

With all the activities that children are involved in from young ages, it is becoming harder and harder for kids to get a full night's sleep.

But, how much is the right amount?

The right amount varies with age. From two to six, the average child needs about 10-12 hours of sleep, as well a nap. From six to 10, they need about 10 hours a night, and from ages 10-14, they need around nine.

The quality of sleep is as important as the quantity. It's important for sleep to progress through the normal stages from onset, then deep sleep and finally to REM stage sleep.

A normal amount of deep and REM sleep is necessary for a child to be rested, refreshed and alert for the next day.

Here are some things that can be done to maximize their sleeping time.

- Encourage exercise and outdoor play in the afternoon for their dose of natural light exposure.
- Keep sound and visual stimulation such as television, computers, video games and bright lights to a minimum within one hour of bedtime.
- Avoid beverages that contain caffeine like soda and tea.

If a child snores loudly, sweats or kicks repetitively during most nights' sleep, they may have a sleep disorder that could be disrupting the quality of their sleep, their day time learning

performance and other normal activities.

Those observations should be reported to a pediatrician who may then decide to request a consultation with a pediatric sleep specialist.