



"I'M BORED!" COPING WITH THE ENDLESS SUMMER

We are slowly approaching the time where the magical fun of summer wears out it's welcome and *those words* seem to be a staple in every child present household..

"I'm bored!!! There's nothing to do!!!"

Cue the music and let the battles begin...

So, how can we cope and respond to this situation differently and avoid the conflict that ensues???

This is the ever-present question, indeed. The good news is: a little structure, a dash of research and some TLC can be the perfect recipe for this occasion.

Rule #1: Preventative measures are summer's best friend.

Every child craves structure. However, there aren't too many children or adolescents who would admit this. To clarify, rules (who's doing what and when) and boundaries are necessary in every household and can be the secret of success in any given situation. Yes, school has ended, BUT expectations are a continuous process. If the 'structure' (framework) of your home can be strong enough to maintain your house, imagine how it can strengthen your family, if constructed properly. Developmentally appropriate expectations with clear and consistent consequences and rewards can be the exact framework you need. Remember, the carrot carries

more weight than the stick. Finding the right motivation can hold your child's attention and improve their tolerance ability.

Rule #2: A little research can go a long way.

We live in a society where information is literally at our fingertips. Taking some time to discover what your community has to offer can improve this area. Be careful not to overschedule and have expectations too headstrong, this approach is overwhelming to both the parents and children. The Pittsburgh Parent Magazine is free and filled with activity opportunities...psssst, Caring Hands has available copies (BONUS!). Check in with your local pool, library and community center to be in "the know" about scheduled events. A local website, kidsburgh.org, is also a great resource to click on and investigate what your neighborhood has to offer year round.

Rule #3: TLC is healthy for EVERYONE

Children look forward to summer for the obvious, summer break from school...AND, to spend time with family. Spending POSITIVE 1:1 time is important for growth and development. We are social creatures by nature and need each other in close and positive proximity. Plan time to look forward to, ask your child to guide this process and make a list together. Adolescence is a time to grow more independent, however, it's a reasonable expectation to connect on a positive level too. This time can strengthen positive relationships and be an opportunity to instill important value systems to the next generation.

Just as your home has a strong foundation and structure within the brick and mortar, your family requires this support as well. I'm confident that you can find your own unique system of operations that foster a healthy family system and quiet *those words*.

Warmly,

Miss Gretchen, MS, NCC, LPC