



MONTHLY MENTAL HEALTH MOMENT

SLEEP AND MENTAL HEALTH

With the beginning of the school year fast approaching, now is an ideal time for parents to start thinking of setting up more consistent bed time routines. We all know that sleep is important, but recent research has continued to identify a link between sleep and mental health – a tie that goes both ways – meaning that mental health affects sleep, and sleep affects mental health.

Here are some basic tips to help your children get the proper amount of sleep so that they are able to function at their best during the school day:

1. KNOW HOW MUCH THEY NEED:

Estimates vary, but generally speaking, experts suggest that nearly one third of Canadian children do not get enough sleep. Recommendations by a recent Participation Report suggests that children ages 5-13 receive 9-11 hours of sleep per night; while those 14-17 should be receiving 8-10 hours per night. [<click for report>](#)

2. CREATE THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT:

Most importantly, remove access to screens and televisions in a child's bedroom. Research consistently suggests that the light emitted from these devices interferes with the body's ability to shut down effectively in order to sleep. Keeping the sleep environment dark, quiet, and cool are all helpful tips for creating an environment good for sleep. [<click for research>](#)

3. CREATE ROUTINE:

Kids need time to wind down from the day. TV and screen time should end approximately one hour prior to lights out to allow children's systems the time needed to get ready for sleep. Having a consistent bedtime routine (bath/shower, small snack, quiet family time) gives kids cues that bedtime is coming.

4. PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR MOVEMENT:

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While it can be difficult to shift kids to a more consistent bedtime and night routine, the benefits, once established, are enormous, both for kids and their parents. If you have concerns about your child's sleep routine, sleep behavior, or both, please discuss with your family physician. Sleep and mental health are closely linked. As a parent, modeling good sleep habits will help your child. And you'll benefit from good sleep habits, too!