

Seven Good Reasons to consider your child's sleep

1. Sleep disturbance is common. Up to 40% of children (babies to teenagers) experience sleep disturbance at some stage and up to 80% in children with developmental disabilities.
2. Sleep disturbance can be long-term. While many children's sleep improves with age, other children continue to have inadequate sleep into the school age years.
3. Sleep disturbance in children impacts on the whole family. Parents and carers can be exhausted from sleepless nights and experience additional emotional and physical stress.
4. Adequate sleep is essential for a child's health and development. Lack of adequate sleep impacts on:
 - Emotional wellbeing (eg may lead to increased irritability, mood swings)
 - Learning (eg poor attention and concentration)
 - Behaviour (eg may cause sleepiness or hyperactivity during the day, aggressive or self- injury)
 - Sensory processing (eg increased sensitivity to noise)
 - Physical coordination (eg slower reaction time, poor stamina)
5. Intervention can help. There is a growing body of knowledge and research that communication, sensory and behavioural strategies can promote adequate sleep in children and teenagers with and without disabilities. Specific sleep disorders may require medical intervention especially those related to breathing, movement during sleep, pain, epilepsy or severe anxiety.
6. Sleep disturbance can be prevented. By promoting good sleep habits children and teenagers they can learn to sleep independently and improve the quality, quantity and timing of their sleep.
7. Sleep with Disability can help you to understand typical sleep, assess the sleep disturbance and develop a unique individualised sleep plan for children. Ongoing support and monitoring are needed while a positive sleep pattern is established.