Healthy Children, Healthy State: 

CHILD SLEEP QUALITY IN TEXAS 

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living

Texas children do not sleep enough\(^1\)

Good sleep is essential to good health, especially mental health. Healthy sleep habits include regular bedtime and morning routines, with sleep lasting long enough for sustained alertness during waking hours. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends school-age children (aged 6 - 12) sleep 9 - 12 hours a night and teenagers (aged 13 - 18) sleep 8 - 10 hours.

Common Sleep Quality Issues

In 2\(^{nd}\) grade, only 48\% of African Americans and 60\% of Hispanics meet sleep recommendations compared to 84\% of White/Other ethnicity\(^2\).

Only 57\% of 2\(^{nd}\) grade Texas border students meet sleep recommendations compared to 70\% of non-border 2\(^{nd}\) graders. However, 33\% of 11\(^{th}\) grade Texas border students meet sleep recommendations compared to 23\% of non-border 11\(^{th}\) graders\(^3\).

54\% of 2\(^{nd}\) graders have electronic devices in their bedroom compared to 92\% of 11\(^{th}\) graders\(^4\).

Current and Lifetime Risks

A lack of sleep is a health hazard for children. Kids who don’t get enough sleep can experience:

- Attention and behavioral problems\(^3\)
- Lowered immune systems that can affect school attendance and school performance\(^4,5\)
- Increased depressive symptoms\(^4,5\)
- Athletic injuries\(^4,5\)
- Increased risk of motor vehicle accidents\(^4,5\)
- Obesity\(^6,7\)
- Poor diet and decreased physical activity\(^6,7\)
- Unhealthy risky behavior\(^8\)

Improving sleep quality in Texas children:

- Remove TV, computers, and other electronic devices from bedrooms\(^5,9\)
- Provide sleep-friendly bedrooms - dark, cool, and quiet\(^5,9\)
- Follow a sleep schedule and consistent bedtime routine\(^5,9\)
- Teach children about the importance of sleep for health, sport and academic performance\(^1\)
- Encourage middle and high schools to delay school start times for teens to improve sleep quantity\(^4,5\)
- Follow a regular schedule for exercise and meal times\(^9\)
- Encourage outdoor activities and a healthy diet\(^7\)
Current Sleep Guidelines

The American Academy of Sleep Medicine’s recommendations change based on a child’s age:

- Infants (4 - 12 months): 12 - 16 hours of sleep including naps
- Children 1 - 2 years of age: 11 - 14 hours of sleep including naps
- Children 3 - 5 years of age: 10 - 13 hours of sleep including naps
- Children 6 - 12 years of age: 9 - 12 hours of sleep
- Children 13 - 18 years of age: 8 - 10 hours of sleep

References


2. Texas School Physical Activity and Nutrition (TX SPAN) Project. 2019–2020 Survey Data. Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. TX SPAN project details available online at go.uth.edu/SPAN.

   The Texas School Physical Activity and Nutrition (TX SPAN) Project is a surveillance system monitoring the prevalence of overweight/obesity in school-aged children in Texas conducted by researchers at the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living. TX SPAN has been funded by the Texas Department of State Health Services since 2000 to conduct height and weight measurements across different grade levels.


About the Texas Child Health Status Report

This project is funded by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. These reports utilize state-level data from the School Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) Project to provide an accurate representation of Texas child health.

Learn more at go.uth.edu/TexasChildHealth

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