

What to do when your child says, "I'm Bored!"

Nothing to fix here!

Boredom is a naturally uncomfortable sensation that can have immeasurable benefits. Learning to sit with the discomfort of boredom helps kids develop resilience and self-regulation. And the feeling of boredom itself often stimulates activities and interactions that enhance creativity, physical and mental wellbeing, social skills, and so much more.

Here are some steps you might take to help your child make the most of their next bouts of boredom.

Connect

When a child seeks out an adult complaining of boredom, this is often a sign that they are feeling disengaged or disconnected.

If you can, take time to just listen to what they are feeling, including if they say they have nothing to do and how terrible things are. They may have something important to share and will feel newly engaged with the world after they unburden themselves from their feelings (possibly including tears).

If giving your child your full attention is not an option right now, remember to create space for some quiet connection as soon as you're able.

Brainstorm

Help your child make a list of things they like to do, including:

- toys they like to use
- physical activities
- projects like sewing, building, collages, etc.
- books
- imaginative play ideas like playing with stuffed animals or making up a show

Keep this list handy and updated for future episodes of boredom!

Provide options

This strategy will work differently for different children at different times. Consider your child and their mood when exploring these options.

- Give two choices. "Do you want to play with Legos or draw?"
- Have them refer to their boredom brainstorm list.
- Have your child walk around the house until something sparks their interest.
- Provide a household task as an option. "Do you want to wash the floor, clean the walls in the hallway, or something different that you or I haven't thought of yet?"

Do nothing

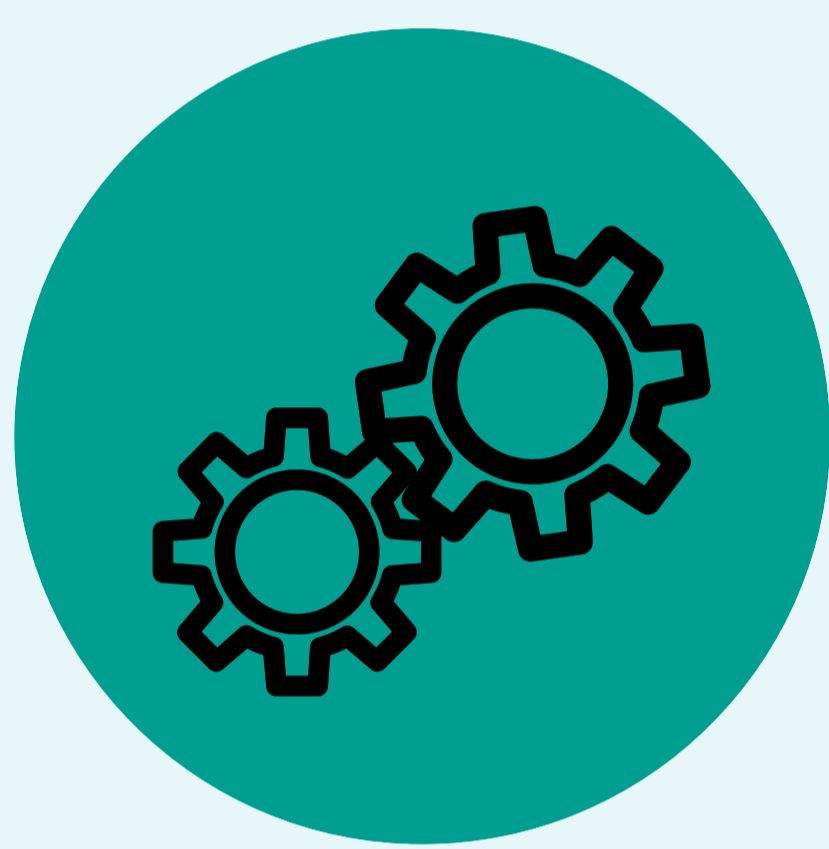
Often, children's boredom blossoms naturally into a great idea. With a gesture of acknowledgement and encouragement you might let your child know that you can't wait to see what exciting discovery they're about to make!

Reflect

Take a few minutes to reflect on how feelings of boredom can lead to positive experiences and cool things you just hadn't thought of yet. Share the benefits of boredom and downtime with your kids and don't be afraid to make space for a little more boredom in the future!



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