

StarChild/Labs. • Enuresis Update

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FROM THE MAKERS OF THE SLEEPDRY[™] ALARM

Bedwetting Kids and Sleepovers

One of the most often mentioned reasons that parents call our company for bedwetting help, revolves around their kids starting to be asked over to sleepovers at friends.

Custom and peer-pressure have seemed to start the "sleepover social" at ever younger ages. Bedwetting problems used to be largely solved by 10 or 12 years of age, when kids used to start the overnights. -Now it is not uncommon for friends to start "campin out" on the living room floor as young as ages 6 or 7..

The problem with this lies in how younger children may often react to discovering another child with wetting difficulties. A teasing child that blurts Oh,...he's just a wierdo bedwetter!-can do irreparable harm for years!

I remember seeing the late actor Michael Landon on a syndicated television show, speaking about how his bedwetting problem had just decimated his younger years.His friends would mock him when his mother hung out all his bedsheets to dry. He was very vocal about the need to not just ignore this chronic problem, but help kids through the difficulty.

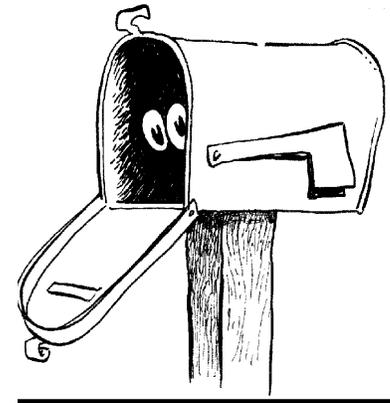
There are things that a parent can do to minimize the ramifications of an enuretic child's first foray into an overnighter with a friend. First of all it is wise to be the first at inviting a child's "best friend", and making sure that just the one child is asked over. Then if a wetting episode happens, the parent is there to soften the situation and help explain things to the friend. It is important to allow the child feedback

as to how any problems would be handled, and to be very sensitive to young feelings. Most pros in the field feel that, if the child with the difficulty is willing,- to help them explain to the visiting friend that there is a slight problem sometimes. It should be wrapped in the statement that it's no big deal, these things are normal, - and its nice to keep these types of difficulties "just between friends". This way a child becomes used to dealing with feelings in a protected environment at first, and can develop confidence and understanding. This is a much better approach than

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just sending a child out to a potentially raucous situation where there are many kids, and a less secure environment prevails.-We have heard an amazing number of such stories in this "away" type situation. One mom told us of having pinned plastic garbage bags into the child's sleeping bag...It worked just fine-until the other kids found out- and sadly started laughing.

Eventually, however,-the child will have to face the first "away, group sleepover". Make sure the child's best friend(now informed and understanding of the problem)-is also invited, and can help with any teasing. Also phone ahead and enlist the sponsoring parents' pledge of help and under-



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standing. Parents can be informed of logistical helps: not too much salty foods or water. Perhaps the sponsoring parent can do a favor and wake the child for the restroom once or twice during the night.

The idea is to not wait so long that the "sleepover invitation" has already arrived, -but to end the bedwetting condition at the appropriate age- in advance of the social and family stress involved. That's why many physicians routinely list a bedwetting question in their back-to-school,-or yearly checkup list. This is a good time to pinpoint any growing anxiety that may be advancing.

Yes we feel the medical literature supports the clear superiority of alarm treatment with the enuretic child,-but it's also important to get the timing right in assisting any child 5 or over..it's clear that any time a child starts being afraid to go to sleepovers, -it's time to get them help!