



ESU 13 Behavior and Mental Health

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The Importance of Sleep

As a society, we keep our children busy every day with school, sports, and activities. But by the end of the day, their body needs a break and sleep allows their body to get the rest they need. When their bodies don't have enough hours to rest, they may feel tired or cranky and may be unable to think clearly. A school assignment that's normally easy may feel impossible, or they may have a hard time following directions.

Without getting the sleep they need, your child may experience delays in growth and development as well. Poor sleep can also impact your child's growth rate and their immune system.

If your child is not getting adequate sleep, there are things you can do to help promote better sleep hygiene.

Upcoming Trainings

CHADRON STATE COLLEGE

**Western Nebraska School
Mental Health Conference:
MARCH 10 9:00-3:00 MDT**

**Details and Registration:
panhandlepartnership.com**

**FREE Trauma Training in
Scottsbluff: March 27 9:00 -
12:00 MDT**

**Register online:
nebraskababies/com/events**

Tips for Better Sleep Hygiene

According to Seattle Children's Hospital, the following are important ways to create better sleep hygiene for your child.

Keep consistent bedtimes and wake times. Late weekend nights or sleeping in can throw off a sleep schedule for days.

Avoid spending non-sleep time in bed. Engaging in non-sleep activities in bed keeps our brains from associating the bed with sleep time.

Keep your child's bedroom cool, quiet, comfortable. A comfortable environment promotes sleep. If your child stares at the clock frequently, have their clocks turned away from them.

Avoid high stimulation activities before bed. These activities include watching tv, video games, or exercise. It is best not to have video games, phones, or tv's in a child's bedroom.

Physical exercise as part of the day. Exercise wears out your child and makes it more likely they will sleep at night.

Relaxation techniques. Deep breathing or imagining positive scenes can help relax a child. White noise or calming music can also help drift them off to sleep.

Worry time should not be at bed time. If your child has a problem with worrying, schedule "worry time" earlier in the day so they can discuss their worries with a parent.

Avoid caffeine. Sodas, chocolate, tea, coffee in the afternoons/evenings can prevent you child from falling asleep.

Have them get out of bed if tossing/turning. It is better for them to do a low-stimulation activity (e.g., reading) and then return to bed later. This keeps the bed from becoming associated with sleeplessness.

Children should be put to bed drowsy, but still awake. Letting them fall asleep in other places forms habits that are difficult to break.

Security objects at bed time are helpful. They help children transition to feel safe and secure when their parent is not present. Include a doll, toy, or blanket when you cuddle or comfort your child, which may help them adopt the object.



How much sleep should your child be getting?

According to the National Sleep Foundation, below are the recommended hours per night your child should be sleeping. Keeping a sleep journal can help you track your child's sleep to make sure they are getting the rest they need.

- **Newborns (0-3 months):** 14-17 hours
- **Infants (4-11 months):** 12-15 hours
- **Toddlers (1-2 years):** 11-14 hours
- **Preschoolers (3-5 years):** 10-13 hours
- **School-aged Children (6-13 years):** 9-11 hours
- **Teenagers (14-17 years):** 8-10 hours
- **Young Adults (18-25 years):** 7-9 hours

If you suspect your child is not sleeping enough, talk to your pediatrician.