

## **World Sleep Day – Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March - Targets Children**

### **Melbourne media Invitation:**

**What:** World Sleep Day Presentation  
**Where:** Glen Huntley Primary School, Grange Road, Glen Huntley  
**When:** 10am,  
**Spokespeople:** Nicole Verginis sleep specialist presenting information at school  
Teachers, students and parents.  
**Contact:** Lucy Williams M. 0403 753 028

### **Research shows 40 per cent of children have poor sleep schedules and 20 per cent are sleep deprived**

Sleep is vital for healthy bodies and minds, but worrying research shows one in five Australian children don't get enough of it.

Sleep specialists are using World Sleep Day on March 14 to head into schools across Australia and New Zealand armed with a powerful message.

"You need a good night's sleep if you want to grow strong, think clearly and feel good," says sleep researcher Dr Sarah Biggs, coordinator of the event co-hosted by the Australasian Sleep Association and Sleep Health Foundation.

"Yet many of our kids are missing out and undoubtedly their physical and mental health is suffering. We're on a mission to turn this trend around."

Studies show 20 per cent of children don't get the recommended amount of sleep, and up to 40 per cent have poor sleep schedules. Most parents don't speak to their child's GP about sleep, suggesting a lack of awareness of its importance.

"If we can increase awareness and teach children good sleep habits, we can improve sleep and ultimately boost health and learning too," Dr Biggs says.

To mark World Sleep Day, the sleep organisations will be educating 6000 students at 23 schools on the importance of sleeping well.

The event, organised with the help of 40 volunteers, will promote MWorld, a colourful and engaging smartphone app that teaches kids about sleep and other interesting science topics.

The message for kids will be: 'Better sleep, better health, better learning'.

"Sleep is regularly ignored, even though it's a pillar of healthy living alongside sensible eating and regular exercise," says Professor David Hillman, Chair, Sleep Health Foundation.

"This event is about engaging with children about sleep needs and helping them to realize just how important it is."

Research shows short sleep duration and poor sleep scheduling are associated with health problems such as overweight and obesity, behavioural problems and poor academic performance.

"We now know healthy sleep is important for physical growth, learning, positive mood, energy and daytime concentration," says Associate Professor Nick Antic, sleep physician and President, Australasian Sleep Association.

"And healthy sleep is not just about duration - it's about quality and having a consistent sleep routine that keeps your body clock in sync."

The specialists warn parents against allowing children to watch television, play electronic games or consume caffeine late at night.

Children may be sleep deprived if they're overactive and/or moody, not able to concentrate, falling asleep during short car trips or while watching TV, or having problems at school.

### **HOW MUCH DAILY SLEEP DO YOU NEED?**

*Source: Sleep Health Foundation*

- Newborns (up to 2 months) 12 - 18 hours
- Infants (2 months - 1 year) 14 - 15 hours
- Toddlers (1 - 3 years) 12 - 15 hours
- Pre-schoolers (3 - 5 years) 11 - 13 hours
- School age (5 - 12 years) 9 - 11 hours
- Teenage (12 - 18 years) 8.5 - 9.5 hours
- Adults 7 - 9 hours

### **SIGNS YOU'RE NOT GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP**

Irritability, low mood, hyperactivity, sleepiness, poor attention span, craving sugary foods, argumentative, short temperedness, low tolerance

### **THE 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR BETTER SLEEP**

For kids aged 0-12 years

1. Go to bed at the same time every night, preferably before 9pm
2. Have an age-appropriate nap schedule
3. Establish a consistent bedtime routine
4. Make your child's bedroom sleep conducive – cool, dark, and quiet
5. Encourage your child to fall asleep independently
6. Avoid bright light at bedtime and during the night, and increase light exposure in the morning
7. Avoid heavy meals and vigorous exercise close to bedtime
8. Keep all electronics, including televisions, computers, and mobile phones, out of the bedroom and limit the use of electronics before bedtime
9. Avoid caffeine, including many fizzy drinks, coffee, and teas
10. Keep a regular daily schedule, including consistent mealtimes

**For further information contact Lucy Williams M. 0403 753 028A**