

# Who Can *Help?*

- ✓ First, consult your pediatrician/family practice doctor for advice and to make sure that medical problems aren't contributing to your child's sleep problems (such as: colic, allergies, ear infection, breathing problems, or other health-related problems).
- ✓ If needed, consult a sleep expert. A sleep expert will most likely recommend a short-term behavioral intervention. Behavior therapy has been shown to be effective, even with severe and long standing sleep problems.



## Resources

### To find a sleep expert and for more information:

- ✓ <http://www.sleepfoundation.org/>
- ✓ <http://www.sleepcenters.org/>
- ✓ <http://www.sleepeducation.com/>
- ✓ Durand, V.M. (1998). Sleep better!: A guide to improving sleep for children with special needs. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.



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## **A Behavioral-Health Information Program**

for Children and Adults with Disabilities

## Sleep Matters: How to Help Your Kids Sleep



# Infant Well-Being

## What do We Mean by *Sleep Problems?*

About 43% of all kids and as many as 86% of kids with developmental delays experience some type of difficulty with sleep.

### Problems include:

- ✓ Difficulty settling down and falling asleep at bedtime
- ✓ Frequently waking up during the night
- ✓ Irregular sleep patterns
- ✓ Sleeping only in short stretches at a time
- ✓ Daytime sleepiness



## Why Should We *Help Kids Sleep Better?*

- ✓ Kids with sleep problems have trouble:

- Thinking
- Remembering
- Paying attention
- Being creative
- Succeeding at school



- ✓ Sleep problems can make kids moody and short-tempered
- ✓ Good sleep is important for health, growth, and development
- ✓ When kids sleep poorly, the whole family suffers! Moms of poor sleepers are more likely to be:
  - Stressed
  - Depressed
  - Have marriage problems
  - And may be more likely to abuse their kids!



## *How* can we help kids sleep better?

- ✓ Keep a consistent bedtime routine beginning at the same time every day
- ✓ Include a series of quiet activities (e.g., bathing, brushing teeth, changing into PJs, reading a book) and end in the child's bed
- ✓ Keep your child's bedroom cool, dark (nightlight only), and quiet
- ✓ Let your child fall asleep alone
- ✓ NOTE: **Avoid TV and videos before bed**, they make it harder for kids to settle down to fall asleep and increase the likelihood of waking up in night.

