



## IDEAS FOR BORED CHILDREN

Creativity is inspired and imagination takes hold when boredom sets in. The worst thing parents can do is try to entertain children who are bored. You are robbing them of childhood adventure and the opportunity to learn how to self-soothe.

Part of the key to success with most of these ideas is to discuss in advance that the children are expected to find things to do when bored. Offer to help them prepare items in advance but put the responsibility on them. Here are some ideas to have on hand when your child says, *"I'm bored!"*

- 1) Have a box of unopened or rarely used toys handy.** Most children receive way too many toys and games for birthdays and holidays. After the immediate euphoria of the event subsides, often many of these toys are not enjoyed to their fullest. Instead of having them all opened at once, have your child select a few to put aside to enjoy when there is not as much competition for their attention. Then, when a child is bored, pull them out and let them pick one item to investigate and enjoy.
- 2) Keep a bin of dress-up items handy.** Just pull it out and point and see what they come up with. Regularly add to the bin when you clean out closets or get random party favors (like those cheap sunglasses) so that there's always a surprise.
- 3) Keep baking supplies on hand.** Allow them to make cookies for the family or friends. Even young children can make place-and-bake cookies with just a little supervision for the actual baking. Add to the activity by having icing or decorative items on hand for enhancement after baking.
- 4) Prepare items for the family meal.** Whether it's the salad, a bread basket, or a more complex recipe, many children enjoy cooking. A response of "come help me make dinner" can be a winner on many levels.



- 5) **Put on a show for after-dinner entertainment.** Plan, find props, and rehearse.
- 6) **Keep a running list of things to do.** At your next family meeting, why not charge everyone with the task of coming up with a list of activities they'd like to do. Post the list on the refrigerator or somewhere conspicuous, and then just point to it as needed.
- 7) **Pull ideas out of a hat.** A variation on the list idea from Item 6 is to take the activity ideas and put them on separate slips of paper then place them in a container. When it's time to come up with an idea of what to do, all they have to do is pull one out.
- 8) **Create art.** Keep art supplies handy. Paper and crayons are a good starting point. Gather craft ideas and supplies from magazines or online and have kids organize them into a binder in sheet protectors. Whether it's doing an actual project or starting by planning it and gathering supplies, there's plenty to keep busy.
- 9) **Create a rotating art exhibit.** Have several themes planned in advance and then children can always have the next exhibit to work on. To make this easy, have some frames or a designated place ready to house the art and then just switch out creations for each exhibit. Take photos, have an "opening," and otherwise make it special. But make sure the children do most of the work.
- 10) **Write a story.** Good for all ages of children who know how to write. As an enhancement, have them write "chapters" so the next idea can build on the one before.
- 11) **Build a fort.** Inside with sheets and blankets or outside with wooden pallets and branches. It's a classic!
- 12) **Fix electronics.** For your burgeoning techie, always keep things to tinker with. Have old appliances and electronics that they can take apart.
- 13) **Make science experiments.** From baking powder and vinegar to making slime, there are plenty of options. Have children gather items and ideas throughout the week to work on in their free time.



- 14) **Exercise.** The list of what to do in this category is endless. Ride bikes, take a walk, do jumping jacks. Teens can add things like lift weights.
- 15) **Play outside.** I know it's old-fashioned, but children need to do more of it.
- 16) **Create an Olympic or triathlon competition.** Have them make a list of events, do the activities, keep score, have medals, etc.
- 17) **Play board games.** Keep old favorites handy and add new ones from time to time. Trade out games with other families to keep the options fresh.
- 18) **Put together puzzles.** It's easy to always have a puzzle going. If you have a dedicated space, that's great. But "under the bed" tables which fold down to store out of the way are readily available, too.
- 19) **Earn money.** Older children and teens can be entrepreneurial. Whether it's pressure-washing the neighbor's driveway, washing cars or walking dogs, there are usually odd jobs to be had.
- 20) **Chores.** Never a fan-favorite, but this option usually becomes a catalyst for other ideas to magically appear.

These ideas are provided just to get you started. Talk with your children. Ask them to come up with more!