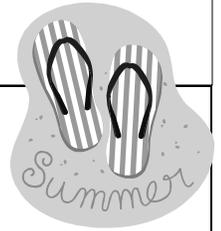


I know this is a repeat but I LOVE the content... A great reminder EVERY YEAR!



May 2015

Families First of Pella



"Mom, I'm Bored -- There's Nothing to Do" by Elaine M. Gibson

Some children find it difficult to adjust to the unstructured days of summer vacation. They are immediately "bored" and turn to adults to tell them what to do. That is, after all, what they have been during for the last nine months. Children can easily slip into a routine of watching television and moaning, "There's nothing to do."

These words can be like fingernails on a chalkboard. When faced with the prospect of bored children, parents can feel overwhelmed.

First idea: Find every summer camp and program available. If we could schedule these kids from 7 am to 9 pm in some sort of activity, problem solved. The problem however, is not one of finding enough activities, the real problem belongs to the child, not the parents.

Boredom should be a stimulus for change, for invention. Unless a child is left to struggle with boredom, he or she will never tap that inner source of creativity. Every child can think of something to do if it is a necessity. They may need some guidance in finding acceptable alternatives, but children need to practice being creative.

How Parents Can Help

Turn off the TV or at least restrict viewing time.

1. Children, like adults, use television as a substitute for thinking and doing. Television has become a quick fix for boredom and is addictive for many people. If denied this alternative to actually doing, children will eventually come up with their own activities.
2. Provide a few basic ingredients for action.

3. Parents can guide without becoming playmates. Children of all ages need books, art supplies, and writing materials of their very own

- play materials appropriate to their stage of development.
- This need not be a major expense. Remember what fun giant cardboard boxes, dirt holes, and water sprinklers can be in the summer time.
- sources for ideas
- There are hundreds of books in the library and bookstores full of good ideas for children's activities. Parents can read about activities for younger non-readers and readers can be allowed to choose their own activities.

The Bored Game

Even with the TV off and a house full of potential projects and activities, every child will attempt the "bored game" with an available parent.

- The game starts with the child saying, "I'm bored, there's nothing to do."
- The parent is both amazed (since the kid's room is full of things to do, a new tree house is in the back yard, and forty kids are playing on the front lawn) and annoyed.
- The parent then says, "What do you mean you're bored! Why can't you play withetc."
- Or the parent offers suggestions of what the child can do.
 - If the child really wants suggestions, he or she will take the first ideas and run off to play.
 - If the child wants to play the "bored game", the child will find a reason not to like ANY and EVERY suggestion.
 - "No, that's not any good."
 - "That's not fun."
 - "I don't want to do that."

How NOT to Play the Bored Game

If the parent offers a few suggestions in good faith and they are rejected, the best thing to do is **disengage**.

Say "I'm sure you will think of something. You are a clever child."

Then do nothing. There is no need for lectures or arguments. Refuse to play the game and put the responsibility squarely where it belongs, on the child. If necessary, repeat "I'm sure you will think of something."

If parents refuse to play the game, children will complain and whine and accuse the parent of "not caring". **The parent simply ignores all of the complaining, whining, and accusations until the child gets bored with the game and moves on to something that is more fun.**

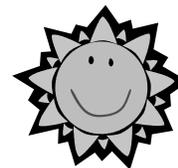
One word of caution, creative children are much more demanding than children who watch television eight hours a day. If children are allowed to be creative, they need supervision. They forget the house rules and they will come up with activities that are not acceptable.

Parents need to encourage children to ask permission or at least notify the parents of the "neat thing to do" before actually doing it. Modifications may be necessary for the protection of children or property. And remember,

Boredom is nature's way of saying, "Think of something to do."

Thank you... Families!

As I wrap up our year of celebrating Families Firsts' 20th anniversary, I wanted to end thanking the most important group of people ... YOU! Our families! From each family that has taken my class to the family that attends the Gingerbread House event... your participation and support are what makes Families First the organization it is today. Each and every family has made an impact in our organization and we are truly blessed by each of you. On behalf of the Families First Steering Committee, Tiffany Van Zee, and myself... THANK YOU!!! We are looking forward to another 20 years!



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