

# Sleeping & bedwetting

## Quality sleep is essential for growth and development

Children aged six to 12 sleep for around 10 hours a night. Those that get less sleep than they need can suffer from weight gain, depression, poor concentration, reduced creative ability and lower immunity to diseases. If they have sleeping difficulties, they tend to have problems more akin to adults such as worries often to do with school, friends or family. Nightmares are more unusual by this age.

Try to remember the importance you put into sleep routines when they were a baby, it is as important now as ever.

### Bedwetting and continence problems

The frustration and extra work involved in managing this can put a strain on family life. Bedwetting occurs most nights in 15% of five-year-olds and is still a problem for 3% of all 15 year-olds. It can be viewed as a taboo subject, the real figures for older children could be much higher. It's significant that night-time 'nappies' are widely available in sizes to fit children up to 15 years old.

There are many different strategies recommended to help parents deal with their child's bedwetting. Some work for some families but not for others and there seems to be no definitive cure. Wet beds aren't just an inconvenience, when an older child is still wetting at night it rules out fun experiences like school trips and sleepovers and can lead to embarrassment and fears about bullying. Talk to your school nurse or GP.

### Sleep tips

Remove distractions such as TVs, mobiles and other devices.

- Make sure they have a comfortable bed, a night light if they wish and a quiet space.
- Make sure curtains do not let in too much light.
- Keep to a regular routine.
- Encourage regular exercise.
- Try to finish the family meal a couple of hours before bedtime.
- Try to complete any homework before dinner to allow for some relaxation time.

Source: [www.lullabytrust.org.uk](http://www.lullabytrust.org.uk)

### Family Lives

Offers support and advice, you can talk to a Family Support Worker by calling their confidential helpline on 0808 800 2222. You can also share experiences and advice with other parents at Forums.

### ERIC - The Children's Continence Charity

A parent's for children aged 5-11  
Common childhood illnesses & well-being

*Livewell Southwest*

The ERIC Helpline is available weekdays on 0845 370 8008 (10am-4pm) A range of free to download leaflets is available on the ERIC website as well as a wide range of products to purchase such as bed alarms and bed protection to help with the everyday problems of a child who has wetting or soiling problems. [www.eric.org.uk](http://www.eric.org.uk)

**1**

My child frequently wets the bed and is upset.

**2**

Don't tell them off or punish them.

**3**

Speak to your GP about measures that could help.