

EDUCATION

Society gives sleep tips

Going back to school often also requires going back to a more regular sleep schedule after a summer of staying up late and waking up whenever. Parents and children should not wait for the alarm to ring on the opening day of school to readjust sleeping schedules.

The Medical Society of the State of New York offers the following tips on getting back to a school sleep schedule. They were adapted from recommendations of the National Sleep Foundation, an independent nonprofit organization.

- Start at least one to two weeks before the opening bell. Change the sleep schedule gradually by having the student go to bed 15 to 30 minutes earlier each night, at least one to two weeks before school starts.

- Establish a regular bedtime and wake up time. Plan a daily schedule that includes the basic daily sleep requirements for particular age groups. This schedule should be maintained on the weekends, although students can be permitted to sleep one or two hours later on weekend mornings. While individual sleep needs vary, the amount of sleep suggested by sleep experts for particular age groups is:

- Elementary school students: 10 to 12 hours

- Pre-teens (middle/junior high school): 9 to 11 hours

- Teens: 8 ½ to 9 ½ hours

- Remember to add 10 to 20 minutes to bedtime for falling asleep.

- Create a bedtime routine. Bedtime routines are not just for toddlers. School children of all ages should have a bedtime routine that includes at least 15 to 30 minutes of calm, soothing activities.

- Observe quiet time. Immediately before bedtime, children should relax, unwind and make the transition into sleep mode. They should not watch television, exercise, use the computer or telephone; and they should not have beverages, chocolate and other products containing caffeine.

- Work out a balanced schedule. Strive to avoid an overloaded schedule that can lead to stress and difficulty coping. These in turn can contribute to poor health and sleep problems.

- Parents: Be a role model. Parents can achieve this by creating and sticking to their own regular sleep schedule.

- Maintain good sleeping conditions. Create a home environment conducive to healthy sleep habits, one where peace prevails and quiet is the night. The bedroom should be dark enough and quiet enough and at a comfortable temperature. The ideal sleeping temperature is around 60 to 65 degrees Fahrenheit.

- Medical Society of the State of New York



James Stein/Photo intern

Education for peace

A conference for students, Education for Peace, was held at Rochester Institute of Technology April 25-26. Above, students from Fairport's St. John of Rochester School find out how to break the cycle of violence. At right, students from Rochester's St. Boniface School learn to create peace through dance.



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