Your children may have already started using that dreaded sentiment, "I'm bored", and in the potential weeks of isolation to come, you could hear it all too often. While this phase is essential, we don't want to unnecessarily expose our children to the detrimental effects of social distancing, like loneliness and depression. Social interaction is an important part of wellbeing and there are ways to nurture peer relationships besides regular video chats, phone calls, and texts.

The next time your kids tell you they’re bored, try one of these virtual playdate methods to promote interaction with their friends in a time where togetherness is of the greatest importance.

**Video Call with Caribu — caribu.com**
At caribu kids can read books, play games, and color together during a video call. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it’s free!

**Pogo Games — earlyaccess.pogo.com**
Play games that range from classics, such as Yahtzee and Monopoly, to newer quest adventures.

**Messenger for Kids**
Designed for kids from ages six to twelve, this app allows parents to control contacts while kids can do challenges, draw, and play with filters while connecting with their friends and family members.

**Netflix Party**
A google chrome extension, Netflix Party synchronizes playback and allows kids to watch their favorite programming together, with chat windows they can discuss what they’re watching.

**Playing on a Video Call**
Texting and phone calls, or even using video to chat to catch up can get dull. Especially for younger children. Use the ability to see other people as an opportunity to play together in different ways. Kids can play games like hangman and Pictionary successfully from a distance. Give them modeling clay or building toys and challenge both sides to construct an object (e.g. "make a cat!"). Have at home scavenger hunts, whoever brings the item back to the screen first wins! Smaller children might like to have online show and tell parties, or even have set crafts they can complete with their parent’s help. When you’re done show your friends what you made!

**Tired of all the technology?**
Help your kids pick a pen pal. They can write to their friends, send it off, and see how the world communicated before cell phones and the internet were a thing!

Now is the time to get creative and see just what we can accomplish and work through as families. You, and your kids, will never forget the time we were “isolated” but found extraordinary ways to stay connected to the ones we love.