

The Parents Guide To Successful Homeschooling

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INTRODUCTION

The decision to home school your child can be a difficult one to make. Many parents wonder if it is the right thing to do. Many wonder if their children can get the same "grade" of education if they are homeschooled.

There are many reasons why parents choose to homeschool their kids. For many it is because they want to add religious content to their children's learning experience.

Making the decision to home school is usually a very difficult not and it is not one to be taken lightly. It is a personal decision that no one can make for you, but maybe I can help in the thought process by providing you with a comprehensive guide to making the choice to homeschool your kids a successful one.

When making the homeschool decision, you must first consider these things:

1. **Time commitment that is involved.** Homeschooling has a tendency to take up a lot of time in your day. It involves more than just sitting down with books for a couple of hours. There are experiments and projects that have to be done, lessons to prepare, papers to grade, field trips, park days, music lessons, and the list just keeps on going. You can go online and search for some sample schedules that will help to give you an idea of a typical day.
2. **Personal sacrifice.** The homeschooling parent has very little personal time or time alone and away from their children. If a lot of care is not taken to set aside time for yourself, it is easy for the parent to feel overwhelmed. Basically, the parent and child are together 24 hours a day and this can get frustrating on both sides.
3. **Financial problems can arise.** Homeschooling can be accomplished with very little cost to you; however, it usually requires that the teaching parent will not be working out of the home. Some sacrifices will need to be made if the family is used to two

incomes. Of course, if you are a single parent, this could pose an even bigger problem.

4. **Time for socialization.** More attention will need to be given to getting your children together with his/her peers. The best part of homeschooling is being able to have more control of the social contacts your child makes. However, the downside is that you must prepare your child yourself on how to socialize with other kids. Homeschooling has a tendency to make your child feel isolated.
5. **Household organization is harder.** Housework and laundry and other house work will still have to be done, but it probably won't get done first thing in the morning. If you are a neat freak, you might be in for a big surprise. Not only does housework need to be let go at times, but homeschooling creates messes and clutter on its own. You will have to get organized so that you can keep your home together.
6. **Both parents must agree to it.** It is important that both parents agree to homeschooling. It is very difficult for this to work if one of the parents is against it. If your spouse is against it at this time, try doing more research and talking to more people so that you can be absolutely certain it is something that both of you can agree upon. Otherwise, the chances for success are much smaller.
7. **Your child has to be willing.** A willing student is crucial to the success of homeschooling. Ultimately, the decision is the parents to make, but if your child is dead against it, you might have a very difficult time in teaching them. The fact of the matter is that an unwilling child can sabotage his/her own school efforts.
8. **Know that it works one year at a time.** It isn't a lifetime commitment and doesn't have to become one. If you find that homeschooling just isn't worth it, you can choose to go the regular route.

There is a lot more to homeschooling than to just do it. As a parent, you must know that your child's education is the most

important factor in his/her future. You need to be thoroughly prepared for all of the time and commitment that is involved. If you are thinking of choosing homeschooling for your child (ren), this guide will help to make it a successful transition. So let's get started.

GETTING STARTED

If you have considered all of the reasons mentioned above and more, and have decided that homeschooling really is right for you and your kids, you will likely want to know what to do now. This section is going to help you know what you should do in order to get things running. Here are some quick points for getting started with homeschooling:

- Locate your state's homeschool group. You can do this online easily by typing in your state and the keyword "homeschooling" at your favorite search engine. Then go to your state listing. You can usually find many different sites that will offer this information for you.
- Locate your local support group for parents of home schooled kids. These groups will help you to get good tips from other parents and is a great place to find like minded people to share your troubles etc.
- Know the laws in your state about homeschooling. If you have questions, arrange for an evaluation with your local school board so that you can verify that your child is approved for homeschooling. They will also check for a proposal from you about homeschooling your child
- Get any magazines, books and/or other supplies that you will need in order for you to have steady resources on hand to offer tips etc.

What Happens next?

When it comes to the homeschooling of your children, there are quite a few factors that play into not just what you will do about it, but also how you will make sure that you are approved to do it. Like everything else, this is a process. Many people have questions that they need to answer about homeschooling. As the parent/teacher of your child, you must do the following to get started with homeschooling:

- Develop your homeschooling curriculum that is both approved by the school board or state, as well as meeting your ability to teach.
- Schedule a meeting with the school board or state education officials so that they can offer you any help with tutors etc. that are approved. You will also be presenting your proposal at this meeting.
- Get information about and register for evaluations with your school board or state to ensure that your child is meeting with the approved standards in your area.
- Get yourself certified to teach your child
- Create a homeschooling proposal for what you are planning to teach your child and how you plan to go about it.

The court recognized that certain factors should be considered by the superintendent or school committee when it comes to deciding whether or not to approve any homeschool proposal that they receive. One of these factors is a form of periodic evaluation of the children that is designed to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards that are required by the state.

The court says clearly that school officials and parents should and must agree on a method of evaluation that may include one of the following approaches: standardized testing, periodic progress report, or dated work samples. Home visits may not be necessary as a condition of this approval.

Dated work samples mean just what they sound like in that they are a few samples of work with dates on them. You do not have to compile an extensive portfolio in order to submit it to the school although you might like to keep these kinds of records for your own use.

Progress reports can also serve as your plan for the coming year if you include information about how current learning will be extended into the next year, and what new areas will be added. While the law does not specify that a homeschooling plan needs to be submitted annually, many towns have come to expect them.

If you live in a town that tells you that your approval is only valid for only one year, you might also want to add any important information such as how long the homeschool year will be, how qualified the parents are, as well as the fact that you plan to submit one such report a year. I will provide a sample report in a later section.

It is important for you to include in your education plan what form of evaluation you are planning to use. That way if the school later asks you for a form of evaluation that you'd prefer not to use, you can refer them to your approved education plan in which you already said that you would submit your preferred evaluation. It doesn't matter if you choose to submit test scores, a progress report, or work samples.

Adding a line in your annual report such as, an annual progress report/dated work sample/standardized test results will be submitted upon request; is a good idea if you aren't sure whether or not they'll ask you for anything. Of course if they don't ask, you don't need to submit anything.

If you know for a fact that your town consistently requires people to report, then it's somewhat pointless to state the terms "at your request" since you know they'll ask and it just creates more work for them to have to. Some of the information from the most recent homeschool policies will vary by state, and what form and frequency of assessment that homeschoolers provide is also very interesting and worth a quick look. Some of this information is like the following:

- About half of the respondents actually write a progress report.

- 21% of the respondents who did submit work samples or a portfolio; several of them indicated that the schools expected them to also submit work samples.
- Fourteen percent of respondents chose to test instead. Tests used include the California Achievement Test (CAT), the Personalized Achievement Summary System Test (PASS), the Wide Range Assessment test (WRAT), the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, and the Stanford Test.
- Thirteen percent of the people didn't submit any evaluation at all.
- Ten percent of the people indicated their evaluation method changes often.
- Four percent of the people indicated that they use of a form of evaluation other than testing, progress reports, or work samples.

TIPS FOR WRITING YOUR EDUCATION PLAN

As I mentioned in the above section, part of the main aspects of getting approved to homeschool your children is in the creation of your education plan or proposal. In it, you need to prove that you are ready, willing, and capable of teaching your own children. This section is going to teach you how to create your education plan. Here are some of the statutes regarding these plans:

Compulsory Attendance Statute

In many states, there is no statute that specifically governs homeschooling. However, many of them have upheld the compulsory attendance statute which states that every child between the minimum and maximum ages that have been established for school attendance by the board of education is

obligated to attend a public day school in their town, or some other day school that is approved by the school committee.

However, it also states that such attendance shall not be required of a child who is being otherwise taught in a manner that is approved in advance by the superintendent or the school committee.

Ages for School Attendance

The minimum age that has been established for compulsory school attendance is six, whereas the maximum age is 16. Each child must attend school beginning in September of the calendar year once he or she reaches the age of six.

Approval of homeschooling plans

The court has decided that while parents have a basic right in directing the education of their children, however; this kind of right is not really absolute but has to be reconciled with the substantial State interest in the education of its smallest citizens.

It is therefore necessary that the school committee seek to enforce, through the approval process under, certain reasonable educational requirements be similar to those required for public and private schools.

The court systems have recognized that certain factors may be considered by the superintendent or school committee in helping to decide whether or not to approve a home school proposal. The factors that are considered are as follows:

1. The proposed curriculum that you decide to show, the length of the homeschool year and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects
2. The competency of the parents who are to teach the children
3. Parental and student access to the textbooks, workbooks, and other instructional aids that are to be used by the children and to the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents

4. A form of assessment of the children so that the system can be sure that the educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards are up to par

Practical Application of Guidelines

Before you begin submitting anything to your school district, it is a good idea to talk to other local homeschoolers in your area. You can probably find someone by contacting a support group near you. While the statutes for homeschooling do not specify that a homeschooling plan needs to be submitted annually in every area, most towns expect annual plans.

Guideline 1: School officials may consider the subjects the child will study, the length of the homeschool year, and the hours that these kids will be taught. While some school officials may consider hours of instruction in each subject, they may not dictate the exact way in which the subjects will be taught.

Subjects the child will study:

First of all, you will have to consider the lists of the core subjects such as mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, English, foreign languages and the arts. Other subjects that may be included in your child's area of study may include orthography, reading, writing, the English language and grammar, geography, arithmetic, religion, drawing, music, the history and constitution of the United States, the duties of citizenship, health education, gym and good behavior.

To follow these guidelines parents can list the subjects that they plan to cover when drawing up their proposal. A simple list of them should be good enough, since the school is not allowed to dictate the manner in which you teach anyway.

You may want to use key phrases or paragraphs that will be of help to convey the flexible nature of homeschooling:

Topics that will be placed in the education proposal may include, but do not have to be limited to, the following:

[Child's name here] will use a developmentally-appropriate and integrated curriculum. We will plan her learning process together, based on her interests, so that while it is

impossible to state in advance which specific topical areas we will cover, we expect to cover the following subjects during this school year:

We will be practicing learner-directed educational skills; [child's name]'s course of study is based upon his/her specific interests. His/her range of interests is quite broad and his/her learning will be created accordingly. [Child's name]'s education is to be holistic as well since learning often occurs in the context of normal life experiences. His/her school year will extend 365 days a year for this reason.

The curriculum is a statement of things [child's name] has learned and, based on that, of things s/he will continue learning throughout the year. Topics have a tendency to mix together and activities and discussions during the year will reflect a wider picture than what can be expressed in a list of isolated subjects previously mentioned.

Of course, if you are following a boxed or self-made curriculum for your child, you can simply outline what you plan to cover for the year, while still allowing for some level of flexibility in your plan. If you do not want to write an outline, you can create a photocopy of the table of contents from the curriculum instead.

Length of the homeschool year: Cities and towns are obligated to operate the public schools for a minimum of 180 days. However, it does not go so far as to state that the length of a homeschool's year **MUST** be the same as a public school year. However, you must ensure that your homeschool year will meet or beat 180 days.

Many homeschool families choose to write that their homeschool year extends 365 days a year, which means that it easily exceeds the minimum 180 days of a public school because of the life lessons that are often taught. In any case, you should make a note that the length of your homeschool year will be somewhere between 180 days and 365 days a year.

Hours of instruction per subject:

Parents may want to calculate the hours of instruction based on the way in which they homeschool, which does not have to be an exact replicate of what the public school's offering,

however it should equal it in how thorough and effective it is.

You should keep in mind that the definition of instruction is a loose one and includes such activities as independent study, field trips, computer-aided learning, and presentations by people that are not teachers. Also, it helps for you to know that following a schedule is not an important consideration in a home school where the use of time is different.

Some parents choose to write that they will meet or exceed the 900 (elementary) or 990 (secondary) minimum hours of teaching. If your local school officials insist on your adding more detail than this, you will want to submit an estimate of hours per subject per year. But when you do this you will want to preface it by including a statement such as "Because of the flexible nature of homeschooling, the following is just an estimate of the hours of instruction spent per subject"

If you are interested in knowing how the public schools allocate their time, schools have curriculum guides that define how much time will be spent on each subject per week. These guides should be made available to you upon request. Schools are not authorized to go so far as to ask for an hourly or daily schedule.

If the school official is insisting on an hourly daily or weekly schedule, you will want to accompany the above with this quote, which was conducted by from Brunelle: *"While following a schedule may be an important consideration in a public school where preexisting schedules need to be maintained and coordinated, the perception and use of time in a home school are different. The plaintiffs can observe and accommodate variations (from child to child, subject to subject, day to day) in the learning process and teach through a process that paces each student."*

Guideline 2: School officials may ask you for information that pertains to the academic credentials or qualifications of the parents who will be teaching the children. Certification would not necessarily be required for parents under a home school proposal.

Let me just tell you that parents do not need to have college or advanced academic degrees. All the laws state clearly that what is needed for homeschooling is that teachers shall be 'of

competent ability and good morals. For example, if you have a criminal history on record, you would not be deemed worthy to teach a child.

In order for parents to comply with this standard they can include one of the following in their education plan:

- I am of competent ability and good morals for teaching my child.
- Summarize your educational credentials, certifications etc.
- Schools are not authorized to ask for the qualifications of everyone who will be teaching your child such as speakers etc.

Guideline 3: School officials may consider teaching materials, but only if it is to determine subject and grade levels of the children being taught. School officials may not use this access as a means to dictate the manner in which the subjects will be taught. There are actually some lessons that are considered intangible to school systems.

For example, travel, community service, visits to educationally enriching facilities like museums and places like this, and meeting with various resource people, can provide important learning experiences apart from the four corners of a text or workbook that can make homeschooling more rewarding for parent and child.

In order for you to be able to follow this guideline properly: You can write in your educational plan, that you will be using a variety of materials and resources, whereas you will be providing a list to be made available to the school department upon request.

Or, you can list the books and other resources that you will ensure that they will have available to them. If you are using a pre-set curriculum, then you can list the books and resources you will be following from that. If your school insists on getting more detail, photocopying the table of contents of a couple of key books will probably be good enough.

If after trying one or more of the above suggestions, you find that a school official insists on actually seeing the books and materials, you could point out that your plan includes making use of such intangible resources, and that the internet and the public library are accessible to anyone, where you can find the information easily.

It is all really about how best to define access in this context. You need to remember that approval can only be conditioned on requirements that are absolutely necessary to the State interest in making sure that all of the children will be educated properly.

Since most of the schools feel that a list of resources meets their need for access to teaching materials, and since some of them are happy with far less than that, it would be very hard difficult to argue that physical access is needed.

Some of these resources that you can use are:

- Encyclopedias
- Dictionaries
- Atlases
- reference books and materials (such as textbooks, field guides, timelines, globes, maps, etc.)
- newspapers
- Magazines
- Library loan books, tapes, magazines, etc.
- educational games
- educational computer software and on-line services
- calculating and measuring tools and utensils
- arts & crafts supplies
- writing supplies
- musical instruments

- audio-visual equipment and materials
- religious materials
- science lab equipment
- sports equipment
- community resources (such as museums, theatres, sports programs,
- private lessons, volunteer opportunities)

Guideline 4: School officials and parents have to agree on a way to host the evaluations that may include any of the following approaches:

- standardized testing,
- progress report,
- dated work samples.
- Other methods of assessment, if they are agreed upon by parents and school officials, are also allowed.

You need to choose the one form of assessment that best fits your own individual style of homeschooling, either testing, progress report or dated work samples. If you add a line such as, An annual progress report/dated work sample/standardized test results will be submitted upon request, as was mentioned earlier; it is a good way to just be sure. If they don't ask, you don't need to submit anything.

Some families prefer to use different methods of assessment for different children.

Once you have submitted a plan that includes information that is outlined by the guidelines, you can rest assured that you have already fulfilled your responsibility to homeschool.

From here you can either hand deliver your plan to the school and ask for a receipt, or mail it certified mail, by requesting a return receipt. It is not unheard of for schools to lose your paperwork, so it's good to have a copy of what you have sent to them, as well as the proof that you have submitted it.

Depending on what town you live in, you may or may not hear anything from your school once you've submitted your plan. If it is important to you to receive approval in writing, you can include a sentence such as, "I would appreciate a letter of approval from you" in your cover letter.

This type of proof of homeschooling can be used to get special discounts at various stores and museums, as well as student discounts for use of the MBTA.

If the home school proposal is rejected for some reason, the superintendent or the school committee must provide you with details of the reasons for the decision. The parents must then be given an opportunity to correct or change their proposal as a means of fixing its inadequacies.

However, if the parents start the education of their children at home in spite of the school committee's refusal to approve their proposal, the burden of proof under the laws, moves to the school committee as a way to show that the instruction that was outlined in the home school proposal fails to meet with the standards of the public schools in the same town.

Basically, if the school sees a problem with your plan, they are obligated to give you the opportunity to fix it. If, having submitted a plan, you commence homeschooling without approval, the school will then assume that the burden to show that your plan does not meet their standards of that in the public schools.

In the unlikely event that the school wants to take you to court over the matter, the huge costs that are incurred for them to do it along with the fact that they would have to bear the burden of proof to show your plan is not adequate would most likely be a detriment to them, especially given the chance that a judge would recommend an quick and easy resolution to the situation.

A SAMPLE EDUCATION PLAN

Parents' names Go Here

123 Main St.

Anytown, any state

August, YEAR

Superintendent

Anytown Schools

Anytown, any state

Dear Dr./Mr./Ms. Superintendent:

We are writing to inform you of our decision to home educate our child, NAME/AGE. Below you will find our education plan, submitted in accordance with the laws of this state.

We will cover the following subjects: [Choose from the following subjects listed in above sections, or make up your own, keeping in mind your plan must meet the same requirements as the schools in your area], reading, writing, the English language and grammar, geography, arithmetic, drawing, music, the history and constitution of the United States, the duties of citizenship, health education, physical education and good behavior, mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, English, foreign languages and the arts, etc.

We will meet or exceed the 180 days, 900/990 hours of instruction required yearly in the public schools system.

We are of competent ability and good morals etc.

We will be using a variety of different materials and resources, a list of which will be made available to the TOWN school department upon request.

An annual progress report/dated work sample/standardized test results will be submitted upon request as well.

Sincerely,

CHOOSING TEACHING MATERIALS

Choosing your teaching materials can be an overwhelming decision because there are so many excellent resources and products available and each one claims to be superior to all others. Many veteran homeschoolers would suggest that you stick to a "prepackaged" or traditional curriculum for the first year or so, just until you get the hang of it.

Other parents will encourage new homeschoolers to consider correspondence schools to start with. I don't necessarily agree with these recommendations, because for many it seems to encourage the idea of viewing home schooling as being "school at home" instead of an exciting and enriching lifestyle of learning.

I know that it takes some experience to determine which materials are best suited to your teaching style and your children's needs, but I am also convinced that the universe can lead concerned parents to the teaching materials and methods that work best for their family with little to no effort on their part. Here are some suggestions concerning choosing curriculum:

Here are some rules for choosing your teaching materials:

Rule #1: First, you need to consider your situation and budget when it comes to choosing your teaching materials. For example, a farm family will have many opportunities for hands on approach to learning in the areas of math, science, economics, etc. while a city family has better access to museums, libraries, cultural events, and more support group

activities. You can make the most of the real life learning opportunities that are available to you; perhaps never needing textbooks and teaching materials in certain subject areas are concerned.

As far as your actual budget is concerned, all that is really necessary is a library card. Of course, if you have a computer or DVD player, you can easily take advantage of these resources for information. If you have cable, you can learn about figures in history through the A&E channel's "Cable in the Classroom" for biographies etc. You can get all that you need for no more money than what you are already paying now.

Rule #2: Choose the teaching materials that complement both you as the teacher and your child as the learner. Textbooks that are developed for classroom use tend to be teacher directed and chalkboard oriented. They seldom take into account different teaching approaches or the different ways children perceive and process information.

Each student has a style in which he/she learns the best. Different children have different learning strengths and weaknesses that the perceptive parent can take into account when choosing teaching materials. Think of what your child is interested in and learn from that.

Rule #3: If you don't like the material that you have chosen, you will end up resisting using it no matter how good it is. All teaching materials have a bias in them, not just in the subject matter, but also in the way the subject matter is presented. Every teaching parent, whether he recognizes it or not, has an educational philosophy of their own or some set of values and beliefs about what and how children should be taught. You should be true to those beliefs.

Sometimes we will have an unexplained inner resistance to certain teaching materials such as formal textbooks. It could be that this inner resistance arises from a conflict between our educational philosophy and that of the teaching material itself, or it can be the result of your own experiences in the classroom. You need to choose your teaching materials from your spirit as well as from your head.

Rule #4: Avoid programs that require a great deal of teacher preparation. Unless you are a researcher-type or high-energy person, you will be extremely irritated by programs that are

filled with detailed teacher's manuals that you need to wade through, supplemental books or seminars that are necessary to fully utilize the program, or lots of activities to prepare beforehand.

Rule #5: It is like the old saying goes, "Don't judge a book by its cover". Expensive does not necessarily mean better. There are \$250 reading programs that are loaded with praise and there are those reading programs that cost a mere \$25 that are far better. Any dedicated teacher with a good phonics program can teach a child to read and spell well.

You need to remember, this is homeschooling. Some of our favorite programs look like they were put together on someone's kitchen table at night rather than something that was meticulously written by a professor. We've been so conditioned as consumers to want slick packages that we will judge the quality of a product by how it is packaged rather than what is inside of it. Don't make this mistake.

Rule #6: You need to be aware that there are various schools of thought when it comes to the teaching of any subject. Some examples: In math there are programs that are primarily problem solving with manipulatives and there are programs that are primarily problem solving on paper.

In reading there are programs that focus on learning phonics before learning to read, programs that focus on learning the rules of grammar and punctuation while you are learning to read, and there are programs that focus on just learning to read and letting the rules come later.

Each school of thought has produced excellent mathematicians, readers, or spellers. What this means is that you can teach to your best ability and not feel pressured to follow someone else's train of thought on the matter.

Rule #7: you need to realize that people's needs change. What worked one year may not necessarily work the next. Your family's needs and interests will always change and you need to learn to go with the flow. Buy materials that meet your present needs and mold the curriculum to the child's abilities, not the child to the curriculum.

Also, you need to be aware that not all books in a series are equally as good. For example, the fourth grade level of a particular program may be excellent, but this does not mean

the other levels will work just as good. Be prepared to change your series of texts accordingly.

Rule #8: The universe gave you your children because there is something in YOU that it wants imparted to them. Teaching materials are only meant to be used as tools to help you impart yourself to your children. You can trust the universe to lead you to those materials that will help you best teach each child if you let it. Your instincts count when it comes to homeschooling.

Rule #9: You will want to remember that teaching materials are often the least important elements of your home school situation. Books are easy to get rid of if they don't work for you, but attitudes and destructive family dynamics are not. The five major reasons families fail at home education are:

- they lack the conviction to continue on through the difficult times;
- It is a single parent household or both parents are not in agreement
- the children are undisciplined and resist parental instruction;
- the parents are undisciplined and cannot handle the added responsibilities
- The family has unrealistic expectations or goals that are too high.

As you can see, choosing your learning materials do require thought on your part, but it doesn't have to be harder than it needs to. If you come to realize that your own instincts and abilities are your best assets, you will then know that you need no more than where they lead you.

10 STEPS TO DEVELOPING A QUALITY LESSON PLAN

This guide is not meant to be the one and only way to develop a lesson plan; however it is going to provide you with at least some good methods to start with. It is a general overview that highlights the key points of creating a useful and working lesson plan.

Below is a list of the steps that are usually involved in developing a quality lesson plan as well as a description of what each component should be. They will be listed in 10 of the best points.

1. The first thing that you will have to consider, obviously, is what you want to teach. This should be developed based upon your state or local school standards. You also need to be aware of what grade level you are developing the lesson plan for, as well as record a time estimate for your lesson plan to help you to better budget your time.

Once you have your topic picked out, you can begin choosing how you want to teach the topic in general. If you didn't use the state standards to help in developing your topic, you will want to refer to them now to see what specific standards your lesson plan can fulfill.

Having your lesson plan properly set up with state standards helps to prove its worthiness and necessity later. It also helps you in assuring that your students are being taught what your state requires as well as what you are able to teach them.

If you are able to blend your lesson plan with the local school standards, record links to those standards in your lesson plan in writing for reference later. If you are however writing this lesson plans for a website you will want to be sure that you include a title that properly reflects your topic.

2. If you want to make sure that your lesson plan will teach exactly what you want it to then you will need

to develop clear and specific objectives at the start. You must note that these objectives should not be activities that will be used in the lesson plan. Rather, they should be the learning outcomes of those activities.

As an example, if you wanted to teach your class how to add $1 + 3$, your objective may be that "the students will know how to add $1 + 3$ " or more specifically "the students will learn to demonstrate how to add $1 + 3$."

Your objectives should also be directly measurable. What this means is that you need to make sure that you will be able to tell whether these objectives were met or not. You can certainly have more than one objective for a lesson plan if you feel that this would be more useful.

In order for you to be able to make objectives more meaningful, you may want to include both wide and narrow objectives. The wide objectives would be more like ambitions and they would include the overall goal of the lesson plan, for example, in order for you to gain familiarity with adding two numbers together.

The specific objectives would be more like the one listed above, in such a manner as "the students will demonstrate how to add the numbers 2 and 3 together."

3. You would probably find out exactly what materials you are going to use later, however, they should be shown early in your lesson plan. This way if someone else decided to start using your lesson plan, they would know in advance what materials would be required.

Be specific in this case so that you can make sure the teacher will have everything that they could possibly need. For the addition lesson, you should make sure you have 10 or so unifix cubes per student, paper, and pencils.

4. You may also want to write out an Anticipatory Set, which would be a great way to lead into the lesson plan and develop the students' interest in learning

what you are getting ready to teach. A good example deals with a lesson on fractions. The teacher could start by asking the students how they would divide up a pizza to make sure each of their 3 friends got an equal amount of pie, and tell them that they can do this if they know how to work with fractions.

5. At this point you need to write the step-by-step procedures that will be performed to reach each of the above mentioned objectives. These don't have to involve every little thing that the teacher will say and do, but they should list the relevant actions that the teacher needs in order to perform them. For the adding $1 + 3$ lesson, you may have procedures such as:
 - A. The teacher will give each child 2 unifix cubes.
 - B. The teacher will ask the kids to write down how many unifix cubes they have on paper.
 - C. The students should then write a + sign below the number 2:
 - D. The teacher will now pass out 3 more unifix cubes to each student.
 - E. The students will be asked to write down how many unifix cubes they were handed. They should write this number below the number 2 that they just wrote,
 - F. Students should now be told to draw a line under their 3.
 - G. Now the students need to count how many unifix cubes they have all together and write this number just below the 3
 - H. Ask students how many unifix cubes they had to start with, how many they were given to add to that, and how many they had all together after the teacher gave them the 3 unifix cubes.
6. After the above mentioned procedures have been completed, you may want to provide your students with time for independent practice. For the example of

above, students could be given some time to add different numbers of unifix cubes together that a partner would provide them with.

7. Just before you start moving on to the assessment phase you should be prepared to create some sort of closure for the lesson plan. A good idea for this is to return to your anticipatory set, for example, you can ask students how they would divide up that pie now that they know how to work with fractions (check step 4).
8. Now you want to write your assessment/evaluation. Many lesson plans don't really need them, but most of them should have some sort of evaluation of whether or not the objectives were reached. The key to doing this is to make sure that the assessment specifically measures whether the objectives were reached or not.

Because of this, there should be a direct correlation between the objectives and the assessments. This is of course, assuming that the objective were able to add two single digit numbers together, an example would be to have students approach the teacher and add two single digit numbers on paper using unifix cubes as a guide.

9. You should make different directions for students with learning disabilities and extensions for others. Examples of this would be adding 1 unifix cube to 1 unifix cube for students with learning disabilities and adding 9 unifix cubes to 13 unifix cubes for the more advanced students and somewhere in between for everyone else.

This is most effective when you use specific adaptations for specific students to take into account their individual differences.

10. It's a really good idea for you to include a "Connections" section, which really shows how the lesson plan could be integrated with other subjects. An example of this would be to have students paint 2 oranges, then 3 more oranges below them, etc. so that

they can learn how to integrate Art into the lesson plan.

A better way to do this would involve creating 2 or 3 different types of textures on those oranges for example using newspaper with different textures. Putting a lot of work into this can really help to develop complete thematic units that would integrate related topics into many different subjects.

That's really all there is to creating a lesson plan! If you followed all the instructions above, you've successfully written a very thorough lesson plan that will be useful for any other teachers wanting to teach a subject like math or whatever.

One of the most helpful tips in writing your first lesson plans would be for you to look at lesson plans that are already completely developed to get a better idea of what needs to be in the lesson plan. This type of example will be provided below.

A SAMPLE EDUCATION PLAN

TOPIC: Addition and Subtraction

GRADE LEVEL: 3 - 5

TITLE: Cross Out Singles

Materials you will need: Partner or small group

One dice or a 0 - 9 spinner

ACTIVITY:

1. Each player has to make a recording sheet, for a game that consists of three rounds
2. To begin, one player rolls the die or spins the spinner.
3. All players will now write the number that comes up in a square on their first chart. Once a number is marked down, it cannot be changed.
4. Another player now gets to roll or spin so that they can generate a number for everyone to record in another square. Take turns rolling or spinning until all of the players have filled all nine squares on their charts.
5. Players will then add the sums of the rows, columns, and diagonal, and record them in the circles.
6. Players will now their sums. Any sum that appears in only one circle must be crossed out.
7. The total of the sums that are not crossed out is the player's score for that round
8. Play two more rounds. Then compare totals and start a discussion about it

Title - Hurricanes - Florida

By - Carolyn Murray

Subject - Science, Social Studies, Language Arts, Other

Grade Level - 4-5

CONTENT:

The lesson plan that you will make on hurricanes is meant to teach students the many different concepts that exist about hurricanes, which is an important part of Florida's past and future. This lesson is also intended to be taught for a full week. Students will be able to use this lesson plan to make connections, understand the key concepts and be able to keep the knowledge that was presented to them for them to use as needed in the future.

ESOL students will be able to use this game in order to perform all of the preceding areas of content using visuals, audio, books, and personal journals to make notes. They may take notes in the form of a drawing, or the written word.

OUTCOMES:

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to answer or identify the following points about hurricanes:

- How is a hurricane created?
- What does a hurricane look like?
- What are the parts of a hurricane?
- Hurricane vocabulary words
- What are the different categories of hurricanes?
- Why are hurricanes given names?
- Historical Florida hurricanes during the 1990's
- How to track a hurricane using a hurricane tracking map - track a pretend hurricane all week long

-
- How to prepare for a hurricane during a watch/warning

The one-day lesson will focus on:

- What does a hurricane look like?
- Hurricane vocabulary words
- How to track a hurricane using a hurricane tracking map - track a pretend hurricane all week long
- How to prepare for a hurricane

Teaching methods:

Lesson-Initiating Activity

The first day of the lesson, students will play the KWL game. This is where they will chart what is known about hurricanes, what we might want to know and at the end of the week, what we have learned. These items ideas will be transferred to a bulletin board/poster and placed in the room all week long to ensure that all of the items that are listed are covered.

Every morning, it is essential for you to discuss with students and review the vocabulary words that are assigned on Monday. Use flash cards that contain the word and picture. Allow the student to break into groups and quiz each other. After the group has a review review, hold a class review. Student should repeat the word after the teacher, give a definition and say the word again. The class can play "Around the World" or other games to facilitate the review.

ESOL students can use pictures as a way to identify words and by repetition will be able to pronounce the words correctly. As we discuss the vocabulary words in the lesson, the ESOL students will be familiar with the terms and their meanings after reviewing on a daily basis.

Students will keep journals for each day that contain items like vocabulary words or concepts taught in class. These logs will be the basis of review for homework and in class reviews. ESOL students can make their notes in English, their native language or in the form of a drawing representing the picture

of the object, concept or action.

Main Activities

Students will learn what a hurricane looks like from a radar plane, the same pictures they would see on the television set during news broadcasts. Color picture of Hurricane Andrew will be given to students to place in their logbooks. Students will learn the colors and what the colors mean on the radar pictures. Students will color a hurricane and place in hurricane logbook.

ESOL students will recognize the colors of the hurricane when viewing in color (as on the news or weather report) and be able to identify the intensity of the hurricane.

Students are given time to write or draw in their journals about the colors in a hurricane picture.

ESOL students may color or write in their native language or English if they feel comfortable to write in English.

Students will place updated coordinates of make-believe hurricane on their individual tracking map. Students are asked to check with their neighbor to make sure the coordinates match and everyone's hurricane is in the same place. Students may predict how the hurricane will travel. These updates are done frequently throughout the lessons each day.

ESOL students can ask their classmates and their classmates will help make sure that they have marked the same spot on the map. Discussion is held on preparation before a hurricane comes to land. Students will go into groups to prepare a list of items needed to have in the house if a hurricane should strike. One student from each group will share with the class the items and write them on the board. The list will be comprised of all items thought of by the class. The class will review and discuss the items for the most practical items and make one list for the classroom, to be posted.

Students would place information in their log books.

ESOL students may color or write in their native language or English if they feel comfortable to write in English.

Closure Activity

Students will break into groups of 4-5 and read a book on

hurricanes located in the reading center of the classroom. After reading the book, they will draw a picture to show something that they read in story. It can be a particular item significant to the story, a person significant to the story, something about the place or setting of the story. The groups will share their pictures with the class. After the pictures are shared, the students may place them around the room on the walls.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT:

- Log Books, 1 for each student
- Paper for students to write on
- Flash cards
- Hurricane Tracking Maps (1 for each student)
- Markers, Crayons, Colored Pencils
- Colored Chalk, Chalk Board or Dry Erase Board and Markers
- Poster Boards
- Color Pictures of Hurricanes
- Library Books
- Videos
- Sentence Strips
- Vocabulary Words
- Copies of all Paper Materials for handouts

These materials are provided for all students so that no pressure is placed on students to purchase something they may not know about. All items are the same or same style, so no students look like they have less than another.

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION:

1. Vocabulary Word Matching Sheet
2. Word Scrambles/Finds for terms and concepts
3. Group and Class discussion
4. Create the "What We Learned" Poster for the "KWL" game and break into groups to discuss what we place on the poster, the groups will decide what to write on the poster(s).

Emphasis placed on alternative ways to "Test" students. Most testing will be done in group discussions and by asking particular questions to be assured students are aware of what they are talking or reading about.

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES:

- Students will track the path of a make-believe hurricane and we will predict the path it will take through out the week.
- After creating the list of what to items need to be on the preparation list before a hurricane strikes, the students will take inventory of items in their house to see what their family would need. This would be discussed in class the next day. The purpose is to see on average, how prepared we are or need to be for a hurricane.

These activities will education the ESOL students about Hurricanes and they in turn can educate their parents and family about Hurricanes and how to prepare for one. This is a start to helping the community learn about events that could someday affect their lives.

Final Note: This lesson is geared to educate students and especially TESOL students about Hurricanes and the possibility of one striking Florida. Students will understand what a hurricane looks like on TV, they can then explain to their parents in their native language. Students will have experience with how to track a Hurricane and again, they will learn what to have in the house in the event a Hurricane is threatening South Florida and again, they can educate their parents in their native language.

These lesson plan info samples were located at:

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/ScienceSSLAOMDHurricanesFlorida45.htm>

You can many more just like them by visiting this website.

SCHEDULING & PLANNING LESSONS

It is possible that the biggest hardship that a homeschooling parent faces is how to make a schedule for homeschooling. I've heard many ideas from many parents about how they handle the scheduling issue. Some use software programs and some write every thing in a notebook or they use a program like Microsoft Word.

Some of them plan the day as it goes and some plan ahead of time. I prefer to think that it is a mixture of planning ahead and on-the-spot is the most comfortable and practical when it comes to homeschooling.

What your Goals Should be:

You should first make a goal plan that lists the goals that you have set for your child's upcoming year. This is not as hard as it sounds. Once you have, you should use these goals, and make better choices when you are gathering the books and supplies that you will need.

There are a wide variety of books that have good ideas for goals. These books usually have some sort of scope and sequence within them. You may be able to find these types of books at your public library or you can buy them from a curriculum catalog at bookstores or online.

If you are looking for a free scope and sequence book, you can visit any number of websites like WorldBooks.com and gather ideas from their scope and sequence. You do not have to do every thing that is in the scope and sequence list either.

If you would prefer, go ahead and add your own ideas to the goals that you are setting for your child because no one knows your kid better than you do. When your child is older, he should assist you with creating the goals and eventually you will become the assistant and advisor as he sets his own goals.

From your goals lists you will want to fill out a curriculum planner. Avoid curriculum fairs until you have done this already and have gotten the hang of it. When you are at the curriculum fair you will need to have your goal lists and your

curriculum planner handy so that when you are at the fair you do not buy anything that you do not need.

I have listed some ideas below that I've learned over the years about planning for homeschool. I figured that since I have all of those forms for homeschooling on the forms page it just made sense to get moving and offer some tips on how to plan.

The Course of Study

In order to make the course of study you should, you will need to have your goal sheets handy and the books that you will be using close at hand. All you have to do is get a sheet of paper and make an overall plan that lists the subjects, the books or supplies, and about how many times a week that you think that particular subject will be studied or how many times a week the book will be used.

You can even try to estimate how much time you think each subject will need. Once you have done this, you will have an overall look at what you have and if anything are missing.

Your weekly lesson plans by subject are important. Below are some tips for making Weekly Lesson Plans for your kids. I have written them per subject. For those subjects that I didn't mention like history and fine arts or religion, it is because you can follow the plans for the subjects mentioned if you need to. Let's look at them now!

Math

The fact of the matter is that some things shouldn't be scheduled too far in advance. Math, for one, should not be planned too far ahead. Fortunately, there's no problem with scheduling math, because almost all math curriculums are pretty much laid out for you in your math kits.

If your child did lesson one yesterday, then today your child will do lesson two, unless your child had a problem with lesson one and needs a review. This is why you should not schedule math far in advance. Math is always a harder subject to learn and therefore can't be pre-planned.

No one ever knows ahead of time which day will require some math review instead of a math lesson. If you need to schedule an entire week of math at a time, be sure to use a pencil to write the schedule in case you have to erase later.

You have to plan ahead for Math Lab if you offer this type of a thing. Math lab is hands-on activities that use objects like beads, Lego's, money, or even a trip to the grocery store as teaching aids. The week before math lab day, you will want to look over the upcoming week or the previous month in your child's math book to see what skills you can reinforce with hands on activities and make your plan work better for you both.

You are going to want to take plenty of time for math. In the middle thru upper grades, it could take as much as 2 hours to complete a math lesson, longer if the child is finding it hard to learn. If your children seem to be taking a huge amount of time for math, it could be that they have not memorized the basic math facts.

Depending on their age or grade, children should know instantly the answers to basic math facts such as times tables. It is well worth their time to do a drill sheet daily until these facts are memorized. Mid-term fourth graders shouldn't be adding with their fingers any more because it will slow them down when they are trying to learn how to multiply and divide later on.

Graduating fifth graders should have all four of the basic facts for math such as: (addition, subtraction, multiplying, and division) memorized. If your 4th grader can't answer right away what $8+9$ or $19-6$ equals, then you will need to start doing a grade-appropriate fact sheet before every math lesson for review sessions.

But, if you do not want to do the drill sheets, another way that you can help them learn is to let the child look at either an addition chart or a multiplication chart while they do math lessons. They will, over time, learn the basics this way and they will eventually not need the charts any more.

Grammar

You will want to plan grammar the way you would plan math; meaning a little at a time, perhaps a week or two ahead and in pencil. Some grammar programs are easy to plan for, whereas others are not. Daily Grams, for example has 180 lessons in it.

You can take up to two years to complete a Daily Grams book or you can do a lesson a day and complete it in one school year.

Easy Grammar lessons usually take around two years to complete.

There should be a teaching plan already laid out for you that you have created for this subject. You will need to look over that plan and count how many days of the school year that you are planning to use this program.

The 8th grade Bob Jones English book for example, is designed to be used for 90 days. That could mean that using it every day for a semester or using it every other day during the entire school year. That is something that you will want to decide before you make your lesson plans.

You should look through the grammar curriculum that you have chosen and decide how long you think it will take to complete the program. You have to also decide how many days a week that you want to devote to your grammar instruction. Write your decisions down for your own reference later when you are making your weekly plans.

Spelling

Spelling books are most commonly laid out for you and all your child will do is a lesson a day for four days and then he/she will do a test on the 5th day. If you use Natural Speller or Spelling Power, you will need to make plans for the spelling lessons.

You'll need to decide which word list you want to use and what activities that you want your child to do each day. Once a week you will need to make detailed lesson plans for the upcoming week. I think Spelling Power has the tools you need to teach spelling and it is more structured. You have to make a decision on the structure and how to go about creating the lessons.

Vocabulary

Studying words is a very good use of your child's time. There are many excellent curriculums that will make this easy for you. Wordly Wise is one of those that I would personally recommend. However, you can do this without curriculum. If you have a very good dictionary like the dictionary tells the parts of speech, the pronunciation, the syllables, the antonyms, the root words, and of course, a definition and example sentence for every part of speech that each word has.

Unfortunately, most dictionaries do not have this. The giant tomes that come with the World Book Encyclopedia or the Britannica are usually terrific dictionaries for helping kids. I bought my dictionary used at the public library. Also, the Merriam-Webster dictionaries are good as well.

A thesaurus is also very useful for word study and is kind of fun when you play games with it. A good thesaurus to use is the Roger's Thesaurus. If you get a small pocket thesaurus, make sure that it has (at least) the phonetic pronunciation, antonyms, and of course it will have the synonyms. It would be very nice if it also tells the part of speech for the words, and has example sentences.

You also want to make certain the type is readable and not too dark and blurry to the eye. Children enjoy owning their own thesaurus, so it is good to look for nice small ones that you can afford to buy for each child.

Plan to do vocabulary at least 2 or 3 times a week.

Dictation

Dictation is a wonderful tool that homeschooling parents use for learning language. What it does is it mixes handwriting, spelling, grammar, punctuation, proof-reading, listening, and anything else that has to do with the language arts. You must always use high quality literature for your dictation so that your child will be exposed to good examples of writing as well as building a higher vocabulary in use.

Younger children can look at the book and copy the words themselves and then check it for any mistakes. Older children can also start out by copying; however, they will later switch to listening as you read the selection a sentence at a time. They will decide from hearing your voice about how to punctuate the words. Dictation is hard for anyone and you may encounter some serious complaints from your kids, but it is worth it.

There are writing and grammar lessons that can be taken after a dictation lesson. If the selection has a lot of adjectives, your children can learn what an adjective is and how to pick out the adjectives along with the nouns that the adjectives describe. You can have your child read the words out loud without the adjectives and then again with the adjectives.

Have your child compare the two to each other. For creative writing, you could have him change some of the adjectives for different ones as a fun activity. You can plan similar activities with nouns and verbs too. If you want to focus on the punctuation, try to pick selections that have plenty of punctuation such as quotation marks and commas.

Plan to do dictation as many times as you want each week. If you plan to use dictation as a way to teach grammar, then get a good college grammar reference book such as Harbrace or Warriner's.

Reading

Reading out loud should be a daily activity as well as reading quietly to yourself. Of course, during the school years, reading includes phonics instruction and learning the alphabet. Later on your child will read as a means of getting information, for textbook reading and reading for pleasure.

Reading for information purposes includes reading things like food labels, road signs, maps, newspapers, etc. Textbook reading would likely have to include learning some study skills, learning the vocabulary of the text book, speed reading, and more.

Reading for pleasure would include reading things like poetry, literature, thought provoking articles, and even comic books.

You will want to plan for your child to do plenty of reading every day. You should also plan to read out loud to your children every day. You must also listen to your child when he/she reads aloud because this will give him an opportunity or improve his reading and will give you an opportunity to help him with his pronunciation, tone, and rhythm. It can also help with easing the fear of public speaking.

Writing

If you are using a writing curriculum such as Writing Strands, Easy Writing, Wordsmith, etc. you are going to have to decide how many times a week that you are going to have a writing class and make your choices from there. Avoid over scheduling for writing because some children may need extra days for their lessons.

For example, each assignment in Writing Strands is spread out for a certain amount of days. If you plan this program in

advance, you will have to skip several days between each assignment just in case your child needs extra days for study and review.

If you plan all of the writing classes in advance, like always, you want to use a pencil and leave plenty of days in between assignments. It may be better to plan one assignment at a time and write the lessons that your child completes in your planner as you go.

If you are going to design your own writing classes instead, you can plan one assignment for every two weeks or longer if necessary; which makes it a total of up to 16 assignments in all. This plan will give you 4 weeks of flexibility to work with, which could be just the thing you need to get your child up and running.

Handwriting

When your child is learning the alphabet it would be a good idea to also impress how necessary it is for him to form the letters well. This would likely add up to a short 5 minute class that doesn't pressure the child. There are a lot of good handwriting programs that you can get from libraries, bookstores, and online. All you have to do is decide which one to use and then stick with it.

You will want to plan to do handwriting on a daily basis until your child can remember how to form the letters and do it legibly. After you do that, you can have handwriting classes as they are needed and you will decide that based on how well your child is doing.

You will know that your child is doing well if:

- the letters in the words that he writes are spaced just right (a pinky finger apart).
- all of the short lower case letters are the same height.
- all of the upper case letters and tall letters reach the top line.
- his words are spaced properly.
- the letters have a similar slant.
- all of the letters are sitting on the line.

Make sure that you go gentle with the criticism of your child's writing. You must remember that there's a lot of time for your child to practice and become better at handwriting. I would recommend short classes. Fifteen minutes should be the most amount of time spent daily on it.

HOMESCHOOLING GIFTED & SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

There are many reasons for parents to homeschool for your gifted or special needs child, such as:

- You can give your child the individual attention and custom program that best suits his or her needs in a safe and comfortable environment.
- Spending time together preserves and helps to strengthen the family bond and makes the family the primary socializing agent in your child's life
- You can take delight in being with your child to witness and be a part of his or her learning experience

For Children with IEP's

According to the VA DoE's "Fact Sheet on Home Instruction," the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that is designed to meet their individual needs in conformity with the child's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Both of the regulations and the United States Department of Education's General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) make it very clear that public education is not the only option for children with disabling conditions.

However, the children who are being educated in home instruction programs are still entitled to take part in any of

the related services that are provided by the school division for which they are eligible to attend.

School divisions have to remain ready to serve these children when parents go in search for these services either through regular enrollment or as nonpublic students.

Of course, each county seems to determine its own interpretation of this law. Some school divisions have become tighter in provision of services to handicapped or disabled non-public students, both for at home and privately schooled.

I know that in Canada, these services are provided for free to the children in Ontario and these children can receive dividends of up to \$350 per month to cover educational costs.

Here are some good tips about homeschooling "special needs" children:

- Don't spend any of your money until you have done a lot of reading of what is covered for you or what grants you can apply for.
- Read as many books and magazines and browse as many websites as you can for information
- Relax: there are no educational emergencies that can't be solved quickly.
- Take some time to evaluate your method regularly and make adjustments as you see fit.
- Know that you'll have ups and downs--they are part of the process.

Books That Are Helpful for Homeschooling Special Needs Children

Accidental Genius

by Kevin James Kearny and Cassidy Kearney

And the Skylark Sings With Me: Adventures in homeschooling and community-based education

by David H. Albert

Bringing Out the Best: A resource guide for parents of young gifted children

by Jacquelyn Saunders

Choosing and Using Curriculum for Your Special Child
by Lisa Rivero

Creative Home Schooling for Gifted Children: a resource guide
by Lisa Rivero

Gifted Education Comes Home: A case for self-directed learning
by Lisa Rivero

The Gifted Kids Survival Guide: A teen handbook
by Judy Galbraith, James R. Delisle

The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide for Ages 10 & Under by Judy
Galbraith, Pamela Espeland

Growing Up Gifted: Developing the potential of children at
home and at school
by Barbara Clark

Hitchhiking Through Asperger Syndrome
by Lise Pyles, Tony Attwood

Home Educating our Autistic Spectrum Children: Paths are Made
by Walking
by Kitt Cowlisaw and Terri Dowty

Home Schooling Children With Special Needs
by Sharon Hensley

Homeschooling the Child with ADD
by Lenore Hayes

Learning in Spite of Labels
by Joyce Herzog

SUMMARY

As you have learned from this guide, Homeschooling children does not mean that they spend all of their time at home, nor is the learning process approached in the same way that it would be in school. In fact, many of the assumptions that are often made about learning found in public school teaching are the exact opposite in homeschooling.

The main element in successful homeschooling of your children is trust. You have to trust the children to know when they are ready to learn and what they are interested in learning. You must trust them to know how to go about the learning process.

While this may seem to be an astonishing way of looking at children, parents commonly take this view of learning during the child's first two years of homeschooling and it works.

Children are naturally curious and have a built-in desire to learn.

In a book written by John Holt, "How Children Learn", it describes the natural learning style of young children in the following way:

*"The child is curious. He wants to make sense out of things, find out how things work, gain competence and control over himself and his environment, and do what he can see other people doing. He is open, perceptive, and experimental. He does not merely observe the world around him, He does not shut himself off from the strange, complicated world around him, but tastes it, touches it, hefts it, bends it, breaks it. To find out how reality works, he works on it. He is bold. He is not afraid of making mistakes. And he is patient. He can tolerate an extraordinary amount of uncertainty, confusion, ignorance, and suspense... School is not a place that gives much time, or opportunity, or reward, for this kind of thinking and learning."*¹

Children know best how to go about learning something for them. If they are left alone, they will know automatically what method is best for them. Caring and observant parents will soon learn that it is safe and very appropriate to trust this knowledge.

The perceptive parents are also aware that there are many different ways to learn something, and they trust their children to know which ways are best for them.

Children also need multiple amounts of quiet time so that they can think. Research shows that children who are good at fantasizing are better learners and cope better with disappointment than those who do not have this ability. But creative fantasy requires time; time is the most lost commodity in our lives.

Fully-scheduled school hours and extracurricular activities leave children with very little time for them to dream, to think, to invent solutions to problems, to cope with stressful experiences, and simply to fulfill the universal need for solitude and privacy.

Children are not afraid to admit to their own ignorance and to make mistakes. Homeschooling children, free from the intimidation of public embarrassment and failing marks, helps them to keep their openness to new exploration. Children learn by asking questions, not by answering them. That is your job.

Children take a great deal of joy in the values of whatever they are learning. There is no real need to motivate children through the use of rewards, such as high grades or stars, which suggest to the child that the activity itself must be too hard or horrible to do.

Think about it; a child would ask "why is a reward, which has nothing to do with the work, being offered?"

Children learn best about getting along with other people through interaction with those of all ages. They also learn best about the world through first-hand experience.

Homeschoolers learn directly about the world by being in it through such events as going to museums, theatres, zoos etc. Ironically, the most common objection about homeschooling is that children are "being deprived of the real world."

Most parents understand how difficult it is for their children to learn something when they are being rushed, threatened, or given failing grades. While infants and toddlers teach us many principles of learning, schools have adopted quite different principles due to the hardships that occur in teaching a large number of same-age children in a compulsory setting.

The structure of school (required attendance, school-selected topics and books, and constant checking of the child's progress) assumes that children are not learners by nature; however they must be compelled to learn through the efforts of others.

Natural learners do not need to be in this type of structure. The success of self-directed learning (homeschoolers who regularly outperform their schooled peers on measures of academic achievement, socialization, confidence, and self-esteem) strongly implies that structured approaches inhibit both learning and personal development.

With this guide, you have learned everything that you need to know about successful homeschooling. If this is your chosen method of teaching your children, this guide will help. Look below for some great resources on homeschooling your children.

RESOURCES

Online

A large collection of homeschool resources. Online support groups, regional support groups, FAQs, discussion boards, chat, mailing lists and links: www.midnightbeach.com/hs/

HOMESCHOOLING RESOURCES (Bill Beaty's Homepage) Some Links to Homeschool and Alternative Ed WWW sites. A to Z Homes Cool; Jon's homeschooling page ... Some Links to Education Resource Directories etc... www.amasci.com/home.html

Homeschooling Resources Links to resources, schools, and educational tools.

www.onlinemac.com/users/tobi/homeschool/

The Home School Mom's Free Homeschool Resources A variety of free resources for home educators, from software to unit studies. Also lists academic contests, homeschooling styles, and curriculum www.thehomeschoolmom.com/

New Hampshire Homeschooling Resources Curricula and field trip ideas, legislative and bureaucratic information for

homeschooling parents, and fun pages for homeschooled kids.
www.nhhr.dimentech.com/ -

Favorite Resources for Catholic Homeschoolers"150 searchable
pages of free information written by and for Catholic
homeschoolers, book reviews, a calendar of resources,
overviews of Catholic homeschool ...www.love2learn.net/

Learn in Freedom! Education Reform, Home-Schooling
www.learninfreedom.org/

The Canadian Homeschool Resource: [www.flora.org/homeschool-
ca/](http://www.flora.org/homeschool-ca/)

Hewitt Homeschooling: www.hewitthomeschooling.com/

Homeschool Math - free worksheets and homeschooling
www.homeschoolmath.net/

Books

Approach For Your Child's Learning Style by Cathy Duffy
(Paperback)

The First Year of Homeschooling Your Child: Your Complete
Guide to Getting Off to the Right Start by Linda Dobson
(Paperback)

The Ultimate Book of Homeschooling Ideas: 500+ Fun and
Creative Learning Activities for Kids Ages 3-12 by Linda
Dobson (Paperback)

Home Learning Year by Year: How to Design a Homeschool
Curriculum from Preschool Through High School by Rebecca Rupp
(Paperback)

Homeschooling for Dummies by Jennifer Kaufeld (Paperback)

Mary Pride's Complete Guide to Getting Started in Homeschooling by Mary Pride (Paperback)

Homeschooling: The Early Years: Your Complete Guide to Successfully Homeschooling the 3- to 8- Year-Old Child by Linda Dobson (Paperback)

So You're Thinking About Homeschooling: Fifteen Families Show How You Can Do It by Lisa Whelchel (Paperback)

Homeschooling Our Children Unschooling Ourselves by Alison McKee (Paperback)

Books: See all 337 items

The Complete Home Learning Source Book: The Essential Resource Guide for Homeschoolers, Parents, and Educators Covering Every Subject from Arithmetic to Zoology by Rebecca Rupp (Paperback)

Practical Homeschooling [MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION] 6 issues/12 months

Magazine Subscriptions: See all 2 items

Family Matters: Why Homeschooling Makes Sense by David Guterson (Paperback)

Homeschooling Today [MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION] 6 issues/12 months

Magazine Subscriptions: See all 2 items

Homeschooling on a Shoestring: A Jam-packed Guide by Melissa L. Morgan, Judith Waite Allee (Paperback)

The Unschooling Handbook: How to Use the Whole World as Your Child's Classroom by Mary Griffith (Paperback)

Sim Town (PC) by Maxis (CD-ROM)

Software: See all 3 items

The Homeschooling Book of Answers: The 101 Most Important Questions Answered by Homeschooling's Most Respected Voices (Prima Home Learning Library) by Linda Dobson (Paperback)