

# parentingtips

## 'Children & Depression and Bed Sharing With Baby'



If a parent or a school psychologist thinks that a child is suffering from childhood depression, it should be taken very seriously (especially if the child is very young). Symptoms of depression in an elementary school child may include general lethargy, a lack of interest in things that used to excite him, sleep disturbances, chewed fingernails, loss of appetite and violent emotional outbursts. Other common indicators are complaints of stomach pain and a low tolerance to frustration of any kind. If depression is a problem for your child, it may be symptomatic of something else that is bothering him or her. Try to get them to verbalize their feelings and anticipate the explanation for sadness - lead the youngster into conversations that provide an opportunity to vent. Make yourself available to listen without judging or belittling the feelings expressed. Simply being understood is soothing for children (as well as adults). If the symptoms are severe or if they last more than two weeks, then it is probably severe enough to get your doctor involved along with (perhaps) the school psychologist. Untreated depression can be needlessly destructive and dangerous for people of any age.

**Parents need to know about the dangers of sharing a bed** with their baby. National experts have launched educational gatherings with parents to discuss the safest place for a baby to sleep (which is in a crib in their nursery or bedroom for the first six months). Surveys show that many young parents are confused about safe sleeping practices for their babies. The risks of crib death are greater if a baby sleeps in bed with its parents, especially if they are smokers. One way to get sound advice on this matter is by consulting your child's pediatrician for more answers on the baby sleep environment - this will allow your child to be set in an ideal sleeping pattern with a lot less risk.

## TV this Week

**'Doodlebops,'** Grade PK and Up, airs M-F at 7:30a-7:55a and again at 11a-11:30a on the Disney Channel morning line-up; check local listings. 'Doodlebops' is a musical comedy series for children. They are the ultimate rock and roll band, at least as far as preschoolers are concerned. Sort of a cross between PeeWee's Playhouse and The Monkees, the show focuses on music, dance, comedy and pro-social educational issues such as sharing and perspective taking. (TVY, E/I)