

“I’m Bored. . .”

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How many times have parents and teachers heard those two dreaded words at home and in the classroom? “I’m bored!!” What do those two words really mean? Children today are used to a fast pace of life . . . electronic equipment such as video games, computers, ipads, iphones, ipods . . . and the list goes on. What they may be trying to say is, “I don’t like this, I don’t get it, this isn’t fun, this is too easy, I need something more challenging.”



From the parent perspective, find out from the child’s teacher if he/she is doing all of the work and earning excellent grades. If so, your child may need a greater challenge. If your child is not doing all of the work, the grades are probably less than great or what you think they are capable of.

It is important that parents let children know that assigned work is not an option. It needs to be done correctly by following directions. However, children may need parental encouragement to complete assignments on time.

If a child refuses to do an assignment, there may be an important reason why. Are they sure of what the assignment is asking them to do? If not, were they listening in class or daydreaming? Did they hear and process critical instruction? A child that is not focused may be dealing with attention issues. Sometimes just a simple e-mail to the teacher for clarification is all it takes to answer some of these questions. Your child may need a behavior plan formulated by the school and parents to improve student motivation.

Students might become bored with assignments because they don’t care for the topic being studied. Parents can help students by encouraging them to use their talents in completing “boring” assignments. Drawing, making a video, writing a song, creating a journal, a skit, and letter-writing are all ways to make an assignment “pop” for a bored student. Good teachers will embrace the creative spontaneity of a student as long as the assignment shows evidence that learning of the topic has taken place.

For teachers and parents, children often use boredom as an excuse for non-accomplishment. An article from Sylvia Burke at <http://teachers.net/gazette/MAR/02> gives 6 examples of good differentiation techniques that everyone can use for “bored” children:

1. **ACCELERATE THE PACE:** Use chapter tests to determine what students already know, and target the things that the higher achieving student needs to learn. If everyone is working on fractions, give everyone fractions at the level they’re at. Some may be at third grade level, some at sixth.
2. **COMPACT THE CURRICULUM:** Needs are determined, teaching takes place, understanding is checked. Now there may be time freed up for some children to work on other learning projects that interest them.
3. **IN-DEPTH STUDIES:** Allow higher achieving children to go off into a subtopic and dig for details. For example, while studying the Civil War, a student may wish to look into the Battle at Gettysburg or the life of Abraham Lincoln.

4. ***COMPLEXITY AND AMBIGUITY:*** As educators of children, we try to simplify things for them. Some children enjoy complex topics and ambiguity and like to look at questions and ideas that can have different points of view.
5. ***USE OF ADVANCED MATERIALS:*** Allow children that are capable to work on challenging materials. Many of them are already reading above their grade level.
6. ***ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF EXPRESSION:*** Allow children to use interesting ways to express what they have learned . . . plays, songs, poems, artistry, building something etc.

Parents and teachers can work together to create the best learning environments for our children. Sometimes we have to stretch our minds and step out of our “comfort zones”. If this creates self-motivated and engaged learners, the reward can be endless!