

“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

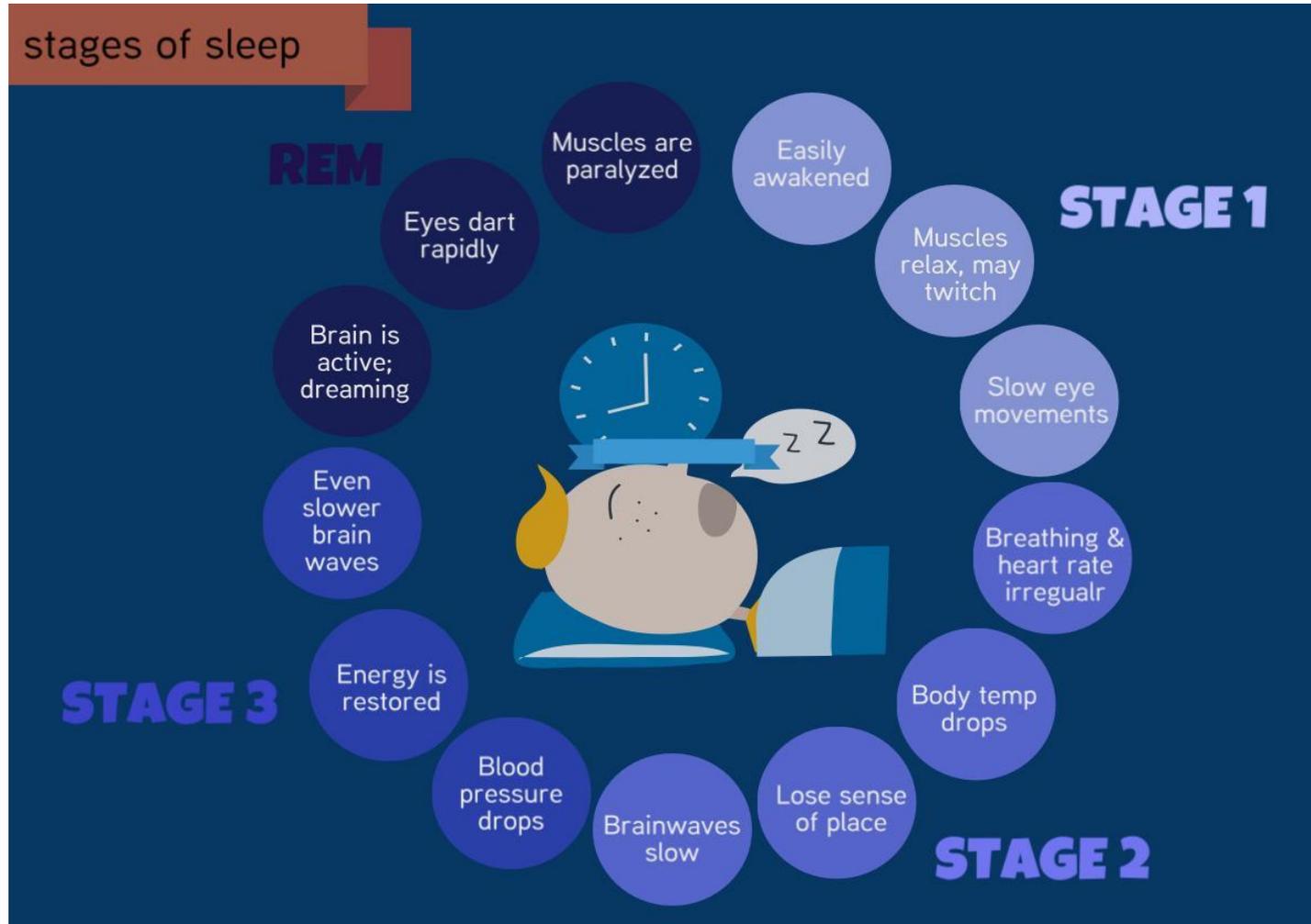
Benefits of sleep

- 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

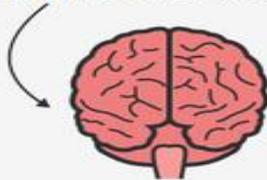


Affect on technology on sleep

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.



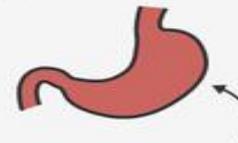
A poor night's sleep caused by smartphone light can make it **HARDER TO LEARN**.



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

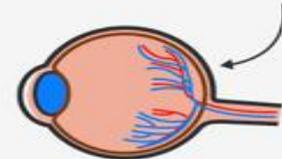


People whose melatonin levels are suppressed and whose body clocks are thrown off by light exposure are more prone to **DEPRESSION**.



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

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**.



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

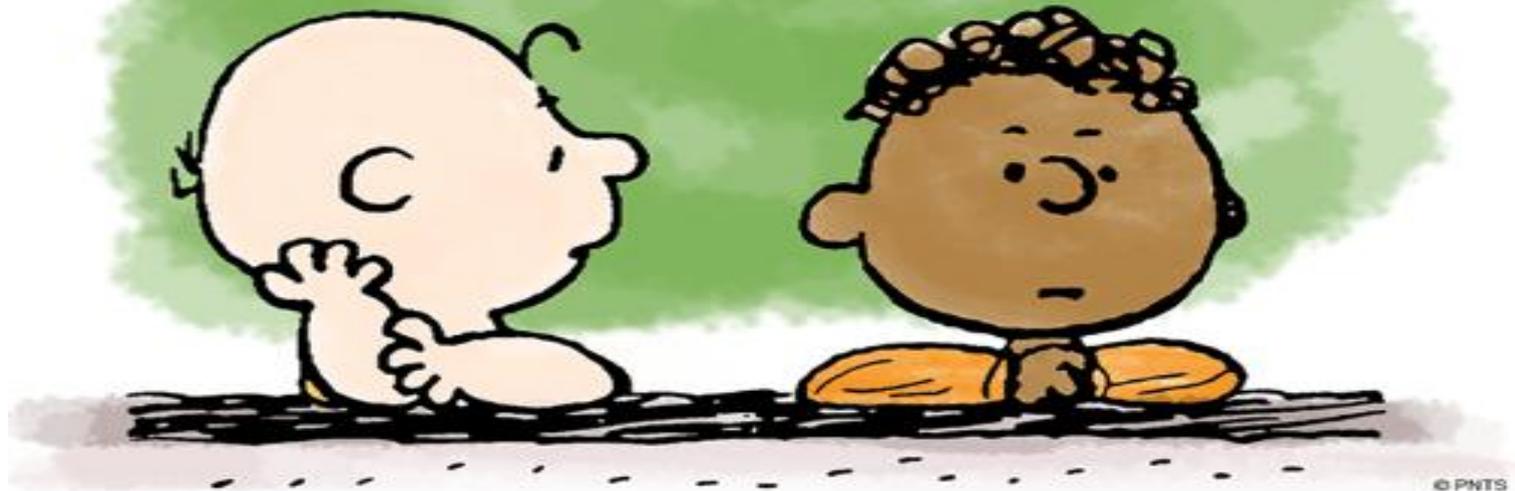
- ESRI 2018 longitudinal study
- 8,500 -9 years children in Ireland
- Reduced scores in both reading and mathematics in children from 9-13 years of age
- Sizeable differences in scores
- **Findings:** significant educational costs arising from early mobile phone usage that impact negatively on children

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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