

Report says kids need more sleep

by Chris Thomas, Oregon News Service

Youngsters in Oregon and around the nation are not getting enough sleep, according to a new report that examines the amount of time children spend indoors on electronic devices – and how this over-stimulation affects their sleep.

Report author Kevin Coyle, vice president for education and training at the National Wildlife Federation, says a generation ago, children spent hours outdoors playing and interacting with others. Today, the average Oregon child or teen spends seven to eight hours per day between computers and cell phones, playing video games or watching tele-

vision. “This has a number of implications for the kids; their health, their overall fitness levels. There are a number of reasons why we think that this new ‘indoor child’ phenomenon in American society has really affected the ability of children to get a good night’s sleep,” stated Coyle.

The report indicates that, on average, kids ages 8 through 18 are losing from 10 to 14 hours of sleep per week because they are over-stimulated by electronic use. Coyle says parents can help children obtain more balance by making sure they get regular exercise and spend at least an hour a day outdoors, because natural light helps promote sleep.

He also suggests trying to

get kids to “unplug” from computers, cell phones and TVs at least an hour before bedtime – an idea he knows could meet with some resistance, “About half of all the kids in America now have a TV in their bedroom. And the other (rule) is, particularly for older children, to park their cell phones somewhere other than in the bedroom, because these kids will often text each other in the middle of the night.”

For more tips to prompt children to spend more time outside and reduce their “screen time,” a new online guide is available for parents and caregivers, at beoutthere.org.

The full report, “Green Time for Sleep Time,” is at nwf.org.

Census data has implications for kids

Oregon’s working families continue to face a painful struggle to provide basic needs like food and health care, new numbers from the census bureau show.

According to data released by the Census Bureau September 13, the poverty rate for both children and families in the United States rose between 2009 and 2010, with 9.2 million families now in poverty. The child poverty rate hit a record high of 22%, a level not seen since 1994. For children under age 6, the poverty rate between 2009 and 2010 increased to 25.3 percent from 23.8 percent, while the number in poverty increased to 6.3 million from 6.0 million nationwide.

“A financially stable family gives children the best chance at a healthy, safe and successful life,” says Children First Pol-

icy Director, Regan Gray. “These numbers show that now, more than ever, it’s critical that legislators continue to fund programs like Employment Related Day Care and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), which allow parents to find work while providing for their children’s most fundamental needs.”

Children who grow up in poverty suffer higher rates of health, and developmental setbacks than other children. According to the non-profit advocacy group, Children First for Oregon, children’s physical health, cognitive ability, school achievement, and behavioral and emotional well being suffer as a result of growing up in poverty. With Oregon’s unemployment rate still above the national average and SNAP /foodstamp enrollment at an all time high, many families in Oregon are living on the brink.

“A small amount of assistance with the cost of food, child care, or a doctor’s ap-

pointment can protect a family’s security and all of our children’s future success,” says Gray. “At the same time, this assistance can prevent costly child-welfare interventions down the road. In this gradual economic recovery, families need all the help they can get to provide a safe and stable environment for their children. Having these basic needs met allows parents to focus on improving their family’s situation, and can help us balance our budget as a state.”

More detailed information on the state of Oregon’s children will be released Thursday, September 22, when the American Community Survey state-by-state data is made available.

Children First is an Oregon nonprofit, nonpartisan child advocacy organization, committed to improving the lives of Oregon’s vulnerable children and their families. More information on Children First is available at www.cffo.org.

Play bingo to help end violence

It’s true! The Ol’ Pastime Tavern, in Rainier, is partnering with the Columbia County Women’s Resource Center (CCWRC) in our work to end violence.

Come out and enjoy bingo every Friday night, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., at the Ol’ Pastime to benefit the work of the Resource Center. This is also the first event during Domestic Violence Awareness Month, which is observed every year in October. All of the fun and prizes are back, so come out for fun and help us work for healthy relationships!

CCWRC is the only agency of its kind dedicated to serving survivors of domestic and sexual violence in Columbia County.

Washington County Sheriff’s Office to offer two parenting classes in October

The Washington County Sheriff’s Office will offer two free Parent University classes in October:

- Bullying and Aggressive Behavior Among School-Aged Children – On October 12, learn about the types of aggression that constitute bullying, the reasons kids bully, warning signs, the scourge of cyber-bullying, and prevention strategies and solutions that work!

- Social Networking – Raising Safe and Responsible Digital Citizens. This class, on October 19, offers general infor-

mation about technology and the Internet, and explains how youth move seamlessly between their “real” and “online” lives. It will also cover social networking sites, sexting, other risky behaviors, and finally, ways to protect our youth.

Classes are held at the Washington County Sheriff’s Office in Hillsboro in the training center on the second floor. To RSVP, contact Christine Rouches at 503-846-2579 or christine_rouches@co.washington.or.us.

Columbia County

Mental Health

800-294-5211

Suicide Hotline

1-800-

784-2433

or

1-800-273-

TALK(8255)

Domestic Abuse

Hotline

503-397-6161

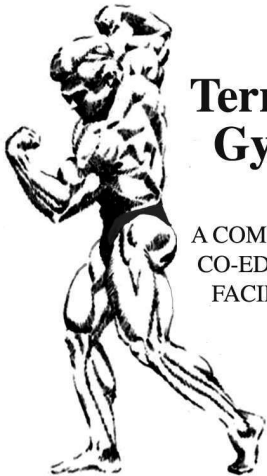
or

866-397-6161

Military Helpline

888-HLP-4-VET

(888-457-4838)



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