

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

*Presented by:
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“I’m Bored” Routine

It’s three hours after the dawn of Christmas morning and calm has replaced flying paper and frantic squeals of delight. Toys, toys, and more toys litter the floor—enough diversion to keep three daycare centers going for years. Then, from the rubble, a sad little face emerges and a doleful voice is heard. “Mommy, I’m bored.”

Our inevitable response is, “What? Bored? You’ve got more toys than all the kids in the Third World put together, and you’re bored? No, it’s a psychological impossibility.”

Bored children put dread in the first day of summer vacation. Continual cries of, “Daddy, what can I do?” make us long for the day when the big yellow buses resume their daily rounds.

Despite what our children say, they probably aren’t bored. When children say they are bored, it usually means, “I want you to spend more time with me.”

Playing with our children is one of the great joys of parenting. But when we agree to do so, we should make it plain to them that their boredom is their problem.

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with you”***

The parent in the following discussion handled the problem well:

Child: I’m bored. There’s nothing going on around here.”

Parent: “Are you really bored? That’s too bad. What are your plans?”

Child: “Well what can I do?”

Parent: “That’s a really good question. What kind of things are in your room?”

Child: “Aw, there’s nothing in there that I like. I’m tired of it all.”

Parent: “Well are there things that you like anywhere else in the house?”

Child: “I don’t think so.”

Parent: “A lot of people get involved with things that they like so they won’t be bored. You’re saying when you’re bored, there’s nothing you really like?”

Child: “Right.”

Parent: “So, it looks to me like there may not be any other option than to sit and be bored. Would you say that was a possibility?”

Child: “I guess I could play with my video game.”

Parent: “Would you like me to play one game with you?”

Child: “Yeah!”

Parent: “I guess I could play one game. But if I do that, do you think you’ll say, ‘Oh thank you,’ or will you whine and say, ‘Oh, please, play one more?’” How will you handle it if I play one game with you?”

Child: “I promise not to ask for another game.”

We want our children to develop the ability to motivate, interest and entertain themselves. Allow them to poke their way out of their self-imposed shell of boredom, rather than providing them with an entertainment service.

