

The Joys of Doing Nothing! Children today have half as much free time as they did 30 years ago! We want our children to be “well-rounded” and to be given every “advantage.” We feel the need to have our children participate in extracurricular and enrichment programs often to the point of neglecting a child’s need to have free time or down time at home. We convince ourselves that it is in the best interest of our child’s learning.

Actually “doing nothing” is “essential” and can be “extremely productive.” When children have many opportunities for unscheduled or unstructured time, they have time to “explore the world at their own pace, develop their own unique set of interests and indulge in the sort of fantasy play that will help them figure out how to create their own happiness, handle problems with others on their own, and sensibly manage their own time. That’s a critical life skill.”

“Children need time to recharge and process what they have learned. Free time allows them to explore, to be scientists, discoverers, creators, and innovators. They do that when they build pillow tents in the family room, sail away in a laundry basket to a foreign land, or find the remarkable in the mundane.”

Children need time to daydream and to be “bored.” They use their imaginations and curiosity to become problem solvers and decision makers.

For one week, keep track of all your child’s scheduled activities and highlight your child’s unstructured free times. The family trip to the museum or your child’s soccer lessons are educational and fun but young children also learn and benefit from having the many opportunities for unscheduled free play times. There just has to be a balance!

You will be giving your child the gift of relaxation and the opportunity to find **The Joys of Doing Nothing!**

You can find this article at www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/creativity-play/joys-doing-nothing. I quoted Dr. Hirsh-Pasek Ph.D, she is a favorite of mine and is also a co-author of the book, [Einstein Never Used Flash Cards](#). We do have a copy of this book in our school parent library if you are interested in reading it.

