

Kids are growing up in the age of electronics. From cell phones and tablets to smart watches and laptops, these devices are an integral part of our lives.

Now that school is back in session, these devices also play a key role in the classroom. Many school districts are tossing the text books, and students spend a majority of their time on tablets or laptops. This switch means additional screen time is necessary for these students to excel.

While the technology offers incredible learning opportunities, parents need to know when to pull the plug on their kids' devices so quality sleep isn't a casualty of computer time.

\*\*\*SOT\*\*\*

Dr. Kaninika Verma, Director of Sleep Medicine for OSF HealthCare

(:08) "The blue light that is emitted from all these screens actually suppresses our natural sleep hormone, so it can make it more difficult for people to fall asleep, and that includes children."

To avoid blue light interference, Dr. Verma suggests shutting down all electronics at least an hour before bedtime. She says keeping a daily routine will help keep the simple act of homework from preventing quality sleep for your kids.

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Dr. Kaninika Verma, Director of Sleep Medicine for OSF HealthCare

(:22) "Get them to do their schoolwork ahead of time so it's not interfering with their sleep. If you need to get them up earlier to start that blue light, look at a screen, that's something you can do too. But again, try to basically have a really good routine where they do know that, 'I need to get my homework done, I need to get stuff done in a certain period of time.'"

In fact, Dr. Verma says bedrooms should be device-free zones.

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Dr. Kaninika Verma, Director of Sleep Medicine for OSF HealthCare

(:17) "One of the things we have noticed is although the phone may not be going off in the room, even if it's shut off, just having that electronic in the bedroom, especially cell phones, it keeps people awake. It keeps the mind awake because you're worried – oh am I going to miss a text, am I going to miss a Tweet, am I going to miss something. So it can disrupt sleep."

Parents can also designate a device drop-off area, where all electronics go an hour before bedtime. The next hour can be filled with ore calming activities like reading, bath time or family games.

OSF HealthCare Sleep Medicine provides comprehensive care for sleep disorders of all types in patients, including pediatric patients. For more information, [click here](#), or call (309) 672-5682.