

Beat Boredom
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How can you keep children creatively occupied when waiting is unavoidable? Creative kids are able to come up with lots of ways to keep busy. Your child won't be bored for long if you teach them how to entertain and amuse themselves. Here are a few ideas and some paper and pencil "quickies" to do with your child to help keep them busy during the holidays. Be sure they try some of these fun activities

1. Make up stories about the people around you. You can either take turns, one sentence or idea each, or improvise together. See where the story goes and who wants to contribute the next bit of information or plot turn.

Example: Pretend there is a man with a briefcase seated across the room. Perhaps he is a spy with a secret plan for a new invention that unties shoelaces so people trip on them. Maybe he is a movie star traveling in disguise or a software inventor who has just developed an instant book report program.

2. Choose an object (sofa, cluttered desk) that two or three people can study carefully for a short time. Close your eyes or look away and take turns telling everything you can remember about the object. This is more of a memory game and it sharpens visual perception. You will find yourself improving with repeated play.
3. Play "Connections" You say a word and your child tries to think of a word that is related to your work in some way, however far fetched. Then your child has to explain the relationship or connection.

Example: You say "brain" your child says "walk" explaining that you use your brain to walk.

To make it more complex, a variation of this game might be, your child says "book" and you say a word that seems to be completely unrelated like "squirrel." Your child's task is to make a connection between the two words.

Example: When you cut down trees to make books, squirrels lose their homes.

4. To experiment with writing or drawing styles, ask your child "How many different ways can you write your first name?" "How many different ways can you draw a flower?"
5. Draw a squiggle or part of a picture on some paper. Take turns adding to it. The final drawing will look different from what the first person who drew on the paper had in mind.
6. Both of you compose a letter together. Either one of you can actually write it. Your letter might be a suggestion, a way to solve a problem, or a friendly holiday greeting to a relative or pen pal.
7. Draw something simple that looks like what you say it is, but only when you stretch your imagination.

Example: A single straight line could be "what you see through a closed elevator door." Several straight lines could be "your food's view of your fork."

8. Play "Word Detective" by cutting out part of a newspaper or magazine. Choose a word that appears on the page, without telling your child what it is. Give clues about the word. If your word was "car" you might say, "It is large, comes in different colors, and is made out of metal." Give your child the newspaper to locate the word.

Once the word has been guessed then it is the child's turn to choose a word and give clues.

9. An anagram is a word or phrase which is made up by transposing the letters of some other word or phrase.

Example: You could turn the phrase "fun software" into the phrase "waste runoff" by rearranging the letters. Have your child take a word or phrase and see how many other words can be made by rearranging the letters.