

# Discussing a Child's Sleep Problems

Parents may not be aware that they can discuss their children's sleep problems with you. As a child's primary care provider, you can screen for sleep disorders and encourage healthy sleep habits the same way you promote a healthy diet, exercise and other good habits.

Sleep disorders can affect every aspect of a child's physical, emotional, cognitive and social development. How can you screen for the myriad of sleep disorders during a busy office visit?

Studies show that asking a simple question – “Does your child have sleep problems?” – is not as likely to identify sleep disorders as using a pediatric screening tool, such as BEARS. The basic sleep issues to screen for are easy to remember with the **BEARS** acronym.

## Bedtime Problems

**Sample Question:** Does your child have any problems falling asleep at bedtime?

## Excessive Daytime Sleepiness

**Sample Question:** Is your child sleepy during the day?

## Awakening During the Night

**Sample Question:** Does your child wake up a lot at night?

## Regularity & Duration of Sleep Problems

**Sample Question:** Is your child's sleep schedule irregular, with inconsistent bedtimes and wake times from day to day?

## Snoring

**Sample Question:** Does your child snore a lot or have trouble breathing at night?

If parents answer yes to any of these questions, further investigation is needed. You can then decide how to proceed:

- Provide counseling and handouts about common bedtime/sleep problems.
- Schedule another visit with the time necessary for discussion and management.
- Schedule a polysomnogram (sleep study).
- Refer the child to a sleep specialist for evaluation and treatment.

*Parkway SleepHealth Centers offers comprehensive pediatric sleep medicine care, including family suites that make overnight sleep studies more convenient and relaxing for children and parents, as well as at-home testing options. If you would like to speak with our physician directly, please call us at 919-462-8081.*



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