



WELCOME TO *THE HEALTHY BUZZ*

Advocates for Healthy Kids is here to cut through the noise and bring parents the practical, balanced information they need to raise strong, healthy families. From real-life nutrition tips to clear breakdowns of hot-button health topics, this newsletter delivers resources, ideas, and encouragement — so you can stay confident in the most important role you'll ever have: **being your child's greatest advocate.**

A NOTE FROM DR. DUNNAVANT



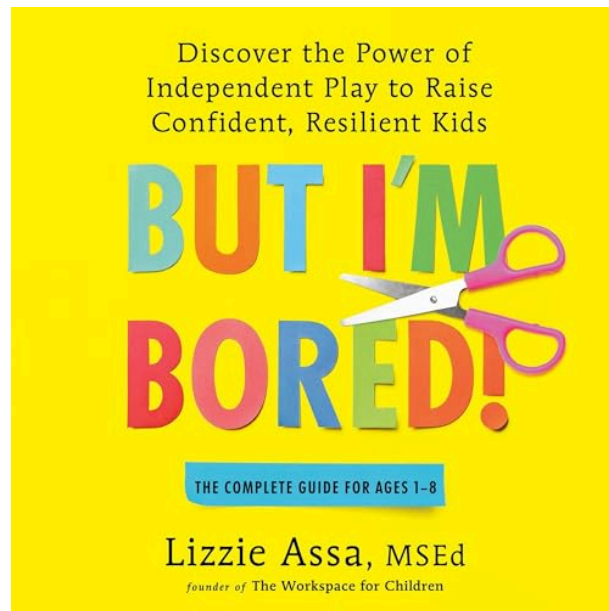
Dear Friends,

As an OB, I meet mothers right at the start of their parenting journey. And one thing I hear over and over, whether you're 8 weeks pregnant or have a toddler at home, is that parenting today feels overwhelming. So this summer, I'm doing something a little different.

I've picked a book I'd love for us to slow down and read together.

Summer is the moment when schedules clear and suddenly we're staring down several unstructured weeks, wondering if we're doing enough. This book is the antidote to that feeling. It's warm, it's a quick read, and it will make you feel great about doing a little less.

So join me this summer in reading:



But I'm Bored! by Lizzie Assa
(Spoiler: boredom is actually good for your kids.)

Feel free to read at your own pace. We will be posting some content on our Instagram throughout the summer and then in September, I'll be sitting down to discuss it with you all. Send us your questions, thoughts, and favorite passages in the comments on our post. I'll be reading along with you and can't wait to discuss together.

Warmly,
Dr. Siobhan Dunnavant, MD
Senior Advisor, Advocates for Healthy Kids

FACT OR MYTH?

FACT OR MYTH?



Reading before bed is just a nice habit. It **doesn't really affect** how well my kid sleeps.

Keep up the conversation!

Follow us [@adv4healthykids](https://twitter.com/adv4healthykids) for useful tips, clear breakdowns on hot-button issues, and encouragement to stay empowered and confident in your role as a key part of your child's growth.

ADVOCACY
ACTION





Try This, Not That

Small word swaps that can change the whole conversation with your kid:

Instead of: "Did you read today?"

Try: "What happened in your book?"

Why: It invites conversation instead of a yes/no answer, and it signals that you're actually interested in what they're reading.

Instead of: "Go find something to do."

Try: "What's one thing you've been wanting to try?"

Why: It redirects them inward instead of putting the burden on you to entertain them. Kids who learn to self-motivate are more creative and more resilient, and it starts with small moments like this.

Instead of: "You're fine."

Try: "That sounds frustrating. Tell me more."

Why: Dismissing a feeling, even a small one, teaches kids to stop sharing. A little validation keeps the door open.

THE LATEST

Your Kid Is Growing Up Online. That Doesn't Mean You're Losing Control.

Picture the last time you handed your child a phone to keep them occupied: in the car, at a restaurant, during a grocery run. No judgment. Every parent has done it.

Now picture the last time you sat down with them and actually talked about what they're doing on that phone. What they're watching. Who they're talking to. What they think about it.

The reality is that technology isn't going anywhere. Your kids are growing up in a world where screens are woven into school, friendships, entertainment, and eventually their careers. The goal isn't to raise tech-free kids. It's to raise kids who know how to handle tech, and they learn that from you.

The "Bad Screen Time" Narrative Isn't the Whole Story

A lot of the conversation around kids and technology defaults to alarm. Screens are rotting their brains. Social media is ruining a generation. Give them a book instead.

And yes, [the research on excessive, passive screen use is real](#). Too much unstructured scrolling is linked to disrupted sleep, reduced attention, and lower emotional regulation in kids. That needs to be taken seriously.

But research also shows that **not all screen time is the same**. A child video chatting with grandparents, working through a coding tutorial, or watching a documentary about animals is having a fundamentally different experience than a child passively scrolling cartoons for two hours.

The distinction matters because when we collapse everything into “screens are bad,” we lose the nuance that actually helps us parent well.

When Technology Is the Tool That Helps a Child Learn

Here’s something that gets lost in the culture war over screens: some of the most meaningful uses of educational technology aren’t happening at home at all. They’re happening in classrooms, under the guidance of a teacher, for kids who need extra support.

Teacher-directed digital learning tools used during structured instructional time are a different category entirely from recreational screen use. These are the programs helping a second-grader who’s behind in reading finally crack the code. They’re giving a child with dyslexia an adaptive, personalized path through phonics that a one-size-fits-all worksheet never could. They’re showing a teacher, in real time, exactly which students are struggling with a concept so she can pull them into a small group the next morning instead of waiting until the next test to find out.

Research on structured educational technology consistently shows that when digital tools are teacher-led, goal-oriented, and embedded in an intentional instructional framework, they improve outcomes. This is especially true for students with learning differences and those who are behind grade level.

Programs like these aren’t replacing teachers. They’re extending what a good teacher can do in a room of 25 kids with varying needs. That’s not to say you can’t ask questions to ensure what is happening in your child’s classroom aligns with the goals you have for your family.

If your child’s school uses these tools, it’s worth asking:

- What program is it, and what’s it designed to do?
- How does the teacher use the data it generates?
- Is it supplementing instruction or substituting for it?

Those are the right questions, not because you should be suspicious, but because engaged parents who understand what’s happening in the classroom are better partners for their child’s teachers.

What Kids Actually Need

Think about how you learned to handle money, or navigate conflict, or make decisions under

pressure. Chances are, someone walked you through it over time, with trial and error. Digital life is no different.

[The American Academy of Pediatrics](#) shifted away from strict screen time limits years ago in favor of a more nuanced approach: creating a family media plan that reflects your values, your child's age, and your household's rhythm.

Kids who grow up with clear, consistent digital boundaries, and who understand the why behind them, are better prepared to manage technology on their own as they get older.

Where Parents Come In

You don't have to be a tech expert, just be present and intentional. A few places to start:

- **Set the tone, not just the rules.** Kids notice everything. If you're reaching for your phone the moment there's a lull in conversation, they're watching. Modeling what a balanced relationship with technology looks like is the most powerful thing you can do and is more powerful than any screen time limit.
- **Make space for real conversation about what they're consuming.** Ask what they're watching. Watch something with them. Ask what they think about it. You don't have to agree or approve, you just have to be engaged. Kids are far more likely to come to you when something feels wrong online if they know you're already paying attention.
- **Build in structure without turning it into a battle.** Tech-free moments like during dinner, in the hour before bed, on weekend mornings, don't have to be dramatic declarations. They can just be how your family does things. Research consistently shows that device-free evenings improve sleep quality in kids and teens, which affects everything from mood to learning.
- **Teach them about attention.** One of the most valuable things a parent can explain to a child is that apps, games, and social platforms are designed to be hard to put down. This isn't a character flaw, it's an engineering decision. When kids understand that, they become better equipped to notice when they're being pulled in and make a conscious choice about it.

Age-Appropriate Doesn't Mean One-Size-Fits-All

A five-year-old watching educational programming with a parent in the room is having a completely different experience than a thirteen-year-old with an unrestricted Instagram account. How you approach digital life should grow with your child.

For younger kids, that means co-viewing and short sessions with clear start and end times.

For tweens, it means introducing more independence alongside more conversation and checking in on what platforms they're using and who they're connecting with.

For teenagers, it means shifting toward trust-building and honest dialogue. Heavy-handed

restrictions tend to backfire at this age. What works is staying engaged, asking real questions, and treating them as capable of making thoughtful choices but with your guidance.

The Through Line

Whether it's a reading app in a first-grade classroom, a family media plan at home, or a conversation with your teenager about what they're scrolling before bed, the common thread is the same: intentional adults making thoughtful decisions about how technology fits into a child's life.

Technology, handled well, can open doors for kids — especially those who've struggled in traditional learning environments. Handled poorly, it can crowd out the sleep, movement, real connection, and quiet moments that kids need to grow. The difference usually comes down to whether a parent or teacher is steering or whether the device is.

You don't have to be an expert to be that steering force in your child's life. You just have to stay curious, stay engaged, and keep asking the right questions.

That's always been the job. The technology is new. The parenting isn't.

Shared Decision-Making Starts With Finding the Right Doctor

Every parent wants the same thing: a healthy kid who grows up strong, happy, and ready to take on the world. But how do you go about achieving that? Healthy kids don't happen by accident. They happen because of choices parents make long before any symptoms show up. And more than anything else, they happen because of the relationship a family builds with a doctor they trust.

We live in a moment when trust in nearly every institution is fraying. Some of that skepticism is understandable. You have more access to information than ever before, and more opinions coming at you from every direction. You want to ask questions. You want to understand what's being recommended for your kids.

But questions deserve real answers from someone who actually knows your child and not from a comment section, a viral post, or a talking head on television. A good provider you trust and have built a relationship with is the winning ticket.

The best thing any parent can do is [find a doctor they trust](#) and their kids are comfortable with, and use that relationship. Bring your questions and concerns to every appointment. Bring the article or Instagram reel you found at midnight that scared you. [A good pediatrician won't dismiss you for asking](#); they'll walk through it with you. They'll explain the reasoning behind a recommendation, talk through the options, and help you make a decision that makes sense for your family and your child's specific health history.

As our Advocates for Healthy Kids Senior Advisor, Siobhan Dunnavant, has taught us with her Patients' Bill of Rights, parents have the right to refuse care, the right to privacy, the right to equal respect, to know all of their options, and to ultimately choose what's best for their child.

That includes vaccines: [which vaccines, when, and why](#); those are exactly the kinds of conversations your pediatrician is there to have. A doctor who knows your child is always going to give you better guidance than an algorithm. That's what shared decision-making actually looks like. It is a real conversation between a parent who loves their kid and a doctor who has spent a career taking care of kids just like them.

That relationship is the foundation of everything else. It's not just about shots. It's about a provider you trust who has watched your child grow, who knows their history, who can spot when something is off before it becomes something serious. Well-child visits are where developmental delays get caught early. Where conversations about mental health happen before a crisis. Where a parent can say "I'm worried about this" and get a real answer. Where you can sit down with someone you trust and talk through your child's vaccine schedule or medication changes or need for specialists.

Right now, there are voices with very large megaphones who can cause a lot of noise and confusion. Some say the routine decisions your pediatricians have been recommending for decades are now suspect. Some of those voices are well-intentioned and some are not. But the effect is the same: families who were already stretched thin, already overwhelmed, now have one more reason to second-guess the care their kids need.

What gets lost in all the noise is something pretty simple. Most pediatricians went into medicine because they wanted to help kids. They're not adversaries. They're partners. And parents who treat them that way, who come in ready to have a real conversation rather than a standoff, tend to get better outcomes for their kids.

If you don't feel heard by your current doctor, find a new one. We even have guidance on [how to break up with your doctor](#), should you need it. Ask your neighbors, your friends, the parents in your school pickup line who seem like they have it together. A good pediatric practice is worth finding and worth keeping.

PAGE-TURNER POPSICLES

The frozen treat that buys you an hour of quiet reading time.

No oven, no mess, no meltdowns. These come together in about ten minutes, go straight into the freezer, and come out ready to hand off right when you need your kid to sit still for a while. Let them pick the fruit, help with the pouring, and choose their own popsicle stick. By the time they're ready to read, dessert is already waiting. A perfect summer afternoon treat!



DOWNLOAD TO SAVE THIS RECIPE FOR LATER

ENGAGE WITH US

What book did you love as a kid that you can't wait to share with your child?

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE

KEEP IN TOUCH

Follow Advocates for Healthy Kids for quick tips, fun updates, and real talk from fellow parents and our founder, Dr. Dunnavant. Get involved and help us keep our children safe and healthy!



Paid for by Advocates for Healthy Kids

1802 Vernon St NW, Washington, DC 20009

This email was sent to test@recipient.com

[Unsubscribe](#)