

Rosemary Kennedy School
Sleep Disorders
VIRTUAL PARENT GROUP MEETING NOTES

Dear Parents/Guardians

RKS Virtual (Zoom) parent meetings have been created to provide parents information, and to share common thoughts and concerns. Our meetings are topic specific with information we hope you will find helpful. Our presentations are recorded and available in the RKS Parent Portal. Our April meeting presented by Randi Miller, school psychologist, focused on sleep disorders and how to identify and manage sleep. Here are some highlights from our Zoom meeting.

SLEEP DIFFICULTIES

Nighttime routine noncompliance

- Trouble going into the bedroom when instructed or brought in
- Difficulty following bedtime-related directions

Sleep-interfering behavior:

- Difficulty staying in bed
- Remaining quiet and still
- Calling out, crying or engaging in a behavior that requires you to return to the bedroom

Delayed sleep onset

- Difficulty falling asleep (still awake after 15 minutes in bed)

Night awakenings or Early awakenings

- Waking up during the night or early in the morning

STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE SLEEP

Step 1: Develop an Ideal Sleep Schedule

Step 2: Routinize the Nighttime Routine

Step 3: Optimize Bedroom Conditions

Step 4: Regularize Sleep Dependencies

Step 5: Address Sleep Interfering Behavior

STEP 1: DEVELOP OPTIMAL SLEEP SCHEDULE

- Age-appropriate sleep amounts
 - Age matters but figure 8-9 hours, more for younger children.

STEP 2: CREATE A NIGHTTIME ROUTINE

Develop a nighttime routine that triggers “behavioral quietude” and results in falling asleep

Try to implement it consistently across nights

Use picture schedules or lists if your child can read

Activities should progress from active to passive

Routine should be the same every night

Prior to saying goodnight

Activities should progress from active to passive

- Make gradual changes in fun factor
- Step down reinforcement

Exercise/baths earlier in the night

- Avoid hot baths right before bed

Light snacks without caffeine

- Look for hidden sources of caffeine

Bid good night the same way every night

STEP 3: SLEEPING CONDITIONS

Think about the conditions in the bedroom

What is the lighting like?

- Nightlight, lamps on or off, direct or indirect light (through the curtains or shades, streetlight, cars)

What is the temperature like?

Does it change during the night?

What is the sound environment like in the bedroom?

Does the noise level change during the night?

- TV or music set with a timer

What type of bed? Bedding?

What does your child sleep in?

SOME HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS

- Adjust the temperature in the room
- Body needs to be cool while sleeping
- Comfortable bedding and pj's
- Indirect lighting only
- Noise: it can be a challenge to make a bedroom and house silent
 - Noise can be alerting
 - Music is NOT the same as 'sound' or white noise
 - Introduce a white noise/sound machine to the bedroom
- Best toys/preferred activities not visible

4-GOOD SLEEP DEPENDENCIES

Good sleep dependency is the ability to fall or stay asleep without your presence

WHAT ARE GOOD SLEEP DEPENDENCY ITEMS?

Something that can be there in the middle of the night

Items that are available on the go (e.g., for vacations or nights at a relative or friend's house)

Good dependencies: pillow, blanket, stuffed animal

One of the best sleep dependency you can introduce is a white noise machine

5-SLEEP INTERFERING BEHAVIOR NIGHT AWAKENINGS

Should be resolved with an appropriate sleep schedule and healthy sleep dependencies

If not, address issues related to bedroom and sleeping conditions temperature, food, light, noise, incontinence, nighttime reinforcers

Access to sleep dependencies in the middle of the night

- Should be easily accessed (can reach for pillow)

This is what makes a sound/noise machine so valuable it is always there!

Understanding the concept of time of day may not be easily understood

- Teach this skill

Introduce a cue or signal that it is not time to get out of bed such as a Moon and Sun clock. This may be useful to fall back to sleep.

KEYS TO GOOD SLEEP

- Maintain an agreed upon sleep schedule that is sensitive to age (and sleep history)
- Maintain a nighttime routine that fosters compliance and 'behavioral quietude'
- Make sure that the bedroom is conducive to falling and staying asleep

- Introduce sleep dependencies that are routinely and easily present throughout the night
- Differentiate between day and night and what is available during the day versus the night
- **This presentation was based on the research and work of Greg Hanley Ph.D, BCBA-D and his presentation “Understanding and Treating Sleep Problems of Children” 2018**