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Know! To Hop Off The "Let Them Be Bored" Bandwagon

There has been a lot of talk about the benefit of "letting kids be bored". Those in favor will argue that young people are overscheduled and need downtime. They believe boredom sparks creativity and encourages autonomy.

Though the research is slim-to-none to back up these claims, they are valid points. Many children are overscheduled and could benefit from some downtime and lazy days over the summer months. And yes, boredom certainly can cause youth to get creative in how they end up spending their time.

However, there are also problems with each of these arguments. Relaxing downtime is not the same as relentless boredom. Relaxing downtime will refresh and recharge a child; relentless boredom will leave a child feeling displeased, discontented, and dissatisfied. And while being bored can cause youth to get creative, that creativity is not always positive, safe or healthy.

In fact, according to "The Case Against Boredom," shared by the Institute for Family Studies, "Teens who are often bored are 50% more likely than their peers to take up smoking, drinking and illegal drugs. And it is one the most frequent triggers for binge eating." Boredom is associated with other negative outcomes, as well.

While we should not be expected to keep our children entertained 24/7, as parents and other caregivers, it is our responsibility to help them explore their own creative interests in a safe and beneficial way.

In the previous tip, we shared ideas on working together to create a Summer Bucket List. In this tip, we encourage you and your child to come up with a Summer Boredom Busters list for days when a little inspiration is needed.

Here are just 25 of the [100+ Things for Teens To Do This Summer](#) shared by StudentDen.com:

1. Go to a thrift store or garage sale and find something oddly fabulous for your wardrobe or room.
2. Stargaze from the top of your roof (safely) or the backyard.
3. Take up the ukulele or some other instrument.
4. Do something kind for someone—a neighbor, a family member or a complete stranger.
5. Get creative! Draw, paint or make a collage portrait.
6. Pretend to be a tourist and visit the top attractions in your town.
7. Climb a tree.
8. Write and produce a film or play with your friends.

9. Have a scream-a-thon. Invite your friends and watch scary movies!
10. Re-create a childhood photo (you're a lot bigger now).
11. Try out a new sport (frisbee golf, bocce ball, field hockey, etc.).
12. Relax in a hammock.
13. Go fishing.
14. Run through the sprinklers.
15. Make some homemade soap.
16. Organize a tug-of-war.
17. Have a bonfire and roast marshmallows or make s'mores.
18. Make a root beer float.
19. Teach yourself to do a handstand.
20. Have a water balloon fight.
21. Write a song, poem or short story.
22. Have a backyard potluck with friends.
23. Make your own slip-n-slide with plastic garbage bags.
24. Host a game of capture-the-flag.
25. Read a book while sunbathing (don't forget the sunscreen).

Encourage your child(ren) to circle the ones that spark their interest, cross off the ones that do not, add to the list with their own ideas, then post on the fridge for those "there's nothing to do" kind of days.

While kids certainly need downtime to recharge and refresh, keeping them engaged and active is essential to their mental and physical well-being, and will help them avoid the pitfalls that summer boredom may bring.

Sources

[Justin Coulson, Institute for Family Studies: The Case Against Boredom. Feb 2019.](#)
[StudentDen.com: 100+ Things for Teens to Do This Summer. July 2019.](#)

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