

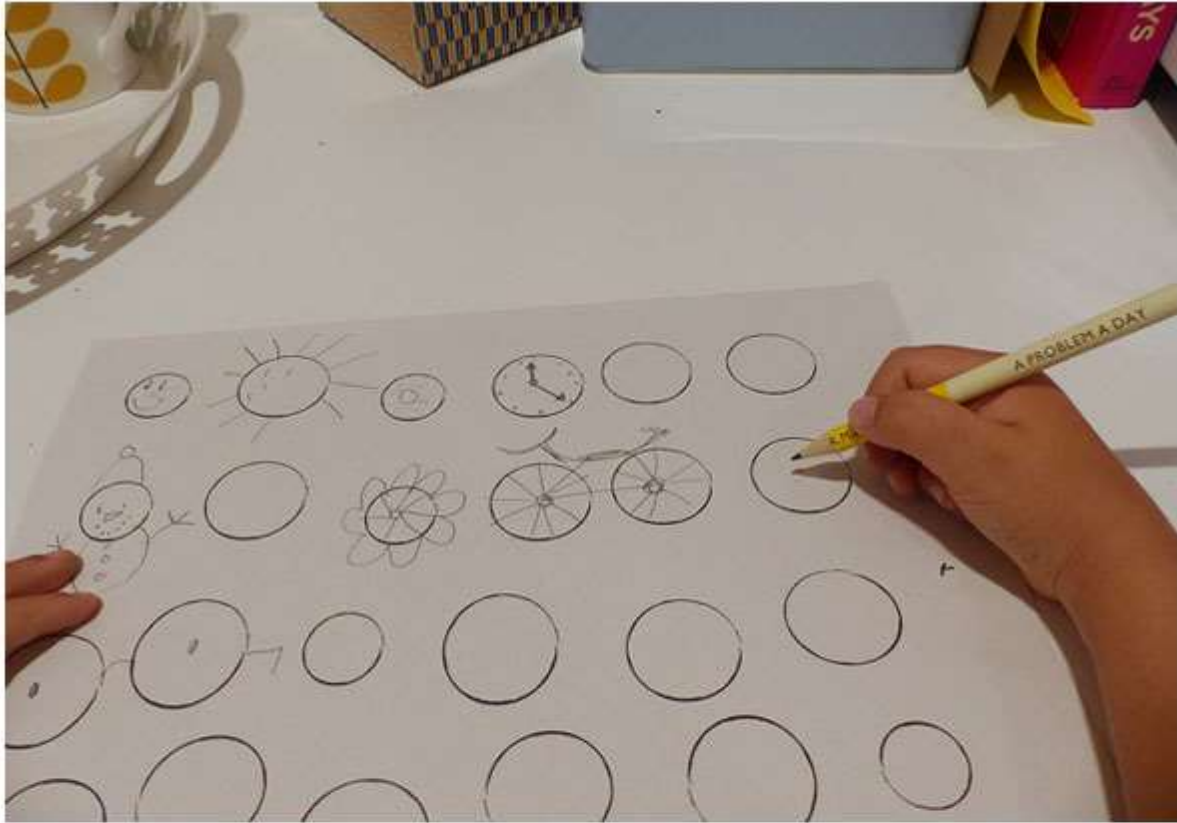
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# HOW TO KILL YOUR CHILD'S CREATIVITY



## HOW TO **KILL** YOUR CHILD'S CREATIVITY

Kids are born creative geniuses. But unfortunately, by the time they reach the third or fourth grade, their creativity has sunk. With intelligence, there is a phenomenon called the Flynn effect: each generation, scores go up about 10 points because enriched environments make kids smarter. With creativity, a reverse trend has been identified: since 1990, creativity scores are falling. What are we doing wrong?



These are some of the most effective creativity killers:

- Rewards: scientific research has demonstrated that rewards inhibit children's exploration and imagination. A kid will put as much effort as it is needed to get the reward and he won't push himself any further. Prizes and stickers eliminate the intrinsic pleasure of creative activities. We want engaged, motivated children, not just kids with their notebooks filled with stars.
- Shadowing: always sitting by their side and micromanaging their projects is detrimental to their creativity. If kids are constantly being observed and we give them always some advice they won't learn to take risks and they won't experience the value of making mistakes as part of the process.

- Limited choice: we put our children into a system that teaches them “there is only one right answer” Most toys come with instructions and we barely let them choose. However, exploring options is at the heart of lateral thinking. Creative kids feel free to propose alternative solutions and are keener to follow their curiosity.
- Over scheduling: organized activities, workshops, social dates... children’s diaries have never been fuller. But we are so busy over-stimulating them that we forget to allocate time for the most important stimulus of all: boredom. Boredom feeds imagination and imagination feeds ideas and creativity. We often say “I need to just sit down and do nothing to recharge” and yet we don’t apply this to our kids. It is during times when we are doing “nothing” that our mind gets the best ideas.



Creativity flourishes when things are done for enjoyment. What matters is the pleasure, not the perfection. Let's forget about the "getting it right" and let's give our kids the opportunity to explore, to make mistakes and take risks and to feel the freedom to express all their wonderful ideas.

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