



TELEVISION, LIGHT, ELECTRONICS, AND SLEEP

Children with too much TV or video game exposure before bed are more likely to be overweight, have poorer grades in school, and more trouble sleeping

What Affects Sleep

- Television
- Video Games
- Tablets
- Computers or Laptops
- E-Readers
- Smart Phones
- Night Lights



The Facts

- Electronic devices, TVs and most lights give off light that affect your children's ability to sleep well.
- The body's sleep-wake clock or circadian rhythm is very sensitive to light.
- Light around bedtime stops the body from making enough melatonin.
- Melatonin is a hormone that makes your children sleepy when it gets dark.
- Light and electronics before bed wakes up the brain and tells the body that its time to be awake.
- Light can even affect melatonin 2-hours before bedtime.

What about Electronics in the Bedroom?

- 1. They become associated with sleep** - If your children fall asleep using an electronic device now, they are more likely to want it or need it to fall back asleep when they wake up at night.
- 2. You lose control** - With electronic devices in the bedroom, you cannot monitor and control what your children are watching, and how much they watch.
- 3. Children watch more TV** - Children with a TV or other electronic in their bedroom watch 5 ½ more hours of screen time a week, than children without electronics in the bedroom.
- 4. Scary thoughts and dreams** - The scary images your children may see on TV or in video games can cause more bedtime fears or nightmares. This can make it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep.

What You Can Do

One of the best things you can do to make your children's sleep environment better is to remove all electronics from the bedroom.

1. Make a bedtime routine without electronics

If your children have already associated the TV with sleep, removing it may be a big change. Try to start a consistent bedtime routine, and 1 hour before bedtime, replace TV time with story time, yoga, or coloring.

2. Practice what you preach.

Take electronic devices out of your bedroom. Rules make more sense to children if they see the whole family following them.

3. Establish a special place

Move all electronics in the home to one place, that is not a bedroom or sleep space. Here is where your children can watch TV or play with other electronic devices.

4. Keeping monsters away

Violent, or fast-paced TV and games can make monsters seem more real. Try using "monster spray." This can be a mix of water and lavender oil in a spray bottle. Spray this in the room before bedtime to help ease your children's fears, and create a more comfortable sleep environment.

5. Nightmares, scary dreams & fear of the dark

Taking away light helps your children sleep, but can sometimes bring on fears of the dark and scary dreams. Try flipping over the pillow to the "good dream side" to calm fears and help your children easily fall back to sleep. If a night-light is needed, try a non-LED bulb far away from the sleep space



PARENT RESOURCES

- Nationalsleepfoundation.org
- Sleepforkids.org
- HealthyChildren.org
- AAP Program: "Brush, Book, Bed" is available at: <http://bit.ly/bedroutine>
- <http://www.seattlechildrens.org/clinics-programs/sleep-disorders/resources/>