

“Supporting your child in school and beyond- Reflections on research and practice”



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Overview



Focusing on your child

- Focus on developmental milestones- What is typical development? (Key indicators for early years, middle years and senior years in primary school)
- Focus on social, cognitive, emotional, behavioural and neurological development
What is happening and why?
- Where can I support my child as his or her parent/guardian?
- Why does sleep and routine matter?

Overview



Focusing on the wider school and community contexts

- The importance of play
- Navigating after-school activities
- The positives and challenges of technology

Early Years in school 4-5 years

Developmental milestones

- Cope with the transition to primary
- Typically children can ride a tricycle, use safety scissors
- Recognise their gender
- Play with other children
- Activities of daily living- start to dress themselves, show in interest in helping
- Sing a song or tell a story

How to support your child

- *Continue to read to your child*
- *Nurture love of nursery rhymes and language*
- *Encourage play, learn to share*
- *Clear and consistent response to discipline*
- *Help child to problem solve*
- *Simple chores*

Middle childhood 6-8 years

Developmental milestones

- ADL: Dress independently
- Catch and kick a ball
- Show greater independence from family
- Perspectives of friends and peers are important
- Rapid learning development
- Can share thoughts and feelings
- More outward looking, concerned for others

How to support your child

- *Show affection and praise*
- *Give greater responsibility*
- *Talk to child about school day*
- *Turn taking skills, consideration of others*
- *Talk through consequences of actions*
- *Clear rules, what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour*
- *Have fun*

Middle childhood 9-11 years

Developmental milestones

- Peer pressure emerges
- More aware of their bodies and changes
- More academic demands
- Developed skills for all ADL
- Become more independent
- Great perspective and awareness of others (TOM)
- Increased attention span

How to support your child

- Continue to take time to talk to your child
- Support them in their understanding of puberty
- Help them to understand and to develop a sense of right and wrong
- Greater responsibility and freedom
- Support them to set goals
- Be affectionate and give praise

Young teenager 12-14

Developmental milestones

- Changes physically, mentally, emotionally and socially
- Transitioning to secondary school
- Concerned about body image
- Experience mood changes
- Interested and influenced by peer group-Social Media
- Experience heightened stress
- More capacity for complex thought and expression

How to support your teenager

- *Be honest and forthright about issues concerning them*
- *Get to know their friends*
- *Show an interest in their school life*
- *Support them to make healthy choices*
- *Work through mistakes in a supportive way*
- *Be clear and consistent in message, especially in conflict situations*

Neurological development

- Rapid changes in the developing brain
- Neuro-developmental processes enable the brain to be moulded and influenced by the environment
- Brain very plastic and susceptible to environmental stresses that may include education, family, friendship, social experiences, nutrition, exercise, alcohol and technology

Teenage development

- Dramatic changes in identity, self-consciousness and flexibility in thinking
- More self aware and more self reflective
- Prefrontal and parietal cortex continue to develop
- Affects executive function that helps us to control our thoughts and behaviours
- More difficult to inhibit emotional responses
- Hormonal changes affecting circadian rhythm

The importance of sleep

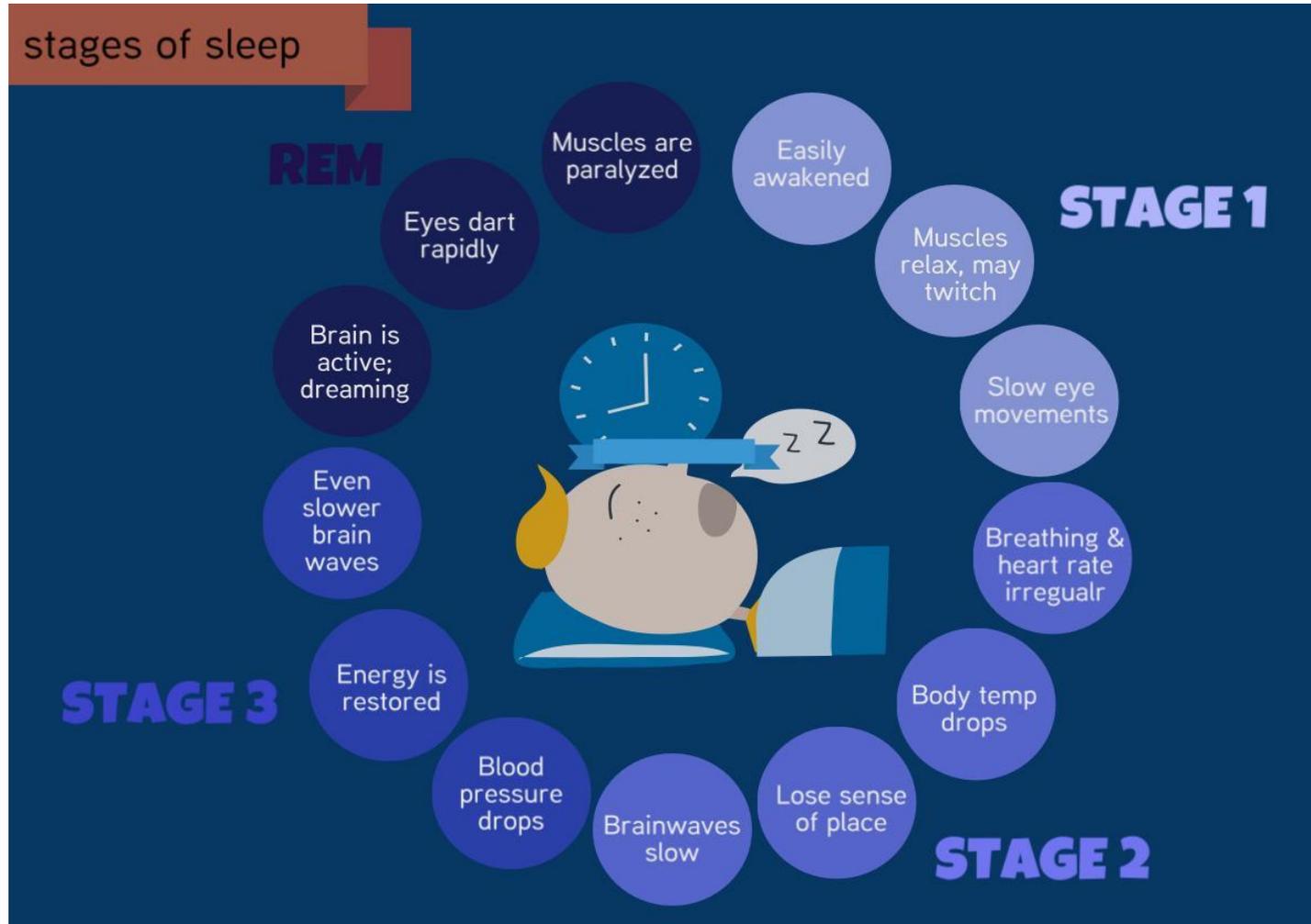
Benefits of sleep

- enhances our memory
- greater ability to learn
- reduces stress and improves our overall mood
- helps us to make better decisions
- think more clearly

Sleep deprivation

- greater risk of depression
- lower quality of life
- poor concentration impacting on our ability to function
- reduced performance
- decreased attention
- excessive day time sleepiness

Sleep

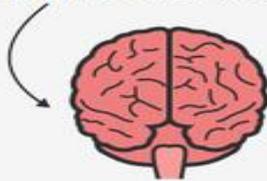


Affect on technology on sleep

How exposure to **blue light** affects your brain and body

BY DISRUPTING MELATONIN, **SMARTPHONE LIGHT** RUINS SLEEP SCHEDULES. THIS LEADS TO ALL KINDS OF **HEALTH PROBLEMS**:

The disruption to your sleep schedule might leave you distracted and impair your **MEMORY** the next day.



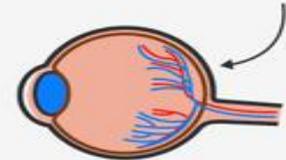
A poor night's sleep caused by smartphone light can make it **HARDER TO LEARN**.



Over the long term, not getting enough sleep can lead to **NEUROTOXIN** buildup that makes it even harder for you to get good sleep.



There's some evidence that blue light could **DAMAGE** our vision by harming the **RETINA** over time – though more research is needed.



Researchers are investigating whether or not blue light could lead to **CATARACTS**.



There's a connection between light exposure at night and the disturbed sleep that come with it and an increased risk of breast and prostate **CANCERS**.



People whose melatonin levels are suppressed and whose body clocks are thrown off by light exposure are more prone to **DEPRESSION**.



By disrupting melatonin and sleep, smartphone light can also mess with the hormones that control hunger, potentially increasing **OBESITY RISK**.

How much sleep do we need?

Age Group		Recommended Hours of Sleep Per Day
Newborn		14–17 hours (National Sleep Foundation) ¹
	0–3 months	No recommendation (American Academy of Sleep Medicine) ²
Infant	4–12 months	12–16 hours per 24 hours (including naps) ²
Toddler	1–2 years	11–14 hours per 24 hours (including naps) ²
Preschool		10–13 hours per 24 hours (including naps) ²
	3–5 years	
School Age		9–12 hours per 24 hours ²
	6–12 years	
Teen	13–18 years	8–10 hours per 24 hours ²
Adult	18–60 years	7 or more hours per night ³
	61–64 years	7–9 hours ¹
	65 years and older	7–8 hours ¹

Sleep hygiene for your child

- Stick to the same bedtimes and wake times every day, even on weekends if possible.
- Beds are for sleeping
- A child's bedroom environment should be cool, quiet, and comfortable (technology out of bedrooms).
- Establish a clear bedtime routine
- Engage in quiet, calm, and relaxing activities
- No screens at least one hour before sleeping

Focusing on the wider school and community contexts



- The importance of play
- Navigating after-school activities
- The positives and challenges of technology

Benefits of play



Types of play

- Physical play
- Play with objects
- Symbolic play
- Socio-dramatic play
- Games with rules

Importance of play

- Evidence shows that play is highly correlated with intellectual achievement and emotional well being
- Supports healthy, social and emotional development in children and young people
- Learn empathy, perspective taking, form emotional relationships and increase resilience
- Supports exposure and regulation of positive stress
- Culturally, learning and play seen as separate concepts

Challenges of parental over-supervision and over scheduling

- Study from UK: Children left under supervised shrunk by 90% since 1970s (Moss, 2012)
- Time frame marked by increases in childhood obesity, self-harm and mental health difficulties- attributed to “nature deficit disorder” (Louv, 2005)
- Children need to be given time, space and independence to develop their own spontaneous and self initiated play activities
- Need time to unwind and to learn to relax

Play- Key Messages

- Play is important throughout a child's development, including teen years
- Fundamental in supporting a range of intellectual, emotional and social abilities
- Children benefit from exposure to different types of play, including computer gaming

Technology in your children's lives (when used properly)

- Develops children's digital literacy, a skill required for life
- Can increase a child's independence in their learning
- Allows them to link with their friends and family and can enhance friendships
- Enhances their play
- Improves hand eye coordination
- Reinforces learning concepts

Other benefits

- Satisfies the innate curiosity in children
- Sense of belonging fostered through social media
- Provides opportunities for civic action and engagement
- Exposure to ideas and current affairs

Challenges to over exposure to technology

- Children can struggle to develop appropriate social interaction skills
- Can affect mood and impacts on sleep cycle
- Impact on brain development is unknown
because their brains are still developing and malleable, frequent exposure by so-called digital natives to technology is actually wiring the brain in ways very different than in previous generations

Other issues

- Challenging behaviour
- Affects mental health including depression, reduced well being and psychological distress
- Cognitive saturation
- Addiction to technology
- Online risk and harm: Exposure to inappropriate content
- Increased exposure to bullying
- Cost
- Peer pressures

Early mobile phone ownership

- ESRI 2018 longitudinal study
- 8,500 -9 years children in Ireland
- Reduced scores in both reading and mathematics in children from 9-13 years of age
- Sizeable differences in scores
- **Findings:** significant educational costs arising from early mobile phone usage that impact negatively on children

Strategies to support healthy use of technology and screen exposure

- Recognise the benefits of technology- an all or nothing approach is very challenging for all
- Set clear rules and time limits about use of technology
- Encourage children to experience different forms of play that include screen based and non-screen based activities
- Minimise media use one hour before bedtime
- Consider a family media plan- good role modelling for children



**Thank you
for listening**



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