



"I'm Bored": strategies to help children go "outside the box"

We all talk about it. Children who don't know how to make their own fun; they are easily bored; more enthusiastic about the electronic world than the one right in front of them. These are the children who need to take a bit more control of their free time and see where it leads them. So next time we hear "I'm bored", the best response might be "SO WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?"

These situations, present a great opportunity for OSCAR professionals. They need our proper attention, to show we want to understand the child's situation but that we won't be solving the problem for them. We are taking the role of enabler, rather than entertainer.

So many experiences are pre-packaged, designed to entertain and "do the work" for the child. Here are some ideas to springboard kids back into the driver's seat of fun and learning. Each of them taps into one of the many developmental paths children can head down. These are just starting points that children can take in their own direction. *Have fun with them.*



	<p>Let's pretend we're.. <i>Dress up and act out</i> making huts / battles / shops/ acting out favourite shows/ spys / ninjas / princesses</p>	<p>Go outside <i>Roam, explore, refresh</i> gathering seeds & leaves / picnic / scavenger hunt / map reading / read under a tree / cloud watching</p>	<p>Sort it! <i>Start a collection; make a list</i> buttons / lolly wrappers / old coins / "top ten" lists / autograph book / what else??</p>	
<p><i>Make a desert island and then survive on it until you are rescued.</i></p>		<p><i>Try to guess how many white bits of Lego we have. Now count them.</i></p>		
<p>Cool stuff <i>Playing with fun objects, special junk</i> spinning tops / knuckle bones / yo-yos / bouncy balls / string games / playing cards / matchsticks / marbles</p>	<p>Top secret <i>Try and figure it out!</i> guessing games / puzzles & quiz- zes / mystery words / hiding things / codes / secret handshakes</p>	<p>Just for a laugh <i>Jokes and silly stuff</i> silly songs / keep-a-straight- face games / skits / drawing funny faces / clown acts</p>	<p>Grazing for crafts <i>Build it out of left-overs</i> boxes / newspapers / wood bits / old cds / lids / com- puter parts / fabric scraps</p>	
<p><i>How quickly can you run a lap around the school hall? How about if your legs are tied together?</i></p>		<p><i>If you could go <u>anywhere</u> in the next holiday programme where would you like to go? Now invent an interesting way to get us all there.</i></p>		
	<p>Bet you can't <i>Challenges & stunts</i> coin spinning / balancing on one leg / card tricks / juggling / shooting targets / personal bests</p>	<p>Hard out <i>Let off steam ; run, jump, climb...</i> time trials / exercise circuit / obstacle course / leap frog / hill sliding / races & relays</p>	<p>Imagieering <i>Dream up something</i> create a secret identity /invent a ma- chine / design a castle / what would you take on a trip to Mars?</p>	

A Chance to be Bored

"There is a tendency ... to encourage children to grow up quickly. Children are frequently pushed past their important years into the adult world... Make your programme the place where those hurried and pushed children can slow down... Permit children to find the time to have fun, relax, create, hang out, share, explore and just be kids. Let children even find the time to be bored... because then they have the chance to go into themselves for their own resources."

From School Age Ideas and Activities by Karen Haas-Foletta and Michele Cogley(School-Age Notes, 1990)

Felt Balls for Indoor Play ... Cool Idea!

Toni from Kids Crafty Club in Howick has been making these smart and durable balls at her programme and they have been a real hit.

The felt outer is made up of just 8 pieces and a balloon is blown up inside it. The ball will bounce and has a nice soft, textured feel to it. The balloon needs replacing every couple of weeks and the ball in the photo has already lasted 2 months and is still going strong.

We have a pattern here if you would like to make them – super easy. Kids can sew them, or get the ball made to the last panel and let them finish it off. *Thanks Toni!*

