

Solutions for Insomnia

The California Partners Project is engaged in a statewide listening tour with California mothers, parents, and caregivers to understand how parents are navigating the integration of technology and devices into most aspects of their children's lives. We have heard from parents and educators that youth are experiencing insomnia. A therapist in northern California noted about her adolescent clients, "They are staying up really late and staying up with technology. They are stimulating themselves with this at the later hours in the night. They report being really off in the morning and very sluggish." A mom of an adolescent daughter reported that at night "I have to go to her and say, 'It is 1 am. You must get off social media and go to sleep.'"

Many kids can't fall asleep at night, sleep patterns have changed and too many are not getting enough sleep. According to the [American Academy of Sleep Medicine](#), teens need approximately 8-10 hours of sleep per night to support their growth and development. However, in our report, [Are the Kids Alright?](#), we found a majority of the teens we interviewed had poor sleep patterns including sleeping with digital devices in their bedrooms, staying on a screen until just before bed, and thinking about social media instead of shutting down at night.

Sleep is critical for more than just a good mood. According to Dr. Matthew Walker Professor of Neuroscience and Psychology at the University of California, Berkeley and Founder and Director of the [Center for Human Sleep Science](#), a good night's sleep supports our ability to learn, which can lead to better academic grades, improved moods, optimizes growth and development, promotes better athletic performance and helps prevent injuries; it even supports a healthy immune system.

Tips to combat insomnia from Dr. Michael Rich, Founder of the Digital Wellness Lab and Pediatrician at Boston Children's Hospital:

TIP 1: Maintain regular bedtimes and waking times, even on the weekends.

Everyone has a natural circadian rhythm that is disrupted when bedtimes aren't consistent. Consistent bedtimes and enough sleep are especially important for teens. ([Family Digital Wellness Guide](#), Digital Wellness Lab)

TIP 2: Keep the bedroom free of screen devices, including TV, and stop using them an hour before bedtime.

The blue light from screens can disrupt the body's natural sleep cycle, suppressing secretion of melatonin, the hormone that helps the body sleep. The content on screens is also arousing, keeping the mind at work when it is time to wind down.

TIP 3: Help your kids resist FOBLO "Fear of Being Left Out."

Temptations to pick up the phone can disrupt sleep. Kids get anxious about potentially missing a message or losing relationships if they aren't responsive to every text message. Have your kids let their friends know when they will be offline and back online; tell them they can blame "strict parents." Turn phones off at night and charge them outside the bedroom.

TIP 4: Turn everything off when you get into bed.

Screens, lights, even music all stimulate your arousal system and make your brain work. Create a dark and cool room for optimal sleeping conditions.