Introduction

Sleepy Sausage breathes through her mouth constantly. She tosses and turns all night long and frequently wakes and needs her parents. She seems to have a kind of sleep apnoea where she stops breathing and then snorts herself awake.

She is such a restless sleeper that when her mum is working late in her home office, which shares a wall with her daughter's bedroom, she can hear her bang into the wall around three times an hour as she tosses and turns so much. Although she sleeps in her own bed, she often wakes in fear so either mum or dad will sleep in her bed with her. They need to take this in turns because she rolls, snores and kicks so much that they hardly get any sleep when lying next to her.

While her twin sister has been successfully night time toilet trained, every second night or so Sleepy Sausage will wet her bed, and doesn't wake up for hours after the wetting. She is so sad when this happens that her parents have reverted her to night time nappies. Unfortunately, this also causes her distress, despite their reassurances that she is loved and still their big girl.

She speaks so nasally that most people cannot understand what she says. She also was slow to speak compared to her twin, who still does a lot of the talking for her. Her parents have tried nasal cleaning and nasal sprays to no avail. There is constant drool on her pillowcase, which they change a couple of times a week.

Sleepy Sausage is a loving and beautiful kid who just wants to please everyone, yet this sleeping and breathing problem seems to affect her ability to concentrate. Maybe she is just constantly tired?

Sleepy Sausage isn't the only one.

When Adam Mansbach's book *Get the Fuck to Sleep* hit the New York Times bestseller list, it surprised everyone. At the time of writing, it has sold over one million copies. While no one expected its popularity, is it really such a surprise?

Thirty to forty per cent of pre-schoolers have frequent problems sleeping, while nearly a third of kids will experience a sleep disorder that will lead to significant long-term effects.[1] Regardless of whether a sleep problem is mild, moderate or severe, there will be some impact on how kids are able to think, memorise and problem solve due to the disruption of the vital brain processes that take place while sleeping. At the same time, this can trigger behavioural agitation and aggression.

As a rule, the more serious the disorder, the more severe the symptoms.

At one end of the spectrum, parents wonder why their kids are so tired and grumpy. They wonder why they can't concentrate, and why they're acting out. They wonder why they're doing so badly in school, and wonder why they grind their teeth and snore. Or they worry about them being too scared to go to sleep because of nightmares or fears about the monster under the bed.

[1] Dr Chris Seton

Comment [JP1]: I thought this story (tweaked from the email a mother sent you) was a more powerful way to being, as it goes into such depth about the problems this little girl is facing. However, I'd consider replacing 'sleepy sausage' with a name, as we don't want to take away from the seriousness of an issue.

Comment [JP2]: Because the official title uses the full word, we should refer to it in full, rather than replacing letters with symbols.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are over ninety diagnosable sleep disorders. Sleep Disordered Breathing (SDB), for instance, can affect kids' brains, hearts, blood pressure, growth, appetites, teeth and jaw development and more.[2] Meanwhile, kids with Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA) struggle to function and stay awake, while undiagnosed OSA in children causes significant behaviour and learning problems, speech delays and mood problems. Kids with OSA are more likely to have difficulty following directions and five times more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD. What's more, ninety-five per cent of children with OSA are never diagnosed.[3]

Comment [JP3]: How much more likely? You say five times more likely to be diagnosed with ADHD, so it would be nice to quantify this one as well

And when kids can't sleep, neither can their parents, which leaves them short on patience, unable to perform well at work, and unable to be the parents they want to be.

Why isn't anyone doing anything?

The problem for many parents is that, even though you might notice the symptoms of a sleep disorder like snoring, noisy breathing and night waking, you assume that these are normal. The truth is that these symptoms are not normal. Common, yes, but not normal.

Take snoring, for instance. According to Dr Jim Papadopoulos, a paediatric sleep specialist, snoring is 'like having a plug in your throat that's stopping air getting in. It has effects on behaviour, learning and mood. Kids (even when they are mild mannered and doing well at day care or school), will have trouble concentrating. Studies show a drop of ten points on IQ tests.'

Comment [JP4]: Could you please check that this quote is accurate? It feels a little fragmented.

Unfortunately, no one is talking about what these symptoms mean or the damage they might be doing.

Or, if they do realise it's a problem, they want to find a quick fix. All of us are busy and tired, and having a sleep-wrecked kid makes it worse. It's no wonder we want to find the path of least resistance, like fixing snoring with a pillow under the head, or playing musical beds in the middle of the night to help settle a child.

If that doesn't work, the next step might be looking for expert help. However, this help is not easy to find, with one of my clients having visited *twenty-three* medical specialists in Australia and the US. Disordered sleep is a very specialised area of medicine – to the point that many doctors and health professionals don't know how to recognise or fix it. Some other parents I know took their child to the doctor, reporting that he was always tired. The doctor's advice? 'Get more exercise or try to relax more.' The sleep was never addressed.

Then, when parents *do* find an expert, many offer different advice and approaches, leaving parents unsure who they should listen to and what they should do.

Unsurprisingly, many parents give up. Sleep gets put into the 'too hard' basket. Some discover that they can't find a solution because parents are unable to agree on the way to handle it, and workable solutions are undermined. Or some settle into a kind of resigned complacency: 'We tried everything and it didn't work, so I guess that's just the way it is.'

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[2] Assoc Professor David Mc Intosh
[3] Dr Chris Seton

It doesn't have to be this way...

Parents need to understand the gravity of sleep issues in young kids, as well as how they can solve them. Sleep problems are serious, with the consequences reaching far beyond the frustration they cause for the family.

When kids don't get the rest they need night after night with no apparent solution, their health, growth, mood, IQ, development and more are all affected. Simply, sleep-wrecked kids can never be at their best, and neither can their parents.

What can you do?

In this book, I want to encourage you to become the lifeguard of your kids' sleep. Lifeguards save lives, watch for danger, protect and prevent swimmers from drowning. Parents do the same thing – keeping their children protected, nourished and cared for in all areas of their lives. There is no reason for sleep to be any different.

As a parent, you are in the perfect position to be a lifeguard in your kids' lives – from birth until now, you've seen them every day and have always been the first one to notice any little change. This means you are perfectly positioned to identify the signs and symptoms of sleep disorders.

However, in order to be that lifeguard, you need good information and support from the time your kids are born. (Though, if your children are older, don't panic – it's never too late to start!)

Comment [JP5]: Added because I imagine most of your readers won't have newborns – they'll have young children who are struggling with disordered sleep. Because of this, we don't want them to feel like it's a lost cause just because their kids are older.

In this book, I'm going to take you behind the scenes of your children's sleep, so you understand why sleep is so important, and are left with some practical tools to help your kids get a good night's rest. In the coming chapters, you'll discover:

The importance of sleep

We'll start by sharing why good sleep is so important, and how bad sleep affects your kids' behaviour, physical health and mental aptitude. We'll also touch on the long-term effects of sleep deprivation, as it acts like a slow disease that builds over time, as well as covering the issue of sleep deprivation for kids with special needs.

Understanding disordered sleep

To be the best lifeguard you can be, you need to develop sleep literacy – an understanding of what constitutes good sleep and what constitutes bad sleep, along with dispelling common sleep myths. This chapter will share how good sleep works and how this is disrupted by disordered sleep, along with the common causes of disordered sleep.

Making the diagnosis

What I notice day after day in my clinic is that many parents understand that sleep is important, but they seem unaware of the key signs that their kids are not getting the right sleep formula. What's more, they believe their kids are getting good quality sleep, even when the symptoms of poor sleep quality are in their faces.

In this chapter you'll learn how to identify the red flags that indicate your children are sleep deprived, so you know whether further action is necessary.

What you can do to help your kids sleep

If your kids *are* struggling with disordered sleep, the good news is that there is a lot that can be done, and it starts with changes you can make to their physical environment, emotional environment and routine throughout the day and night. It's also essential to make sure that *you* are getting the sleep you need, as this will fuel you to be the best lifeguard you can be.

How myofunctional therapy can help

When changes to your kids' routine and environment don't solve the problem, it's time to look deeper. Many sleep disorders are related to issues of the airway and facial muscles, often because they haven't been used properly (and, consequently, haven't developed properly) from birth.

In this chapter, you'll discover the essential, early life activities that need to take place to ensure these muscles develop properly, and how myofunctional therapy might be able to help if they aren't working as they should.

When to bring in a specialist

If your child has a diagnosed sleep disorder, or changes to their environment and routine aren't working, it's time to bring in the experts. There are a range of trained professionals who can assist with sleep disorders, including speech pathologists, occupational therapists, osteopaths, dentists and orthodontists, your GP and more. In this chapter, I'll outline who can help, how they can help, and how to find the right team members to help your kids get the sleep they need.

Comment [JP6]: Note that this is a recommended new chapter (see the editing notes document and notes later in this document), so you'll need to add this to the book.

The key is getting the right information, which will allow you to build your sleep literacy, and empower you to be a lifeguard of your kids' sleep.

Who am I?

As a parent I know how distressing it is when children are out of sorts and you feel helpless to fix it. There's nothing like lack of sleep or interrupted sleep to bring out the worst in kids (and their parents). On the flip side, when good sleep is the norm, kids can grow and thrive.

I'm the founder of a speech pathology and orofacial myofunctional therapy practice in Canberra. I've been working as a speech pathologist for over thirty-seven years and have conducted over 39,000 clinical consultations. I help parents recognise and fix kids' sleep problems, and I've seen firsthand how sleep problems interfere with kids' health and family happiness.

Comment [JP7]: Can I just say, wow!

As research in sleep medicine proliferates, so does our understanding of poor sleep and its many consequences. More than one million Aussie kids under the age of six are sleep deprived and, because disordered sleep is often related to the way they breathe, many are also oxygen deprived. Sadly, most of them are misdiagnosed or the problem is missed altogether.

Comment [JP8]: Source?

It's much more than just feeling foggy the next day. As a speech pathologist, I quickly discovered how sleep affects communication, learning, focus and behaviour. Sleep-wrecked kids are poorly behaved, unhappy and not alert, and are often misdiagnosed with ADHD. There's clear science to show that poor sleep and lack of oxygen to the brain can lead to stunted growth, poor brain function and immunity. These kids start school behind their peers and it's really hard for them to catch up, causing ripple effects that last a lifetime. I began to wonder how any therapy could be effective unless kids were properly rested.

Comment [PJ9]: Source?

I wrote *Sleep-Wrecked Kids* to help parents better understand the consequences of poor sleep, as well as to give them some strategies to improve their kids' sleep.

My mission is to spread the word among parents, so that every parent has this health topic on their radar, and every kid has the best chance of getting a good night's sleep every night. By doing this, our collective efforts can raise global IQ, happiness and health.

I believe that parents deserve to have the latest knowledge at their fingertips, for treatable health issues. Kids deserve to grow well, be happy and reach their full potential. Everyone deserves a good night's sleep. *Sleep-Wrecked Kids* will help make this happen – for you, and your kids.