

# 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 dairy 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/>
- ✓ Durand, V.M. (1998). Sleep better!: A guide to improving sleep for children with special needs. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.
- ✓ Ohio resource: <http://www.sleepohio.com/>
- ✓ Florida resource: [http://www.childrensleeplab.com/classwebsite3\\_003.htm](http://www.childrensleeplab.com/classwebsite3_003.htm)



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## Sleep Matters: How to Help Your Kids Sleep



**Be Healthy Information Program**  
for Children and Adults with Disabilities

# Sleep Well

## 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.

