



## **Catching ZZZs is Good for the Brain and the Body**

With summer months having longer days and later sunsets, some children have trouble getting to bed early enough for a good night's sleep. To help ease the transition from summer to school, parents can help children by setting and sticking to school a bedtime routine beginning in early August. Once school begins, kids will have a sleep pattern established that gives them a good night's sleep so they are ready when school starts.

### **Why children need sleep**

Sleep is necessary for the body to grow and stay healthy. It's also important for the brain. During sleep, it is believed that the brain sorts through and stores information, as well as solves problems.

Unfortunately, most kids between ages 5 and 12 get on average 9.5 hours of sleep a night. Experts agree most need 10 or 11 hours nightly.

### **How to catch ZZZs**

For most kids, sleeping comes pretty naturally. Here are some tips to help your child get the sleep he needs.

- Put your child to bed at the same time every night; this helps his body get into a routine.
- Follow a bedtime routine that is calming, such as taking a warm bath or reading.
- Limit foods and drinks like sodas, tea, and chocolate that contain caffeine.
- Don't allow a TV in your child's room. Research shows that kids who have one in their rooms sleep less.
- Limit or eliminate physical activity close to bedtime.
- Your child's bed should be for sleeping—not doing homework, playing games, or talking on the phone.

By encouraging a good night's sleep you will be helping your child stay healthy, strong, focused and ready to learn.

*This article is brought to you by The Children's Hospital at Bronson, southwest Michigan's only children's hospital. For more information about children's health, visit [bronsonhealth.com/children](http://bronsonhealth.com/children).*