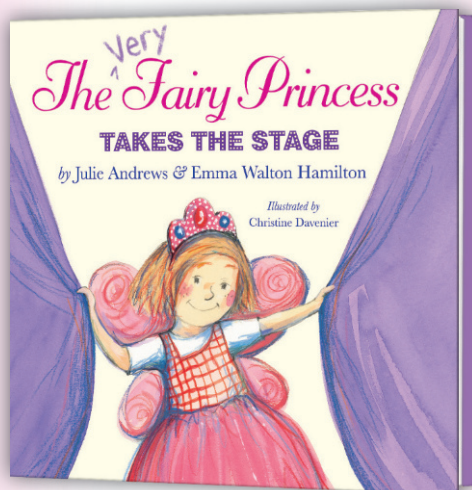


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7 to 8

Boredom Busting

How to anticipate “there’s nothing to do!”

BY MICHELLE ANTHONY, M.A., Ph.D.



phrase as a way of seeking attention from parents.

YOUR ROLE

Although you want to help your child develop new skills, you also want to avoid becoming your child’s main problem solver or source of entertainment. Instead, use this summer to help her develop her own resources, and allow her to begin the next school year with an increased sense of competence.

At the beginning of the summer, come up with a list with her of 50 things she can do. Balance active choices (soccer, jump rope) with quiet activities (painting, model building). Think about options that can be done solo versus more social ones (board games, putting on a play). Make sure the list is mostly things he can do without you, but include some to do together.

If your child’s boredom stems from a need for attention, structure how and when you spend time together. Plan family time at various points across a week. This will allow your child the benefit of your company, but also relieve you of the sense of obligation to stop what you’re doing and entertain him at a moment’s notice. Don’t forget: Allow some boredom—it sparks the imagination! **P&C**

MICHELLE ANTHONY, M.A., Ph.D., is co-author of *Little Girls Can Be Mean: Four Steps to Bullyproof Girls in the Early Grades*. She is an expert in developmental psychology, a mother to three young children, and a certified K-3 teacher.

‘M BORED!’ Those two dreaded words from children are the scourge of every parent once school lets out. Before you roll your eyes in frustration, it’s wise to learn about the developmental nature of boredom in 7- and 8-year-olds. You can use this knowledge to help understand and address your child’s comments. Doing so will allow both of you to enjoy your time together more and also help you to impart some valuable skills.

BOREDOM BEGINS

Most school-age children’s days are highly structured. Unlike in the preschool years, 7- and 8-year-olds have longer school days, more homework, and many after-school activities. As a result, they have fewer prolonged periods of downtime where they’re responsible for their own fun. For many children, the phrase “I’m bored” often means “I’m not sure how to structure my own time (please do it for me)” or “I don’t know how to slow down and let events unfold.” Other children use the