

## Reset Children's Internal Clock for School Success

By Patti Teel  
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During the long summer break many children have gotten used to staying up late and sleeping in simply "because it's vacation." If this problem isn't corrected before school starts, children are likely to struggle as they adjust to an earlier schedule. Patti Teel, author of *The Floppy Sleep Game Book*, says that insufficient sleep affects a child's mood, immunity and ability to learn. She gives parents the following tips to help reset their children's internal clock *before* school begins—so they can get off to a good start.

### **Before** school starts:

- ◆ Move bedtime up by 15 –30 minutes one week before school starts.
- ◆ Consistently wake kids up earlier during the week before school starts.
- ◆ Motivate children to get out of bed by creating fun reasons for them to get going. For example, plan an early morning treasure hunt, a picnic breakfast at the park or a back to school breakfast with friends.
- ◆ Be sure your child spends time outside in the morning; early morning sunshine helps to reset the internal clock.

### **During** the school year:

- ◆ Allow time for a leisurely and consistent bedtime routine. Don't vary bedtime by more than one hour a night or a total of two hours for the entire weekend. If it does, you're setting your child up for a kind of jet lag when Monday morning rolls around.
- ◆ Warn children five to ten minutes before they need to get ready for bed so they can wrap up what they're doing.
- ◆ Have quiet activities before bed. (Limit television, video games and computer time.)
- ◆ Avoid caffeinated drinks in the late afternoon and evening.
- ◆ Teach children relaxation techniques to help them relax and fall asleep.

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Dubbed "The Dream Maker" by People magazine, Patti Teel is a former teacher and the creator of an award winning relaxation audio series for children. Her book, *The Floppy Sleep Game*, gives parents techniques to help their children relax, deal with stress and fall asleep. She is a popular speaker and presents innovative workshops for parents, children, and health professionals. Get R&R tips and sign up for her newsletter at [www.pattiteel.com](http://www.pattiteel.com). You can listen to her online radio show at [www.timeoutwithpattiteel.com](http://www.timeoutwithpattiteel.com).