

Let Your Kids Be Bored

If we had a dollar for every time our kids whined, “I’m bored!”, we’d all have enough to collectively purchase our own private island...and once we arrived, our kids would somehow *still* fail to find ways to entertain themselves.

Holiday boredom is the plight for many parents this season, and with it comes a stab of guilt. But our instincts tell us how much *we* benefited from unstructured time when we were kids. Our imaginations came alive and we were able to create worlds inside of our heads with very few toys or electronics. Those quiet moments of creating our own fun built us into the adults we are today. Still, it’s hard to hear from our kids how bored they are—it feels like a failure on our part.

Boredom is defined as “the frustrating experience of wanting, but being unable, to engage in satisfying activity.” And while that sounds—and can feel—unpleasant, numerous studies have shown it’s actually good for kids to be bored.

Because when our kids are bored, they can:

- Learn how to self-motivate and act independently.
- Take responsibility for their own well-being.
- Seek out creative challenges.

So, here’s how we can realistically help our kids be bored:

1. Choose only one class or activity.

As a parent, you want to provide your kid every opportunity to succeed, so it’s tempting to enroll them in sports, music lessons, or classes to give them an academic head start. However, a tight schedule can quickly escalate to stress, short tempers, and exhaustion. Creativity requires breathing room to flourish.

2. Create a screen time strategy.

Prioritize routine tasks and creative activities before screen time. Encourage your kid to complete a checklist of things to do, like a chore, reading a chapter in a book, or some form of creative expression before turning to screens.

3. Schedule unscheduled time.

Provide art supplies or set challenges for your kids that require them to slow down and focus, like building an adult-sized LEGO tower, inventing a recipe, or teaching themselves a new skill.

Kids who face unstructured time with no planned entertainment learn to figure it out. In fact, boredom can actually be a tool to help your kid discover their passions and how to develop them. That means we have to be intentional about creating unstructured time for our kids.

From ParentCue