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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Your Child's Sleep

Most sleep experts agree that children's and teenagers' sleep less than they should. These trends have been linked to increased exposure to electronics, games and media. Lack of sleep may have a detrimental effect on children's health, behavior, and development. Also lack of sleep may alter normal growth.

The brain is very active during sleep. Children in preschool should sleep between 11 and 12 hours a day. School-aged children and adolescents need at least 10 hours of sleep each night.

Teenagers' biological clocks shift 1-2 hours later than children or adults. Teens are more likely to go to bed later and sleep. "This delayed sleep-wake rhythm conflicts with the early-morning start times of many high schools and helps explain why most teenagers get an average of only 7-7.5 hours of sleep a night," said James C. Miller, Ph.D. who teaches physiology at Texas A&M Corpus Christi.

Here are some tips to help your child get their best sleep:

1. Use the same bedtime and wake-up time every day. Do not vary on non-school days. This practice helps to stabilize the body's daily rhythms.
2. Exposure to sunlight during the day and to darkness at night helps to maintain a healthy sleep-wake cycle.
3. Avoid stimulants such as caffeine and sugar close to bedtime.
4. Exercise and outdoor play promote good quality sleep. However, avoid strenuous exercise close to bedtime.
5. Establish a regular, relaxing bedtime routine. Reading to or with your child is a great way to end any day.
6. Make sure that the bedroom cool and pleasant. Use curtains keep the room dark, and dehumidifiers or fans to minimize outside noises.
7. Blue light suppresses the secretion of melatonin, a hormone which aids sleep. Many phones and pads have evening settings that shift the screen to a more yellow color.

The Regional Health Awareness Board was created by an inter-local agreement between San Patricio County, Nueces County and the City of Corpus Christi to promote dialogue on the health/welfare and environmental issues that affect our communities. For further information contact Dr. James Mobley at 361-643-4546.

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