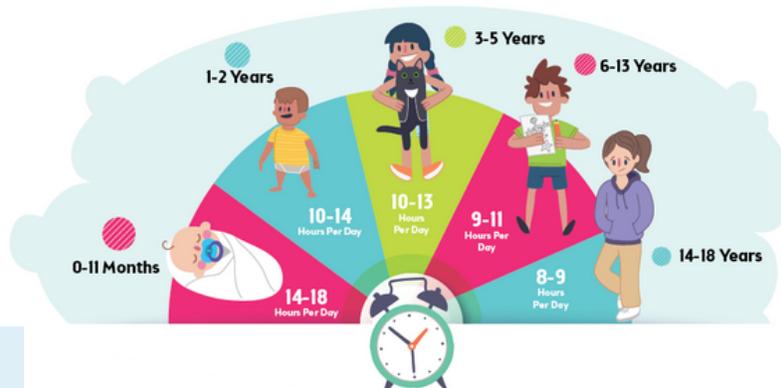


Counseling Corner

Whiteford Elementary School

Healthy Sleep Habits: A Key to Success

As we approach the final months of the school year, it's important to revisit the topic of sleep -- an essential yet often overlooked component of our health and academic success. As students navigate through learning, growth, testing, and the excitement of summer fun, ensuring they receive adequate sleep becomes more important than ever.



Why Does This Matter?

Research consistently shows that sufficient sleep is integral for children's physical growth, emotional regulation, and cognitive development. It plays a pivotal role in memory consolidation, meaning the lessons throughout the day are more effectively absorbed and retained during a good night's sleep. Children aged 6-13 require between 9-11 hours of sleep per night, a number that becomes challenging to meet with the increased demands and excitement towards the end of the school year.

Lack of sleep can lead to noticeable changes in behavior and academic performance. You might observe increased irritability, difficulty concentrating, or a decline in academic achievement in children not getting enough rest. These issues can be detrimental at a time when students are preparing for end-of-year tests, projects, or activities, potentially impacting their grades and overall satisfaction with the school year.

Symptoms of Sleep Deprivation

Sleep deprivation is often overlooked when addressing performance and behavioral issues in children. Given our hectic lifestyles this time of year, children's schedules are so packed that many children often struggle to get enough sleep, and the pressures to succeed affect the quality of their rest. If you're unsure about your child's sleep quality or patterns, you might consider signs of sleep deprivation like difficulty falling asleep or waking up, challenges with impulse control, decreased motivation, defiance/noncompliance, frequent school absences, unexplained hyperactivity, frequent emotional fluctuations, anxiety or increased anxious behaviors, poor concentration, signs of memory impairment, academic decline, irritability, etc. If you suspect that your child may be experiencing sleep deprivation, seeking guidance from their pediatrician can help guide you in re-establishing healthy sleep routines.

What Can Families Do?

To support your child in maintaining a healthy sleep schedule and routine, you can consider:

- Establishing a consistent bedtime routine** that includes relaxing, winding down activities, such as reading, drawing/coloring, meditation, or quiet play.
- Limiting screen time** at least an hour before bed can also significantly improve sleep quality. The blue light emitted by devices is known to interfere with the body's natural sleep-wake cycle, so intentionally limiting screen time before bed can impact sleep quality in a positive way.
- Keeping bedrooms dark and quiet**, as this helps limit additional distractions and unnecessary blue light exposure before bed or during nighttime awakenings. Keeping bedrooms cool and temperature-controlled helps the body stay relaxed, which also helps regulate sleep-wake cycles.

As parents, guardians, and caregivers, your involvement and encouragement can make a substantial difference in your child's sleep habits and, by extension, their overall well-being and academic performance. Let's work together to prioritize rest, ensuring our children end the school year on a high note and enter the summer months with energy, enthusiasm, and a foundation for continued success. Please let me know how I can support your family in this practice.

For more information on healthy sleep habits, please visit my **Counseling Corner Newsletters and Resources** section within my **Resources** tab in my Schoology group.