

STUDY: SLEEP DEPRIVATION ON THE RISE IN YOUNGSTERS;
BRIGHT FUTURE LEARNING CENTER SAYS TIME MANAGEMENT SKILLS
ESSENTIAL FOR GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

Sleep deprivation among children in our country is rapidly on the rise. According to a recent study by Medco Health Solutions, use of sleep aids among youngsters ages 10 to 19 has increased 85% since 2000. In another study, conducted by the Departments of Pediatrics and Child and Family Psychiatry, Hasbro Children's Hospital and Brown University School of Medicine, teachers reported that 10% of their students were falling asleep in class.

Studies suggest that children in grade school grow into sleep loss. That is, as children grow older, they tend to fall asleep at increasingly later times, yet continue to awaken at the same time for school. As a result, many students go through the day plain tired.

Paul Dhillon, Founder and Director of Education for Bright Future Learning Center, says sleep deprivation is especially problematic among high school juniors and seniors because they just don't make the time to sleep.

Dhillon explains, "Sixteen-year-old and 17-year-old students are being pulled in many directions. They have to contend with homework, extracurricular activities, the stress of exams, maintaining their GPAs, and SATs. And then there's the socialization factor. They go out more with their friends which means they stay up later."

On average, a teenager needs 8.5 to nine hours of sleep a night, but most only get six which means they get up tired and remain tired the entire day. Dhillon says regardless of age, students who don't get enough of sleep each night are unable to concentrate, study, and work effectively. The results include:

- Careless mistakes – Students who are not alert, often make careless mistakes on homework and exams, resulting in lower grades.
- Inability to understand new concepts – Because lack of sleep affects concentration, it takes tired students longer to grasp new concepts. Critical thinking skills are decreased.
- Slower comprehension skills – Tired students have difficulty comprehending what they are reading. Because students often need to 'read between the lines,' they can miss the author's tone and intent.

Dhillon says students need to learn good time management and organizational skills. "High schools students know what they have to do and when it needs to get done. Just like they need to plan and allocate time for homework and other activities, they need to allocate time for the proper amount of sleep. That may mean cutting back on socializing, but they need to make sleeping a priority. The earlier in life a child learns these skills, the better."