Who Can Help?

- First, consult your pediatrician/family practice doctor for advice and to make sure that medical problems aren’t causing your child’s sleep problems (such as: colic, allergies, ear infection, breathing problems, or other health-related concerns).
- If needed, consult a sleep expert. A sleep expert will most likely recommend a short-term behavioral intervention. Behavior therapy often works, even with severe and long-standing sleep problems.
- It may be helpful to keep a diary of your child’s sleep patterns and behaviors before your visit to help your doctor understand and treat the sleep problem.

Resources

To find a sleep expert and for more information:

- http://www.sleepfoundation.org/
- http://www.sleepcenters.org/
- http://www.sleepeducation.com/
- Ohio resource: http://www.sleepohio.com/
- Florida resource: http://www.childrenssleeplab.com/classwebsite3_003.htm

Information provided by:
Florida Center for Inclusive Communities at University of South Florida, and Nisonger Center at The Ohio State University, both University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

Please Cite this Document as:

Development of this material was supported by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities (#90-DD-0592, Fox and Kincaid) and the William Greenville Pace Medical Research Fund of The Columbus Foundation

For more information or to print additional copies visit http://flfcic.org or www.nisonger.osu.edu/hip/
Sleep Problems

What do We Mean by Sleep Problems?

About 43% of all kids and as many as 86% of kids with developmental delays experience some type of difficulty with sleep.

Problems include:
- Difficulty settling down and falling asleep at bedtime
- Frequently waking up during the night
- Irregular sleep patterns
- Sleeping only in short stretches at a time
- Night Terrors
- Feeling tired during the day

Why Should We Help Kids Sleep Better?

- Good sleep is important for health, growth, and development
- Kids with sleep problems have trouble:
  - Thinking
  - Remembering
  - Paying attention
  - Being creative
  - Succeeding at school
- Sleep problems can make kids moody and short-tempered
- When kids sleep poorly, the whole family suffers! Moms of poor sleepers are more likely to be:
  - Stressed
  - Depressed
  - Have marriage problems
  - And may be more likely to abuse their kids!

What can help kids sleep better?

- Keep a consistent bedtime routine beginning at the same time every day
- Put PJs on right before the bedtime routine
- Include a series of quiet activities (e.g., bathing, brushing teeth, reading a book) and end in the child’s bed
- Avoid sugary foods/drinks for at least 2 hours before bed
- Keep your child’s bedroom cool, dark (nightlight only), and quiet
- Let your child fall asleep alone
- NOTE: Avoid TV and videos before bed, they make it harder for kids to settle down to fall asleep and increase the likelihood of waking up in night.