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ARE YOUR KIDS IN THE RIGHT SCHOOL?

Our panel of experts answer your
burning education questions



Ch-ch-changes

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system this year. We get the lowdown

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**AN INTELLIGENT
GUIDE TO PARENTING**
February 2015

Health

Snoring in kids: harmless or harmful?

One of every ten children snores, but is a snoring child cute or cause for concern? Dr Jocelyne Charest, DMD Neuromuscular Dentist at the German Dental & Neuromuscular Clinic, has the answers



Snoring in children isn't quite like adult snoring: a wheeze, a whistle or heavy breathing is about the extent of child snoring. But if you can hear them breathing, that means there could be an obstruction, and that needs to be investigated.

A third to a half of all children who snore also suffer from sleep apnea, which means they are deprived of oxygen while they are sleeping – a serious issue for adults and children which can affect mental, physical and social development.

IQ and ADHD

Clinical evidence shows that a child with sleep apnea is nine times more likely to be in the bottom ten percent of the class at the age of six. A child who snores until the age of six is four times more likely to be in the bottom 25 per cent of the class before they reach high school. Additionally,

children with untreated sleep apnea will, on average, be ten IQ points below their potential.

Studies have also shown a link between sleep disorders in children and ADHD: it is possible that children lacking sleep may turn to behaviours associated with ADHD as a way to compensate. Even without conclusive findings on which triggers the other, it is worth monitoring children who do have ADHD for sleep problems like snoring.

Detective work

The earlier snoring in children is detected, the earlier it can be corrected. But don't rely exclusively on your child's GP or pediatrician to automatically pick up on this problem: Most GPs only get to see kids when they are sick, which makes it hard for them to assess what normal looks like for that child.

Others may not be aware of the relationship between airways and tooth development. Sleep apnea is often associated with mouth breathing, which leads to distorted growth of the teeth and jaws. Consequently, dentists are often the first people to see subtle changes that can be indicative of such a problem, and a trained neuromuscular dentist has a better chance of figuring out what is really going on.

Get listening

If you have children or grandchildren: listen to them sleeping. They should be breathing through their nose and their mouth, and their breathing should be silent. If you see mouth breathing or hear noisy breathing, get it checked out.

If you know children being treated for ADHD, find out if they snore or are mouth breathers - you could

be saving a child from a lifetime of misdiagnosis, medication and other problems.

How we can help

After an examination, if necessary we will refer your child to an ENT (ear, nose and throat) specialist or a sleep physician for confirmation of the diagnosis. If necessary, the treatment can be a tonsillectomy (removal of tonsils by surgery) to remove obstructions to a clear airway – in recent years, the use of lasers has even led to painless procedures and quicker healing. Later on, a palatal expander may be used to help the development of their palate.

*Dr. Jocelyne Charest, DMD
Neuromuscular Dentist, German
Dental & Neuromuscular Clinic,
Cluster W, JLT, www.germardent.com
(04 379 47 22).*