

## **MENTAL HEALTH MEMO: SLEEP HYGIENE: HEALTHY SLEEP HABITS TO IMPROVE YOUR SLEEP PATTERNS**

Sleep is important for our children's physical, cognitive and mental well-being. Both the quality and quantity of your child's sleep is important. As children grow and develop, the amount of sleep needed changes (10-11 hours for pre-school and school aged children and approximately 9 hours for teenagers).

According to the 2018-2019 RRDSB School Climate Survey, less than half of students in Grades 4-12 report getting 8 or more hours of sleep per school night and only 23% report getting a good night's sleep every night.

Here are some ideas for helping your child fall and stay asleep:

- Have a consistent bedtime routine that you follow every night and children should go to bed and get up at similar times every day.
- Ensure the bedroom is quiet, dark, relaxing and at a comfortable temperature.
- Remove electronic devices (TVs, computers, gaming consoles and smart phones) as these can delay bedtimes and the light exposure stimulates brain activity making it more difficult to fall asleep.
- Beds should only be used for sleeping. Teens especially will use their beds for doing homework, eating and screen time.
- Provide a light bedtime snack (such as cheese and crackers) and ensure they eat breakfast every day.
- Ensure your child engages in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise during the day.

Poor or insufficient sleep can affect your child's mood and behaviour, put them at higher risk for emotional and behavioural problems, and negatively affect their ability to pay attention, learn and be successful in school.

For more information, please contact the RRDSB Mental Health Leader: [tracey.idle@rrdsb.com](mailto:tracey.idle@rrdsb.com)