

Read to Me

A newsletter for families and others who care about the future of young people.

Volume 3, Issue 1

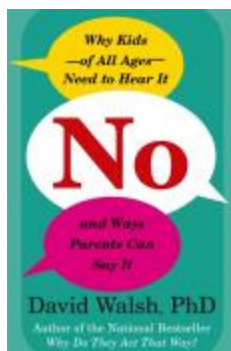
Fall 2008

Special Points of Interest in this newsletter:

- Imagination Library—How Books are Selected
- Open Your Eyes
- Better Times at Bedtime
- Cyril Paul Event
- “Bouquet of Thanks” Craft Project



United Way
of Southwest Minnesota



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

“WILD ABOUT PARENTING”

This year’s Annual Parent Education Event will be

Dr. David Walsh presenting his “Say Yes to No” Message
Tuesday, March, 24, 2009 from 7-8:30 p.m.

The event is free for all and will be held at the
Marshall High School Theatre
in Marshall, Minnesota

Go to our website for additional information www.unitedwayswmn.org.
Find out how to join a book discussion group.

Imagination Library - How Books are Selected

Yearly the hardcover books for Imagination Library are selected by a Dolly Parton Foundation committee composed of parents, teachers, child development specialists, librarians, publishers and others specializing in early childhood literacy. Special attention is given to age-appropriateness and the development of positive themes such as promotion of self-esteem and confidence, regard for diversity, and the appreciation of art. Ten to fifteen new titles are rotated into Imagination Library each year.

The first book every child receives is “The Little Engine That Could” and the last book when a child turns 5 is related to their approaching Kindergarten/School experience.

The books are distributed on a group basis, which means that all

children born in a calendar year receive the same book each month. Even though new titles are included each year for each group, some books remain on the distribution list. Children within a household may receive the same book that an older sibling received earlier. Many families view each book as a part of their child’s personal home library.

Newborn children are entered into Group 1. All Group 1 books, except for four titles, are board books. Some of these books have high contrast pictures (black, white, and red colors) which are excellent for infants. Most important is the bonding that occurs with the baby through a cozy special time together. At this age, more important than what words are being read is the sound of the person’s voice, their caring touch and the melodic strain of the words that are spoken.

In conjunction with United Way of America and its Born Learning Initiative, reading tips for parents are printed in some of the books. *The Little Engine That Could* has general tips for reading that are applicable for children of all ages. Other books include reading tips that are more age specific such as: tips for reading with your infant, tips for reading with your toddler, and tips for reading with your preschooler.

Parents are encouraged to frequent their local library to choose books that aren’t included in their home library. This practice only strengthens the foundation of being a life-long reader and learner, and it supports community involvement at the same time. We also encourage parents to visit their local bookstore for additional books in different formats such as toy books that are suitable for the tub and chewing, etc. The more books in the home, the better!

Please keep your address current with United Way of Southwest Minnesota



Imagination Library books are mailed out at bulk library rates and can not be forwarded by the post office.

Call us (507-929-2273) or e-mail us (unitedway@unitedwayswmn.org) right away if your address changes. It takes 6-8 weeks for address changes to go into effect at the publisher.

bits of understanding

This information is a follow-up on last Spring's "Wild About Parenting" speaker: **Mary Sheedy Kurcinka "Sleepless in America: Is Your Child Misbehaving or Missing Sleep?"**

Open your eyes...the issue may be shut eye. Is your child sleeping enough and why it matters.

The scenario: Your three-year-old is fussy all afternoon, crying and throwing her toys onto the floor. **Your assumption:** Your child is misbehaving. She needs some discipline. **Consider this instead:** Your child is misbehaving. She needs some sleep.

Wake up call: Simply counting the number of hours your child is sleeping isn't the best way to tell if your child is getting enough sleep. Instead, pay attention to your child's temperament and behavior, especially between 4 and 5 p.m.



- Is she generally happy, calm and cooperative? Then she's probably well rested.
- Is she crabby, fussy, yawning, rubbing her eyes or falling asleep at the table? Then, you guessed it, she may be over tired.

Think outside of the clock: Likewise, when you are trying to figure out whether lack of sleep may be to blame for your child's poor behavior, more than the hours matter. Ask yourself:

- What time did your child go to bed last night?
- Did she sleep well last night (or interrupted sleep due to snoring, dreams, etc)?
- What time did she wake up in the morning?
- Did she take a good nap?
- Is she getting ready to drop a nap?
- Did she have more excitement than usual in the day?

You may find that a nap—not a time out—is what your child really needs. And for the future, you can help put your child's sleep-related issues to bed by putting your child to sleep regularly at the same time each night, following the same bedtime routine, and keeping a sleep journal.

Why is Bedtime Important?

A good night's sleep is crucial for children's healthy growth and immune function. The human growth hormone is released during deep sleep, so children require this stage of sleep to grow, while REM (rapid eye movement) is required for learning and memory.

Having a certain bedtime, complete with rituals and regularity, is important for growing children and their parents. Researchers who study sleep behaviors have found that children who go to bed and get up at different times each day instead of at set hours often have trouble falling asleep at night. They believe that children should go to bed at the same time every night, including weekends, and get up at the same time every morning. By consistently sticking to a bedtime ritual, children will fall asleep easier and bedtime will be a more pleasant time. Consistency helps children feel rested and energized and it also enables parents to plan time for themselves.



Children who do not get enough sleep tend to have behavioral problems. When children are sleepy, they unconsciously begin to look for things to stimulate them. Often this need emerges as disruptive behavior. Some of these kids seem hyperactive, but it's not hyperactivity, it's actually sleep deprivation.

Continued on Page 3

Children's Sleep Guide



Use the guide to determine how much total sleep (total sleep = Night and naps) your child needs.

- ☺ **Newborn to 3 months....16 - 17 Hours**
- ☺ **3 months to 6 months....14 - 15 Hours**
- ☺ **6 months to 12 months...12 - 14 Hours**
- ☺ **12 months to 2 years.....13 Hours**
- ☺ **2 years to 4 years.....11 - 12 Hours**

"bits of understanding" is taken from civitas.org, a national nonprofit organization that develops public awareness and educational tools that communicate the best of what we know about how children develop and learn.

"Better Times at Bedtime" taken from the NDSU Wellness Center Child Care Service with references from www.nncc.org, www.parents.com, and www.more.com

Ages and Stages

Infants—

Newborns slip between the waking and sleeping state with little regard for day or night, typically feeding every 2 to 4 hours. Around 6 to 8 weeks a more regular cycle begins to emerge with the baby sleeping more at night and staying awake more during the day.

By four months the longest sleep period should occur at night and last 4 to 9 hours with a mid-morning and mid-afternoon nap developing. Parent's should start reinforcing their child's biological rhythms by anticipating their baby's natural sleepiness, and lay him down before he falls asleep, or gets overtired.



6 to 18 months—

As a baby approaches 6 months of age, parents often ask, "Why is my child still waking up three and four times a night?" Instead, they should be asking, "Why does my child need my help to get back to sleep when he wakes up?" By 6 months, if a healthy child is waking up at night for feedings, it is a learned behavior. The more often you put your baby to bed when he is still awake, the more practice he'll get soothing himself to sleep.

Around 8-9 months, some babies who had been sleeping through the night suddenly begin to wake in the middle of the night and cry. At this age they are beginning to understand object permanence. You are there even if they can't see you. Parents are advised to give their child a reassuring pat and leave the room. If the crying continues, wait five minutes and return to calm the child, but do not pick him up. Parents wait for increasingly longer intervals between reassuring visits until the child finally falls asleep. Ideally, the whole process should take as little as three days.

18 to 36 months—

By 18 months, most babies have given up their morning nap; at 3, some will be ready to give up their afternoon nap as well. At this stage there is so much excitement in a toddler's life that she can't wind down at night, even when she's exhausted. If you find that your toddler has a cranky period toward the end of the day, it may be a sign he needs to go to sleep earlier.

Children often wind up in your bed at this age as a result of two major developmental milestones; instead of just crying, they can now actually call out "Mommy" or "Daddy," which is a lot harder to ignore; and the move into a big-kid bed means they don't even need to call, they can just show up at your bedside.

Remember that toddlers derive great comfort from rituals, so it's crucial to maintain nighttime routines like bathing, singing, and

reading bedtime stories. Establish rules and make it clear that your bedroom is off limits for sleeping. By leaving the crib up during this transition, toddlers can start out in their big bed, and if they continue to get up, can be placed back in their crib. Eventually they will figure out that they need to stay in their own room.

3 to 5 years—

Nightmares and night terrors, which usually strike preschoolers, are common causes of night disturbances and resistance to bedtime at this age. "Nightmares are scary to kids, but night terrors are scarier to parents." Night terrors are a partial arousal from deep sleep usually occurring within the first couple of hours after your child goes to sleep. She might sit up and scream, but she is not awake and not conscious that you're there. Night terrors tend to occur when your child is overtired. If she experiences them repeatedly, taking a very short nap in the late afternoon can reduce her fatigue. Nightmares, on the other hand, tend to be concentrated in the second half of the night during REM sleep. Bad dreams are young children's way of playing out unresolved feelings or experiences. Since they cannot yet distinguish between fantasy and reality, the scary feelings remain. In addition to providing comfort, help your child figure out ways to combat her fears. Dream catchers, monster sprays (a water spritzer) or a stuffed animal are just a few ideas.



6 to 11 years—

Why Sleep is Important

Research demonstrates that children who get more sleep:

- * **Have higher grade averages**
- * **Perform better on reasoning and mathematical skills**
- * **Have higher reading scores**
- * **Experience fewer accidents**
- * **Get along with others better**
- * **Focus**
- * **Get sick less frequently**
- * **Are less likely to be overweight**

Sleep tips for School-aged Children

- ☉ Continue to emphasize need for a regular and consistent sleep schedule and bedtime routine
- ☉ Make child's bedroom conducive to sleep—dark, cool & quiet
- ☉ Keep TV and computers out of the bedroom
- ☉ Avoid caffeine.

For more information on the importance of sleep for children and how it can effect them, refer to Mary Sheedy Kurcinka's book "Sleepless in America: Is Your Child Misbehaving or Missing Sleep?" and her website: <http://www.parentchildhelp.com>.



United Way of Southwest Minnesota

109 S 5th St, Suite 300
PO Box 41
Marshall, MN 56258

Phone: 507-929-2273
Email: unitedway@unitedwayswmn.org

**This is a special
newsletter for families
who have children
enrolled in Imagination
Library.**



Warm up to the beat of Caribbean Music this January!

This will be an upbeat event for kids, introducing them to songs from the Caribbean culture. Cyril will have the children up and involved in dance and music that they will long remember. So mark your calendar for -



**Thursday,
January 22,
2009
6:30 pm
Marshall
ECFE
Located at
the
Marshall
Middle
School**

If you wish to check out some of Cyril Paul's music please visit www.cyrilpaul.com

Bouquet of Thanks

'Tis the season to express everything you are thankful for. This simple project makes a wonderful centerpiece that's not only colorful, but interactive as well! Have your kids make these leaf cards and as your guests arrive, ask them to write what they are thankful for on the leaf. Just before dinner, have everyone choose a card from the bouquet and take turns reading them out loud.

What you'll need:

- * Construction paper (yellow, red, brown, green, orange)
- * Scissors
- * Black Sharpie marker
- * Craft sticks, straws or pipe cleaners

- * White craft glue
- * Vase or basket
- * Floral foam
- * Ribbon

Directions:

1. Cut out a leaf pattern
2. Trace onto your construction paper and cut out leaves in various colors
3. Glue each leaf to your craft stick, straw or pipe cleaner
4. When the leaves are dry, arrange them in your vase (if you'd like, wrap a piece of coordinating ribbon around the vase)
5. As your guests arrive have them write something they're thankful for on a leaf

United Way of Southwest Minnesota is an independent, local organization working to create lasting changes in people's lives and the communities in Lincoln, Lyon, Murray, Yellow Medicine and western Redwood Counties of Minnesota.

Learn more about United Way of Southwest Minnesota at www.unitedwayswmn.org

**While you're there,
sign up for our free
e-newsletter**

Do you have a neighbor whose children are not registered for Imagination Library? If they live in our service area, have them go to www.unitedwayswmn.org to register!!