

Psychologists: Boredom is Good for Children

When I was eight years old, a little girl near my age moved into the house across the street. She, my sister, and I clicked immediately.

The girl was, however, an only child with two working parents. As such, she spent her summers in a profusion of camps and activities, leaving little time for play.

When we did get together, I would hear about all the activities she was doing. I often got the sense that she would have been happier hanging out at home, playing with us, and having time to just imagine and entertain herself.

I was reminded of this friend and her full schedule when I ran across a [Quartz article](#) suggesting that boredom is actually good for a child:

“There are [activities](#) and [summer camps](#) galore to fill children’s time and supply much needed childcare when kids are out of school. But psychologists and child development experts suggest that over-scheduling children during the summer is unnecessary and could ultimately keep kids from discovering what truly interests them.

‘Your role as a parent is to prepare children to take their place in society. Being an adult means occupying yourself and filling up your leisure time in a way that will make you happy,’ says Lyn Fry, a child psychologist in London with a focus on education. ‘If parents spend all their time filling up their child’s spare time, then the child’s never going to learn to do this for themselves.’

Fry is not the only one to point out the benefits of boredom. Dr. Teresa Belton, visiting fellow at the University of East

Anglia with a focus on the connection between boredom and imagination, [told the BBC](#) that boredom is crucial for developing ‘internal stimulus,’ which then allows true creativity.”

Unlike my friend, my childhood was much like the one recommended above. Yes, I had duties, and yes, I had some pre-planned activities, but all in all, I was given ample time to entertain myself and pursue my own interests. Oftentimes that entertainment involved reading books, making music, or writing articles for our homegrown attic newspaper. Incidentally, it is these three areas that I pursued as adult career choices.

This is not to say that children who spend their summers in pre-scheduled camps and activities will never discover their talents and interests – they can.

But in our eagerness to ensure that children are continually entertained and occupied with adult-directed activities, might we be keeping them from discovering greater abilities, talents, and interests which they might be more suited to than those we choose for them?

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