Children With Irregular Bedtimes More Likely to Misbehave

BY ROSEMARY BYRFIELD

EPISODE TIMES STAFF

Children who have irregular bedtimes are more likely to exhibit behavioral problems, according to new British research. "The lack of a good bedtime routine can disrupt the body's natural rhythm, leading to like sleep deprivation, leading to impaired function development and dysfunctional behavior." A constant sense of flux increases the body's metabolic rate to stay, said study author professor Karen Wu in a statement.

"The study looked at sleep habits of 10,000 children ages 5, and 7 in the UK and found a statistically significant link between bedtimes and behavior. "What we've shown that these effects build up incrementally over childhood, with children who always had irregular bedtimes were more likely than those children who did have a regular bedtime and go to sleep at the same age when they were surveyed," Kelly said.

The study, published in the journal Pediatrics, found one in five five-year-olds went to bed at varying times. However, by the age of 7, most of the children went to bed regularly between 9 and 10 p.m.

In the study, the researchers from University College London discovered that if bedtimes became consistent, the effects were reversible, with clear improvements in the child's behavior. Therapists like Kelly, who helped children, maintained that he had noticed children who sleep and wake up earlier, the better they got at the end of the 10-week treatment.

"Given the importance of early childhood development and subsequent health, there may be knock-on effects across the life course," she said.

Sleep trainer at the Millpond Children's Sleep Clinic in London, Marietta Gurney agreed that bedtime differences between one and two hours have "huge impact" on children's behavior. "Children who don't sleep well are much more likely to exhibit things like biting, hitting, lack of sleep, and punching than children who do sleep well," she said.

"Crucial to enough sleep is a good bedtime routine. Gurney said if parents don't take the time to wind children down before bedtime, they might get a second wind while they're being prepped for bed and feel tired."

"Setting a routine, stopping screen time half an hour before bed, and restricting caffeine and sugar is also essential for children to get a good night's rest."

Previous research has shown that children who go to sleep before 9 p.m. suffer less from loneliness and those whose school beds earlier. A 2010 Australian study of 2,240 adolescents aged 9 to 16 years old found that those who went to bed late and woke up late tended to weigh more and exercise less compared to their counterparts who went to bed and woke up early, despite the fact that both groups of children get virtually the same amount of sleep in total.

The importance of sleep on child development has only been understood within the last 10 years through studies using MRI scans that allow researchers to see how brain activity relates to learning and health.

At the Millpond Clinic, Gurney trains nurses to recognize the link between behavioral issues in children and poor sleep habits. "People are scared to talk about sleep it's an issue they don't know what to do with it. You haven't got the time to support that person to involve the issue. That's why we do the training," Gurney said.

A.U.K. website, www.nattimes.com, and the U.K. Institute of Health & Fitness (IHF) did a survey with 400 health visitors, nurses who have extra training in child health and public health issues, about their knowledge of sleep.

The study found that although the health visitors faced children's sleep issues from parents on a regular basis, very few had the appropriate training to help with it, according to the IHF's national advisor for sleep, Maggie Fisher.

BY KARENA WU

The NYC marathon is rapidly approaching. For running these tips last week is essential. I am a physical therapist in Manhattan; I've treated world-class runners including Marouenha Wallen (one of the top ranked sprinters in the world), and as a runner myself. Have some advice for marathon runners:

Race Drinks
Practice refueling with sports drinks and gels that you know will be on the race course. Find out the distance between stations and practice drinking at the rate in which you train. Stay on pace.

Motivate Yourself
Around mile 23, tell yourself what you've accomplished and that you will finish. It helps you mentally to know that you have to finish that finish line!

Mind Games
Sing a song to yourself as you run, it helps give your mind something else to think about and push you to the finish line. Practice for the mental side of running.

Footwear
Select the shoes and socks you'll wear in the marathon. Test them with stretching. The shoes and socks you wear in the race!

Distance
Two weeks prior to the race is when you should take distance and minute time long and hard runs and in the last week, do 30-50 percent. No running daily! It helps you mentally to know that you have to finish that finish line!

Stretching
Start stretching 15 minutes before the start of the race, get your muscles warmed up with gentle stretches, especially if you are not used to the start. You can also include a light jog.

Start Slow
For the first 5 miles, it's ok to start with a little slower to conserve your glycogen. Then pick up the pace to what you trained for.

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