Holiday habits hit sleep rhythm

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PARENTS of grumpy kids who will not get up in the morning can blame the school holidays, according to research by the Flinders University’s Child and Adolescent Sleep Clinic.

The clinic’s Dr Michael Gradisar said relaxed rules over the summer break interrupted body rhythms for sleep and concentration.

About half of all school aged-children show the effects, he said.

“The biggest issue is they are having difficulty getting up in the morning and getting ready for school – a lot would have been sleeping in over the holidays and at night, they would be having trouble falling asleep because they have been going to bed a bit later,” Dr Gradisar said.

Many children will return to a normal sleep pattern within weeks. Those who do not can suffer lower grades, poor attention span and memory problems, anxiety, depression and family conflict.

“You can have kids possibly going to school at an early point in their body rhythms,” Dr Gradisar said.

The clinic helped solve the sleeping problems of Westbourne Park Max Hattam, 8, who had disturbed concentration.

His natural sleep time is now recognised as later – 9pm rather than 7.30pm – with “sensational” results.

SOLUTION: Max Hattam had treatment to cure sleep problems. Picture: CAMPBELL BRODIE