

Dealing with a bored child can mean leaving them alone

Kids of today are too serious. They receive pressure to succeed, have little time to get bored and they often don't make decisions on what they want to do. Play has become a structured regimen, much to the chagrin of children and their better nature. Dealing with a bored child can mean leaving them alone.

The [American Academy of Pediatric](#) says play *is* the development of children, not just a part of that development. Boredom leading to unstructured play might just be what the doctor ordered to counter attention deficit inclinations that most kids seem to have these days. Between school commitments, church or other spiritual activities, afternoon sports teams and evening television schedules, children are often completely overbooked.

Throw away the schedule

Schedules are something our children need to learn to follow (to be sure), but let us not forget that the world is an unscheduled one where nothing happens without someone scheduling it. Your child will be scheduled much of his or her adult life, taking directions and subjugated by bosses and other oppressive institutional structures. But there is anecdotal evidence today that shows that unstructured children who are forced to create interesting activities for themselves, tend to be more creative while learning how to dictate structure for themselves – and, ultimately, for others.

How to Encourage Unstructured Play

Many parents feel it is important to offer children opportunities, but unstructured play can also be part of teaching that structure. By placing them in after-school activities every day of the week, parents are creating dependencies for their children. On the other hand, encouraging kids to take initiative and create their own schedules can be a start to a creative life that can be bigger and better than what parents might imagine. Dealing with a bored child means letting them do things that they want:

- **The child chooses the child's own destination** - Stop telling the kids where to go when they go outside. If they choose mud, [then mud it is!](#) It provides our children with sensory experiences through the squishing and mushing of the mud. These experiences can be essential to the development of the brain. Also, making mud pies can offer wonderful experiences with hand eye coordination.
- **Hand your children toys that have no specific designated purpose** - Art supplies, cress-up clothes, dolls, and broken Legos are all abstract projects they can enjoy. Give them plenty of ways to express themselves without limiting them to one way.
- **Controlled chaos is important** - It may seem weird to many mothers, but everyone needs to release the reigns and let a little mess take front stage. Controlled chaos is where we as parents ensure that when chaos time is over we are able to clean up the aftermath easily.
- **Color without lines** - Providing free play is recognized as important to our society, but the tendency is to provide coloring books with the lines already drawn in them. "Just fill in the middle," one might say. But a better alternative might be to provide the child with a blank piece of paper and have them go at it alone. What will happen?
- **Let your kids meet strangers** - Many children are not learning how to interact with strangers, either. Meeting random kids in the park (even the weird ones) can cause many parents ultimate fear what their children might learn. But in my case I beg my kids to go make new friends, and [they will learn who is scary](#) and who is not on their own. That's a skill they'll take with them for the rest of their lives.
- **Let kids stay up past their bedtimes (occasionally)** - We all understand the perils of a tired child, but [letting kids stay up past their normal bedtimes](#) can allow for them to learn the necessity of sleep for their own well being, not just what adults tell them is good for them.

Encouraging our kids to be the best that they can be is not a problem for most parents. However, when parents spend all of their spare time focusing on a particular skill or activity, this limitation can be harmful to their emotional health. Many times the pressures that we put our children under – to perform in school, creative arts, or sports – can cause stunted creative growth.

[Pacific Standard magazine](#) reports on the importance of unstructured play, and how children may find themselves underdeveloped and emotional unstable for their age when structure is too prevalent in their short lives. One of the biggest ways our children learn how to express themselves and be happy, according to the magazine, is by having plenty of unstructured free time during childhood.