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It's okay for kids to experience boredom over spring break, says social worker

Written by Judy Peters Monday, Mar 25 2024, 5:00 AM



Vicki Fehr is a social worker in the Hanover School Division. (Photo Credit: hsd.ca)

With the kids at home for spring break, parents might feel pressure to provide a week filled with activities.

A social worker in the Hanover School Division, Vicki Fehr, cautions against too much planning.

"We actually have sort of drifted away from the ability to entertain ourselves," she says. "We live in this very fast-paced world of the Internet and social media, and so kids actually need to learn how to be bored. It's a skill that we're sort of losing over time. So, I actually think it's great for kids to be bored and I think if we over plan for some of our kiddos, it creates a bit of stress for them, or this inability to sometimes feel some calm or just kind of sit and do nothing."

Fehr says it builds independence when children learn to handle boredom and find ways to entertain themselves.

While many children are excited for spring break and the change in routine, she notes not everyone feels that enthusiasm.

"I think a lot of the time we assume every student will be just pumped to be out of school for the week. But there's lots of our students who won't love that break as much as others. So, it might impact their sleep schedule which can impact their mental health, things like that."

Leading up to the break, Fehr has been checking in with students to find out how they're doing and what their plans are for managing the change in routine.

"There are lots of positives that come for lots of families in our community during spring break, but there's also a pocket of our kiddos who might be having worries about food security. Lots of our kids get their meals at school. Or just having that trusted adult around because parents have to work, and that can be a stressor for parents too, finding care for their kiddos during the week.

"So, we're always trying to be mindful about how these breaks are for kids, because for some, it's fantastic and a much-needed opportunity for rest and recharge. And for some others, it might actually be a point of stress or contention."

Fehr encourages adults to check in with their children to make sure they're handling the changes in the best way possible, offering some strategies in dealing with things like boredom without relying solely on social media for entertainment and connection.