

Lack of Sleep Can Affect a Kid's IQ

By Margaret O. Kirk, *Family Health Handbook*, *workingmother.com*, February/March 2008

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Researchers at the University of Virginia Health System believe that sleep disorders can impair a child's IQ as much as lead exposure can (March 2007).

What You Need to Know

Children who snore nightly scored significantly lower on vocabulary tests than those who snore less often. The vocabulary differences associated with nightly snoring are equivalent to the IQ dissimilarities attributed to lead exposure — and "even at nontoxic levels, lead exposure can reduce a child's IQ by more than seven points," according to Paul M. Suratt, MD, a pulmonologist who directs the University of Virginia Sleep Laboratory. Deep sleep patterns are necessary for healthy development, he adds, and snoring frequency has so far proven "to be the most reliable predictor of intellectual impairment and behavioral problems."

What You Can Do

See your pediatrician if your child snores chronically or otherwise can't sleep well.

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