyone out of bed and ready to get out the door on time every day.
- ▶ How can we help our kids get up ready for the important learning that lies ahead? Making sure everyone is well rested is a great start.
- ▶ In fact, sleep is vital whether you are 8 days or 80 years old, and children especially need enough.

Remember:

- ▶ Children who get enough sleep have a healthier immune system, and often have better school performance, behaviour, memory, and mental health.
- ▶ Children learn new skills at an enormous rate, and our kids' growing brains really need adequate sleep to keep up, behave well, and focus in school.
- ▶ And enough sleep usually makes people less cranky – which is a benefit we can all enjoy.

What is recommended? In general, about ...

| AGE GROUP | HOURS OF SLEEP REQUIRED |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| 1-3 Years Old | 10-14 Hours per day |
| 3-6 Years Old | 10-12 Hours per day |
| 7-12 Years Old | 10-11 Hours per day |
| 12-18 Years Old | 8-9 Hours per day |

How we can help make that happen? Setting good sleep habits isn't simple, but with time the following tips may help.

- ▶ Teach your kids the importance of sleep and make it a priority for your family. Given everything else we have to do, sometimes it is easy to forget about the importance of sleep. Schedule time for it – just like everything else.
- ▶ Set a regular bedtime, considering your kids' ages when making decisions.
- ▶ Start your bedtime routine early enough. If bedtime is 9:00 pm, you might have your children start getting ready for bed at 8:00 or 8:30, so they are ready to actually fall asleep at 9:00.
- ▶ Keep screens out of the bedroom.
- ▶ Incoming messages and calls interfere with sleep; both audio and vibrating alerts can wake up children and teens.

- ▶ It is good to help children avoid the temptation to use or check devices when they should be sleeping – during the night or too early in the morning
- ▶ Emitted light from TVs or mobile screens can affect the quality of sleep. Our brains naturally produce hormones that help us sleep. The glow from our electronic devices confuses our brains and stops those normal processes.

If your children say they need the phone to wake them up, is it possible to buy an alarm clock, instead?

- ▶ When using screens in the evening:
 - Turn the brightness on the screen down
 - Don't play or watch media that are intense or scary

Or help your child relax before bedtime with a story, instead of the stimulation of television.

This can be hard sometimes, but try to keep the same sleep routines on weekends and vacations. You can be a little bit flexible at times, but it is easier to keep regular sleep habits when we don't make big changes too often.

- ▶ Get enough exercise during the day! Being active helps everyone sleep better at night.
- ▶ Have your kids avoid caffeine. Soda, energy drinks, and coffee (even decaf) can ruin a good night's sleep. And avoid chocolate in the evening ... it also has caffeine.
- ▶ Consider that most people sleep well in a cool, dark, quiet space.
- ▶ Watch for signs of sleepiness in your children. Do they wake up easily in the morning? Are they energetic all day long? If tiredness is a problem, can you add a few more hours of sleep to the schedule?

And get proper rest and go to bed early yourself. Your kids may pay more attention to what you do than what you say. You can be a sleep role model – and feel better, too.

Try tracking your sleep patterns for a week using the following sleep log:

| SLEEP LOG | | | |
|-----------|---------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Day | Bedtime | Wake Time | Number of Hours of Sleep |
| Sunday | | | |
| Monday | | | |
| Tuesday | | | |
| Wednesday | | | |
| Thursday | | | |
| Friday | | | |
| Saturday | | | |