My son came home recently and announced that someone said the “B word” at school. I quickly sifted through all of the “B” bad words that I knew. Finally, I said, “What was it?” He said, “Mom, well, um, it’s really not a word we say in our house. Bored.” I couldn’t believe it and it gave me the giggles! I guess I do equate the word “bored” to a 4-letter word, one that no mom ever likes to hear! It is one word that we don’t use in our house. Not because it’s a bad word or that we don’t let anyone say it, we just never introduced it…. probably because hearing it makes the hackles stand up on my neck.

I’m going to blame it all on my dad…

When I was living in my first apartment, just out of college, and away from all friend and family – I called my parents and declared that “I was bored”. Not to be outdone by his eldest daughter’s drama, he said to me, “What does it say about the company you’re keeping?”

Took a little while for me to figure out what he meant. Here’s my take: The only company I was keeping was me. I had few friends and no outside interests besides working 24/7. It was just the kick in the pants I needed. With a little wounded pride, I started getting involved by going to church, tutoring a Kurdish family of men (story for another time), taking a flower design and then a calligraphy class, going to the gym regularly, and planning my wedding. Getting involved in things outside of myself helped me to use my time more wisely because I was busier, taught me some new skills, and helped me to be less self-obsessed.

Is it true that only boring people are bored?
Have you...

B - Been creative?
O - Outside play?
R - Read a book?
E - Exercised?
D - Done something helpful?

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Why are they bored? Children who attend all day school live in a very structured environment when they are out of the house. Their after-school time is filled with homework, chores, and activities (sports, scouts, music lessons). Remember: Children actually thrive on structure and routine (ie. Having a plan for the day).

What does “I’m Bored” really mean to your child?

a. I don’t know how to structure my own time – please help!

b. I don’t know how to slow down and let events unfold.

c. You’re ignoring me and I’d really like some attention.

d. I’m feeling anxious and need to know the plan for the day.

How can you help?

Take the “B” word out of your child’s vocabulary. *Raise your hand* … who has said one of the following?

- He’s so bored that’s why he got into trouble.
- She has nothing to do – he must be bored.
- Are you sure I should take him? He might get bored.
- Are you bored?
- I don’t want them to be bored all summer long.
- I know you’re bored, but you need to find something to do.

Kids need to be encouraged to be creative, problem solve, play games, have free time! when we drive our kids all over town, it is not healthy for them or us! I love the quote from Kirk Martin about what kids need today.

It’s Time to Rethink Our Strategy

Your kids have a choice: Boredom is a choice that people make. There are a hundred things to do at any given moment. It’s a procrastinators excuse for not getting things accomplished. Having nothing to do is a part of life. What would be do if the batteries on our phone died, we didn’t have computers for a day, were stuck at home? Would be stare at the walls and cry? No, eventually we’d find something to do: read, a home project, talk to a friend, write a letter, make something, or cook.
Parents...

It is not your job to create entertainment and magic for your child 24/7. You are not a cruise director. But if Television, videos, and video games are not an option. What should you do?

PLAN – do you have items that are accessible for your kids to play with?
PREPARE – do you need to stock up on art supplies or go to yard sale for more outside equipment?
ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY – some simple demonstrations of how to draw on paper or play tic-tac-toe.

Offer options if they seem to need some structure. “You can read a book or go play outside. Your choice!” Limit the “I’m Bored Jars”. Make a Bucket List of Family Goals or brainstorm ideas you can do when you have “free time” Get excited about “free time”. Encourage them to like being by themselves!

Every once in awhile Mr. BKHM and I realize that things are not going that well at our house. Kids are not listening, back talking is occurring, directions are being repeated and repeated, etc, etc….. in short – I feel like I’m losing my mind. (Please note that my husband is completely onboard; he’s just not the one home during the day).

So, I declare that it’s Back-to-Basics time! Time for me to get my act together! My goals are to be clear, consistent, and explain consequences first. I’m basically trying to get us all back on track. Making my no mean no and my yes mean yes.

I will tell you that the first few days are always miserable. It’s so hard to follow through on each and every thing! On one occasion, my husband and I decided that the two areas that were bugging-us-to-no-end were getting ready for dinner and the bedtime routine. We felt as if they were causing us undue stress. We were nagging *gasp*, repeating ourselves, and getting frustrated!

What should have been 2 easy tasks, were driving us bonkers!

So, my husband and I hammered out our plan. Nothing fancy, just me and a Crayola Marker.

Completing our simple dinner routine = dessert (fruit, cookie, or snack)
Completing the bedtime routine + shower = more story time
Both plans work! We’ve put the responsibility on the kids, the instructions on the paper, and made the consequences clear. I can just point to the paper if there are questions (no more crazy mom). Expectations and rewards are known by everyone!

Why, oh why, did I drag my feet in making a plan? It took no time, a little instruction, and is easy to implement. Now we just have to follow through! Here’s to less crazy parents!

Moms with boys...

You’ll get this one: I also wrote with a dry erase marker on the underside of the toilet seat: “Please Flush Me!” (I’ll spare you the picture). No one has found it yet, so either they’re not flushing or not lifting the seat! aaaaahhh!
Stop the Whining! Favorite Phrase

Long ago I learned this line in a parenting workshop. I felt a little bit like a drill sergeant when I used it on my kids initially, but now it works like a charm!

**Parent:** When do we listen?  
**Child:** The first time.

Try it – you’ll love it. It’s such an easy way to correct your child without having to sound like a broken record. I started when they were 2 and still use it now (on my 9 year old).

Now onto another problem:

Whining! There is just something about a whine that can bring a parent to her knees! Is it the tone, the meaning, the drama? All of the above!!

My husband came up with this one:

**Parent:** Nothing’s finer…  
**Child:** than getting a quarter from a whiner.

Brilliant! We used it this weekend for fun and got some giggles. I hope that if I just say “Nothing’s finer” that will stop the whine cycle in it’s place. If it doesn’t the phrase will serve as a warning and the next time they’ll have to bring me a quarter.
Recognizing Your Child’s Character

I always enjoy getting the opportunity to hear one of my favorite speakers, Mrs. Janet Mancini. I’ve heard Janet speak numerous times over the years. I’m always inspired by her enthusiasm, tried and true ideas, and deep love for her family.

She has highlighted that you need to compliment your child’s character. Tell them specifically what you love about them:

I love you because you’re honest.
I love that you’re so friendly.
One thing that makes you special is that you're kind.
You know, you’re just like Dad.

Janet said that your children will live up to who you say they are. Maybe you’ve said that your son is a “handful”? Or your daughter is a “spoiled princess”? Or maybe one child a “jock” and the other one a “brain”? Do you really want them to grow up to be a handful or worse?

Focus on their specific character traits to encourage them for life. Your children will live up to who you say they are.
Taking a Break from the Busy Kids

Why it is good for a mom to leave the nest: {for a little bit}

1. You have a name other than mom.

2. You get to have adult conversation all day.

3. You don’t have to cook or feed anyone else.

4. When someone asks how you are, you don’t answer “We’re fine.”

5. You only have to put yourself to bed.

You find yourself again!

The best part…. you miss your family and can’t wait to return!
Get Support... Join a MOPS Group!

I can’t say enough about joining a MOPS or MOMSnext group in your area! MOPS is for Mothers of Preschoolers (moms with kids ages 0-Kindergarten). MOMSnext is for moms with school age kids.

If you are looking for encouragement, friendship, and support in your mothering journey then MOPS or MOMSnext are for you!

I found...

- hope
- friends
- a break (MOPS has childcare!!!!!! Need I say more?)
- support
- help in the details of mothering
- like minded women who wanted to be purposeful in their parenting
- mentors
- something to look forward to (my husband always said that I was happier on MOPS days!)
- opportunities to serve others (outside of my family)
- time to breathe
- women just like me!

To find a local group, go to MOPS.org, click “Find A Group” and type in your zip code.
How to Encourage Your Child’s Time with Dad

Growing up my parents put me to bed every night. Not just as a little girl, but through all the years I was home. They called it “Special Time.” Generally it was my Dad who did the nightly routine. Studies show that a girl who has a solid relationship with her father, will also develop strong healthy relationships later.

My husband and I do the same thing with our kids. It looks like this: Story or Book, Song, Prayer, and Cuddles. Truth – my husband does it 99.9% of the time. Usually I just go up for cuddles. I think I’m just not as “good” at it. I’m tapped out from the day and just really, really want them to fall asleep.

Fortunately, my husband recognizes this special quality time with them. As Janet Mancini puts it, kids are “weak” at this time of the day! They confide things that they wouldn’t normally share. As their brains are turning off, sometimes important events from the day pop up. Janet also said, “You should never pass up the opportunity to spend that time with them, to listen, and to pray over your children.” One “rule” my parents had for Special Time: you could never get in trouble for anything you shared during this time. This allowed us to be more open, honest, and put our brains to rest at the end of the day. We follow the same guidelines. From my own experience, it can make a tough day all right again and grows your relationship with your child.

**Bedtime Routine Notes:**

- My kids cherish this one-on-one time with their Dad.
- If I’m called on to do it, I usually ask them to go up and read for 10 minutes before I join them. This gives me a little bit of time to collect myself and want to spend time with them again.
- We do their story together and then split up into separate rooms.
- We don’t let one child interrupt the other child’s special time.
- Tap into your child’s Love Language to really show them / tell them how much you care. Fill their love tanks up – they’ll sleep well and be ready to face the new day. Want to find out your child’s love language? Go to [5LoveLanguages.com](http://5LoveLanguages.com) to take a quiz and find out.
Busy Kids Happy Mom is dedicated to fun, practical, and purposeful activities to do with your kids. Visit today for more inspiration!

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