

How to Reclaim Imagination For Your Kids

Do you remember feeling bored as a kid? Do you also remember what you did to pass that boredom? Turning cardboard boxes into castles, exploring places you had never seen before, getting into trouble. That's what childhood is all about. Or was, at least.



Nowadays, we all suffer from a lack of boredom, and as a result, we have no good reasons to use our creativity anymore. But imagination isn't just something that's nice to have, it's a human necessity, just like love or meaning.

Creativity is the source of emotional resilience, problem-solving and empathy, and so our lives are incomplete without it. With that in mind, here are some ideas on how to restore that sense of magic and wonder to your family's life.

Let's Talk About Screens

If we're going to have this conversation, it needs to start from a place of honesty. The reason why so many children are addicted to screens at such an early age is because we, the adults, make them so.

If they start getting restless at the supermarket, we hand them our phone, same goes for when dinner needs another ten minutes or during long car rides when they start getting tired. Screens have become our replacement for education.

That being said, this is not an attempt to shame you. Parenting is hard and we sometimes lean on whatever aid we can to get the job done. And since our culture runs on convenience and productivity, we reach for what's easiest.

But the screen is not an answer to boredom either. When children get an endless stream of entertainment from a little black square, they have no incentive to make up their own fun. And that kind of limitation takes its toll later in life.

Kids who haven't flexed their imaginative muscles struggle to entertain themselves, create their own games, or think beyond what's immediately in front of them. They lose practice in that beautiful, messy process of turning nothing into something.

What Imagination Does

But what's the practical effect of leaving room for imagination? For one, it changes the way kids approach their problems. So instead of getting upset when something they're trying doesn't work out, they might try alternative routes.

Their thinking will also improve as they learn to tell their own stories instead of repeating narratives others pass on to them, and you might even save money on gifts as they learn to play with things that weren't originally toys.

And that's just the surface level. Imaginative play builds emotional intelligence. So when your child pretends to be a doctor, a teacher, or even a dragon, they're practicing empathy, stepping into different perspectives and working through scenarios in a safe space. That's how they learn to navigate real relationships and real emotions.

And it's not just for kids. When you engage in imaginative activities as a family, whether that's collaborative storytelling, building something together, or acting out silly scenarios, you create shared experiences that become a unique shared culture.

Making Room for Creativity

You don't need to overhaul your entire life or live like an Amish to bring back imagination in the household. Start with creating small pockets of space where imagination can show up naturally.

- **Protect Boring Time:** Creativity only comes up when there's a gap to fill. Be it a blank canvas or a moment of the day where you have nothing better to do. Start with creating small pockets of space where imagination can show up naturally.
- **Give Yourself Material:** Fill up a bin with random items; cardboard tubes, fabric scraps, buttons, old magazines, popsicle sticks. Things that don't have one specific purpose. Then watch for what your kids create when they have all the resources they need and no instructions.
- **Tell Stories Together:** Books are great and kids should definitely read them. But that's not the goal here. Start a story and let your child add the next sentence, then keep that back and forth going. Make it ridiculous. Let them drive the plot into weird territory. This kind of collaborative storytelling builds narrative thinking and shows kids that stories don't just come from published authors
- **Spend Time Outside:** We all have a core memory of coming upon a stick out of nowhere and turning into everything our imagination could come up with. The same goes for mud or rocks. When you take walks or spend time outside without a structured activity or destination, you give both yourself and your kids permission to notice, explore, and imagine.

Dealing With Resistance

While listing a series of ideas is easy, convincing people to play along is not. There will be times when your kids can't care any less about imagination, in fact, if they already have the habit of using screens, it's very much guaranteed to cause some resistance.

When that happens, just remember that you're swimming against the cultural mainstream and that changes can be hard on children. So start small. Pick one thing you can start doing today and work on that alone for a while.

As your children start to realise the value of these times, they might even start doing it on their own.

A Creative Life.

More and more people are beginning to understand the price of being constantly entertained, and are now making conscious decisions to escape that vicious cycle. So if you decide to go on with this, at the very least you won't be alone.

There is true value in noticing a void and deciding to fill it, the type of value that sticks to us throughout our lives and keeps us going in times of trial. And through some gentle discipline, we can give that to our children too.

If you're ready to bring more creativity and imagination into your daily life, explore the resources and tools at [The Creative Mindset](#). From journals and affirmation cards to storytelling activities, you'll find simple ways to nurture the creative spirit in your entire family.