

Children with sleep disorder symptoms are more likely to have trouble academically

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Students with symptoms of sleep disorders are more likely to receive bad grades in classes such as math, reading and writing than peers without symptoms of sleep disorders, according to a research abstract that will be presented Monday at SLEEP 2007, the 21st Annual Meeting of the Associated Professional Sleep Societies (APSS).

The study, authored by Alyssa Bachmann, of Chappaqua Public Schools in New York, was focused on the parents of 218 second and third graders, who completed Sleep Disorders Inventory for Students – Child Form, a brief screening tool validated for use in the schools.

According to the results, students with reported symptoms of sleep disorders received significantly worse grades than students without symptoms of sleep disorders.

Specifically, there were differences in math, reading and writing grades.

"This study, which identified the relationship between the prevalence of symptoms of sleep disorders and academic performance in second and third graders, found that screening students at school with a validated school-based instrument may identify students to be referred for appropriate medical and/or behavioral treatment," said Bachmann.

Experts recommend that children in pre-school sleep between 11-13 hours a night, and school-aged children between 10-11 hours of sleep a night.

Your child should follow these steps to get a good night's sleep:

- Follow a consistent bedtime routine.
- Establish a relaxing setting at bedtime.
- Get a full night's sleep every night.
- Avoid foods or drinks that contain caffeine, as well as any medicine that has a stimulant, prior to bedtime.
- Do not go to bed hungry, but don't eat a big meal before bedtime either.
- The bedroom should be quiet, dark and a little bit cool.
- Get up at the same time every morning.

Parents who suspect that their child might be suffering from a sleep disorder are encouraged to consult with their child's pediatrician, who will refer them to a sleep specialist.

Source: American Academy of Sleep Medicine

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