

Homeschool INDIANA

a publication of the Indiana Association of Home Educators | Issue 22, Volume 3



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Homeschool Indiana Core Values

To be Christ-focused
To be Indiana-focused
To be encouraging
To be a resource



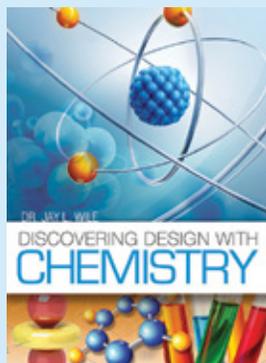
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Welcome

In March, I had the privilege of sharing about the IAHE before one of the keynote sessions at the annual **IAHE Home Educators' Convention**. As I was talking about our incredible team and all of the work that our dedicated volunteers do during the year, I shared one of the main reasons **WHY** our team serves so faithfully:

We serve because we believe that homeschooling changes lives.

IAHE was founded for the purpose of serving the Lord Jesus Christ by supporting and encouraging families interested in home education.

Our community has seen a lot of changes over the last 36 years, but still:

We serve because we KNOW that homeschooling changes lives.

Today the IAHE is once again facing changing times. The homeschool community is more diverse than ever and while the IAHE remains a Christ-centered organization, we continue to serve all families interested in home education. The basic needs and questions of a new generation of homeschool parents remain the same as previous generations, but the way parents gather information and support is evolving.

*Did you know that over the last five years **alone** the IAHE has spent over \$155,800 mailing copies of our magazine to families across Indiana?*

With rising magazine costs and a decrease in convention attendance, the IAHE is always looking for new ways to serve well and be wise stewards. We're excited to offer a brand new way for you to partner with us and to keep the homeschool community strong for generations to come. We're proud to introduce IAHE Membership, launching this summer. Be sure to check out a sneak peek on pages 16 & 17.

Do you have questions? Let us know. We look forward to hearing from you.

Tara Bentley
Executive Director, IAHE
Managing Editor, *Homeschool Indiana*

The Indiana Association of Home Educators
(IAHE) is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1983 for the purpose of serving the Lord Jesus Christ by supporting and encouraging families interested in home education. We define home education as parent-directed, home-based, privately-funded education.

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New Reps for Region 12

Dwight & Marsena Hatfield

Dwight and Marsena Hatfield live in Sullivan, where Dwight is the pastor of a small church. Believing that they should “train up a child” in every area of life, they have always homeschooled, and they have graduated three of their four children. They desire to help and encourage other homeschoolers. ■



Do you live in an area without an IAHE Representative and have a passion for homeschooling? Do other homeschool families look to you for answers?

The IAHE is looking for couples with the heart to serve others. Homeschooling is growing across the county and you can be a part of encouraging families with the IAHE.

Contact us directly for more information:

office@iahe.net





Did You Hear?

We have new IAHE Regions! Check to see your new region number and share it with your local families.

Serving the homeschooling community throughout Indiana.

Regional Representatives are veteran homeschool parents who are here to support your family on your home education adventure. Whether you are looking for local activities,

have questions about curriculum, or want to find a support group in your area, your Regional Representative couple is available to help you!

To contact any of our reps by phone, dial 317-467-6244 and then their extension.

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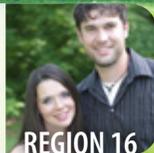
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REGION 9





*One Step
at a Time*

— Heidi Kreider

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“Stewardship as parents means raising our children to be adults who can walk well.”

I hope I never forget the memory of my children taking their first steps. I specifically remember a cold February afternoon when I snapped a few pictures of my son stepping between his father and his grandfather. The most amazing part of that moment was when my dad let go of my son’s hand and my husband reached out a few feet away ready to catch him if he fell. In between these two strong men, a small human wobbled and teetered and awkwardly put one foot in front of the other as he stepped right into his father’s arms.

Watching my babies learn to walk wasn’t always easy. There were many bumps and bruises and even a chipped tooth along the way. When they fell, I scooped them up. I wiped their tears and kissed their boo-boos. As soon as the tears were gone, they were pushing against me to get down. They were off to walk on their own again.

Many years later, we would again let go of his hand as our teenage son took many “first steps.” I remember his first job interview and his first day on the job with a crisp, new Culver’s uniform. He worked hard at that job to save up for his first car and I’ll never forget watching him drive out of the driveway alone for the first time. I also remember his first accident (and thankfully his only one to date) and later watching him navigate the steps of auto insurance claims. During all of those first steps, we were a few feet away if needed. With each step, he gained strength and confidence to walk as a man.

Stewardship as parents means raising our children to be adults who can walk well. The best way we knew how to accomplish this was to give our kids opportunities to take awkward and wobbly “first steps” while we were close by to guide them. Two of our three had their first job at the age of fifteen (and the last one will when she reaches that age). We helped them purchase their uniform, and they were responsible for remembering their work schedule. If they were late, they had to take responsibility. And, when the boss

noticed that one of them had forgotten his belt, he had to figure it out. Later, we helped them enroll in dual-credit college classes. On the first day of class, we didn’t ask for the syllabus. Instead, the course was their responsibility and if they forgot to study for a quiz, there was no second chance from mom. The bumps and bruises of teenagers “first steps” are bigger, more painful, and often much more expensive than when they were babies. There have been times I’ve been too frustrated to scoop them up, and they aren’t willing to let me kiss their boo-boos anymore. However, with each wobble and teeter, they have learned to walk on their own.

Because of steps that they took in high school, going to college wasn’t a hard step for either of our two adult children. They already had vehicles that they had paid for with cash they earned, and they both graduated from high school with over thirty college credits to take with them to the university of their choice. The steps that they took earlier taught them how to navigate a college campus with confidence.

Whether it’s first steps as a baby or “first steps” as a teenager, learning to walk happens one step at a time. Sometimes our kids have fallen and other times they’ve just stumbled. There have been really hard life lessons learned, and there have been incredible grace gifts given. Thankfully, each “first step” they took taught our two young adults to walk well.

He has told you, O man, what is good;

And what does the LORD require of you

But to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

—Micah 6:8 ■



Heidi Kreider has been married to her BFF for 23 years and together they’ve parented their children. She is in her sixteenth year of homeschooling and now only has one left in her nest. Over those years of homeschooling, she’s also experienced life as a work from home mom. One of the things Heidi is passionate about is helping women find ways to make an income while being a stay-at-home mom.





Elder Care &
HOMESCHOOLING

—Vicki Bentley

An increasing number of homeschoolers are considering the question of whether to provide in-home care for aging parents or grandparents. Many of you face—or may someday face—the challenge of helping to manage a parent’s daily life of nurses and therapists, chemotherapy and blood transfusions, oxygen providers and medical equipment, prescriptions and insurance, house modifications, personal care, and companionship. Or you have already taken it on—and are wondering how to make it work while also managing your own household and homeschooling full-time. You may be asking:

How do I prepare for this?

How can I possibly homeschool while caregiving?

How will caregiving impact my family?

How Do I Prepare?

Sometimes life comes at you so quickly that there is no preparation phase. Circumstances simply send you into autopilot mode and you instinctively, protectively bring your parents home. However, if you do have advance notice—or if you are planning ahead for that season of life—asking the right questions can help you evaluate your options.

How To Help A Caregiving Family

There are a number of meaningful ways you can reach out to a family that is juggling homeschooling and caregiving:

- ***Pray for them.***
- ***Volunteer to sit with the care recipient so the caregiver can have some time off.***
- ***Take their children to events, such as support group activities or field trips.***
- ***Include their children in your family events.***
- ***Invite them to events. Even if they can't come, it is nice to know they are wanted.***
- ***Understand that they have limited social time, even on the phone. If you call, they may need to keep it brief.***
- ***Take them freezer meals.***
- ***Help them catch up on laundry, vacuum their house, or clean their windows.***
- ***Offer to pick up a few groceries when you make your shopping trip.***
- ***Treat the care recipient with dignity and honor.***

Janice Campbell of Virginia shares some questions that were helpful to her family as they made the decision to provide full-time care for her grandparents, who raised her:

First, you must consider yourself, your family, and the elderly parent. Do you have a good relationship with the person you would be caring for? Love can help you survive difficult times and situations. Second, does the person want in-home care, or would he rather go to assisted living? Do you and he have a sense of humor? Diapers, dentures, and dementia do create very difficult situations. You must be able to laugh in order to survive. Do you have a good relationship with your spouse, and does your spouse support the idea of caregiving? Caregiving challenges even a solid relationship. Finally, what kind of an influence will the care recipient be on your family? Attitudes are contagious, so consider in advance how to address difficult issues.

Here are some additional tips from other experienced caregivers:

Have Realistic Expectations Of Your Family

Julie Caprera of Massachusetts, whose family has been caring for her mother-in-law for almost nine years, stresses that this should be a mutual decision; if one spouse is not supportive, or if the care recipient is adamantly opposed, the arrangement can result in anger or conflict. If this disagreement cannot be resolved, you may want to investigate other care options. If there are other extended family members, a family meeting is recommended.

Questions to consider and discuss during the meeting include the following: Is everyone supportive of the decision? What roles will all the siblings play? Are others close enough geographically to take turns providing care or respite care? Who will handle finances? How will legal matters be handled? Will others pitch in with labor or finances for household help?

While this will be an opportunity for your children to serve and honor their elders and to pitch in as a family, they should not be expected to shoulder the burden of eldercare. Generally, the parent who stays home during the day should be prepared to carry most of the day-to-day caregiving responsibility.

This means that for many homeschooling families, it will be the mom who cares for the parent in addition to running the home, caring for the children, and homeschooling. It's very important that husbands recognize this heavy task load, helping out



whenever possible and providing physical, emotional, and spiritual protection.

Have Realistic Expectations Of The Care Recipient

Janice cautions, “If there are long standing relationship issues or personality conflicts, and especially if the parent in question is bullying, abusive, or otherwise dangerous, it may be best to consider options other than in-home care. The priority in your home must be caring for your husband, your children—and even yourself—and that requires focus and emotional energy. If you have no other option than to take a person who is toxic, the Lord will be there for you, but I don’t recommend it if you don’t have to do it.”

If you are considering caring for someone who has significantly different values than you do, be mindful of the ages of your children and the potential influence on them. Consider in advance how to deal with inappropriate comments, belligerence, impatience, manipulation, or other unpleasant behaviors that could arise from either personality conflicts or mental confusion.

Have Realistic Expectations Of Your Friends & Community

According to Mary Sayre of Pennsylvania and Flo Feldman of North Carolina, you should communicate your needs, but be aware that caregiving tends to isolate families.

“During the nearly two decades that we had my grandmother, people slowly stopped asking us out or including us in activities, as we either had to bring her or couldn’t leave her,” says Janice.

“We were too overwhelmed and stressed to have company or even much energy for social life, so we didn’t initiate things either. It does get lonely. If you can find a local support group, that’s probably a good source for companions for this journey.”

Have Realistic Expectations Of Yourself

Nobody expects you to be a superhero. Know your areas of strength and need; don’t think you have to do everything yourself. Julie found it helpful to hire outside help for her mother-in-law’s finances as well as occasional housework, while Flo had a health care aide come regularly to give her time to work and take care of personal errands. Expect to be frustrated or overwhelmed sometimes; cry out to God (and sometimes just cry), then leave it at His feet.

Be Prepared To Alter Your House

If your home isn’t handicapped accessible, plan to modify the house to make life simpler and safer, such as adding bath rails, a bath bench, a handheld showerhead, sidewalk or stairway rails, a stairway lift, and wheelchair/walker access to everyday living areas, including hallways and doors.

Older people tire easily, and the normal noise and rhythm of family life can overwhelm them. A room—or suite of rooms—for your loved ones, away from the hub of activity, gives them a place to be quiet and enjoy their own pursuits or entertain visitors, and it allows your family a measure of privacy. Mary found that moving her father-in-law’s “room” to the former dining area was actually more convenient, so they could monitor his needs. Flo’s mother had her own suite until her physical limitations dictated a move closer to the main living area.

Be Prepared To Advocate For Your Loved One

Keep a care notebook in which you can log all doctor appointments, treatments, therapies, lab tests, and diagnoses. Take notes at meetings; unrecorded dates and details will quickly blur. Spare copies of medicine lists (with prescription information and dosage) and brief medical summaries are helpful to have on hand for medical staff. Write out procedures or routines for any substitute caregivers.

Contact a lawyer, preferably an eldercare attorney, to get things in order before the care recipient can no longer manage his affairs. Important legal documents to consider are: general power of attorney, health care power of attorney, will, living trust, deed of gift, and advance medical directive. You should also seriously consider adding the caregiver’s name to the checking account. Keep detailed financial records for accountability.

“Do everything you can to have a loving and open relationship with your parents, even before this season of life,” encourages Flo. “As they age, wherever possible, be an active part of your parents’ lives. At the very least, get to know your parents as people. Get to know what they want as they get older and what they would like if and when they cannot totally care for themselves. Be gentle when you discuss these things!”

Maintain A Sense Of Humor

When a tense situation arises, gentle laughter can be a lifesaver. Janice says, “One thing that can save your sanity is a sense of humor, and it helps if you both have one! There’s plenty that happens that’s tragic, but there’s comedy along the way, too.”

Where Does Homeschooling Fit Into Caregiving?

While it is certainly a challenge to homeschool and caregive, there are many benefits. You will find that you are teaching not only academics, but also life skills, compassion, cooperation, and honor. As you, your children, and your older family member spend time together, you are building relationships, disciplining your children, and nurturing a learning lifestyle.

It is not uncommon for a child who has done very little else during the year than simply cuddle with Mom or Grandma, help out around the house, and read a lot (or be read to) to still advance a year in language arts and mathematics on a standardized test. While you would not pursue that as a long-term homeschooling lifestyle, be reassured that children still learn when given a firm foundation and the right tools. And in addition to their cognitive gains, they have learned valuable lessons on how to live through crisis, serve one another under stress, and trust in God for each moment.

Combining homeschooling and caregiving may involve redefining normal for your family during this season. So, how do you do that?

Start With A Routine

When you feel overwhelmed, start by identifying the basics of normal. What is getting dropped that is truly essential? Meals? Bedtimes? Basic housekeeping? Read-aloud time? Revisit and rework your routine—not the sort of schedule that has you checking the to-do list every eight minutes, or ding a bell to move from lunch to naptime, but instead covering the basics and ensuring some regularity from day to day.

Knowing what comes next, without having to make one more decision, can be a relief. Children—and most care recipients—find security in routine, and parents can find emotional freedom in having a basic structure for the day or week. For example: “I’ll make a great effort to have breakfast by 7:30, after morning medications, and then lunch ready at 1:00 and supper at 6:30.”

Focus On Home

Caregiving is physically and emotionally draining. Janice advises, “If you’re a wife and mother, the most important thing you must do is love your husband and children (Titus 2:4), and keep them at the top of your priority list.”

Mary explains that caregiving forced her family to find educational and social opportunities closer to home. While the Sayre children continued to participate in outside activities such as debate, Mary and her husband Rodger gave up their parental involvement in leadership roles such as coaching the team. The Campbells and Sayres found that eliminating the extra running around had many benefits, including better family relationships, improved health, better-quality learning, and more relaxed and pleasant days.

Make Time For Your Family

Your extended family may not understand the demands that caregiving, in addition to homeschooling, puts on your time. You or your spouse may need to communicate your needs and limitations to other family members. Mary arranges for one full day of respite care each week to focus on her children. Janice’s husband took over

care of Grandma and the boys one evening a week so Janice could recharge her batteries and do her planning at a local coffee shop.

Focus On The Basics

In the last year of Janice’s grandfather’s life, the Campbells were faced with his Alzheimer’s disease and her grandmother’s difficult adjustment to living in Virginia, plus the task of parenting four boys, ages 1–8. Between packing the boys into the car to go hunt up “Gampy” when he wandered off (sometimes more than once a day), selling their house, building a new home for this extended family, and coping with meals, laundry, and all the varying physical and emotional needs, Janice found it a challenge to get through even a very basic math lesson and a little writing.

She realized that most of what she had learned as a child had been through independent reading, so during that crisis year, she made sure that her boys had lots of good reading material, audio books and music, and an occasional video documentary. Even though the physical needs of the moment sometimes made it impossible to follow her previous lesson plans, Janice and her husband decided it was more important to preserve and build family relationships than to have a perfect homeschool. Janice’s priority was creating a learning lifestyle in which learning could happen, with or without structure.

If you have several children, educational games and multilevel activities allow you to get maximum results with minimal effort. In most cases, you can alternate subjects; rather than trying to cover six subjects in a day, cover two or three subjects in longer sessions.

Many caregivers admit that much of their discouragement stems from the concern that they just aren’t doing enough, or that their children will end up with big learning gaps. If you are aware of the typical academic milestones, you can make a conscious decision to focus on certain concepts now or concentrate on them later. For members who need a little help adapting their curriculum to fit this changing lifestyle, contact HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Association). Their education consultants are just a phone call or email away.

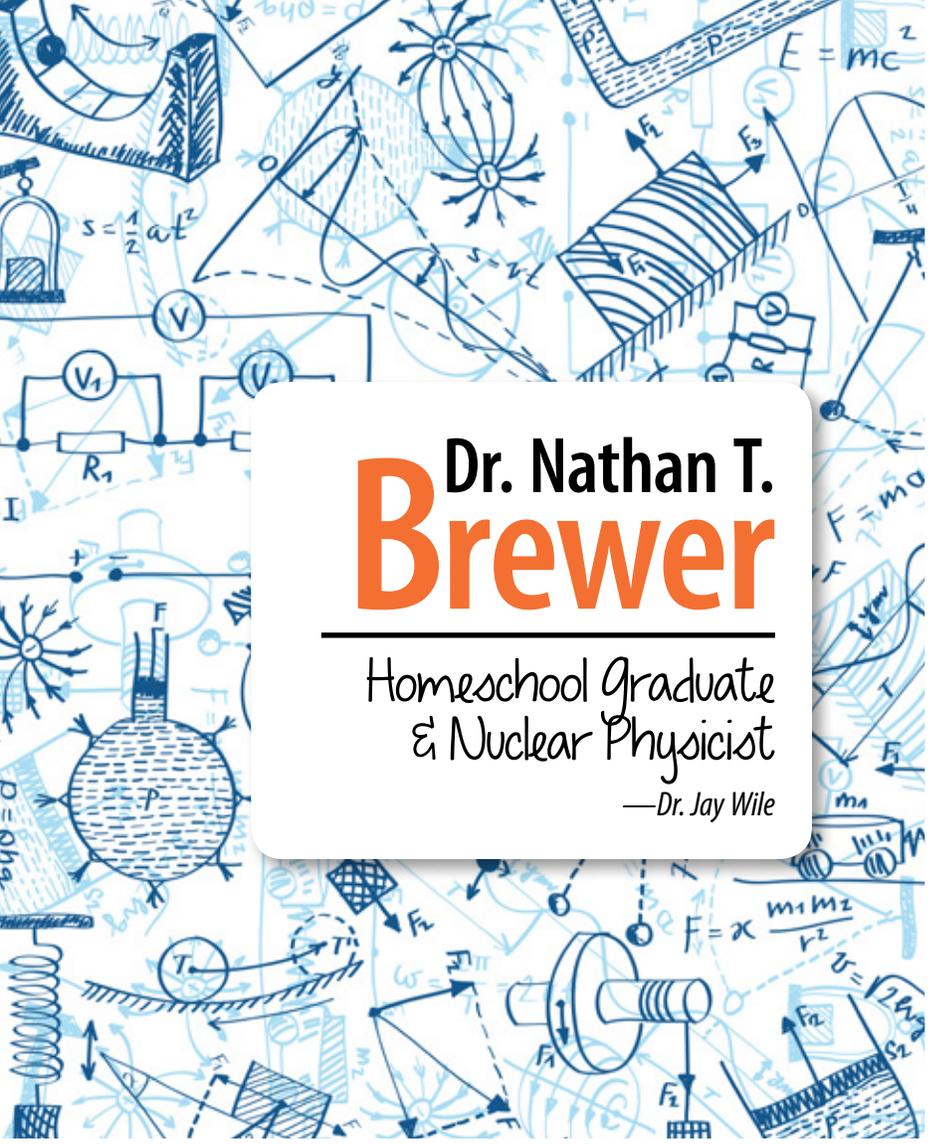
How Will Caregiving Affect My Family?

Caregiving caused Flo to redefine what being a good daughter or mom is. She recognized that although her mother had cognitive impairment, she could reach her through games, songs, dance, and movement, so it allowed Flo to give herself permission to be creative. She had to constantly be on guard against self-pity, and was often reminded to turn to the Lord. If she had to do it over, she would move closer to extended family for support. Yet she would not hesitate to make the same caregiving decision again.

While it is important that you not allow a care recipient’s illness, disability, or confusion to maintain center stage in your life, you should recognize that caregiving has a profound effect on your family. ■



Vicki Bentley has homeschooled 17 children. She is the author of *My Homeschool Planner, Home Education 101: A Mentoring Program for New Homeschoolers, and other homeschool helps*. She currently serves as the *Toddlers thru Tweens* consultant and Group Services director for HSLDA. Vicki recently advocated for her widowed mother during an extended hospital stay and provided full-time in-home care when her mother was diagnosed with advanced cancer.



Dr. Nathan T. Brewer

Homeschool Graduate
& Nuclear Physicist

—Dr. Jay Wile

When I was on the faculty at Ball State University (in the early 1990s), I

started encountering a unique group of students: homeschool graduates. I knew nothing about homeschooling, but I was impressed by what I saw. Not only were homeschool graduates excellent university students, but they were also at university for more than just the chance to get a degree and get a good job. They were there because they recognized that God had given them specific gifts, and to honor Him, they needed to develop those gifts and use them to make the world better for other people. My experience with them inspired me to start working with homeschooling parents, and eventually, I began writing homeschooling curriculum.

Since that time, I have been constantly impressed with the homeschooled students and homeschool graduates I have encountered. They are still my best university students, and I expect that they will do great things. Yesterday, I had a chance to chat with one who is, indeed, doing great things: Dr. Nathan T. Brewer. He is currently doing postdoctoral

research for the University of Tennessee and is employed by Oak Ridge National Laboratory. He is part of a team that is trying to understand the structure of the atomic nucleus by synthesizing new elements.

His proud mother informed me about his work via Facebook, so I contacted him,

and he sent me a copy of the paper that he thinks contains his most important scientific work so far. In that paper, he describes experiments that he and an international team of scientists performed to show an alternate method of producing the heaviest-known element, which is named Oganesson in honor of Russian nuclear physicist Yuri Tsolakovich Oganessian. He thinks that this method shows the most promise for synthesizing even heavier elements, and it also helps us further understand how these exotic nuclear reactions happen. While all of this might sound unfamiliar to you, it is very important work in the field of nuclear physics, and I am impressed that someone so young has been a successful part of it.

While I am fascinated by the science he is doing, I thought my readers would be interested in the fact that he was homeschooled from grades 6 through grades 12, so he graciously agreed to take

time out of his busy day to speak with me about topics that are of interest to homeschooling parents.

I wanted to know how Dr. Brewer went from homeschooling to a Ph.D. in nuclear physics, and he told me that from a very early age he really enjoyed the process of learning, so going to university after high school was the obvious choice. At one time, he thought about being a professional musician, but he decided to turn to physics, because he thought it would be a more stable career. He actually said, “I thought physics would be better than standing on the corner begging for money, but little did I know about grants.”

If you have ever written a grant to support your research, you know what he means!

Dr. Brewer got his undergraduate degree in physics from Union University and his Ph.D. in nuclear physics from Vanderbilt University. Of course, I had to ask him whether being homeschooled had helped him or hindered him in his university work, and overall, he thought it helped him. For example, he thought that homeschooling taught him how to be self-motivated, which is absolutely essential if a person really wants to succeed at the university and postgraduate levels. In addition, he thought that the freedom that comes with homeschooling was important, because he could spend more time on the subjects that really interested him. That’s one reason he ended up enjoying physics so much – he was able to spend a lot of time studying it. He told me:

The thing about studying science is that you have to be really good with everything. You have to be good at writing, you have to be good at technology, you have to be good at learning... There needs to be an optimism that you can get everything you want out of your education, and homeschooling is a great way to get that optimism.

There was one way that Dr. Brewer thought homeschooling hindered his success a bit: He was unprepared for the workload at university. He had to adjust to it. I have seen that in some of the homeschool graduates who have been in my university courses. Homeschooling parents know their children so well that they can usually tell when the child “gets it” and when the child doesn’t. As a result, when the parent sees that the child understands the topic, the parent can just move on. At university, of course, the professors don’t know their students very well, so the students must demonstrate that they have mastered the material. This leads to some homeschooled students being unprepared for the amount of work they have to do. Obviously, since my best students are the homeschool graduates, they usually adjust, but it can take some time.

Dr. Brewer is a Christian, so of course, we had to talk about how he sees his faith interacting with his science. For such a young scientist, I thought he put it in a superb way. “My Christianity gives me a desire to learn. The world is absolutely breathtaking, and studying the world’s beauty fuels my faith.”

He also mentioned one other way that his faith and his science interact, and it is something I had never considered. “My practice of faith has graciously given me patience. That patience has paid off in my science.”



In today’s world of instant gratification, patience is a rare commodity, but it is absolutely essential in science. For Dr. Brewer, his faith was an integral part of finding out how to be patient.

I want to end with what Dr. Brewer thinks is the most important message that he can give to homeschooled students. I think it applies to all students, but because of the nature of homeschooling, I think that homeschooled students can probably benefit from his advice more than other students. When thinking about what you plan to do after school, he says, “Think carefully about the end game. Think about what the career you are thinking about looks like. Find a mentor to help you get a realistic idea of the career.”

Dr. Brewer mentioned the importance of finding a mentor several times, and I strongly agree with him. There is no way for a high school or first-year university student to really know what a career is like. If you think you want to be a physicist (or chemist – I had to throw that in) find a physicist (or chemist) who will help you discover what the career is like. The more personal interaction you have with a mentor from the field in which you are interested, the better you can determine if that field is what God is calling you to do. With the freedom that homeschooling gives, I think homeschooled students can spend more time interacting with a mentor than most other students, so you should definitely try to take this advice to heart.

While Dr. Brewer spends most of his time discovering new things in nuclear physics, he does have a blog at calcumore.com that he updates from time to time. ■



Dr. Jay L. Wile, who holds an earned Ph.D. in nuclear chemistry, is an adjunct professor at Anderson University. He has won several awards for excellence in teaching, but he is best known for his award-winning K-12 science textbooks that are designed for the home school. He and his wife of more than 30 years homeschooled their daughter from the time they adopted her until she graduated high school. His textbooks can be found at bereanbuilders.com.

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GUS GRISSOM

MITCHELL'S HOMETOWN HERO

-TOMI CARROLL



Nestled in the heart of beautiful southern Indiana is Lawrence County, the home to three American astronauts, including one of the original seven Mercury astronauts. Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom was born on April 3, 1926, in Mitchell, Indiana, the oldest of four children. In 1944, he graduated from Mitchell High School. After serving in the U.S. Army Air Corps. during World War II, Grissom went on to study Mechanical Engineering at Purdue University, graduating in February 1950.

He joined the United States Air Force in 1951 and was eventually shipped overseas to fight in the Korean War. Grissom flew 100 missions with the 334th Fighter Interceptor Squadron in less than six months and received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal. When he returned from Korea, Grissom was assigned to the Air Force Institute of Technology at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio. He then transferred to the Test Pilot School at Edwards Air Force Base in California. Grissom specialized in flying advanced-designed fighter planes; he logged more than 4600 hours as an airplane pilot. In April 1959, when the National Air and Space Administration (NASA) announced the selection of the country's first seven astronauts, Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom was part of this elite group.

The goal of Project Mercury was to place a manned spacecraft in orbit and return that spacecraft safely to earth. As part of Project Mercury, Grissom became America's second man in space on July 21, 1961, in a capsule named the "Liberty Bell 7." A successful flight was followed by a dramatic ending when the capsule was lost at sea after splashdown.

Grissom's next assignment was to oversee the design and then to command the first manned mission of the Gemini program. The two primary goals of the Gemini series were to launch a two-man capsule designed to maneuver and work in space, and to test plans, techniques, and equipment needed for a landing on the moon. On March 23, 1965, the Gemini III launched with Grissom at the helm, in a capsule he christened the "Molly Brown."

The flight lasted five hours and flew nearly 81,000 miles around the earth, completing three orbits. During the voyage, Grissom made history again as the first person to ever control and change the path of a spacecraft while in orbit. The final steps needed to prepare for a successful, manned, lunar landing were undertaken during the Apollo program. The ultimate goal of Apollo was to launch a spacecraft on a path to the moon, using lunar gravity to slingshot the spacecraft to the moon and then back to earth.

In February 1966, Virgil I. Grissom, Ed White, and Roger Chaffee were chosen as the crew for the Apollo I mission. On January 27, 1967, during a test on the launch pad, a flash fire broke out inside the command module. Grissom, White, and Chaffee were trapped inside, unable to escape the blaze. Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom, Mitchell's hometown hero, was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

"If we fall, let the world know that we died as test pilots in the risky business of exploring outer space"

—Gus Grissom

After the tragedy of Apollo 1, the Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation to create the Grissom Memorial. Spring Mill

State Park was selected as the location for the memorial due to its proximity to Mitchell and the availability of land. All the items in the memorial are actual artifacts or authentic representations of Grissom's life. The original exhibits are on loan from the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum and may be periodically replaced with new material. The Grissom Memorial was officially dedicated on July 21, 1971, ten years after Grissom's first flight into space. Almost everything here is from the Molly Brown, Grissom's Gemini mission capsule. The Molly Brown itself is on display, behind a plexiglass shield, suspended above the ground floor gallery. You can also find Gus's Mercury spacesuit and helmet there.

If you choose to visit the memorial housed at Spring Mill State Park, you can also take in the rest of the park's attractions, which include 1,319 acres a restored Pioneer Village, Nature Center, three nature preserves (including virgin timber), the Twin Caves boat tours, and a pioneer cemetery.

As a bonus to this nearby field trip, you can take in the Boyhood Home of the Grissom family. Located on aptly named Grissom Avenue in Mitchell, the house was saved from demolition and accurately restored with actual Grissom family furnishings. Tours are given on Saturdays, but private and group tours can be arranged by contacting the "Gus Grissom Boyhood Home" moderator via Facebook Messenger.

Steve Grissom, of Grissom, Inc. (the nonprofit group started by members of the Grissom family) announced in March, a new venture to develop the Grissom Center for Space Education, where they will, "honor and celebrate Indiana's Space heritage all while educating young people on STEAM education." This project is under development, but should prove to be a welcome addition to the legacy of Lawrence County in respect to space exploration.

For further information on the places in this article, as well as all of the Mercury astronauts in the space program, you can visit:

dkfindout.com/us/space/space-race/mercury-seven/

thoughtco.com/astronauts-of-project-mercury-3073478

nasa.gov/mission_pages/mercury/index.html

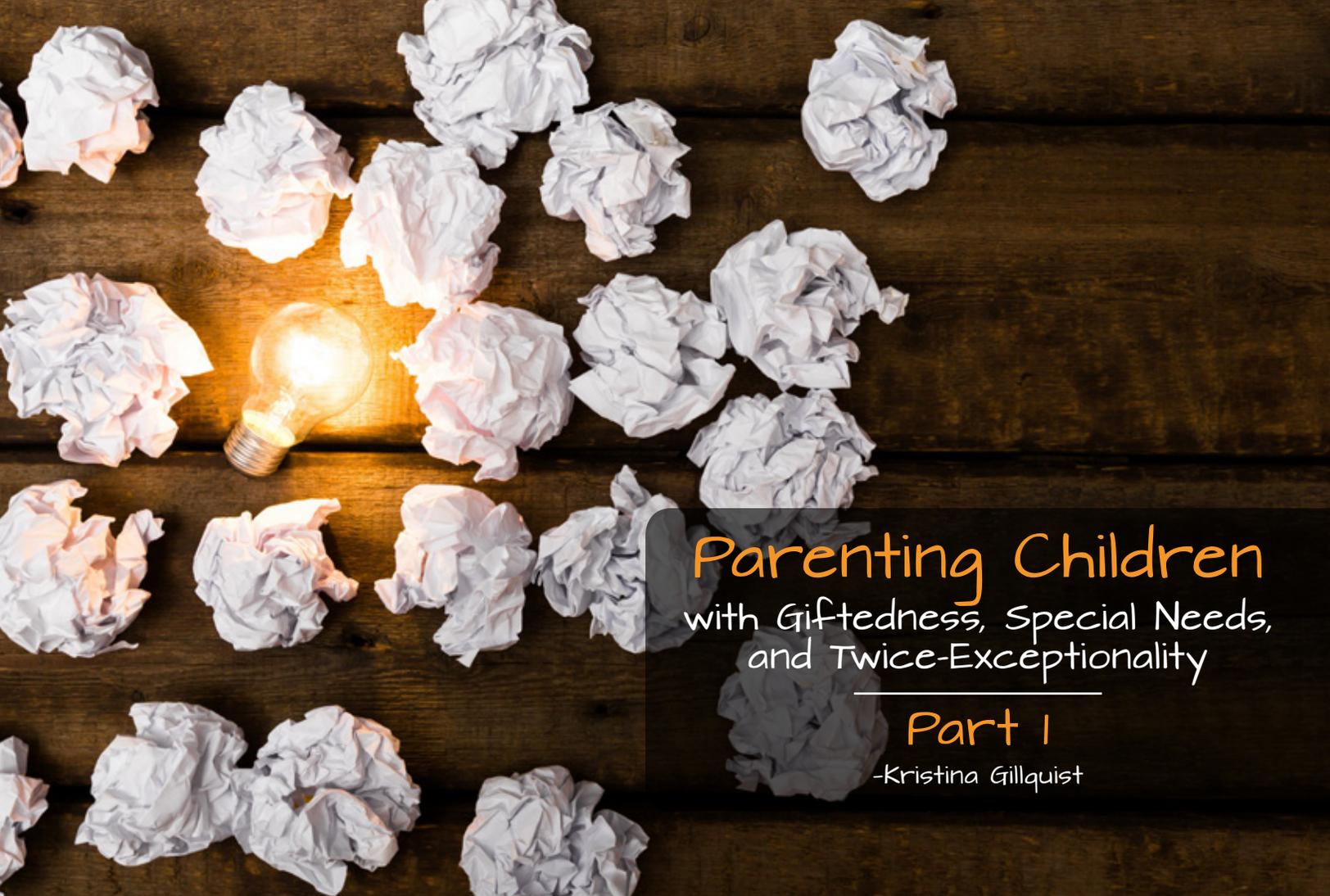
Virgil I. Grissom Memorial, located in Spring Mill State Park, 3333 Hwy. 60 East Mitchell, IN 47446

Grissom Boyhood Home, 715 W Grissom Ave, Mitchell, IN 47446 ■

Some information in this article was obtained from: Interpretive Services State Parks and Reservoirs 402 W. Washington St., Rm. W298 Indianapolis, IN 46204



Tomi Carroll is a homeschool mom of 20 years and proud native of Lawrence County, Indiana.



Parenting Children with Giftedness, Special Needs, and Twice-Exceptionality

Part I

-Kristina Gillquist

When your kid doesn't fit the mold, you know it. Awareness

of your child's differences may begin during pregnancy, or perhaps birth—something is different with this one. It could be toddlerhood before your first red flag is hoisted up the pole, flapping wildly in the breeze: a game where turn-taking is nearly impossible, a playdate that needs to be managed at every turn, or a simple trip to the library that is fraught with difficult transitions. In the elementary years, other parents in your community are choosing birthday themes for their children's parties, but you are just hoping to pull off a celebration without your child coming completely unglued. Based on your memory of last year's soiree, you whittle down the guest list to one or two predictable friends, who have predictable parents, to whom you will serve a predictable menu. Needless to say, you'll pass on a restaurant or pinata—at least for this year.

What is wrong with your child? With your genetics? With your parenting? Inquiring minds want to know. The cashier at the grocery store wants to know as does the server at the restaurant, the lady leading story time, and the 20 other parents in the room. And I'm going to let the cat out of the bag, here. When you or your

child are in rare form, nobody within earshot actually cares. They just want it to stop, and want you to be better at your job. Heck, you want to be better at your job. But good grief. Take another look at whatever job description you have in your possession. If it was prepared by human hands, it is woefully lacking in the fine print.

You may have a gifted child. You may have a child with sensory processing difficulties or signs of dyslexia. Your child may be on the autism spectrum. And if you feel as though your family's on a spectrum of its own, you may qualify for "(D) All of the above". My advice is to shred whatever's left of your stubbornness and expectations. Take a photo if you must, but discard them quickly, for whatever we retain fertilizes the briars and goads of our lives. Your job is to train up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Now, let's reboot.

This article applies to all families but may be of particular interest to those who have elements of giftedness and other special needs under their roofs. Many thousands of our households are living (and home educating) with 'twice-exceptionality': the self-explanatory term commonly used to describe individuals, in this case, children, who have areas of giftedness and simultaneously, areas of development that need extra support. On the surface, this appears to describe all children, but children who are twice-exceptional have an unusual spread between their "highs" and "lows". These "lows" usually include the social and self-help skill domains. With

twice-exceptionality, the asynchrony characteristic of normal development is lit on fire, surrounded by neon lights, and paraded around the disco floor. When I speak to parents about navigating the world with twice-exceptional children, I begin with, “Toto, we’re not in Kansas anymore.”

In many cases, children who eventually fit this description, with or without a formal diagnosis, are able to skate through the first handful of years relatively unscathed. Girls adapt more successfully than boys in many settings, but it is common for children of both genders to blend in enough to make it for a time. Still, blips appear on the parental radar, and one day, like a lightning bolt, the demands of literacy strike. Something stands out as the code is cracked and Junior begins to read (or not read, or refuse to read aloud, as the case may be). Pre-adolescence is another common time when things hit the fan. The social piece, which always felt like a square peg in a round hole, is now a dodecahedron or a triangle; you can’t even force a fit. You and your youngster avoid crowded, overstimulating environments. You protect routine in a way few peers understand; if you don’t, your child and your family suffer the consequences. Regular, restorative sleep is difficult to come by...for the whole family. The nature and frequency of meltdowns make you joke that Armageddon can actually take place several times a day. But, of course, it’s not funny. At first. At first, my friends, this can gently be described as an excruciating and protracted disequilibrium. Here is one recommended “scope and sequence” of how parents can become experts on the underlying neurologic development of their children in order to support learning, overall.



We are all very much aware of the explosion in autism spectrum diagnoses over the past 20 years, which has, in many areas, raised the general level of awareness of “atypical” development. But what about our awareness of the people who are raising, coaching, safeguarding, and teaching these children? Let’s be honest. Parenting can be a lonely and uphill experience in this world under the most straightforward of circumstances. Even the most optimistic and successful parents I know would agree with that. But parenting, and educating, twice-exceptional children requires extra sensitivity, extra grace, and at the very least, pharmaceutical-grade nutritional supplements. For the parents, never mind the kids!

This is because the sheer energy and emotional resiliency required to investigate resources, research diagnoses, troubleshoot social blunders, and advocate for your child within and outside the walls of your home is not only extraordinary, it is also round-the-clock. Parents of children with special needs have some special needs of their own, regardless of how inconvenient this is for us to accept. These people are usually exhausted. Their bodies are exhausted. Their finances are exhausted. Their spirits and patience are exhausted. Parents of children with special needs need extra sleep.

But they don’t sleep. Their bodies require pristine diets and lifestyle habits, but half the time, they forget to eat. Their marriages are hungry for extra nourishment and nurturing. This is a common, and dangerous, picture: overwhelmed primary caregiver absorbed with the needs of the children and an overwhelmed, disconnected spouse. Seventy-five percent of them crumble beneath cumulative stress into a pile of divorce, tragically adding pain to pain.

Self-care for any parent is not optional, and I can promise you that avoiding it is not sustainable. Remember two things. Number one. We cannot protect and serve our children well if we are withering on the vine! And number two. Our excuses will not save our children. And ultimately, if you are not protecting your own mental, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being, it is only a matter of time before it is no longer optional for you to do

so. It is absolutely critical that we remain vigilant against the enemy’s attack on our households; he will exploit weakness wherever he can find it, so let’s not give him any.

If you are married, let your spouse know how much you desire solidarity and support in your daily work and secure support for your marriage. Seek a pastor or counselor. Order take-out after bedtime, regularly. Go to bed earlier and get up earlier, together. Be flexible. Be creative. Be forgiving. And be willing to change your routine as life’s seasons require it. Find what can work for your relationship and then, get to work. If you are a single parent, building and benefitting from a true support system is every bit as important, and may be more difficult to come by. Take care to prioritize your own

peace and stability, and ask for help from sources that will respect your wishes and needs, follow through, and withhold criticism.

Finally, it is very important that we discern if the isolation we experience is of our own making, or if it is an illusion. We are never “the only ones” facing a given situation, and it is important to keep the vision of the Body of Christ in view at all times. If, however, we are allowing ourselves to be cut off from community unnecessarily because of the demands of our high-need households, steps should be taken to allow even a few supports in. Real connectedness and relationship building is a cornerstone of any successful domestic life. Practice wisdom and model healthy boundary setting for your exceptional and high-demand children. This is a good place to start in setting your special family up for success. Let’s remember how important it is to bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ■

Part 2 of this article series will explore common areas of difficulty (or proficiency) of this unique population, including sensory processing, executive functioning, and binocular vision skills.



Kristina Gillquist lives with her family in Bloomington, Indiana where her husband, Fr. Peter Jon, serves the parish of All Saints Orthodox Christian Church. Their wonderful children range in age from 17 to 1.



The Question of **ACCREDITATION**

— Karen McDaniel

Home educators often feel pressure to validate what we

do. It may be in response to spoken or silent disapproval from others, or a desire to give our child the very best education so opportunities will be as broad as possible. Does accreditation answer any of these concerns? Is accreditation ever necessary for your child's homeschool diploma? Following are my opinions from both experience and research. I share this to, hopefully, help homeschoolers coming behind me make confident decisions for high school at home.

What Is Accreditation?

In the US, the goal is to ensure that the school meets acceptable levels of quality. In a nutshell, a panel of peer professionals evaluates the school, sets goals, and holds the school accountable, most often colleges and universities but also high schools. Accreditation can be accountability to gain and retain funding. It is also a persuasive marketing label for the school to gain or keep enrollment.

How Does A School Become Accredited?

After the evaluation, criteria may be set for curriculum content, licensure and teaching credentials, administration, finances, transparency, instruction methods, student testing, test scores, pass/fail rate, completion rate, campus environment, degrees offered and more. The process can cover several years, with ongoing (often

hefty) fees that will be passed on in student fees. Once standards are met and maintained, the agency will grant accreditation to the school.

Who Does The Accrediting?

Well... it gets confusing. Let's break it down by levels:

- ★ The U.S. Department of Education "does not accredit educational institutions and/or programs." However, the Department oversees the postsecondary accreditation system through its review of all federally-recognized accrediting agencies (for the purpose of college financial aid.)
- ★ National agencies offer accreditation to distance-learning schools and professional licensures, such as nursing or engineering.
- ★ Regional associations are private organizations who charge higher fees for comprehensive evaluation and accountability. They offer respected peer-accreditation to institutions of higher learning that grant degrees, certificates, a/or diplomas.
- ★ States often set their own rules and standards for compulsory attendance schools, public a/ or private. High schools may also invite (and pay for) accreditation from a regional association.

★ Private, parochial schools and colleges (for example, PCC, publisher of *A Beka*) may seek accreditation to gain state lobbying 'clout', a/or offer the widest options to global clients.

When Is Accreditation Required?

Indiana requires Indiana state accreditation of public-schools and private schools that participate in the Choice Scholarship Program (vouchers). This ensures that those receiving our tax dollars are held accountable. Indiana also recognizes non-accredited, private school and homeschool diplomas as legal and valid. "Students who are issued a diploma by the administrator (parent or legal guardian) of an Indiana homeschool possess a legally issued, non-accredited diploma according to the State of Indiana."

What About College? What About Financial Aid?

As of 2018, all US colleges & universities (that we know of), including top-ranked schools, enroll non-accredited homeschool graduates. Some seek out homeschoolers. The HEA (Higher Education Act) sets accreditation requirements for post-secondary institutions that accept federal financial aid.

It works like this:

- ➔ The college or university needs tuition fees to stay in business.
- ➔ Funding is available thru the HEA, if the institution meets Federally-recognized accreditation.
- ➔ The school invites, meets, and maintains accreditation with a recognized agency... sooo ...
- ➔ The applicant can receive federal financial aid to pay their tuition for that school.

When one files a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), he/she is asked to provide the name/id# of their graduating high school. On the Indiana drop-down menu, a box for "homeschooled" is one option. No other qualifications needed. Also, if a privately-funded scholarship is open to the public, that includes homeschoolers. My family has known several homeschooled scholarship winners.

I've Heard That Non-Accredited Diplomas Are Sometimes Not Accepted?

Back in the '90s, when my family began homeschooling, this was often true. Isolated cases still exist, but the growing numbers and reputations of homeschool grads are changing this. If a homeschooler does encounter a roadblock to their plans due to accreditation requirements, this can be viewed as an opportunity to play civil-educator for those outside the homeschool community, as well as wait upon the Lord for possible changes to our student's plans.

Decades of work by homeschool veterans and graduates continues to bring positive change. Recently the Indiana Association of Home Educators (IAHE) met with the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Dept (IMPD) to advocate on behalf of unaccredited homeschooled job applicants. Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) has dealt with other situations. Our US military branches have been moving forward with new homeschool-friendly policies for

the past decade or more. Corporations are changing company policies so they can more easily hire unaccredited, yet desirable, homeschool grads.

Is Homeschool Accreditation Ever Needed?

We have established that accreditation is not required of homeschools by federal or Indiana law. Homeschool accreditation is not necessary for the FAFSA, nor for college enrollment. Workforce hiring policies continue to improve for homeschoolers. Yet, we should consider a few situations when accreditation may be necessary.

- ★ Some parents face times of intense scrutiny, ie: legal issues, custody battles, hostile family, relocation to a new state with stricter homeschool laws. An accredited homeschool program may be the path to peace during these pressures.
- ★ Plans to transfer to a public high school for graduation may call for an accredited homeschool program before transferring. However, it is entirely up to the school district to decide which homeschool credits may be accepted and applied to a diploma. Avoid disappointment by checking with the intended high school before your child begins this path.
- ★ Remember, under accreditation, you must play by the rules of one who does not know you, your child, or your household. Those rules may include school calendar, due dates and deadlines, scheduling, reporting, timed tests, busy-work, and other requirements that negate your freedom as a homeschool family.

I Need Help! How Can I Be Sure To Give My Teen A Robust Homeschool High School Education?

First, I urge you to support the IAHE, attend the IAHE Annual Home Educators' Convention, and tap into all that is available. You'll discover scores of opportunities: co-op teaching, academic clubs, homeschool sports and arts, STEM clubs, online courses, umbrella schools, dual-enrollment, early college, apprenticeship studies, and more. Contact the institutions a/or jobs on your child's radar for after graduation to ascertain how best to prepare. Your child's transcript, test scores, character, and work history will be most important, not the high school diploma.

As a loving parent, you are already the very best teacher/administrator for your child. Without accreditation, you teach them to walk, talk, eat with a fork, and go potty. You choose books to read at bedtime, discuss current events, and teach them right from wrong. Every step of the way, the loving parent learns how to teach what the child needs at that stage. Know you are not alone. You have the expert guidance of IAHE, HSLDA, and scores of Indiana homeschool neighbors. No accreditation required. ■



Karen McDaniel is an Indiana native who married a Texas native and had five wonderful children. They began homeschooling in 1997 when their oldest was twelve years old, graduating all five from home. Together, they also worked to encourage new homeschooling families. As a widow, Karen now lives in Bloomington, Indiana.

2019 Legislative Session Wrap-up

IAHE began this legislative session in January by monitoring 69 bills of concern.

By mid-session, we were actively monitoring twenty-one bills with the potential to impact homeschool families, three of which were very concerning. While the majority of bills were education issues that we typically monitor every year, the emergence of mental health bills unexpectedly became the hot topic of the session.

5

COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE
SB 318 (Gregory Taylor, Democrat – District 33)
Final Status – Bill died

Once again, a Senate bill was introduced that would lower the compulsory school age from seven years of age to five years. While it died again this session, we are well aware that this is an annual battle that we expect to revisit in 2020.



MANDATORY KINDERGARTEN
HB 1408 (Tonya Pfaff, Democrat – District 43)
Final Status – Bill died

This bill would have made kindergarten mandatory for every student five years of age on August 1 of that school year. It is now dead for this session, but we expect to watch this every year. However, the budget bill has positioned funding for increased kindergarten enrollment, so IAHE Action will be vigilant in watching for this in upcoming sessions.



VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY
SB 567 – (Sen. Jeff Raatz – Republican – District 27)
Final Status – passed

In the final weeks of the session, a bill to create additional oversight for virtual public schools harkened back to old issues when SB 567 would have removed the “homeschool exemption” for students withdrawn to homeschool from the public schools for funding calculations. This change would have lumped these new homeschool students in with dropouts when the school reported back to the state. While it was unclear if there would be any long-term consequences for the individual student, the implications of grouping these two types of students does not reflect the intentions of the parents to continue the child’s education. We worked with Rep. Behning to address our concerns and the “homeschool exemption” was reinstated.



GRADUATION PATHWAYS
SB 507 (Jeff Raatz, Republican – District 27)
Final Status – Bill died in the House

HB 1002 (Holly Sullivan, Republican – District 78)
Final Status – Bill passed

SB 507 would have created a graduation pathways tracking and reporting system within the public school system. Public school graduation legislation is always monitored so that we can ensure homeschoolers are not discriminated against in college admissions. While SB 507 died, HB 1002 passed and does include a study regarding career coaching and graduation pathways for public education which we will diligently monitor next session to be sure homeschoolers have an equal opportunity in higher education.



DATA MINING
SB 266 (Michael Crider, Republican – District 28)
Final Status – Bill died in the House

SB 507 (Jeff Raatz, Republican – District 27)
Final Status – Bill died in the Senate

Both the bill that would have mandated mental health screenings (SB 266), as well as the bill crafting graduation pathways (SB 507), would have created a tracking and reporting system on students. SB 507 would have required the Department of Education to provide data on students to the Commission for Higher Education

and the State Board. **SB 266** and its cohort, HB 1004, must have also, by their very nature, included the collection and recording of students' inmost thoughts gathered through the mental health screenings. Data mining is a computer science term that simply involves collecting and storing data and finding new information within that data. These bills would have mined data from and about students, and IAHE is always against data mining due to the school system's lack of accountability. SB 266 died and HB 1004 had the mental health language removed.



EDUCATIONAL SAVINGS OPTIONS

HB 1254 (Jim Lucas, Republican – District 69)

Final Status – Bill died in House

HB 1675 (Ryan Lauer, Republican – District 59)

Final Status – Bill died in House

These two bills addressed educational savings options, such as annual grants or deductions for education-related expenses, typically to be administered by the state. IAHE Action met with legislators and we conveyed our concerns that this would be the proverbial foot in the door for increased government regulation of homeschooling.



BIAS CRIMES

SB 12 (Mike Bohacek, Republican – District 8)

Final Status – Bill died in House

SB 198 (Mike Bohacek, Republican – District 8)

Final Status – Bill passed

This session began with 13 bias and/or hate crime bills. SB 12 was the first to take off and it provided that a court may consider bias in imposing a criminal sentence. While not necessarily a homeschool issue, this bill had many faces. We monitored it to be able to inform co-ops and other homeschool groups with employees as to whether this may have affected them as well as religious restrictions that may be affected. SB 12 died in the House. SB 198 was similar to SB 12 and while it did pass this year and is now law, it does not list specific groups and is a sentencing bill so it does not have a direct effect on homeschool groups with employees.



MENTAL HEALTH SCREENINGS

SB 266 (Michael Crider, Republican – District 28)

Final Status – Bill died in House

HB 1004 (Wendy McNamara, Republican – District 76)

Final Status – Bill passed

HB 1001 (Todd Huston – Republican – District 37)

Final Status – Bill passed

HB 1629 – (Robert Behning – Republican – District 91)

Final Status – Bill Passed

SB 325 – (Michael Crider – Republican – District 28)

Final Status – Bill passed

SB 266 emerged from revisions in the Senate as a monstrosity that would mandate local schools to become, in essence, mental health providers. This would have been a huge infringement on parental rights by instituting mental health screenings for ALL children from birth through the age of 22. SB 266 passed the Senate but homeschooling parents along with other like-minded groups were able to sound the alarm about this bill and consequently, it did not receive a hearing in the House.

HB 1004 then began to move through the Senate, where IAHE Action watched to see if it would pick up language from SB 266 which included mental health screenings from birth to age 22. IAHE Action was pleased to see Sen. Dennis Kruse add language protecting parental rights by requiring written parental consent prior to mental health screenings and surveys, even though this was still a public school issue at that point. The bill passed the Senate with those provisions intact. However, Rep. Wendy McNamara, unhappy with the addition of the parental consent language, stripped the bill of all mental health language before it passed.

HB 1001 was the biennial budget bill and it did pass with language included that allowed for the Secured School Safety grant funds to be used for school-based mental health services. However, in their final day of the session, the House heard the cries of conservative groups (including YOU!) and allowed **SB 1629** to nullify the allowance in HB 1001 of using those funds for mental health services in schools. In addition to this, SB 325 included some parental protections for those using public schools. These protections are not perfect and do not allow for penalties, but all in all IAHE Action is pleased to see that legislators heard the people's voices. **SB 325** may be a springboard for homeschoolers to use in future sessions if parental protections of homeschoolers are infringed upon by extending mental health screenings outside of the public school system as was attempted this session.

Thank you for making a difference!

Despite having a Republican supermajority in the legislature, parents cannot let their guards down because new issues are introduced each session, as we saw this year with the issues of mental health and bias crime bills. Your phone calls and emails were heard.

Also this session, IAHE Action had many good discussions with many legislators such as our friends Rep. Robert Behning, Rep. Timothy Wesco, Sen. Dennis Kruse, Sen. Randall Head, Rep. Mike Speedy, Sen. Greg Walker, and Sen. Jeff Raatz. Many of these legislators reached out to us when they found areas of concern. Our goal is always to keep them aware that homeschool parents are here, actively monitoring educational bills as well as parental rights concerns.

We have also been able to introduce IAHE & IAHE Action to several legislators who only had a basic understanding of homeschooling. We were able to work with them and share how IAHE stands for parental rights, homeschool freedom, and religious freedom. We are grateful to those legislators that attended the IAHE Home Educators' Convention. Every year, we hear from new legislators how vital the convention is to their understanding of the home education community.

Thank you to all of you who stay updated and contact your legislators as needed. YOU make a difference! ■



Disconnect & Reconnect

—Tom Kersting

In February of 2016, my family and I took a weeklong trip to Aruba. Coming from N.J., the warm sun and ocean blue water were the perfect reprieves from a long, cold winter. Six weeks prior to our trip my book, *Disconnected: How To Reconnect Our Digitally Distracted Kids* was released. This was a topic I had already been lecturing about for eight years at that time. The book was a way for me to reach more families throughout the world and begin the process of re-connecting our device dependent kids with us. It was a topic that was a burning passion inside of me and still is.

If you've ever been to Aruba you'll remember that it's quite crowded with families. Our first night there I remember arriving at this wonderful Italian restaurant. It was the biggest restaurant I had ever seen. When the hostess was ready to seat us, she explained that our table was at the far end of the restaurant. I'll never forget that walk; it felt like I was walking the length of a football field, weaving my way between tables. But there was something more remarkable than the sheer size of this restaurant. Screens were glowing everywhere. During my slow-motion walk to my table, I noticed that nearly every child was staring at either an iPhone or a tablet. Finally, we were seated at our table and I could feel my heart pounding in my chest; I was upset; I couldn't believe what I was witnessing. None of the parents were conversing with their children.

To my left was a nice-looking couple in their thirties with their two boys. The two boys, around eight and six, were each sitting with

their own tablet and wearing a pair of those big, Beats headphones. I couldn't help but become distracted by this. If only this couple and others could understand the damage that is occurring here. For the hour that we were there, there was not one word exchanged between that couple and their two boys. It was as if there was a divider between the couple and the boys. In fact, when the food was placed in front of the boys they didn't even notice; their parents had to gesture to them that it was time to eat.

From 2002 until today I have been a member of the Intervention & Referral Services Committee (I&RS) at a local high school where I work as a counselor. During the 2009 school year, the types of disabilities referred to my committee started to change. We began receiving countless referrals for teenage students diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). This is a neurological condition that causes a combination of the following symptoms: inattention; disorganization and lack of focus; and

sometimes impulsivity and hyperactivity. The average diagnosis is 8 years old. Strangely, my committee was receiving dozens of referrals for fourteen- and fifteen-year-olds newly diagnosed with the disorder. As a school counselor by day and private practice therapist by night, I have more than twenty years of experience working with ADHD children and their families, and this influx of attention-deficit teenagers wasn't making sense to me.

Dr. Gary Small, professor of psychiatry and Director of the UCLA Longevity Center at the Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior, began researching technology's impact on the brain in 2007. He discovered that because kids of this generation spend so much time using powerful electronic devices, their brains were changing, something known as neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity is the brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections, leaving behind past traits and developing new ones. Could all of this "screen time" for kids be changing their brains, thereby causing older children to display inattentiveness, lack of focus, and disorganization—all symptoms of ADHD? Dr. John Ratey, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School coined the term "acquired attention deficit disorder" to describe how too much screen time was rewiring kids' brains. These new brains are hyper-focused on tweets, posts, and likes and not very focused on their classroom lectures; brains that are brilliant at communicating through texts and posts but struggle with face-to-face communication. More and more kids are becoming emotionally fragile and lack critical coping skills. This lack of face-to-face interaction, particularly for children, is evident in their reduced social and communication skills, making it difficult for them to handle the everyday bumps in the road of life. The end result: a substantial increase in stress, anxiety, and self-esteem issues.

How do we curb these trends and raise healthy children? Look at it like this: if you were planting a garden, you would plant in the best soil, buy the best seeds, and care for that garden so that you could grow the best crop. When it comes to our children's mental gardens, we can become careless. Their mental garden is more

important than anything else, so their life depends on the quality of the seeds planted in their minds and how those seeds are cared for. Let's face it: if the seeds sown by social media and technology consist of gossip, fear, and a drive to keep up with the Joneses, our children's mental crop will become weak and decayed. If seeds of courage, optimism, and hope are planted, cared for, and nurtured, and these thoughts refuse to associate with any damaging thoughts received from other sources, then your child's mental garden will be bountiful.



Unfortunately, a common fear that many of us share is that our children will not fit in. And in most cases, that's exactly what it is—a fear, not a reality. Without realizing it, we allow the collective group to make our decisions for us instead of deciding for ourselves what is right for our child. I believe this is why so many younger children now own smartphones. Although they make our lives easier when we need to get in touch with our children, I believe the risks are too great. Perhaps the most important message I am trying to convey is that we don't want to teach our children to be followers of the crowd, we want them to be leaders. When we allow our children to have something that we know they are not mature enough to handle, for the sake of fitting in, we are teaching our children to follow the crowd.

Folks we have to get our families back on track. We have to have deeper, meaningful conversations with our children. Our families are at stake. Screens have invaded every area of our lives: the family dinner table, car rides, sporting events. You name it. Even the five or ten-minute drives to school or sports have been hijacked by screens. The dinner table and those short drives are fertile ground for conversation. It is these nuanced conversations that add up to a lot over the years. They have much to do with how our children will fair emotionally, spiritually, academically, and physically. In fact, kids who come from families that have regular meals together most nights of the week, without distractions from devices, are far more likely to be happier, do better in school, have better relationships, and enjoy their jobs more in the future.

I get it. We are all working crazy hours. Our kids are involved in too many activities. This is important though! Whether it is a meal together or a family talk time, make it happen most nights of the week. No screens. No distractions. Well what is there to talk about, you might be wondering? Make sure whatever the dialogue is that it is genuine. It doesn't have to be about school; it could be about sports, current events, friends. How about God? Everyone could share something they are grateful for. Get creative.

God has given us our precious little angels and it is up to us to guide them, to direct them, to love them. We can't do that if we are all staring at a screen all the time. As humans, we are social/emotional beings. That is how God wired and intended us to be, and the only way we can deliver upon God's intentions is to actually be in the presence of our children, engaging with them and they with us. That can only be done in a face-to-face, uninterrupted manner. ■



Tom Kersting is a licensed psychotherapist, school counselor and the author of the bestselling book, *Disconnected: How to Reconnect Our Digitally Distracted Kids*. He is a regular contributor on *Tucker Carlson Tonight*, *Fox & Friends*, *The Today Show* and more. Tom has hosted television series' for A&E Network, Food Network and National Geographic Channel, offering insight and advice about parenting, relationships and wellness. He lectures throughout the country and is the founder and owner of Valley Family Counseling Center in Ridgewood, NJ.



The Best Advice I Received about Homeschooling was from the Mother of Three Toddlers

-Debbie Burks

Some of the best parenting advice I have ever seen came from an article in a magazine. I do not remember the woman's name, but she was the mother of three two-year-olds. Can you imagine?

She and her husband had a history of fertility issues, so they decided to adopt. While eagerly awaiting the birth of the baby who would join their family, she discovered that she was expecting. When their son was eight months old, she gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl. I am so thankful that she shared her successes in dealing with several toddlers in her home. It helped me when I dealt with my three children, each two years apart. Although her children have to be in their early 40's by now, I am sorry that I cannot remember her name to thank her.

The basic idea of the article was that the children would have fewer meltdowns and would be happier and better adjusted if they knew what to expect. What's coming next, Mom? It was that simple.

She had a basic framework for the week, and then a basic schedule for each day. If something different than the norm was going to happen (like an annual check-up), she prepared them every day for a week ahead. I took her advice and I had a few meltdowns as I raised my children. When my toddler received his MMR at age 16 months, he held his arm out to the nurse, and said, "Ouch," when she gave him the shot. He did not even cry. The doctor and the nurses were impressed and wanted to know how I managed that. I called the office a few weeks in advance and found out exactly what would be done for each child during their checkups. I then talked to them about it each day. They were not happy about getting their fingers pricked or their vaccinations, but they knew what to expect.

What does that have to do with homeschooling? We all are happier when we know what to expect. What's coming next? Early morning may mean cereal and cartoons in one family, and a hot breakfast, cleaning house and feeding pets in another. That's fine. Just set expectations and then follow through.

If something different is going to happen, like a field trip or a doctor's appointment, then prepare the children ahead of time. From babies through teens, your children will be more cooperative if they know what to expect. No one likes a finger prick to check your blood count, but if your child knows it is coming and why it has to be done, then they will be more accepting and cooperative.

I am not talking about an inflexible schedule that cannot ever be changed. (Johnny broke his arm. We will go to the doctor after math is over. What?) A rigid schedule only brings frustration when unexpected things happen, like when your child takes ten days to understand a new math concept, or they fly through another concept and want more. You cannot schedule the day that your dog gets out and you are searching the neighborhood, and you might have to alter your schedule around an ear infection or the flu. I read years ago about a family who was traveling across the country and parked in the parking lot of Mt. Rushmore. They did their school work for the day and never got out of the car to see one of our nation's monuments! That is being too rigidly scheduled.

On the other hand, don't be too loopy-goopy, changing plans with every whim, or having no plans at all. Your children do have lessons to do and things to learn. Also, meals have to be made, pets fed, and bathrooms cleaned. Having a basic schedule will help you get all of those things done. It will also help your children to adjust to a world that has schedules.

Being too rigidly scheduled and being what I call "too loopy-goopy" can both cause frustration in your family. I doubt you want either. The former does not focus on the children enough but focuses on the schedule; the latter can help to create self-centered children, who think that the world revolves around them. In addition to this, you may be frustrated that you 'cannot get anything done' because you have no focus. My late pastor used to say that if "you aim at nothing, you are sure to hit it." You need a basic schedule to ensure that your "aim" is accurate.

How Do You Create a Basic Schedule?

List what you need to do each week, things that will not change unless illness or something like a fire occurs in your home. Our weekly schedule looked like this once upon a time:

Sunday: church/ relax/visit

Monday: work/school/clean/play/karate class

Tuesday: work & school/yardwork & cars/play

Wednesday: work & school/clean/ play/youth group

Thursday: work & school/ clean kitchen well/play/ karate class

Friday: work & school/grocery shop/ game night

Saturday: sports/yard work/ get ready for Sunday

A more specific schedule with blocks of time might look like this:

Monday:

- 2-hour block: breakfast/feed pets/exercise/tidy up
- 1-hour Bible reading/prayer/memory work & read aloud
- Schoolwork
- Lunch & play break
- Schoolwork/read
- Clean one room together
- Play
- Supper & clean up
- Evening activities (bike ride/play games/work in the yard/ watch a movie,etc.)
- Bedtime routine (baths/put toys away/read-aloud, etc.)

We followed this schedule early in our homeschool years when my children were elementary age. A schedule with older or younger children will look much different or might be a lot more complicated if you have children of greatly varying ages.

The idea is not to schedule every moment of every day but to create blocks of time to get things done. You will have blocks of playtime as well as times to work. I used to clean my kitchen well every Thursday, and my children expected a tent in the living room (made with our dining chairs) while I mopped the floor. It was a favorite time in our week. My kitchen was cleaned, organized, and ready for grocery shopping on Friday. A schedule can be something that the family enjoys, not just a list of things to do.

Depending upon the ages of your children, you may need blocks of time for the extras: dance lessons, band practice, karate class, ball games. If you have a baby, you may need to schedule everything around nursing.

Again, what does this have to do with homeschooling?

When you add homeschooling to the many, many things you have to do during the week, it is a lifestyle change. You are not just adding something. You are creating a lifestyle. If your children have been in a brick-and-mortar school, you will need to adjust to them being home all of the time. The things you did while they were away at school (cleaning, laundry, a job) are going to have to be done while they are home. And you need to teach them how to do household chores, just as you teach them fractions. If they are young, and you are adding more than read-aloud and crafts to your day, you will also need to juggle your schedule. You might be adding an hour or so for learning to read and learning basic math. No matter your family's situation, you will need a basic plan to ensure things go smoothly throughout the year.

I found that the best time to work on a new schedule was the summer. I know. Summer and schedules in the same sentence?

Think of it this way: the above schedule on Monday might be to spend the morning at the pool instead of school lessons. Sunday

afternoons in the summer might mean a picnic and splashing in a local creek each week. The idea is to get a basic schedule set up and to get your family accustomed to following a schedule. Switching out mornings at the pool for math and English will not be so bad when the pool closes for fall.

Or you can do like I did when school started. When school started for everyone else, I would promise my kids that if they did their schoolwork quickly (and accurately) enough, we would go to their grandparents to swim in the lake afterward. It is especially nice on a warm September afternoon with colorful leaves floating on the surface of the water. And it counts for physical education!

You can learn to love that schedule. You will have a reasonably clean house, children who have realistic expectations about their day, animals will not be starving, and your yard might even get mowed regularly. Everyone will be more cooperative because there are few surprises.

Having a flexible schedule will not only help you with your toddlers but all ages of children. You are creating a new lifestyle of learning. You would not build a house without a proper framework, and you need the framework of a flexible schedule to create a secure environment for learning.

As you utilize that schedule you created, you might find that things need to be tweaked a bit. That's fine. Change it so it works for you, and make sure your entire family understands the changes. Or you may have to change the entire schedule because you have a new baby, or there is a job or shift change. The schedule is your tool, not your master, so changing it is not a failure. It is just like exchanging one hammer for another when building something.

Just like the toddlers in the magazine article, the whole family functions better when there is a basic plan and everyone knows what is coming next. But on the rare occasion when you suggest that you forget about scheduled yard work and go for ice cream, I am sure you will find you have complete cooperation from the whole family. ■



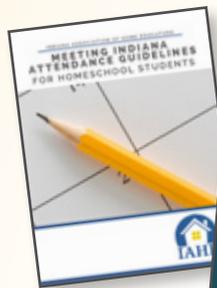
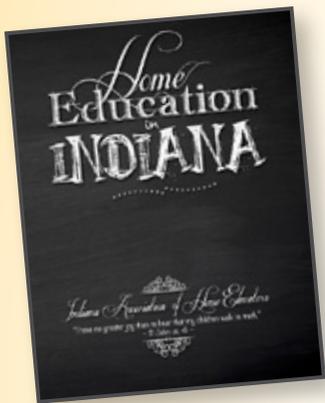
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