

If you knew that there was one thing you could do at your event that would:

- Improve the likelihood that participants remember what they are taught
- Improve the relationships among participants
- Reduce feelings of stress and homesickness
- Reduce overeating at mealtimes
- Reduce everyone's chances of getting sick
- Improve everyone's mood and reduce disciplinary problems
- Improve leaders abilities to solve problems independently
- Make the event more fun

Would you do it?

Sleep impacts all of these areas! Getting enough sleep is one of the most important things you can do for yourself, your chaperones, your counselors, and your participants.

Sleep is crucial to success at events



Sleep Requirements

AGE	HOURS OF SLEEP NEEDED
6-9 years	10-11 hours
9-12 years	9-10 hours
Teenagers	9-10 hours
Adults	7-9 hours

PROBLEM

There are too many fun activities we want to have.

SOLUTION

Activities are truly only fun when participants feel excited about doing them. If they are tired, they won't learn as much and may cause problems. Prioritize what needs to be included in the schedule.

The teen counselors want to have some time without the youth to socialize.

While participants are on site, they must be the priority. Building relationships and supervising them is the job of the teen counselor. Build in a day before and/or after the event for teens to prepare/debrief from their experience. Make these rules known when hiring staff.

Participants are not tired.

If the evening activities include caffeine and high energy options, then participants will have a hard time calming down. Keep the last hour before bed calm. Put high energy activities, like hikes, dances, and crazy skits right after dinner.

Event can only be held in the evenings.

Working with volunteers does limit when 4-H meetings can be held, but keeping the quality of the experience in mind is just as important. If planning 4-H events late into the evening (later than 8:00 pm) try to schedule them on weekend nights so that children can sleep in the next day. Most youth members should have a bedtime around 9:00 pm.



Steps to ensure adequate sleep for 4-Hers:

- Set up group agreements at the start of overnight events with consequences for breaking quiet times.
- If possible, flip youth in beds to reduce head-to-head sleeping.
- Do not allow “screens” (such as tablets or phones) in rooms before bed.
- Set a bedtime for everyone and keep it the same each night.
- Provide thirty minutes of decompression time before lights out. Use this time for personal reflection and journaling.
- Schedule high energy activities earlier in the evening. Slow things down as time progresses (e.g., end with quiet campfire songs, not a dance).
- Schedule counselor meetings and downtime during activities that can be chaperoned in the evening, not after youth bedtime.
- Schedule time in the morning for getting ready. Alternate bathroom schedules.
- Provide “barefoot” time in the afternoon for those needing to rest. Prepare activities for participants not needing to rest that can be done quietly (such as cards for solitaire or kid magazines).
- Make sure counselors are in sleeping area when youth are there.
- Eliminate caffeine from menus, especially after lunch (such as hot cocoa or chocolate candy).
- Provide a high-protein breakfast. Breakfasts high in carbohydrates (fruits and grains) burn off quickly and leave youth feeling sluggish. Rev them up in the morning, so they can slow down in the evening.
- Provide a light evening snack. Overly full or empty stomachs make falling asleep more difficult.
- 4-H Club and project meetings should end by 8:00 pm. Events that will go longer should be planned for weekend nights when youth can sleep in the next day.
- When preparing schedules for overnight events, start with 10 hours allocated for sleep, 30 minutes for before bed decompression, and 30 minutes for waking up and getting dressed.