

School Start Times: Useful Links

www.sleepfoundation.org

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/hot-topics/background-earlier-school-start-times>

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/sleep-topics/school-start-time-and-sleep>

"Early to bed, early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise," said Ben Franklin. But does this adage apply to teenagers? Research in the 1990s found that later sleep and wake patterns among adolescents are biologically determined; the natural tendency for teenagers is to stay up late at night and wake up later in the morning. This research indicates that school bells that ring as early as 7:00 a.m. in many parts of the country stand in stark contrast with adolescents' sleep patterns and needs.

Evidence suggests that teenagers are indeed seriously sleep deprived. A recent poll conducted by the National Sleep Foundation found that 60% of children under the age of 18 complained of being tired during the day, according to their parents, and 15% said they fell asleep at school during the year.

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/hot-topics/eight-major-obstacles-delaying-school-start-times>

Because most school districts have delicately balanced bus transportation systems designed to run as efficiently and inexpensively as possible, any change in the school schedule can have a severe impact. The specific circumstances in each district vary, but problems that arise can include cost, recruiting drivers, and/or redesigning the routes.

One solution that has worked to solve this problem is flipping start times, most commonly elementary with high school. This solution requires no extra buses or drivers, just a change in the order of pickups. This schedule also seems to be more appropriate to elementary school students' sleep schedules, because young children tend to wake up earlier in the morning. This is a very dicey issue; however, in districts where the start time is quite early. If the young students have to go to school so early, they have to go to bed VERY early (because they need 10 - 11 hours of sleep). Parents may not get home from work until very near or after bedtime. The direct flip cannot work unless all start times are reasonable.

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/how-sleep-works/how-much-sleep-do-we-really-need>

Ellen never thought that her **young son** could be sleep deprived. After all, she thought, sleep deprivation occurs when you're a "night owl" teenager or over-worked adult, not a four year-old! What Ellen may not know is that children need much more sleep than their adult counterparts to be well-rested. Experts estimate that preschoolers (3 to 5 years-old) need 11-13 hours of sleep, while school-aged children up to age 12 need approximately 10-11 hours of sleep. Ellen's son Josh frequently adapts to his family's late-night schedule and doesn't usually take naps – in fact, when he falls asleep in the car, it is usually past his bedtime or the day after getting too little sleep. As a result of "going along with the family routine," he's often shortchanged on sleep. Unfortunately, it shows up in whiny behavior and even tantrums that he has otherwise outgrown ...

To begin a new path towards healthier sleep and a healthier lifestyle, begin by assessing your own individual needs and habits. See how you respond to different amounts of sleep. Pay careful attention to your mood, energy and health after a poor night's sleep versus a good one. Ask yourself, "How often do I get a good night's sleep?" If the answer is "not often", then you may need to consider changing your sleep habits or consulting a physician or sleep specialist. When Ellen's family members began this process, they realized that often they weren't getting what they would call a "good night's sleep." This led each of them to reevaluate how much sleep they needed and whether their sleep habits were healthy ones.

OTHER LINKS

<http://www.icsd.k12.ny.us/redistricting/startend/starttimesummary.pdf>

.... When districts move high school start times later, they generally make the elementary grades start earlier. Younger kids don't have to fight biology to wake up bright and early. The change in circadian rhythms happens around puberty. When Juneau, Alaska, flipped high school and elementary start times, however, the move was especially unpopular among parents who relied on their high school-aged children to mind younger siblings after school. Under the new schedule, elementary school children arrive home first.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/podcast/episode.cfm?id=later-school-start-time-leads-to-be-10-07-05>

Beginning at adolescence, kids have what's called a delayed sleep phase, where they start sleep later and sleep later in the morning. And they need plenty—about nine-and-a-quarter hours a night... The researchers evaluated 201 Rhode Island high school students whose school pushed back its start time from 8 to 8:30. The kids completed a sleep habits survey before and after the time change ... After the delayed start, the percentage of students who said they got at least eight hours of sleep a night jumped from about 16 to 55 percent.

<http://www.miller-mccune.com/education/delaying-school-start-times-causes-alarm-24662/>

“It was, as it's been in every other town, polarizing,” recalls Lisa Bogan, a former school board member in Wilton, Conn., which changed its start times in 2003. She is now the school start time change specialist (yes, there is such a position) for the League of Women Voters of Connecticut. The state league embraces efforts to change school start times because it sees them as a way to improve communities that is both nonpartisan and research-based, Bogan says.

Changing school schedules also changes transportation and child care arrangements, Bogan says. As such a change was discussed in Wilton, she says, she listened to a lot of “anticipatory fears” about young children waiting for buses alone on dark winter mornings and about the death of sports. “It is a very emotional issue. It can affect your family life,” she says.

<http://www.cehd.umn.edu/research/highlights/Sleep/default.html>

<http://www.edina.k12.mn.us/news/reports/laterstart/index.html>

<http://thechart.blogs.cnn.com/2010/07/05/small-delay-in-school-start-timesbig-benefits/>