

NEWSLETTER

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BEATING BOREDOM!

“Mom, I’m bored.” A frequent complaint of kids today despite all their electronic gadgets and enough toys to fill a small shop.

Maybe that’s the problem with kids today. They have so much to play with they have never been forced to self-entertain.

And, of course, boredom is more apt to strike in the summer. Even though kids complain about school, the structure and enforced work immunizes them against the boredom virus.

Researching far and wide (I asked a dozen kids ranging from 8 to 12 how they kept from being bored in the summer) I came up with the following ANTIDOTES TO BOREDOM list.

- o READ. Several of my research subjects told me they read series of books like all the Harry Potters. Some had school summer reading lists and they could get extra credit for reading more books than were required. Some were doing research of their own, immersing themselves in a subject that interested them like genetics or astronomy or geology. Others just browsed in the library to find books that seemed interesting.

- o COLLECT. One kid collected and classified insects, another worked on rocks.

- o PERFECT A SKILL. One young man liked to draw and was completing a computer course. Another was teaching himself to play the guitar. Several took tennis lessons.

- o WORK. No, kids this young can’t get real jobs but several worked for their parents doing extra chores like cleaning the garage or yard work. One helped an elderly lady by walking her dog and sweeping her patio. One girl helped a mother of twins every afternoon, playing with the babies so the mother could rest. All the workers were saving their money for something they really wanted.

What do all these antidotes have in common? They require ACTIVE PARTICIPATION. Too much of what our kids do today is passive, like watching TV, or semi-passive, like playing video games.

Advice to parents:

- o LIMIT TV and video games.

- o Encourage COLLECTING, PERFECTING, AND WORKING. Talk about your collecting or hobbies when you were young. Pay attention to the skills and talents your children are developing and help them with lessons, upgraded instruments or sports equipment. And you may be in a better position than your kids to know who needs help in the neighborhood.

- o Your kids complain of boredom? Show them this WebParentTip. Maybe they'll learn something from their non-bored peers.