

# Kids: Breathing, Learning & Sleeping

(This is part 4 of our 5-part series)

**Guiderland, NY** - We all know how much Kids need sleep, but it has to be the right kind of sleep. Just like adults, children need to breathe well while they sleep in order for their sleep to be restorative. Even more important for children, though, is deep, restorative sleep that promotes optimal brain development. Only through breathing well while sleeping can a child's brain develop to its maximum potential.

According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, sleep-disordered breathing causes disrupted and inefficient sleep, which in turn results in not only fatigue and daytime sleepiness, but also cognitive impairment and poor performance in school. Even if a child gets to bed "early enough" then they could still have problems with fatigue, focus and learning.

With regards to children, because their brains are still developing, the problems caused by sleep deprivation and sleep-disordered breathing are even greater. Having Airway-centered Disorder is like trying to breathe through a tiny coffee stirrer instead of through a garden hose. Under such conditions during sleep, the brain unconsciously recognizes that it is not getting enough oxygen, and it signals that a crisis is occurring. In other words, having difficulty breathing during sleep makes the brain think it is threatened. That threatened brain turns on all the body's survival instincts, the fight-or-flight response. It tells the adrenal glands to release a flood of the stress hormone, adrenaline, putting us into full panic mode. Over time that adrenaline has toxic effects and creates inflammation throughout the body. When interrupted by apnea, snoring and other breathing disorders, the sleep process becomes a time of crisis rather than a time of rest, repair and restoration.

For children, this state of alert for the brain and body along with a lack of oxygen, can lead to symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), hyperactivity, learning disabilities, anxiety, depression, lack of social coping skills and sometimes aggressive behavior.

Intervening early in a child's life to prevent sleep disordered breathing is essential to their future health and their ability to learn.

Stay tuned for Part 5 in next month's article.

We look forward to seeing you once again at the National Night Out on August 7th at Tawasentha Park. Stop by our table! We look forward to meeting you!

With Oshins of Smiles,

Dr. Steven Oshins



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