

Homeschool INDIANA

- Getting Started -



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You've got homeschooling questions. We've been answering them since 1983.

Welcome to the wonderful world of home education!

Indiana is a wonderful place to live for homeschooling families. Indiana regulations are minimal and families are free to provide a superior education tailored to the needs of their children. No longer restricted by a system built on standardized performance measures and comparison to others, parents are able to focus on providing opportunities that can extend learning far beyond the traditional classroom.

While this freedom is incredible, it can also be overwhelming for new homeschool families. Especially in a world where mass social distancing presents challenges for everyone no matter what educational option they choose.

The Indiana Association of Home Educators (IAHE) has been helping families just like yours for almost forty years. Our team has pulled together a treasure trove of information to help you get started on your new journey. This special, digital edition of our magazine Homeschool Indiana is the perfect resource full of inspiration, checklists, curriculum options, and much more.

Do you have more questions? Be sure to connect with our team.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tara Bentley".

Tara Bentley
IAHE Executive Director

P.S. Stay encouraged! If you want to receive a print subscription of our magazine Homeschool Indiana, be sure to visit our website and become an IAHE Premium Member today.

Start Strong INDIANA Homeschool University

*Everything you need to know for a
successful homeschool year in a
two-week online course!*

Whether your kids are 5 or 15, this course will empower and equip you to successfully homeschool your children. We will teach you how to be intentional in raising your children from academics to discipleship to continuing education for you, so you can be the best parent and educator.

"I wish I had this course when I first started my homeschool journey, but it's never too late to learn and grow, and that's exactly what this course is helping me do!"

— Kelly Cox

"I was blown away by the amount of content provided! This course has reminded me that all homeschools are different, and I can focus on my children's needs."

— Lacey Hooie

"This is perfect for new homeschoolers like us! Everything's in one place—from creating an educational home to age-appropriate education. I loved the personal experiences the veteran homeschoolers shared."

— Joann Wong

**Videos | Articles | Panel Discussions
Bonus Sessions | Resource Center
Printable Planners & More!**

iahe.net/start-strong



Start Strong INDIANA Homeschool University

The Course

.....
*Two weeks of daily lessons
with videos, articles, and more!*

Day 1	<i>Understanding the Law</i>
Day 2	<i>Getting Started</i>
Day 3	<i>Choosing Curriculum & Learning Styles</i>
Day 4	<i>Testing, Evaluations, & Recordkeeping</i>
Day 5	<i>Educational Stages</i>
Day 6	<i>Academic Nuts & Bolts</i>
Day 7	<i>Time Management</i>
Day 8	<i>Parenting & Discipleship</i>
Day 9	<i>Homeschooling Works</i>
Day 10	<i>Homeschool Civics</i>
Day 11	<i>Navigating Homeschool Lingo</i>
Day 12	<i>Homeschool Myths</i>
Day 13	<i>Developing a Long-Term Vision</i>
Day 14	<i>Homeschool Parent & Professional Educator</i>

BONUS CONTENT

- **Masterclass Interviews** with nationally recognized homeschool speakers and leaders
- Student Planners
- Sample Transcripts
- Printable Encouragement Cards for Mom
- 10 Audio Workshop Recordings from Homeschool Experts [MP3s]

A virtual marketplace of homeschool resources and curriculum providers.

iahe.net/start-strong



INTRODUCTION TO HOME EDUCATION

What is Homeschooling?

Not just school at home, but...

- Parent directed education
- Privately funded
- Home-based education
- Traditional, tutorial instruction
- A family lifestyle
- A thriving, mainstream, educational alternative

How did Homeschooling Develop?

- Predominant form of education until the 1900s
- Resurgence in the 1980s
- Legal in ALL states; 34 states have enacted specific laws since 1982
- Growing 7 – 15% yearly (prior to 2020)

How Many People Homeschool?

- 50 million public/private students nationwide (2019)
- National Center for Education Statistics (2007 survey): 2 million homeschoolers
- Possible 1.5-2.4 million students homeschooled (2017)

Who Homeschools?

- 97.5% married couples
- 25,000+ single-parent families
- Families average 3.5 children
- 32% minorities
- Half have attended college or have a degree
- Income \$75,000 – \$79,999
- 75% attend religious services
- Broad range of families: mainstream except for attitude toward education
- Families with special needs children to talented & gifted children

Why Do Parents Homeschool?

- Safety issues and better learning environment
- Transmit family values or provide religious instruction
- Academic goals
- Develop strong family relationships
- Guided social relationships



What about Socialization?

Socialization: fit for companionship with others; how to get along with age-mates; the development of self-worth; the adoption of a set of values or beliefs.

— American Heritage Dictionary

- Studies show that homeschooled children are typically better socialized than their peers. Learn more about these studies on page 54.

Does It Work?

Academic results based on nationally standardized achievement tests:

- National average: 50th percentile
Homeschool average: 80th – 82nd percentiles
- Homeschoolers: average 20-30 percentile points above national norm
- 24.5% of elementary homeschooled students perform one or more grade levels above peers in public & private school
- By grade 8, average homeschoolers perform four grade levels above the national average.

Why is Homeschooling Successful?

- Tutorial approach
- Individualized curriculum
- Developmental readiness
- No learning gaps
- Opportunity for remediation
- Pursue personal interests
- Opportunity for good character development



Why the IAHE?

The Indiana Association of Home Educators (IAHE) is the oldest and the largest homeschool organization serving Indiana families.

Have you ever wondered why Indiana homeschoolers need a state organization?

Decades ago homeschoolers were few and far between, curriculum resources were less abundant, and connecting with other like-minded families was difficult. In those days, state homeschool organizations were the hub of all things homeschooling. Even in a pre-pandemic world, homeschoolers were much easier to find, curriculum vendors are plentiful, and many networking opportunities exist, making the need for a state organization seem less obvious. This may feel especially true here in Indiana, a state where homeschooling is less regulated in comparison to many other states.

The freedom to educate our children at home is a blessing and a constitutional right. Did you know this right is something the IAHE has actively fought to protect for almost forty years? The board members of the IAHE and countless volunteers have worked faithfully behind the scenes in big and little ways to provide many “hidden” benefits to homeschoolers across the state.

The Indiana Association of Home Educators (IAHE) was founded by Judge Ken and Joyce Johnson in 1983, the same year as the Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), making it one of the earliest state home education organizations in the nation. The IAHE has been influencing the legislature on behalf of home educators since its inception. When bills are discovered that have the potential to negatively affect homeschool rights, IAHE heads to the State House and work to prevent it from becoming law. **Your right to educate your children has been protected by the IAHE in numerous sessions of the state legislature.**

The IAHE also works closely with national organizations to stay informed about issues that homeschooling families in other states are facing in an effort to avoid those challenges here at home. IAHE works with Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI). And, as a member of the National Alliance of Christian Home Education Leadership, the IAHE networks with other state leaders in the home education movement. These types of relationships provide mutual encouragement, idea sharing, and benefits to homeschooling families statewide.

The IAHE also provides a volunteer team serving across multiple ministry teams, including Regional Representative couples across the state, Special Learner Consultants, Social Media, Government Affairs Team, Leadership Support, and more. Perhaps the most well-known function of the IAHE is its annual Home Educators’ Convention with nationally recognized speakers and a large vendor hall. This is a great time of fellowship, encouragement, learning, and exploration for new and veteran parents. Many moms and dads count this weekend as a special time to focus on the Lord’s calling to train and disciple their children.

Today’s homeschool families have more choices, opportunities, and freedom than ever before. State organizations like the IAHE continue to play a vital role across the country in helping families navigate choices and make connections while supporting the foundations of our legal right to homeschool.

■ — Debi Ketron

This article was published in *The Informer*, Spring 2013, and revised for this special edition of *Homeschool Indiana*, 2020.

IAHE Government Affairs Team

Working Together to Protect Homeschool Freedom



Since 1983, the IAHE has worked to protect homeschool freedom in Indiana. Our Government Affairs Team works together to meet the following objectives:

- ▶ Assess bills
- ▶ Attend committee hearings
- ▶ Testify when needed
- ▶ Send Legislative Updates
- ▶ Build relationships with government officials
- ▶ Watch for any potential legislation that may affect our homeschool rights



Established in 2015, IAHE Action is IAHE's sister organization. The mission of Indiana Association of Home Educators Action is to protect Hoosier home education freedoms and parental rights by influencing the legislative process. We encourage Indiana home educators to stay vigilant in order to maintain the liberty that has been gained over the years.

Our Government Affairs Team



Tara Bentley
IAHE Executive Director



Alison Slatter
IAHE Senior Analyst



Meghan Carver
Legal Analyst



Belinda Hatfield
Team Member



Shawn King
Senior Bill Reader



Toby Miller
Bill Reader



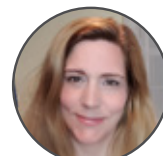
Mike Sager
Team Member



Dr. Bridgette
Whitlow-Spurlock
Writer



Kylene Varner
Social Media



Lisa Yankey
Leg. Policy Advisor

TRAIN UP
a child
IN THE WAY
HE SHOULD GO
AND WHEN
HE IS OLD
he will not
DEPART FROM IT.

PROVERBS 22:6



HOMESCHOOLING GETTING STARTED STEPS

- **Research Homeschooling**
 - Attend IAHE's free Homeschool 101 Webinar
 - Sign-up for the online course: Start Strong Indiana
iahe.net/how-to-homeschool-in-indiana-course
 - Research topics on the IAHE website
iahe.net
 - Read how-to-homeschool books
 - Subscribe to one or more homeschool magazines
iahe.net/homeschool-indiana-magazine
 - Attend IAHE events
 - Attend local presentations and workshops
 - Visit local support groups or co-ops
 - Talk with veteran homeschoolers
 - Read homeschool blogs
- **Understand Indiana Homeschool Law**
 - Non-public and non-accredited
 - Review the law on the IAHE's website
iahe.net/homeschooling-in-indiana
 - Begin tracking attendance
iahe.net/attendance-ebook
 - Withdrawal from public school if needed
iahe.net/withdraw
- **Join Support Organizations**
 - Indiana Association of Home Educators
iahe.net
 - Home School Legal Defense Association
hsllda.org
 - Local support group or co-op
 - E-groups, Facebook, blogs
facebook.com/groups/IAHEchat
 - Individual or team sports
 - Field trip group
- **Choose a Curriculum Type or Style**
 - Traditional
 - Unit approach
 - Classical curriculum
 - Correspondence course
 - Delight Directed
 - Unschooling
- **Decide on Curriculum**
 - Visit the IAHE Homeschool Curriculum & Resources page on our website
iahe.net/curriculum-directory
 - Find budget-friendly supplements online
iahe.net/free-homeschool-curriculum
 - Sign-up on email lists from publishers
 - Visit your local library and review available materials in their homeschool section
- **Purchase Supplies**
 - Resource books
 - Curriculum
 - Storage cabinets, bookshelves
 - Tables, desks, whiteboards
 - Writing supplies, art supplies, maps, etc.
 - Computer (if age appropriate)
- **Set Goals**
 - Character and spiritual
 - Academic goals
 - Physical skills
 - Work skills and habits
- **Establish a Routine that Works for Your Family**
 - Work schedule
 - Academic schedule
 - Family and outside activities

Book Recommendations for New Homeschoolers

It's hard to believe that our youngest daughter graduated from high school over six years ago!

During our fourteen years of homeschooling, continuing education and encouragement for myself as a parent was vital. Filling my own bookshelf with informative and inspirational resources was always just as important as choosing the right curriculum for my children.

Today, my home may be (almost) empty of curriculum, but the books that remain contain the wisdom of decades and decades of homeschooling experience. The insights on these pages come from different generations. Sometimes wisdom comes from the voice of a veteran homeschool parent, but wisdom can also come from a new generation of parents seeking to serve their families well. No matter how long you have been homeschooling, there is a wealth of confidence to be gained when we invest time in educating ourselves as well as our children.



*Tara Bentley,
IAHE Executive
Director*



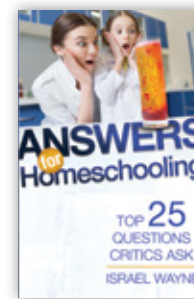
However Imperfectly
Andrew Pudewa

In his collection of over fifty essays and articles, popular homeschool convention speaker Andrew Pudewa shares from his thirty plus years of speaking and writing about issues related to homeschooling, teaching children, writing, spelling, and much more. This book is a great resource full of inspiration, encouragement, and practical advice for both new and veteran homeschool parents. The book also gives the purchaser access to ten free MP3 downloads of Andrew's most popular workshop sessions and a DVD of additional material.



Teaching from Rest
Sarah Mackenzie

Again and again, when the IAHE poses the question on social media asking parents for their favorite book recommendation for new families, one of the most frequent recommendations is *Teaching from Rest*. As a member of the homeschool community since 2001, I understand why. In this quick read, Sarah Mackenzie artfully addresses the heart of a mother feeling stressed and overwhelmed at the task of trying to do it all. No matter what style of homeschool methodology or curriculum you choose, you will find yourself uplifted by this faith-based, inspirational book every time you read it.



**Answers for Homeschooling:
Top 25 Questions Critics Ask**
Israel Wayne

In spite of the global exposure to home education this year, critics continue to question the success of the homeschooling movement. Many families find themselves homeschooling for the first time and often have to defend their choice to family and friends. Israel Wayne's book addresses topics from socialization, accountability, vouchers, special education, extracurricular activities, and more.

Have you connected with your IAHE Regional Representative?

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.



Do You **REALLY** Want to **HOMESCHOOL?**

Homeschooling, eLearning, school-at-home,
and distance learning... oh my!

Many parents found themselves

facing a difficult decision this summer regarding the education of their children. For families seeking an at-home option, there are many paths to consider.

Public schools across the country unveiled a wide array of alternatives to in-person teaching. With so many options put before them, families are often left confused, trying to sort through the vast amount of information. The term "homeschooling" has been misused for public-school-at-home options for many years, and increasingly so in the midst of the pandemic. It's important for parents to understand that not only do different legal definitions exist for each option but that different education classifications also come with different legal requirements.

Since 1983, the IAHE has been serving Indiana families interested in home education. While we firmly advocate for homeschooling as defined by Indiana law, we are here to help answer questions for families as they navigate through unfamiliar waters.

There are three main types of at-home options for families to consider for their children this fall. All are legal and viable choices and parents should choose the option that works best for their family.



PUBLIC SCHOOL AT HOME OPTIONS

1) **State-wide Charter Schools** – For many years, Indiana has offered virtual public school options such as *K12* and *Indiana Connections Academy*. These programs offer instruction 100% online. Families enroll their children for the entire school year, and they do not typically have access to extra-curricular programs and activities by the family's local school district. While commonly confused with homeschooling, these programs are publicly funded and overseen by the state. They are, therefore, classified by law as public schools.

2) **District-specific eLearning** – Local school districts across the state are rolling out reopening plans for the fall and most have created at-home options using many different labels. Various schools have mislabeled some of their options as "homeschooling", in spite of the fact that homeschooling, in Indiana, is a separate legal classification. At-home options through your local school district, by definition, are public education. You are accountable to that school for tracking your child's attendance and instruction, but you may have access to more programs depending on the guidelines established by your district. At-home eLearning options through a student's own school district may be the best option for families seeking a temporary solution. *This is particularly applicable to high school students who want to remain on their school's path toward graduation.*

HOMESCHOOLING

3) Indiana classifies homeschools as nonpublic and non-accredited. ***This definition dictates the laws that we must follow and it outlines the freedom that we have.*** We recognize many families wanting to keep their children at home this year may not be interested in homeschooling as defined by Indiana law. For families ready to explore the freedom and opportunity that come with home education, we're ready to help you succeed. ■

— Tara Bentley

Did You Know?

Virtual Public School is **Not** Home Education

Virtual public schools, such as Indiana Connections Academy, K12, etc., are **publicly funded** and **accredited**. These are valid choices for some families, but fall under the laws and regulations of public schools.



Indiana law defines homeschools as **non-accredited** and **nonpublic**. Homeschools are **privately funded**.

Legal definitions exist to separate the two options.



For more information on home education in Indiana, check out:
iahe.net/get-started

Be a Homeschool Advocate!

Your IAHE membership, IAHE event attendance, and donations support the work of a non-profit organization run by a volunteer board of directors and team. Since 1983, the IAHE has worked to **Encourage, Protect, and Serve** Indiana homeschool families.

When you join the IAHE, you are working alongside our team to keep homeschooling strong in our state.
You are the missing puzzle piece!

Premium Membership

\$40/year

Email newsletters

Support Group and Co-op Directory

Printable Teacher & Student ID Cards

High-quality, laminated Family Membership Card

Featured Convention Audio of the Month & One FREE Workshop Bundle

Discounts from select homeschool curriculum & service providers

Print & digital issues of Homeschool Indiana

NEW for 2020
Become a
Supporting Member
with your
Premium Membership
+ Monthly Donation.

Your Support Matters

The IAHE stands in the gap and helps safeguard your legal right to homeschool by keeping its finger on the pulse of what's happening in Indianapolis.

iahe.net/join

Indiana Homeschool Law

- 1. Children ages 7-18 must be educated for the number of days their local school system is in session. This is typically 180 days.**
(IC 20-33-2-5; IC 20-33-2-6)
- 2. Parents must begin keeping attendance records the date the child turns 7. The local superintendent and the state superintendent may legally ask to see a parent's attendance sheet.** *(IC 20-33-2-8; IC 20-33-2-20)*
- 3. Parents must provide an equivalent education. Please note, home educators are not required to teach on the same subjects as are listed in the IDOE state standards.** *(IC 20-33-2-28; IC 20-33-2-12)*
- 4. The education must be taught in English.**
(IC 20-33-2-4)

For more information
on home education in Indiana, check out

iahe.net



WE *homeschool*



You CAN too!

*Classical
Conversations*[®]
Classical Christian Community

*It's not too late,
get connected with
a local community.*

REGISTER NOW!

CLASSICALCONVERSATIONS.COM/IAHE-START

Scope & Sequence

— What is It? —



The “scope and sequence” of curricula are generally accepted guidelines followed in planning a child’s area of study. Appropriate maturational and intellectual levels are considered in the designing of these guidelines and the following lists are an example of concepts that should be covered at different grade levels. While a scope and sequence can be a helpful guideline for a parent who has no idea where to start, **a child should always be allowed to progress at his own rate.** Some children will be ahead of the following schedule for their age group while others may be behind. The next few pages should be used only as a guide to the equivalency of a grade level in the public schools. The parent should always be aware that a child should not be pushed beyond his ability, but at the same time, many children need to be challenged to use the abilities the Lord has given them. **It takes discernment on the part of the parent to meet each individual need appropriately** – to challenge each at just the right time and in just the right way to make learning a wonderful adventure.

READING

Kindergarten – 1st Grade

The term “readiness” refers to those activities (mostly structured) of the preschool or early elementary age child that actually prepare him to learn to read and understand beginning math concepts. These activities start when you hold your child on your lap, read to him and talk about the pictures. He learns to hold a book, turn pages, and sees left to right sequencing. HE soon learns to relate written and spoken language. Through discussion of the story, he builds his vocabulary and begins to develop reading comprehension skills. Sorting, matching, and discriminating between objects in games are other

readiness activities that come along in normal playtime. Learning the sounds and names of letters (magnetic letters are great) along with matching beginning and ending sounds through audio or visual discrimination are also important activities for the younger child. Preschool children can easily be encouraged to make up simple stories or retell a familiar story. Wholesome family activities (a trip to a museum, park, or zoo, of baking cookies) expose the child to new learning experiences, build vocabularies, and make learning a fun family event.

Initial Steps to Reading:

Learn the sounds of letters (vowels first); the names of the letters of the alphabet; recognize that sounds make

up words; recognize upper and lower case letters; learn to blend the letters; recognize simple words; and recognize blends, digraphs, and diphthongs (not the terms). If the child is progressing well he should be able to: recognize basic sight words; recognize root words/base words; recognize some suffixes; be able to read aloud and indicate the end of a sentence by voice inflections, and be able to recognize new words in context.

2nd and 3rd Grades

By this level the child should be increasing his sight vocabulary, comprehension skills, and solidifying his understanding of phonics. Children should be able to: independently read for enjoyment; follow written

instructions; understand, read and write contractions and compound words; understand and count syllables in at least two syllable words; understand and relate story sequence; recognize homonyms, synonyms and antonyms; use basic phonics skills consistently; recognize common suffixes and prefixes; and consistently expand their vocabulary.

4th – 6th Grades

Although still limited by maturity level and lack of knowledge, a child at this grade level should be able to read most written material. Some children might need remedial attention while most will be reading for information and pleasure. Advanced reading skills should include: reading with increasing skill and expression; following more difficult written instructions; listening to adult reading which improves both reading and listening skills; using reading skills to locate information and for practical reading such as newspapers, advertisements, etc.; understanding prefixes and suffixes on a more difficult level by studying Latin and Greek derivatives; learning dictionary skills; identifying an author's point of view; comparing authors and their works; becoming familiar with renowned authors and their works; reading and studying a variety of forms of prose and poetry; analyzing reading material for theme, appeal, technique, and effectiveness; and reading for literary value.

7th and 8th Grades

General literature: There are many excellent literature texts available. Students should be reading from classic and contemporary novels.



GRAMMAR & COMPOSITION

Kindergarten – 1st Grade

Students should learn to: speak in complete sentences; follow oral directions; tell stories; say name, address, and telephone number; recognize rhymes; listen to others reading; relate simple stories, verses and rhymes orally; write simple sentences ending with periods, and capitalize first letters of sentences and proper names.

2nd – 3rd Grades

Students should learn to: follow oral and written directions; use the suffixes: -s, -ed, -ing and some prefixes; use apostrophes; alphabetize; recognize syllables; use a dictionary; write simple stories, notes, and reports; punctuate sentences using periods, question marks, commas, and exclamation points; capitalize proper nouns and words at the beginning of sentences; understand what a complete sentence is; and identify the following parts of speech: nouns, verbs, adjectives and simple conjunctions.

4th Grade

Students should learn to: participate in discussion; write simple stories, poems, letters, reports, etc; apply punctuation rules for: periods, commas, exclamation points, question marks, periods after abbreviations, initials and commas in a series, dates, greetings and closings of letters; identify possessive words; properly use apostrophes; group related sentences to form a paragraph; write a letter and address an envelope; use capitalization rules; identify: nouns, verbs (state of being and action), pronouns, adjectives, conjunctions; and recognize and diagram indirect objects and prepositional phrases.

5th Grade

Students should learn to: give oral reports; use all punctuation correctly including quotation marks; underline titles; write reports (2-5 pages), letters, prose, poetry, creative stories; proofread and edit their own work; identify nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns; identify subjects, predicates and direct objects; recognize subject-predicate agreement; use adjectives and adverbs in writing; apply correct usage of verbs; identify prepositions, conjunctions and interjections; recognize agreement between pronouns and antecedents; learn irregular plurals; diagram subjects and verbs, direct objects, adjectives and adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions; and recognize and diagram indirect objects and prepositional phrases.

6th – 8th Grades

Student should learn to: give oral reports and participate in group discussions; use plural possessives and contractions; recognize and write compound sentences; write outlines and topic sentences; compose poetry, short research papers, book reports, dialogue; write with unity and coherence; proofread and edit their own work; develop total understanding of use of dictionary; understand appositives and direct address ("you"); master helping and linking verbs; write compositions; identify simple verbs (can be taught as early as 4th grade); use predicate adjective and predicate nominative; diagram all

the parts of speech; define and learn examples of similes and metaphors; use a thesaurus; and take notes from printed and oral material.

MATHEMATICS

Kindergarten

Begin by working with the student on: relating quantities (same/different, larger/smaller, shorter/taller, long/longer/longest); classifying (by color, shape, size, common characteristics); relating characteristics (matching items one for one, recognizing like amounts, duplicating a given pattern); recognizing basic shapes (square, circle, rectangle, triangle); recognizing and ordering numerals 0-10; counting and printing numerals 0-10, understanding concepts of smaller/larger and more/less involving values from 0 to 10 with aid of pictures; and naming coins (penny, nickel, dime, etc.).

1st Grade

Students should learn to: count, recognize and write numerals 0-100; memorize addition and subtraction of numbers from 0-10; understand place values (ones, tens and hundreds); recognize "greater than" and "less than" concepts, apply simple problem solving; identify fractional shapes and parts of a whole for $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, and $\frac{1}{3}$; measure: 1 cup, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, foot, inch, yard; and add and subtract two digit numbers without carrying and borrowing.

2nd Grade

Student should: review addition and subtraction facts to 10 + 10; learn carrying and borrowing in math (regrouping); accomplish counting, identifying and writing numerals up to 100; learn to use "greater than" and "less than" symbols; begin learning the concept of multiplication; learn to count by twos, and fives to 100; review place value of hundreds, tens and ones; identify parts and the numerals for $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$ in fractional shapes and fractional parts of a whole; understand money concepts up to \$1.00; tell time (hour, half hour and quarter hour); apply measurement (linear, liquid, and weight); interpret simple bar graphs; and solve one-step word problems with either addition or subtraction.

3rd Grade

Student should learn to: multiply up to 9×9 (mastery may not come until grade 4); divide (introduced pictorially or with hands on objects); identify place value to thousands and ten thousands; read and write up to five digit numbers; recognize even and odd numbers; add and subtract three digit numbers where regrouping is required; divide with one digit divisor; recall multiplication and division facts up to 9×9 ; multiply one digit times two digits with carrying; identify fractions: $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, and $\frac{1}{4}$ of different shapes and amounts; understand a.m. and p.m. and tell time to the nearest five minutes; identify days and months; count, add and subtract money; use \$ and decimal point; measure using linear, liquid, and weight measurements; use the metric system; do one-step problem solving using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division; do simple estimates; make up simple word problems.



4th Grade

Student should learn to: do any addition and subtraction with whole numbers; read and identify any numeral up to seven digits and beyond; do two-digit times three-digit multiplication; round off numbers; learn estimation; divide with two-digit divisors; show remainders in division; add and subtract fractions with like denominators; understand fractions as ratios; reduce fractions; master time (be able to read and write to the nearest minute); count money and make change; master more difficult measurement concepts regarding length and mass; do all liquid measurement; identify all shapes and construct graphs; add and subtract mixed numbers ($2\frac{2}{3} + 5\frac{1}{6}$); solve more complicated word problems; use data to construct word problems; determine missing data for problem solving; find averages.

5th Grade

Student should learn to: do any addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems with whole numbers; add, subtract and multiply any decimals; divide whole numbers by decimals; use ratios; master more difficult measurements; determine prime factors; read and write up to nine digit numbers; use decimals other than in relationship to money; read and write decimals to the thousandths; determine the area of squares and rectangles; introduce the concept of volume with cubes; round off whole numbers and decimals; estimate; identify the following terms: congruence, symmetry, diameter, radius, angle, parallel, perpendicular, and intersecting lines; construct and interpret graphs; compute the area of a triangle; use math to solve real life problems; and use a protractor.

6th Grade

Student should learn to: read and write all decimals; change percents to decimals; understand and apply percentage; introduce integers; read and write all 12 digit numerals; do any computation using fractions and decimals; convert fractions to decimals and decimals to fractions; determine circumference and area of circles; use a protractor to measure and draw angles; interpret graphs; line circle and bar; convert units of measure in the system; quarts to pints, yards to feet, etc.; formulate and apply problem solving strategy; deal with exponential notation; define, explain and use probability; analyze and evaluate statistics.

7th and 8th Grade

Student should study general math or pre-algebra with an emphasis on problem-solving using all math concepts.

SOCIAL STUDIES: HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY, GOVERNMENT

Kindergarten – 2nd Grade

Focus for the student at this level should be on the neighborhood and town, or rural area and town most frequented. Children should become familiar with surrounding streets and roads and how to get to and from familiar places. Children should be aware of the types of stores in the area and the public services, such as police stations, fire departments, hospitals, libraries, etc. Second grade is a good time to begin map skills (a homemade map of a familiar area is helpful). Children should learn directions (north, south, east, west) around their home and understand those directions on a map. Introduce the time line concepts using the child's actual birth as the beginning and add events that have happened since the child's birth.

3rd Grade

Students should; study Native Americans including types of shelter, dress, etc.; learn more map skills including roads, towns, lakes, rivers, etc.; study national holidays; begin study of prominent historical figures like Washington, Lincoln, Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., Wright Brothers, etc.; start a time line and include these people; study different kinds of occupations and interview people working in these fields.

4th Grade

This is the year to study Indiana history. Include materials from first settlement to the present. Students can practice map skills by using a map of Indiana, locating major towns, highways, waterways and surrounding states. They should study famous Indiana people from the past and present. Field trips to the State House and other important historical spots can add much to the course. Include a study of Indiana government.

5th Grade

United States history should be taught this year. It can be taught from a textbook or through unit studies. Helpful ideas include making extensive maps and constructing a time line. Many read literary works that relate to different periods of time in our country's history. This is a time to practice writing good reports.

6th Grade

Students usually study world history this year. Extensive use of maps can be very helpful. Continue the time line from previous years. Students should write reports and simple research papers.

7th Grade

During seventh grade world geography is taught but from the cultural, physical and political aspect.

8th Grade

United States history is taught again this year.

SCIENCE

A general science program is taught throughout elementary and middle school years. Science textbooks for each grade level are published by most curriculum companies. The use of a text can insure consistent instruction in this subject. Most texts suggest enrichment reading ideas for experiments and activities. These help the parent motivate the student and allow more first-hand experience for the child than textbook reading. Parents need to take advantage of the child's writing education by requiring reports appropriate to the grade level. Learning the scientific process is also important. Many parents make use of unit studies for science in the elementary grades. This can be an effective way to study science. By involving all of your children, it provides a family activity at the same time.

Note: Cathy Duffy's Christian Home Educators' Curriculum Manual – Elementary Grades is highly recommended for further in-depth study and ideas for teaching grades K-6.



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A NEW WAY TO THINK ABOUT EDUCATION

10 RULES OF THUMB FOR CHOOSING CURRICULUM



RULE #1: Invest in Yourself First

Like it or not, you are the glue that will hold this homeschooling endeavor together, so you need to develop a strategy for staying sane and on top of it all (even if it means scheduling a nap every afternoon). You wouldn't dream of trying to build a house without a plan, the right materials, and the necessary tools. Homeschooling is like building a house—you need to determine your plan, gather your materials, and be sure you have the right tools for the job. Take some time to read, to look around, to compare. Invest in some of the “tools of the trade” like the “must-haves” and parent resources.

Begin rearranging your house so it will accommodate study without becoming too cluttered or stressful. Think through what you will do with infants and toddlers during school times; how you will handle meals, house cleaning, and laundry; and how you will deal with the other changes schooling at home brings. Don't feel guilty about spending money on yourself. After all, if you were a professional teacher, you (or your parents) would have spent tens of thousands of dollars getting you ready to stand before a classroom of children. So think in terms of what will make you more confident and able to create a learning environment for your household. What will smooth your way mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually? Remember that teaching your children at home is going to be quite an adjustment for you as well as for your children. Take care of yourself. Don't overcommit. Stay at home. Find ways to make life easier for yourself.

Homeschooling is like building a house—you need to determine your plan, gather your materials and be sure you have the right tools for the job.

RULE #2 : Consider Your Situation

Your first priority is to find out where your children are physically, emotionally, mentally, and academically. Start with where they are and build on that. Often children taken from a public-school setting have problems with self-esteem, peer dependency, academic “burnout,” and/or the adjustment from classroom to home. The most harmful thing you can do with a damaged child is to jump into academics. Take time to become reacquainted with your children, to “wash away” the institutional effects, to determine their learning strengths and weaknesses. You may want to just cover the necessities of academics (language arts and math) for the first few months to a year, or start out with one or two subjects and gradually add more.

A farm family will have many opportunities for “hands-on” learning in the areas of math, science, economics, etcetera. A city family has access to museums, libraries, cultural events, and more support-group activities.

You can make the most of the real-life learning opportunities god gives you, perhaps never needing textbooks and teaching materials in certain subject areas.

We once had a missionary call us, bemoaning the fact that she lived in a large foreign city and her children weren't able to do much nature study. She completely overlooked all the wonderful opportunities her children had to learn foreign languages, history, and geography, and to interact with other cultures. So, look around. God may have already arranged a learning environment for you that is better than a classroom.

RULE #3: Choose Teaching Material Suited to the Learner

Textbooks developed for classroom use tend to be “teacher-directed” and chalkboard oriented, seldom taking into account children’s interests or the different ways children perceive and process information. Different children have different learning strengths and weaknesses that the perceptive parent will take into account when choosing teaching materials. For example, visual learners may do well with workbooks, while auditory learners need songs or spoken instruction, and kinesthetic learners need to manipulate objects.

RULE #4: Choose Material You Like

or you will resist using it, no matter how good it is. All teaching materials have a bias, not just in the subject matter, but also in the way the subject matter is presented. Every teaching parent, whether he or she recognizes it or not, has an educational philosophy—some set of values and beliefs about what and how children should be taught. Sometimes we will have an unexplained inner resistance to certain teaching materials. It could be that this inner resistance arises from a conflict between our educational philosophy and that of the teaching material. Trust the Holy Spirit and choose from your spirit as well as from your head. No matter how much your friends rave about a particular product, don’t buy it if you don’t really like it yourself. A key question to ask is: “Does just looking at this curriculum make me feel tired or pressured?”

RULE #5 : Avoid Programs that Require a Great Deal of Teacher Preparation

Unless you are a researcher type or high-energy person, you will be frustrated by programs with detailed teacher’s manuals to wade through, supplemental books or seminars that are necessary to fully utilize the program, or lots of activities to prepare beforehand.

RULE #6 : Expect To “Waste” Time, Energy, and Probably Some Money

You will soon discover that often it is you, not your children, who are being educated. So loosen up and accept the fact that some of what you buy may be a total waste of time, energy, and money. This is all a part of learning what works for you and for your children. Consider it payment of your tuition in the University for Home-Educating Parents.

RULE #7 : Be Aware that there are Various Schools of Thought

Some examples: In math, there are programs that are primarily problem solving with manipulatives and 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 while learning to read, and programs that focus on just learning to read and letting the rules come later. Each school of thought has produced excellent mathematicians, readers, and spellers, but sometimes products will be advertised as better than the rest because they follow a particular school of thought.

RULE #8 : Realize That There Is No Perfect Curriculum

What works with one child won’t necessarily work with another. What worked one year may not work the next. Your family’s needs and interests will change. Buy materials that meet present needs.

Mold the curriculum to the child, not the child to the curriculum.



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

RULE #9 : God Gave You Your Specific Children Because There is Something in You that He Wants Imparted to Them

Teaching materials are only tools to help you impart yourself to (to disciple) your children. You can trust the Lord to lead you to those materials that will help you best disciple each child. Beware of adult peer pressure; many of your relatives and friends will criticize your decision to homeschool. Don’t feel like you need to live up to their expectations. Other homeschooling parents may pressure you to try their favorite curriculum or intimidate you with their children’s achievements. Remember, you know your children’s needs better than anyone else and you are best qualified to help them reach their full potential.

RULE #10 : Remember that Teaching Materials are Often the Least Important Elements of Your Homeschool

Books are easy to discard if they don’t work for you, but attitudes and destructive family dynamics are not. Five major reasons families fail at home education are:

- They lack the personal conviction to persevere through the difficult times,
- The father is not involved,
- The children are undisciplined and resist parental instruction,
- The parents cannot handle the added responsibilities, or
- The family has unrealistic expectations.

The best teaching materials in the world are going to take a back seat to the attitudes and family dynamics in your household. ■

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Homeschool Curriculum

Making Sense of It All

Traditional Style

(Textbooks, worksheets, and/or computer)

- Abeka
- Accelerated Christian Education (A.C.E)
- Alpha Omega Publications
- Apologia
- Berean Builders
- Bilingual Books
- Bluestocking Press
- Bob Jones University/ Homeworks by Precepts (BJU)
- BookShark
- Christian Light Education (CLE)
- Constitutional Literacy
- Eagle's Wings Education
- Notgrass History
- Rod & Staff
- Singapore Math

Charlotte Mason Style

- Across America
- Ambleside Online
- Beautiful Feet Books
- Five in a Row
- A Gentle Feast
- Heart of Dakota
- Learning Language Arts Through Literature (LLATL)
- Masterbooks
- NaturExplorers
- Noah Plan
- Queen Homeschool Supplies
- Simply Charlotte Mason
- Trail Guide to Learning
- Winter Promise

Accredited:

- Abeka Academy
- Alpha Omega Academy
- Christian Liberty Academy
- Heritage Homeschool
- Liberty Online Academy
- The Potters School
- Veritas Press Academy

Distance Learning Style

- Abeka Distance Learning
- Alpha Omega's Switched on Schoolhouse
- Bob Jones University Distance Learning
- Bravewriter
- Essentials in Writing/Literature
- Liberty Online Academy
- Memoria Press
- Veritas Press

Free Options

- Ambleside Online
- EasyPeasy
- Freedom Homeschooling
- Homeschool Helper Online
- Homeschool Share
- Little House Kindergarten
- NitroType
- An Old Fashioned Education
- Plain and Not So Plain (PANSP)
- Readworks.org
- Teach Your Monster to Read
- Typing Club

Unit Study Style

- Caldron Creek Curriculum
- Five in a Row
- Gather 'Round Homeschool
- Konos
- Magic Forest Academy
- Moving Beyond the Page
- My Father's World
- Philosophy Adventure
- Prairie Primer
- Tapestry of Grace
- Total Language Plus
- Unit Studies by Amanda Bennett
- Weaver
- Winter Promise

Classical Education Style

- BiblioPlan
- Classical Conversations
- Classical Academic Press
- Learning Adventures
- Memoria Press
- Tapestry of Grace
- Veritas Press

More to Explore

(Some are adaptable to multiple styles)

- All About Learning Press
- Answers in Genesis
- Around the World in 180 Days
- Bravewriter
- Bright Ideas Press
- Calico Spanish
- Christian Kids Explore Science
- Cornerstone Curriculum
- Critical Thinking Books & Software
- Demme Learning (Spelling U See & Math U See)
- Diana Waring Presents (What in the World? & History Revealed!)
- Essentials in Writing/ Literature
- Foreign Language For Kids By Kids
- Hillsdale Online Courses
- Homeschool in the Woods
- Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW)
- Galloping the Globe and Cantering the Country
- Geomatters
- GuestHollow.com
- A Journey Through Learning (Educational Lapbooks)
- Jump-In Writing with Sharon Watson
- The Learnables
- Life of Fred Math
- Logic of English
- McGuffey Readers
- My Father's World
- Mystery of History
- Nature's Workshop Plus
- Patriot Academy
- Progeny Press
- Real Science 4 Kids / Gravitas Publications
- RightStart Mathematics
- Rosetta Stone
- Saxon
- Sonlight
- State History by a Helping Hand
- Teaching Textbooks
- Thinking Tree Books/ Funschooling
- Timberdoodle
- Trick Geography
- VideoText
- Wall Builders
- Worldly Wise
- WriteShop
- YWAM Publishing
- Zeezok Publishing

Note: Virtual public schools, such as Indiana Connections Academy and K12, are online, accredited, public schools. These are not, by law, home education options in Indiana.



For more information on homeschool curriculum options, check out:
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Updated August 2020

Homeschool Curriculum by Topic

Making Sense of It All

Math

- Demme Learning (Math-U-See)
- Life of Fred Math
- RightStart Mathematics
- Saxon
- Singapore Math
- Teaching Textbooks
- VideoText

History/Government/ Economics

- Constitutional Literacy
- BiblioPlan
- Bluestocking Press
- Diana Waring Presents (What in the World? & History Revealed!)
- Homeschool in the Woods
- Mystery of History
- Notgrass History
- Patriot Academy
- State History by a Helping Hand
- Wall Builders
- Zeezok Publishing

Language Arts

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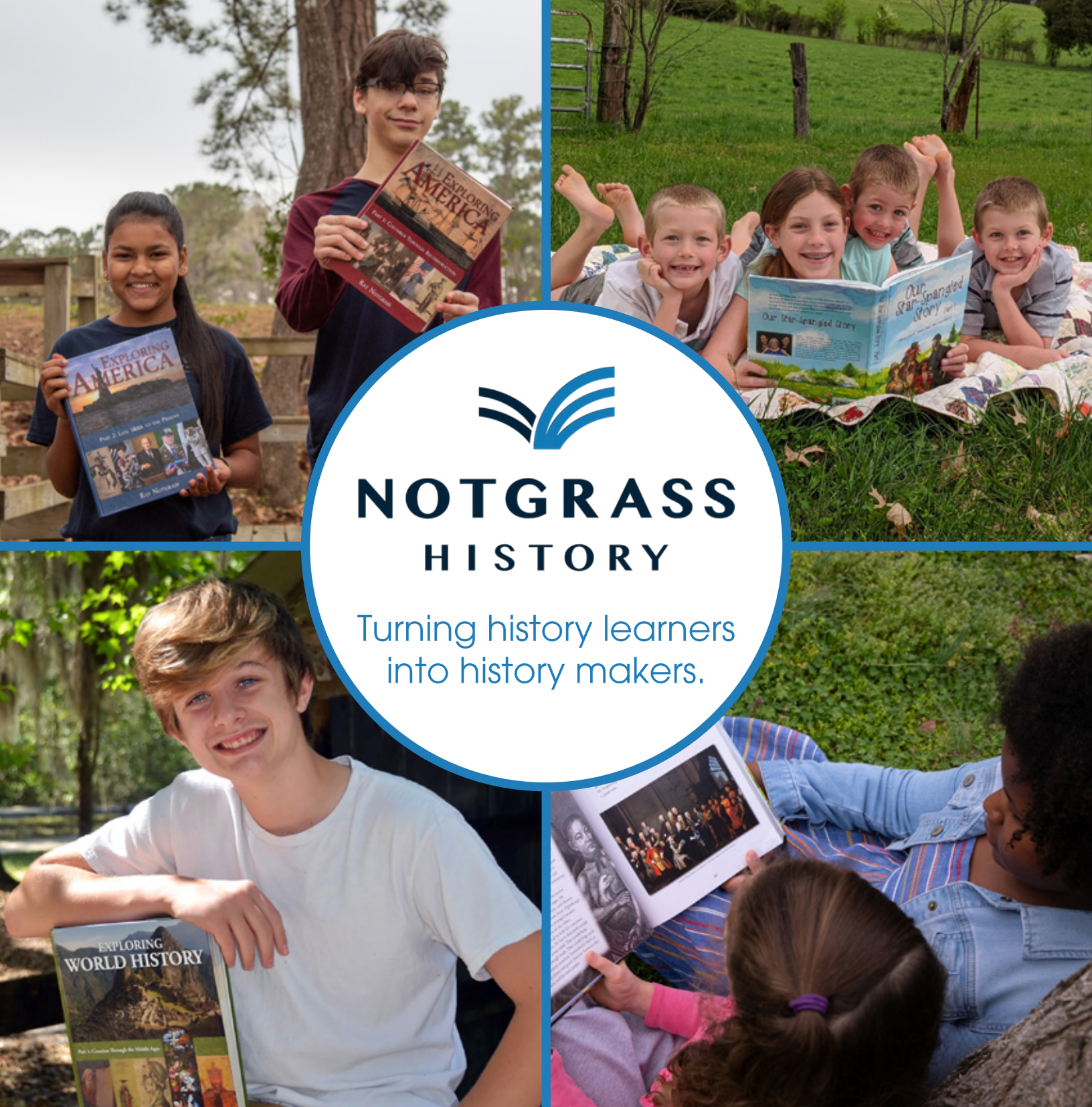
Multi-Topic Curriculums

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- Bob Jones University/ Homeworks by Precepts (BJU)
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- Heart of Dakota
- Heritage Homeschool
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- Homeschool Helper Online
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- Konos
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- Magic Forest Academy
- Masterbooks
- Memoria Press
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- The Potters School
- Prairie Primer
- Queen Homeschool Supplies
- Rod & Staff
- Simply Charlotte Mason
- Sonlight
- Tapestry of Grace
- Thinking Tree Books/ Funschooling
- Timberdoodle
- Unit Studies by Amanda Bennett
- Veritas Press
- Weaver
- Winter Promise
- YWAM Publishing



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What About Socialization Now?

What about socialization? I'm guessing we've all been asked this question a time or two in our homeschooling careers by well-meaning friends or family members. Somewhere along the way in the modern homeschool movement, this one question has become a means of dissuading parents from educating their children at home. The implications of this question lead one to believe that socialization must take place in a traditional classroom.

Google defines socialization as "the activity of mixing socially with others." Proponents of traditional schooling have argued that homeschool students miss a significant portion of socialization by learning at home. Traditional schooling would have us believe that socialization can truly only take place under the guidance of a college-trained teacher who oversees a group of twenty or more peers.

As a veteran homeschool parent, I'm well aware that socialization is so much more than my children interacting well with peers. True socialization crosses age, culture, and economic barriers. These socialization lessons occur every day in a myriad of opportunities. I am grateful that we embraced those opportunities in our homeschooling journey.

Ironically, socialization is a hot topic in traditional education these days. Only this time, the age-old socialization argument is now aimed at public school administrators as they attempt to implement the CDC's COVID19 guidelines for the 2020-2021 school year. Though I can honestly say I feel slightly vindicated for all the years I've heard the "What about socialization?" argument, I feel badly for these administrators as they try to keep the community satisfied, parents happy, and children safe. I doubt I'm alone in that feeling.

Currently, school systems across the country are moving desks six feet apart, changing schedules to accommodate lunch hour in the classroom, staggering recess times, and in some cases, even installing plexiglass barriers between teachers and students. Socialization is becoming isolation.

Changes are not only happening in traditional school settings. Homeschool families are having to reevaluate play dates,

field trips, and volunteer opportunities. Many homeschool families find themselves choosing nature walks over museums and curbside library pickup over story time. What was once considered isolation is now the norm.

However, we were not created for isolation. In the book of Genesis, chapter two verse eighteen, God said it is not good for man to be alone. God created a helpmate for Adam and together they had children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and beyond. God created mankind to be together and to have social interaction.

As I've watched the regulations with COVID19 unfold, I'm reminded that God is in control. Nothing in 2020, including the increase of isolation, has been a surprise to him. He is still omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. My job is to simply trust him, obey him, and pray to him for those in authority.

1 Timothy 2:1-2 "I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."

Socialization has always been a hot topic of debate in home education. However, now it is a real issue that traditional schools are grappling with. I don't know our local Superintendent but I pray for him. His choices don't directly affect my daughter, but they do affect our community. He has an incredibly difficult job and I've been given the privilege to pray for him.

Right now, many are asking "What about socialization?" Many are confused, scared, and frustrated. Will you join me in praying for "all people"...homeschooling families and traditional schooling families as we all wrestle through this virus?

Socialization matters, more now than ever. We were not created for isolation. ■

— Heidi Kreider

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10 Things Every Homeschooler Should Remember

#1 Regardless Of How Qualified You May Or May Not Feel, The Best Teacher God Can Provide For Your Children Is You, Their Parent

As parents, we know our children best, and we love them more than any teacher would. We can evaluate their work based on their abilities and assess it based on their effort rather than their intelligence. We know them well enough to know if they are really trying. We can challenge them at their level, but without unnecessary frustration. The best teacher God can provide for your children is you.

#2 THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU CAN DO IS WIN YOUR CHILDREN'S HEARTS

When you have their hearts, you are able to pour into them the truths that God is teaching you; you have a valuable opportunity to influence not just what they do, but who they are.

#3 GIVE PRIORITIES FIRST PLACE IN YOUR DAY. GOD'S WORD SHOWS US WHAT OUR PRIORITIES SHOULD BE AS PARENTS

In 2 Peter 1:5 it says, "...add to your faith virtue (or character); and to virtue knowledge." Start your day pointing children to God and His Word, and then train them in character. Training them in godly character is much more important than teaching them academics. The academics are important, but character is

what will make a difference in their life. Wisdom is the principal thing—not knowledge.

#4 YOU CAN DO IT!

We all have times when we wonder whether we are giving our kids what they need academically, or wonder how we will get through the challenging high school subjects. The key is that we can do it through the strength of Christ. Daily time alone with Christ is essential! Without His help, we will struggle.

#5 YOU DON'T NEED TO WAIT UNTIL YOU FEEL PREPARED AND QUALIFIED

You will never totally feel ready or confident that you are as qualified as you should be. However, if you feel God is calling you to teach your kids, and you are willing to obey Him, you are ready. That is the only qualification and preparation you need: a willing heart and spirit. Be teachable, and let God lead you. He will bless your efforts and obedience.

#6 DON'T TAKE YOURSELF TOO SERIOUSLY

As homeschooling parents, we tend to take our responsibility very seriously—and we should; but at the same time, it's important to lighten up and enjoy the journey. Read together, go to the park, laugh, and have fun. When things are stressful and a child or a subject is frustrating you, switch things up, change your focus for a time, and do something different. Don't sacrifice the relationship because of a standstill with a subject.

#7 YOUR MARRIAGE NEEDS TO STAY AT THE TOP OF YOUR PRIORITY LIST

Don't get so caught up in planning and teaching that you don't have time to nurture your marriage. The kids will be gone one day, and you want that relationship to still be strong. (Plus, you are giving your children the example and vision for a wonderful and godly marriage.)

#8 YOU CAN'T DO IT ALL!

It's so easy to get too busy with all the wonderful opportunities we want to give our children. However, if every day is overlooked with activity and rushing about, it leads to fatigue and eventual burn-out. There is a limit to our physical energy, so it's important to make wise choices about how we will use our time. Ask God what HE wants for your family, and make decisions based on His leading, rather than on what you see other homeschooling families doing.

We are not all created alike, and God calls each of us to different things.

#9 WE ALL HAVE BAD DAYS

Not all of us want to admit that, and we usually don't want to talk about them, but they are part of the package. Kids get sick, moms get sick, kids have bad attitudes, and you will wonder what in the world possessed you to ever keep them home! On the other hand, some days will be great. You will love what you are doing and be glad God called you to teach your kids at home. Don't let the bad days get you down.

#10 HOMESCHOOLING IS MORE ABOUT DISCIPLINING AND PREPARING CHILDREN FOR LIFE THAN IT IS ABOUT ACADEMICS

There are definite academic advantages, but the true value of homeschooling comes in the spiritual and biblical values that we are able to impart. ■

—Kathie Morrissey
Founder of the **Character Corner/Courtship Connection** (thecharactercorner.com), Kathie is a mother of eight children and a homeschooling mom of twenty-eight years. She is a popular speaker at homeschool events, family seminars, and mother/daughter banquets. Her desire is to help and encourage parents in raising godly children with strong Christian character.

This article was originally published in the 2013 fall edition of the *Virginia Home Educator*.



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Unlocking Knowledge

Epiphanies come at the most inauspicious times. I was in the car with my many children, and as usual, we were listening to a book on tape. That week I had begun to worry about my nine-year-old daughter's understanding of what we read, so after listening to a paragraph of our book, I stopped the tape and asked her some questions: Who is this story about? (no idea) Where is it happening? (not a clue) My daughter understood the English language and had a good vocabulary, but she needed more help to get the gist of a story.

Think about it: How do you grasp what is happening in a story? For example, a story might say, "Dave climbed up onto the pitching deck. Waves crashed over the bow, and salt stung his eyes. The sails cracked menacingly overhead, threatening to break the mast." How does the reader take those words and figure out what is going on? By using inference—taking the facts that are presented and using them to paint a picture. The story appears to be about Dave since the reader is experiencing the ship from his perspective. The mention of waves, salt, and sail indicate that the setting must be a ship at sea. Furthermore, the crashing waves and cracking sails suggest that a storm is brewing. The ship and Dave are in danger. Some children pick up these inferences easily. Others need to be taught. Where is a teacher to start?

Picture books are a wonderful way to start the process, and they are not just for little children. Caldecott Medal books such as *Sam, Bangs, and Moonshine* have great depth. Moreover, I once led a group of moms in an hour-long discussion of Patricia Polacco's *Thundercake*. Thus, picture books are the perfect place to start literary instruction.

In a picture book, the main character and setting are usually portrayed on the pages along with important elements of the story. Discuss the picture before or after reading the text on the page. Have your student point out the characters in the picture. Discuss the setting: Where in the world is this? Is it real or make believe? What time of day is it? How do you know? It is those "how do you know" questions that are most helpful. If your student is not sure, patiently explain it to him. Work on developing the concrete elements of the story—who, what, where, when—before moving on to the more abstract questions of how and why.

When reading chapter books, stop often and discuss the story. Help your student paint a picture in his head of what is going on. This is not easy to do from words alone, so connect

it to experiences he has had. If needed, find images online to help him see where the story is happening. Act out parts of it to help him form a movie in his head about the story. As time-consuming as this is, it is well worth the time and effort to build the skill of inference with your kids. Be patient. Like Anne Sullivan teaching Helen Keller to sign, there will be a long period of no understanding. But then like Helen with the word w-a-t-e-r, understanding will suddenly blossom, and all your hard work will quickly come to fruition.

Using a series of books with repeated characters is also helpful. I had lamented that my daughter would never be able to retell a story, but one day it happened. She came down and for the first time excitedly told me about a book she had just read, relating the characters and the plot. The book? The first in the *Series of Unfortunate Events* by Lemony Snicket. Those books are a gift to kids who struggle. All thirteen books have the same characters and essentially the same plot, and the author presents the story in a clever yet clear way. Here is a sample from Chapter 1 of *The Bad Beginning*:

The three Baudelaire children lived with their parents in an enormous mansion at the heart of a dirty and busy city, and occasionally their parents gave them permission to take a rickety trolley—the word "rickety," you probably know, here means "unsteady" or "likely to collapse"—alone to the seashore, where they would spend the day as a sort of vacation as long as they were home for dinner.

Note that the text is both clever and entertaining while at the same time it fills in information and vocabulary definitions for the reader. Thanks to Lemony Snicket, my daughter finally grasped how to understand a story. Another series that is equally helpful is John Erickson's *Hank the Cowdog* books. Both series are available on audio, which brings the stories to life all the more. Dr. Seuss wrote, "The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go!" But for this to happen, some kids need a parent to show them how to connect the dots. Trust me, it works. By high school, my daughter was delving into Shakespeare with the best of them. She just needed the key to getting there. So the next time you read a book with your kids, ask a few questions early on to ensure they are picking up on the story. If not, take the time to point out what is happening and why. In this way, you can provide them with the keys to unlock the impressive knowledge contained in books. ■

— Jill Pike

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Dear Sweet Mama...

YOU Are Good Enough

Over the years, our family has been blessed with the privilege of working homeschool conventions for different curriculum vendors. When we started, it was simply a fun, weekend job and a way to help out the curriculum companies that we love and support. But it has proven to be more than “fun” and it is truly more than a paycheck for us. Each convention is a small window of opportunity for us to minister to homeschool parents as they make choices for their families.

Many parents already know what they are looking for when they approach us. They already know what works well for their students. Some parents just have typical questions about grade levels, the length of the lessons, or scope and sequence.

But then there are the families who are struggling with their doubts about homeschooling. They are not skeptical about the success of homeschooling. They have seen it in other families. But they are harboring doubts about their own abilities. Doubts that they may not be able to discuss with their local homeschool moms...because they are living a life filled with unspoken fears that they just aren't good enough. Every decision is overwhelming. They worry they will fail their children...that they won't be able to get their kids into college if they pick the wrong book.

I've seen moms break down in tears over choosing curriculum. I've seen moms paralyzed by so many options. Many moms are drowning in the idea that everyone around them is capable of homeschooling their children but them.

It's easy to sit in our homes with ungraded papers and half-finished lesson plans and let doubt consume us. We believe that everyone has it together but us. We put blinders on, isolate ourselves, and focus on our own weaknesses.

Last year as we worked a convention, I once again had a mom standing before me in tears. She was overwhelmed by the task of choosing curriculum for her children. She was convinced that if she picked the wrong thing she would mess up her child's

future and he would never be able to get into college. She was consumed with doubt and fear.

She isn't alone. I've had similar conversations with moms over the years. Each one tied up in emotional knots over curriculum choices, each shadowed by dark clouds of uncertainty on their homeschooling journeys.

As I looked in the tear-filled eyes of this particular mom, I just wanted to hug her and tell her: “Dear sweet mama, YOU are good enough.”

YOU are the best teacher for your child.

YOU are the best person to choose curriculum for your child.

YOU are the best choice.

Too often we focus on the books, the transcripts, the daily piles of paperwork. But that is not the point of homeschooling. It is not about our curriculum choices. It is about raising our children up to fulfill God's purpose in their lives. Maybe that is college, maybe it is not.

If God has called you to homeschool your children, He will equip you regardless of which books you buy at a convention.

“Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.” (Proverbs 19:21, NIV1984)

Our curriculum choices are temporary. Grades don't last. Our job as homeschool parents is to remain focused on what is lasting...what is eternal.

Dear sweet mama...with God by your side, YOU are good enough. ■

— Tara Bentley

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BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION

Planning Your Own Field Trips

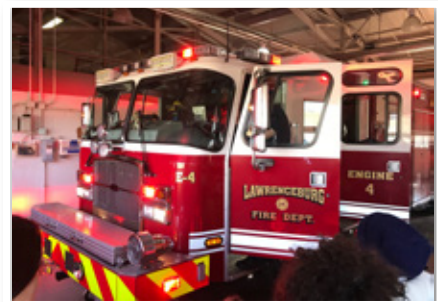


Field trips—everyone loves them! Until YOU are the parent trying to plan them. Most parents have childhood memories of going to their local natural history museum or city zoo with a large class of students. These trips out of the formal classroom were always much loved, but most of us did not consider the effort put into coordinating and scheduling these outings. Now that you are the teacher/field trip planner—what do you do? You may find existing field trip groups, but what if those are not available, you cannot afford the cost, or they are not geared for the age of your child?

When my family was ready to pursue field trips, I began to research options. As I looked around, there were no groups local to me, and my budget was nearly non-existent. Yet I knew that I wanted to give field trips a prominent place in our homeschool, so I started my own group. My mom was a homeschool pioneer in the 1990s and early 2010s, and many of that earlier generation had to begin their own support groups, co-ops, and yes, field trip groups. Following their lead, I dove in and began creating something that would work best for us! While not everything will apply to your family, the following are some examples of how I chose to approach finding and planning field trips.

Starting My Group

I started by inviting a few other homeschool friends. Eventually, I created a facebook group where I posted events as I scheduled them. I tried to schedule a trip every month, and if anyone found established events, we also shared them with the group. It has been very low-key and low-maintenance, which is perfect! Families are free to choose what field trips work best for their schedules, and we get to have friends come along for the adventure—the more the merrier, which makes for more fond memories.



Where Should I Go?

Field trips can be created from anything! My oldest's interest in semi trucks sparked our transportation field trip. A friend invited us on a steamboat cruise, so we spent a week or so reading books from the library about steamboats before our afternoon voyage. Child-led interests, historical events, and anything you want your child to experience are all starting points that can easily become field trips with a little research.



How Big a Group?

The short answer is, it depends. Even though my field trip roster has grown to fifty families, typically no more than five to ten families attend any one trip. Occasionally though, and especially more now due to the current situation in our country with COVID-19, I also plan little local field trips based on things my family is studying; for these I tend to not invite others aside from maybe grandma, or one other family to share the experience with us. Recently, this meant going in search of a working jukebox while we were reading the MaryEllen series of the American Girl books (set in the 1950s). After a quick Facebook shout out, we located one nearby at the Aurora High School Museum, and they opened specifically for us just so we could hear it. Field trips do not always have to be with lots of other people; sometimes they are sweeter when they are just your family.

Funding

Almost all of our field trips are free or very cheap. I look for places that do not have existing field trip options, which means they usually do not charge. Occasionally though, I choose a location that does require a group deposit; I utilize PayPal to collect these funds. It is easy to track who has paid me.

Some locations also have "Homeschool Days" - though these special days do have a higher cost than my typical field trips, they are cheaper than usual for homeschoolers to visit.

Local Businesses

I want my children to know how the world works, so we like to visit various businesses. The local garden nursery, fire department, and even a Chick-fil-a restaurant! Our favorite business field trip was to a transportation company. My oldest kept asking questions about semi-trucks, so I called a local trucking company. They had never been asked to host a field trip before and were ecstatic to have us visit. Just call around and see who is willing to accommodate you. Field trips to local businesses are often free.

Local Events

Be sure you are in local and county groups to see what opportunities exist in your community! Historical societies, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFWs), and other groups sometimes hold events that are open to the public. Our local historical society had a pioneer day that we attended, and the VFW held an exhibition of World War I & II uniforms and memorabilia. We did a little research and found out that my great grandfather served in WWI, and I had great uncles who served in WWII. It was exciting to be able to see representations of the uniforms they would have worn and to see other artifacts of the era.

Memberships

If you have the funds to do so, purchasing a family membership to the local zoo, museum, or aquarium can be a fun year of field trips! Be intentional, so you make good use of it. Plan to study something new each time— African animals on a first zoo trip, apes on a second, ecosystems of a specific region on a third. Studying beforehand will get them excited to "teach" you what they know when you visit.



Parks and Rec

State and county parks frequently have history and science oriented offerings for the community. Check out websites and social media pages for your local parks. Many times they are either free or very cheap! We love visiting Kentucky's Big Bone Lick State Park for their Salt Festival every October. A county park field trip we took was to an event I found on Facebook called "All About Beavers" where they showed us how they were designed for their environment and also showed us their habitat. We had a great time, it was free, and there was little work involved with planning it!

Learning from Friends

Do you have a family friend with an interesting passion or skill? Ask them if they would be willing to do a demonstration! I am friends with a dog trainer who works with scent detection and personal protection canines. He and his wife met us at a local park, and he showed us what his dog was capable of in personal protection, as well as how he trained her for scent detection. Think about who you know that might be able to share their unique talents!

Planning your own field trips can be an overwhelming thought, but it is also one of the highlights of our homeschool! We can bring to life dry historical facts, dive into professions that would otherwise be a mystery, and learn things we never knew that we never knew! Field trips hold a prominent spot for our family, and we hope these tips will help give you the courage to start planning awesome educational memories for your family (and maybe some friends too!) I encourage you to think out of the box, and listen to your kid's ideas for what they want to learn about. The sky's the limit! ■

— Amanda Runge

This article was first published in *Homeschool Indiana*, Fall 2020. All small photos of field trips are courtesy of Amanda Runge.



... You CAN Do Field Trips! ...

Field trips can be simple.

Field trips can be as easy as calling a place and asking to visit, joining an existing field trip group, or visiting a museum! Field trips can be made from anything.



Field trips count.

Field trips are an exciting aspect of education. They aren't just breaks from the normal school day — they ARE school. A field trip day counts as an educational day.



Field trips teach from real experience.

Field trips allow your student(s) to experience learning in a new way and give life to new interests.



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COMMON Misconceptions About Homeschooling



Homeschooling is just public school at home.

"My first misconception was that homeschooling was trying to recreate a school classroom in the home. That was erased before we ever began homeschooling. Instead, homeschooling is our lifestyle — it's not just about school."

~ Roben Closs

Homeschooling requires a strict schedule.

"My misconception was that I had to have our kids on a strict, hour-by-hour schedule with a room set up for classwork. I thought I had to keep all sorts of records (every paper, test, or book ever done). I thought we needed hours set up for school-work and other hours set up for "homework," and that days couldn't just be taken off for enjoyment while simultaneously counting as life skills.

Being around other homeschoolers who had never put their children into public school freed me of that. Now my children do schoolwork wherever it happens to be most convenient or comfortable. Some days they'll do only history, some days they'll only do math, some days they'll switch a subject every hour, and some days we do fun things like rock climbing—things we'd never have done if we hadn't homeschooled."

~ Diane N. Allen

Homeschooling needs a desk and classroom.

"I thought that kids work best at a desk when they sit up straight and tall and have their feet on their ground... NOTHING could be further from the truth for our boys!"

~ Laura Vitkavage

Homeschooling is only for religious fanatics or those with problem children.

"My biggest misconception about homeschooling was that only people with problem children and religious fanatics homeschooled their children. When my husband suggested we solve our problem by homeschooling, I was shocked. I remember vividly my harsh words: "Only losers homeschool their children!" God definitely had a lesson for me to learn.

AFTER SPENDING TWO DAYS AT A HOMESCHOOL CONVENTION, I WAS INVIGORATED. I realized that no one who was homeschooling was a "loser." They were all winners—big winners. I began homeschooling my child and realized that I loved teaching her. I loved being with her. I loved every aspect of the entire process."

~ Pam Proffitt

"A misconception I had was that most people who homeschooled were religious zealots who were weird and wanted to stand apart from "the system"—a perspective I still often see taken on the news or in public opinion. After getting to know my neighbor who homeschooled and meeting people with many, many different reasons for homeschooling, my attitude has completely changed."

~ Diane N. Allen

Homeschooling is only for families who have abnormal children.

"The question I am always asked when explaining that I homeschool is, "What is wrong with your son?" People think there is something "wrong" with your children to make you homeschool."

~ Tabitha Jernigan

Homeschooling has a right & wrong way.

"There's a 'right' way to homeschool. When I began homeschooling, I did not know anyone else who did it—this was before support groups and how-to books and curriculum catalogs. I was so afraid I wouldn't homeschool the 'right' way until I read *The Survivor's Guide to Homeschooling* by Shackelford and White. They gave so many wonderful examples of different ways to homeschool with different schedules and using different approaches that I was freed to work with my children in a way that worked for OUR family. They showed me that there's not one "right" way to homeschool."

~ Vicki Bentley

Homeschooling cannot be altered from the way society views it.

"A misconception for me was thinking I had to homeschool the way it was presented. It's been invaluable to have information from my state organization and from other homeschooling families, but even better for me to remember why we are homeschooling and to always run any suggestions through our home's "goals' filter." It took me a while to realize that someone else's suggestions were fully able to undergo individualization for our home."

~ Kara Floyd

Homeschooling means teaching only one method.

"I thought children had to be taught one certain way. Only through reading and going to seminars did I finally learn

that each of my children learn in different ways in different subject areas and how to help them learn by making more appropriate curriculum choices."

~ Diane N. Allen

Homeschooling moms must be naturally organized.

"One of the biggest misconceptions I had about homeschooling was that I would have to be a naturally organized and disciplined person in order to be successful. I realized that if God called me to homeschool, He would give me the grace to handle our daily tasks."

~ Hollie Gilman

Homeschooling parents teach every subject themselves.

"I had a first-grade teacher curtly say to me, "You teach them everything? I don't know how moms do that." With a graduate degree in art education and years of teaching under my belt, that comment still leaves me feeling slightly inept, as though my elementary-age children should be taught by subject teachers. How do I overcome? I think, hmmm... that's why there are teachers' editions."

~ Debra McCommons-Martin

"I thought I had to know everything I was supposed to teach my daughter—like science, math, and English. Now I realize my main role is to guide her through it. Most importantly, I need to know and learn the Word of God with her, and [we need to] grow spiritually together."

~ Lito and Joyce Sandan

Homeschooling play all day and are available all day.

"A misconception I hear is that we play all day (or we are not schooling them at all). Overcoming this is easy when I look at how brilliant my children are. I know what we are doing and am confident in the process."

~ Homeschooling Parent

Homeschoolers have lots of free-time.

"We get this one all the time: "Since you're homeschooling your teens have time to baby-sit during the day when the other teens are in school." They don't understand my teens are doing school work during the day, and babysitting takes a big chunk of time out of our day."

~ Paula Williams

Homeschooling are subject to surprise inspections from social workers.

"and no one other than a pastor's family who had done it in another state. I thought social workers or officials could do surprise inspections at your house to see if you were having school. "

~ Debby Baker



Homeschooling automatically guarantees well-behaved children.

"I thought all homeschoolers were organized, calm, and peaceful, and had perfectly behaved kids. I broke my own misconception by becoming a homeschooler. On given days I am one of each of these things, but never at the same time."

~ Kelly Schales

Homeschoolers have perfect manners.

"I thought my children would have beautiful manners since they would not be around poorly mannered children. Recently my eldest dispelled this myth. We were sitting in church (which is how all embarrassing stories start!), and he sneezed one of those VERY productive sneezes. He did not have a handkerchief, so he took off his shoe and sock, blew his nose on his sock and put it back on. I am not sure if I should brag about his resourcefulness or keep this story to myself lest people think he is poorly socialized! I am DEFINITELY buying him handkerchiefs this weekend! My eldest is seven, and this is our first official year as homeschoolers, so maybe there is still hope for him?"

~ Sara Dunn

Homeschoolers get a tax write-off.

"One that I've heard is, 'Oh, do you get a tax write-off for that?' or, 'Does the government send you money?' Yeah, right!"

~ Elisabeth T

Homeschooling would negatively affect family time.

"A misconception was that we'd grow tired of spending so much time together. OR, we would have less time for family time because we'd always be busy teaching or preparing to teach."

~ Laura Vitkavage

Homeschooling high school is daunting and hard work.

"One misconception I had while homeschooling at the elementary-school level was that homeschooling high school would be daunting and not practical. Since I started homeschooling my ninth-grader last year, I learned that not only is it doable, it is an outstanding experience for everyone involved."

~ John Rossi

Homeschooling teens is difficult.

"When I tell people I homeschool my 14- and 15-year-old sons, their response is, 'Wow, that must be so hard and so much work for you.' Not at all! I am enjoying getting to know my boys, how each is different and has his own learning style. I'm enjoying every minute!"

~ Ann Eaton

Homeschooled children won't be properly socialized.

"One misconception I had before starting homeschooling was that our children wouldn't have diversified social



interaction. This has proved so wrong over the last 12 years as homeschooling has evolved and grown. There are far more opportunities for my four girls to interact than they possibly have time to do. From violin orchestras to chess competitions to ballet to swim teams, interactions are the least of my concerns."

~ John Rossi

"Probably the biggest misconception I hear is lack of socialization. I respond that competing for teachers' attention with twenty-some other kids in class, with a brief "walk and talk" in lieu of recess, isn't what I consider socialization. We do ice hockey, baseball, swimming, cultural events, Scouts, guitar, piano, and library programs. Visits to the botanical gardens, the aquarium, and the zoo don't hurt either, especially when we can go mid-day, and employees give us loads of personal attention."

~ Debra McCommons-Martin

Homeschooled children won't turn out right.

"I believed (without knowing ONE homeschooled child—shame on me) that homeschooled kids would turn out geeky, withdrawn, and afraid to leave the nest after high school to pursue college or career. I'm so ashamed I believed this without ever coming in contact with a homeschooler. God is so good to not leave me as I was, but to continually change me."

~ Anonymous

■ — compiled by Cris and Katherine Loop



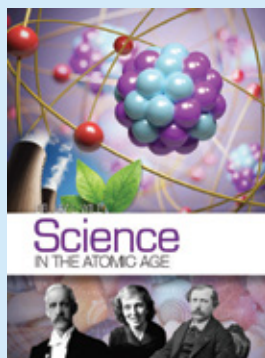
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Teaching Your Young One in Indiana

Congratulations! You are the parent of a child old enough for school. Go ahead and have a good cry—your baby is just growing up all too quickly. It's worse if this isn't your oldest kiddo, but let's not get into how old they are, let's just focus on your preschooler or kindergartner.

When most folks think of teaching a preschooler, they envision an active 3-4 year old. Images of miniature primary colored desks and chairs float in their heads, a little timer for measuring class time, and the first "off to school" photo, complete with an oversized backpack that reaches their smiling child's knees. However, did you know that that isn't the path that every toddler takes? Especially if they're home educated, there are many caveats to this vision of your young baby's maiden educational voyage.

Not everyone knows, but Indiana's compulsory age is 7 years of age. That means you don't have to focus on what passes as traditional schoolwork complete with workbooks for a few more years. Let's say it together--whew! Your baby can stay your baby for a while longer!

Does that mean they shouldn't be allowed to even look at a schoolbook for another four years? It seems like this is going to put them at a great disadvantage from their workbook wielding peers. However, research has shown that students who begin formal education later have no trouble catching up or exceeding their classmates who started earlier. Plus, they frequently have a love of learning that the "fast track" students seem to lack as time goes on.

For you parents of little boys, this is especially excellent news. Frequently mothers are pulling their hair out trying to

figure out ways to help their naturally active sons to just sit still and learn! Boys mature at a slower rate than girls, and many just simply aren't ready for sitting still and learning new information. They try and focus all of their attention on being still! Allow them to stand and match letters at a table, or jump on a small trampoline and count as they jump. Let them be active! That's the beauty of homeschooling; you can make it work for you.

Use this precious time with your child for a few things, one of which is instilling a love for learning.

Counting out loud the number of snaps on their onesie or pjs isn't "math," nor is counting the scoops of flour going into your cookie recipe. During bath time, my husband would countdown to when he poured the water on our daughter's head--and now she counts backward 3-2-1 all on her own at two years old. She surprised me even one day by skip counting when I was saying out loud the number of beads I was counting out for a bracelet I was making. I didn't "teach" her that, but she was soaking up the information like a sponge.

There doesn't need to be a formal time for learning to read.

Your toddler doesn't need to know that reading them books throughout the day is actually "school." Providing them with letters to match, whether you start with identical letters, or progress to upper & lower case matches, allows them to start to recognize the letter shapes. You can have a pan of shaving cream for them to trace letters into as well. This helps with fine motor skills as well letter recognition. Finding "outside the box" ways of learning is especially wonderful news for parents who are concerned that their four year old still can't hold a crayon correctly. Give them time,

and help them hone their fine motor skills in other ways.

What's most important to me for my children to learn during this time in their life is character.

Of course, that is something that they will always be working on for the rest of their lives, but these years will lay the foundation for how they learn and mature down the road. We work on first-time obedience, having a happy heart, and thinking of others, putting their needs first. My eldest daughter continues to amaze me when she shows such compassion for those around her, even when she isn't quite three yet. Taking the time to work on good character traits at these young ages will not make homeschooling (or even parenting) a walk in the park, but it will make it much easier than if they are not cultivated purposefully, and allowed to flounder.

So cherish these fleeting years with your preschooler, and don't focus on getting him ready for college, at least not in the traditional academic sense. After all, we homeschoolers are frequently teaching our children at home because we don't like the current school situation they would typically be in. We don't need to replicate what the brick and mortar mass education establishments are doing in our own homes; we have the freedom to do things our way, in the manner that will best suit our little ones. This is especially true in the years when they are not even required to be in school yet. That is truly the best thing about homeschooling. ■

— Amanda Runge

This article was published in *The Informer*, Summer 2017, and revised for this special edition of *Homeschool Indiana*, 2020.

Did You Know?

Homeschool is Not School-At-Home

Preschool-Kindergarten

15 minutes to 1 hour

1st-3rd Grades

1 to 3 hours

4th-6th Grades

2 to 4 hours

7th-12th Grades

5 to 6 hours



The minutes and hours of instruction listed above are not set in stone. They're simply a suggestion of how much time could be spent educating each day. Homeschooling allows one-on-one instructional time, and for children to move at their own pace. Welcome to the freedom of home education!



For more information on home education in Indiana, check out:
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Lessons Learned from Thirty Years of Teaching

It's hard to say exactly when I began thinking myself a teacher, but I do remember when I set out on my own as an independent violin instructor, preschool owner, tutor, and homeschooling parent. (Sometimes self-employed guys have to wear many hats to make ends meet.) It was about three decades ago. Certainly, it has been an adventure, not without its challenges and frustrations, but with a great many lessons learned along the way. Although much of my time now is spent trying to organize and communicate to other teachers and parents the technical things I've come to understand about teaching—and teaching writing in particular—the most valuable lessons are probably the philosophical ones, or in the words of Mrs. Ingham, one of my great mentors, “the intangibles.” So here I outline them for you: seven lessons learned from my thirty years of teaching, things which perhaps would have been good for me

to have learned sooner.

1. It's hard not to do to your children what was done to you.

Most of us went to school. I did, eleven years in relatively good public schools with a few memorable teachers scattered here and there. Consequently, my primary understanding of teaching and education came from my own experience as a student growing up. Later, that was enhanced by three years of very unusual teacher training at the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto, Japan. But for the most part, as I launched into teaching, my concept of school was that it had to be done

with classes and grades, textbooks and exams, letter grades and transcripts, all proven effective by standardized tests.

Providentially, and early in my career, I was given a book by John Taylor Gatto, New York State Teacher of the Year and eighth grade English instructor in Brooklyn for sixteen years. The title grabbed me: *Dumbing Us Down: The hidden curriculum of compulsory education*. It was a small book, and I devoured it. As I read it, I thought, “Ha! This explains why I am so stupid!” You see, around that time I began to realize that I was profoundly uneducated and wondered why. I always received good grades. I was a reader. I had pursued my vocation as a music teacher seriously.

However, as I absorbed Mr. Gatto's book, I realized my own childhood was less about learning and more about playing the mandatory game called school. As I read it again, I gained a fuzzy idea that there could be a different type of education, and that it might be better than what I grew up with. But as Mr. Gatto didn't explain much about what that might look like, I was somewhat on my own in finding something different.

Certainly, my Suzuki training was different. Shinichi Suzuki, the founder of the Talent Education Institute, believed that any child could learn anything given the right environment and method. Using music as a case study, he set out to prove that to the world, and as a result of his work, hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—of children learned to play extremely complex repertoire on the violin or other instruments and make it look easy. His purpose was not, however, to create little armies of young violinists; his goal was to prove to the world that every child could learn anything. And the children did. They did so without age segregated classes, without report cards and grades, without threats and compulsion. They did so with joy and mastery. So when I left Japan, my hope

was to continue his mission by teaching music and if possible applying the principles of Talent Education to other areas of teaching and learning as well.

Reading an interview between Shinichi Suzuki and Glenn Doman, I knew my next step: The Institutes for Human Potential in Philadelphia, where I lived and learned as a junior staff member for three years. Working in the clinic with brain-injured children and their families half the day and apprenticing as a teacher in their school for accelerated children the other half, I became acutely aware that all children learn differently, and the best ways to teach were very, very different than the way I had been taught. I was young and idealistic and fully believed that we were changing the world with the truth about children, brains, talent, and education. The school and its methods were entirely unconventional, and I often thought, "I wish I could have gone to a school like this—I would have loved it! I would have learned so much!"

However, it wasn't until I left Philadelphia and began home educating my own children that I realized how deeply ingrained my schooling mentality was. My wife and I dutifully ordered a pile of textbooks with a number on the cover and began to do school at home, replicating the very system I knew we didn't want to be a part of. My wife, with a degree in elementary education, was concerned that if we didn't use grade-level textbooks and standardized tests, our children might fall "behind," which would be bad. We had come face to face with the bugaboo of school, even while knowing we didn't want to do our kids what was done to us. Thus, we began on the long path of discovering options—looking for what we could do differently, and how.

We often felt both excited but nervous; what if we failed our children? What if we didn't cover all the bases? What if they weren't ready for college? These were not easy fears to overcome. But as we met more like-minded people, read helpful books, and worked on keeping our priorities straight, it became easier. Sometimes it seemed as if I were part of an imaginary group that could be called Schoolaholics Anonymous. "Hi, my name is Andrew, and I went to school, and I don't want to think that way any more ... and I don't want to do to my kids what was done to me."

2. Process is more important than product.

We live in what might be described by some as a rabidly capitalistic environment, where the value of almost everything is measured, compared, and judged—often by its profitability. "The proof is in the pudding," and we are quick to evaluate the pudding as excellent, acceptable, or unacceptable. Unfortunately, when this thinking infects education, we can easily fall into judging experience by the product it produces and then engineering experiences to produce a hopefully superior product. While

this approach may work in an industrial world where parts and materials are static and consistent, humans—and children in particular—are not so controllable and predictable. What I have come to see quite clearly is that education is a process, and the products are the artifacts of learning, neither an end result nor even an immediate goal.

There is an excellent scene from a particular movie that I wish all teachers and parents could see. Toward the beginning of *A River Runs Through It*, a film based on the autobiography of American author Norman Maclean, a young Norman and his younger brother, Paul, are being taught at home in rural Montana by their father, a very taciturn Scottish minister. The boy sits at his table, writing some type of story or essay. He then brings his paper to his father, who crosses out a few things, makes a few marks, and returns it to him with three words, "Half as long."

Returning to his desk, the boy rewrites the piece and brings it once more to his father, who reads it, marks on it, and hands it back with the command, "Again, half as long."

The somewhat exasperated child rewrites his composition a third time and again presents it to his father. This time, however, the response is different. Father reads it, hands it back, and says, "Good. Now throw it away."

The boy crumples it up, throws it in the trash bin, grabs his fishing pole, and runs out the front door while his mother shouts, "Norman! Norman! Wait for your brother!"

I have related this scene many times to parents and teachers, and I can always feel the collective cringe at the line "throw it away."

But he worked so hard! Shouldn't we keep it? At least put it in a portfolio to prove that we did something? But, you see, the father's lesson was not just about the economy of language; it was that the process is the product, and the effort of the day is sufficient thereto. He's not finished learning, but he made progress, and the statement "Good. Now throw it away" is an acknowledgement of both. But today we are definitely attached to the product we can pin to the wall or hang on the refrigerator to justify our efforts. Objectively, the writing of a ten-year-old is worthless, and you'll throw it away eventually, so why not now? It's something to think about.

Another point under "Process over Product" is to understand that if we wait until we are very good at teaching something, we may be waiting so long that we never try. One of my favorite quotes is from G. K. Chesterton, who stated, "If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly." This was echoed by Zig Ziglar decades later: "Anything worth doing, is worth doing poorly ... until you can do it well." Somewhat of a perfectionist by nature, I don't like doing anything I can't do well, so this advice hits me square. What Chesterton probably meant, at least as I read it, was imperfectly (rather than badly). I have taught music poorly; I have taught math badly; I have taught Latin ignorantly. But I have taught those things, probably ... where no one else would have been able to teach. I learned as I taught; so did my students.



I have taught things I didn't completely understand—but then again, there are many things I don't completely understand and probably never will. My good friend Andrew Kern of the Circe Institute once said, "Understanding is highly overrated." This freed me. While I will probably never fully understand Homer or Hamlet, that doesn't mean that reading or even teaching them is something to be avoided or feared. I now realize that it is through teaching and learning together that the best learning happens for both teacher and student, and if we were to wait until we felt perfectly qualified to teach something, there would be very few people teaching anything at all. Sometimes it is enough to just be a few steps ahead.

The final point under "Process over Product" is that how students learn is ultimately more important than what they learn. We have all likely had the experience of taking a required class, reading the textbook, taking notes during class, passing the tests—maybe even getting A's—and promptly forgetting ninety percent of the content we supposedly learned. Conversely, we have all probably learned a great deal about something we were inspired to learn—not because it was required, but because we wanted to know—and developed perseverance as well as research, organization, and presentation skills that we carried into adulthood as great blessings.

One example that comes to mind pertains to teens who do competitive policy debate. The obscure things they study in great depth (e.g., medical malpractice law or the federal criminal justice system) are not all that important as subjects, but the drive they have to go deep, motivated often by a competitive nature, allows them to learn how to learn something well. And in delving deeply into one narrow area, they learn the "subjects"—the vocabulary and grammar of it, the history of it, the science of it, the economics of it.

So while I agree that there are certain things all students should have some knowledge of (Latin, government, economics, literature, history), I am convinced that the way in which students study and learn is actually more lasting and therefore more important than the details of what they learn.

3. All children are different.

The idea that all children are different is not a hard sell. In fact, everyone knows this. So why then do we often structure schools and curricula in such a way that assumes all children are the same? Yes, some factors necessitate similarities: Children are all human. Children should all learn some of the same things. Children all go through stages of growing up. All true. However, look at the way schools are essentially forced by their structure to teach the same things to children of the same age according to the same schedule and then evaluate their progress by comparing them with each other. Now that just doesn't make sense. Two things brought this home to me clearly.

First was my work with brain-injured children at the Institutes in Philadelphia. Glenn Doman, one of the founders, often used to make this observation: "All children are brain injured; it's just a question of location and degree." It sounds a bit harsh, of course; no one wants to think about his child being handicapped, but Doman went on to explain: "On one end of a spectrum is neurologically flawless, and on the other end is comatose. Everyone is somewhere in between." Now that makes sense. So if all of us have less-than-perfect brains, and what differs is

location and degree of damage, then we can understand that we may all learn differently, depending on whether our weaknesses are visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic, language, manual, locomotive, etc. Capitalizing on this, many authors and lecturers have tried to explain learning styles—for better or worse. And yet for the most part, we still keep children in age-segregated environments, where they all do the same thing according to the same schedule, though perhaps in a more multi-sensory way. For an institution to provide truly individualized education, it would have to change its very structure and method—something not only hard to do, but seemingly risky. I've seen a few schools that have done this successfully, but it is rare.

Another way in which I became acutely aware that children are different was by teaching violin. Truly, that was the best of places for me to start my career because music teachers do things very differently than most schoolteachers. For one, it doesn't matter how old the child is when he starts. A child can begin lessons at four or ten or fourteen or forty. It's never too late to begin playing an instrument, and although there may be certain advantages to starting at a younger age, any time is okay. Suzuki himself did not begin playing violin until around age twenty. There's no decree that because a child is a certain age he or she must now start lessons or else be behind. That's important, because while some children may be ready and may do well starting music lessons at four, others clearly are not, and forcing it at too young of an age could cause them to hate it. Of course, this is true with things like reading and writing and math, but we don't think about it the same way, and we have laws that declare that all children must start school (and therefore conform to state "standards") at five or six years old.

A second way in which music teachers nurture students of differing aptitudes is by having no expectation as to how quickly they will progress. It may take a student six months to learn all the pieces in Book One; it may take two years. But it doesn't matter. What matters is that each individual student is making progress, learning pieces, developing technique, coming to love music. That's all that matters. There's no need to compare students with each other, and if we did, it could have some very negative effects. Correspondingly, music teachers don't give grades. What's the point? Should I, the teacher, sit at the recital and score my students as if it was a final exam? ("Oops, missed that C#—A-. Oh no, bowings confused—down to B+. Ugh! Major memory lapse—C.") What would be the point? Instead, what do music teachers do? They note areas that need modeling and practice, and they teach at the point of need. Wouldn't schools be healthier places if they weren't compelled to group students by age, compare them with each other, and sort them by test scores and grades? I would say yes, but how to accomplish that is a big question. Gradually I have learned to eliminate expectations based on age, to avoid comparing students with other students, to be unconcerned whether my children are ahead or behind other people's children, and to keep foremost the question, "Are they making progress?" which is really all that matters.

4. "Progressive" education doesn't mean progress.

In 1990, Myra J. Linden and Arthur Whimbey wrote a book entitled *Why Johnny Can't Write: How to Improve Writing Skills*, in which they presented well-documented research to support their claim that writing skills of high school graduates had been in decline for twenty years. That was in 1990. I don't

know a single person who is going to argue that the writing skills of high school students have improved since 1990, so that indicates that writing skills have been in steady decline for over twenty years now. Why? While some would blame television then (and now the technology that distracts many students from reading and writing almost anything but drive), others might blame the methodology used to teach writing, or the general dumbing-down of schools and curriculum. Whatever the cause, we do know that governments and schools have been trying to turn things around. Each new iteration of “standards” addresses basic skills: reading, writing, and arithmetic; each results in a wave of curricula promising to solve the problem. But it hasn’t. Almost five decades of decline, all during the “progressive” era. Similar observations of math skills and general knowledge could be made, yet the curriculum and education experts continue to convince us that a new approach will certainly be better. But new is not always better; sometimes we find what works better in what used to work better.

After examining current weaknesses in writing instruction, Linden and Whimbey offer two strategies for effective teaching, both old, and both very similar to what we do at IEW: 1) text reconstruction and 2) sentence combining. They even quote (as I have) Franklin’s autobiography, where he talks about “taking short hints of the sentiment in each sentence” and then trying “to complete the papers again, by expressing each hinted sentiment at length.” They mention Somerset Maugham copying by hand portions of the King James Bible every day, “jotting down for future use turns of phrases that struck me,” and Malcolm X in prison writing out words and definitions from the dictionary to improve his vocabulary and grammar. All in all, their suggested techniques are not modern; they are old, even traceable to ancient and medieval times when the study of rhetoric was built on a solid foundation of memorization and imitation. But modern “progressive” education has rejected this as ineffective, even stifling to a child’s creativity and motivation.

But now, “progressive” education seems to be moving into a truly terrifying realm—the paperless classroom and the end of knowing things. Two years ago in 2016, I listened to Dr. Sugata Mitra, then Professor of Educational Technology at Newcastle University, give a talk at the Global Home Education Conference in Rio de Janeiro, wherein he commented that his colleagues at the university didn’t want students to use their smart phones during exams. “I asked, ‘Why not?’” he said. Their response: “Because they would answer every question.” Dr. Mitra’s counter: “But don’t you want them to answer every question?” He went on to prophesy that eventually the phone will shrink until it disappears into our bodies, and we will have continuous access to all the knowledge of mankind, and that our great-grandchildren will ask us not only, “What’s driving?” in reference to the inevitable ubiquity of self-driving vehicles, but that they will also ask, “What’s learning?” in response to the idea that once upon a time their parents and grandparents had to memorize information and carry it around in their heads.

While you or I may laugh at such a thing, Dr. Mitra was serious. He appears to be a true post-humanist, one who views technology merging with humanity as the inevitable next step in our “evolution.” Others in education now argue against teaching children “useless” information, like how to find the square root of a number or the dates of wars or discoveries—unnecessary because we can simply google the information or ask Siri®1 or Alexa®2. The consequences of not knowing things, however, can be seen by a kind of *reductio ad absurdum*. It may be one

thing to not know the dates of the Civil War and ask your phone, which will tell you, “It happened from April 11, 1861, to May 10, 1865.” However, you must know that there was a Civil War in order to ask the question! What happens when students know so few facts about history or government that they can’t even ask the questions?

Instead, consider Daisy Christodoulou’s argument in her critically important book *Seven Myths about Education*. Myth one is this: “Facts prevent understanding.” This misconception derives from the work of progressive Rousseau (and subsequently Dewey), who advised this: “Give your scholar no verbal lessons; he should be taught by experience alone.” However, Christodoulou presents case after case to prove that in writing, math, and all subjects, “knowledge and skills are intertwined. Skill progression depends on knowledge accumulation.” Pointing out that the more we know about a particular topic, the easier it is to gain understanding of that topic, she definitively states: “Learning such facts does not preclude meaning, it allows meaning.”

Technology atrophies the skill it replaces. Show kids how to use spell checkers, and they won’t care about spelling. Teach them how to use calculators, and they won’t believe that memorizing math facts has value. Let them ask their phones the answer to any question they are asked, and they won’t believe that learning and remembering things is worthwhile. Sadly, current progressive education is so deeply infected by this wrong thinking; I fear that by the time we realize the extent of the damage done, it will be too late to rescue an entire generation from a deep mire of ignorance and dependency.

5. “College and career readiness” ... isn’t.

College and career readiness. This much bandied-about phrase was popularized when the Common Core State Standards Initiative was discussed and adopted by many states from 2009 to 2014. Subsequently, this verbiage made it into the Test Specifications for the Redesigned SAT—not surprising, since the chief architect of the Common Core, David Coleman, went on to become the next president of the College Board. However, I think we see a significant difference between what the SAT can test and what real preparation for life is. I have polled thousands of people with this question: “If you were a college or university teacher who had to teach high school graduates, or if you were an employer or manager who had to hire high school graduates, what skills or abilities would you want them to have?” And guess what? No one has ever answered, “I want people who show ‘proficiency in reading, writing, and analysis by comprehending a high-quality source text and producing a cogent and clear written analysis of that text supported by critical reasoning and evidence drawn from the source.’”

Instead, what ordinary people most often say are things like: “Integrity. Honesty.” “Humble, teachable.” “Cheerful, takes initiative.” “Respectful, knows how to listen.” Even, “Shows up on time.” Then people go on to things like “Communicates well” and “Knows how to think.” So there seems to be a disconnect between what the world wants and what schools are trying to do to prepare students. Of course, most of those intangibles are points of character developed primarily at home and outside of school. And they can’t be assessed on a multiple-choice test. Many parents and teachers consider academics the most important thing about preparation for adulthood; however, in my experience academics is likely the least important thing

about growing up. Study after study confirms the fact that academic performance in school has little bearing on success and happiness in later life, yet we tend to be anxious and even stressed about academic success in childhood.

Of course, study can and usually does build character. Cumulative subjects such as mathematics and a foreign language require consistent effort over long periods of time, which not only develops perseverance but actually grows the brain, as does memorization. Additionally it is good to know some history, geography, science, and literature, although today's texts and tests may distort or disorder many facts. So please don't misunderstand me and assume that I don't see the value in academic effort. There is much.

However, there are things more important in preparing for the good life than merely grades on a transcript and test scores. If we continue to contemplate what character qualities, values, and life skills we want our students to take into adulthood, we can make the best decisions about the use of our time and resources and truly prepare them for college and career in a way the College Board will never be able to measure.

6. It's really about you, not them.

There's an old saying: "When mama's happy, everyone's happy." Most would agree there's some truth to it. I propose a corollary: "When the teacher is learning, everyone's learning" (or maybe almost everyone). We all recognize and probably respect the somewhat clichéd term lifelong learner. While some fields require frequent or continuous professional development, others may not seem as demanding. Either way, it's easy for teachers or parents to become busy, distracted, or complacent about their own study.

In the fourth chapter of *A Thomas Jefferson Education*, Oliver DeMille outlines seven keys of great teaching based on the methods of George Wythe, mentor of Thomas Jefferson. While some of these are easy to grasp (Classics, Not Textbooks), and others are a bit enigmatic (Structure Time, Not Content), the last key, number seven, hit me right in the gut: You, Not Them.



As a violin teacher, I knew how important it was for me to maintain my own practice regimen—no matter how inconvenient. As a writing teacher, I now force myself to write, to keep studying, to read, and to always be learning a little more about the history and methods of what I'm trying to teach. This keeps me fresh, keeps my students engaged, and prepares my mind and heart to overflow to the minds and hearts of my students.

The sabbatical tradition of university professors sounds like a good one, though impractical for most everyone else. We have work to do, bills to pay, children to feed, projects to accomplish, checklists to check. We are busy. But maybe, just maybe, we could work better and accomplish more if we scheduled study time for ourselves. Perhaps now and then, especially at home, we should take a mini-sabbatical from teaching. Start reading a great book and leave the children on their own. They will be confused. Perhaps the dialog might go something like this:

"Mom, aren't we supposed to do school?"

"You can if you want to. I'm busy."

"What are you doing?"

"I'm busy. Leave me alone."

"But what are you doing?"

"I'm studying. Go do something."

"Uh ... aren't we supposed to be doing school stuff?"

"Like I said, you can if you want to. But I'm busy."

"What are you reading?"

"You wouldn't be interested."

"What are we supposed to do?"

"I don't really care."

"But what are you reading?"

"Look, if you want to stay here and be quiet, I'll read it out loud. But otherwise, please leave me alone."

"Okay ..."

If you are excited about learning, excited about your subject, and excited about new challenges, there's a much better chance your students will be excited as well. If they see you studying and enjoying it, they may be inspired to study more themselves. If you are a good student yourself, you are likely to have better students. It's a simple but hard thing, and I've found it to be true again and again.

Continuing your own study also engenders empathy. It's easy to forget what it's like to not know something you know well or not be able to do something you do easily. I once worked with a school that had a very unusual—and I think wise—policy for the faculty. All the teachers and administrators were required to take one semester course each year in a subject new to them. The school paid for the courses, and the teachers were repeatedly reminded of what it's like to be a beginner. Similarly

I have heard many hundreds of times attendees at my writing seminars making exclamations of empathy for their students. "Wow, this isn't as easy as I thought." "It takes time to do this right." "I think my expectations have been a bit unreasonable." Even, "Now I understand why my son cries when he has to do writing." These are all great realizations to have and then have again a month and a year later.

7. Love is the key.

All the great teachers I've met love not only their subjects but also their students. It's universal. Looking back, I remember very few teachers from my schools and classes, but the ones I can remember are still in my mind, not because of what they taught me but because they loved. Mrs. Berry, my fifth-grade teacher, was no taller than the tallest child in her class. She was tiny, but organized and strict, a lot of fun on the dodgeball court at recess, and she loved me—I knew it. She probably loved all her students, but I knew she loved me. Mr. Grantham, my middle school orchestra teacher, holds a place in my very fuzzy memory neither because he would throw pencils at students who weren't paying attention, nor because he made funny faces with funny voices, but because he was a real encourager. He believed in me, personally, and he brought out my best efforts. He loved me. Among the many high school teachers I had, I can remember only two by name: Ms. Harper the Latin teacher, who was cute, and Mr. Spurgeon, who taught English. He loved his poems, he loved his books, and he loved teaching us what he loved. I don't remember his poems, and I don't remember his stories, but I remember his zeal.

As an adult, my four great mentors were Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, Dr. Glenn Doman, Mrs. Anna Ingham, and Dr. Bertin Webster, whom I wrote more about in the article "In Retrospect: Heroes of Providence." While the time I spent with them and the training they provided was seminal for my mission, the thing that made it so powerful, even life changing, was that they loved me. Not just a general love, but a personal, heartfelt love—they appreciated me, they believed in me, they trusted me. While I know these great mentors loved others as much as me, I always felt individually loved and encouraged, and that made all the difference.

I discovered early on in my teaching career that if my students felt loved and appreciated, if they knew that I liked them and was happy to be with them, everything went better. Students of various ages, mostly six to thirteen, would come to my violin studio during the after-school hours, often tired or distracted. I knew that before we even took out the violins, I needed to communicate love. But if you are a male teacher in your twenties, one thing you don't say to a twelve-year-old girl is, "Hi, sweetie. I am so glad you are here because I love you so much." No. You need to find other ways to communicate that. And so I developed some secret weapons.

One of these techniques is something you've probably already heard of: filling up the emotional gas tank, or the emotional bank account. I like the bank account idea better, since the gas tank metaphor implies that you fill it up to drain it. My teacher Dr. Suzuki used the bank account idea, but with a twist—live off the interest! You see, one of the problems of teaching violin is that as soon as someone picks up a violin, he or she is doing everything wrong. Teaching it is a continuous process of correction, and most people don't do well with constant

correction. So I followed Suzuki's model. He would always say something positive first, sometimes several nice things, before making the first correction. I remember one time in particular. A new foreign teacher trainee came to Matsumoto for a few months. When this individual first played for Suzuki in master class, we, the more seasoned teacher trainees, shuddered and held our collective breath, because this young man's playing was nothing less than dreadful—out of tune, wrong rhythms and bowings, horrible tone. He was completely unprepared. What would Suzuki do? Well, the first thing out of his mouth was, "Good. You can play." And then he proceeded to give a short lesson on how to hold the bow correctly. Later, some of us were involved in a conversation about this event.

"How could sensei say that he played good?" asked one.

A senior student answered, "Sensei didn't say that he played good. He said, 'Good—you can play.' That's different."

It was a starting point. He started with a positive statement. One time Suzuki shared his way with us. He explained that you have to "live off the interest." Deposit enough love in the emotional bank account that when you make a withdrawal by giving corrections or being strict, you still have the principal there, gaining interest so that future corrections won't drain the student to the point where he or she hates lessons and wants to quit.

So I got in the habit of saying positive things, even counting on my fingers to be sure I made ten good comments before the first correction. "Hey, thanks for being on time! I really appreciate that, and I know how hard it is for my kids to get their mom to get them places on time." "That's a cute outfit you've got on." (I don't really know if it's cute, but I do know that a twelve-year-old girl may have spent half an hour trying to figure out what to wear that morning.) "Hey, your violin is nice and clean. It's a good thing to keep your instrument clean." (Maybe he didn't practice all week, and that's why it's clean.) I'm not saying give false praise; I'm just saying find things to praise. It works.

The other secret weapon I discovered is the power of a smile. A smile communicates all the right things. I like you. I'm happy you're here. I'm grateful for you. Although some people think that smiling is a result of attitude, I discovered that smiling can influence attitudes. In my early years, I used to practice in a mirror all manner of smiles—large, small, peaceful, amazed, subtle, dramatic—and then I'd go try them out on students. I don't do that any more, but I do have a decent repertoire (or arsenal, as the case may be).

Once experience changed my life forever. I was at the Spokane airport, leaving to go teach writing workshops in Boise for six days, and my little daughter Fiona just lost it. "Daddy, do you really have to go away again? I miss you so much when you're gone." Sobs.

My father's heart was tearing apart, but a commitment is a commitment, and that was my work. But I thought, why not take her with me? Spokane to Boise won't cost that much. I made a phone call. "Okay, you want to come with me?"

"Really?"

"Sure. We'll buy a ticket right now, pick up some clothes and a toothbrush at Walmart, and you can spend the week with me

in Boise." Although my wife shot me a skeptical look, I knew I could make it work. And so it did. We flew to Boise, and on the next day I let her sit in my grade three to five writing class. She had never done that before, being a bit on the young side for dad's writing classes. I'm not sure what she did during that class since I was very busy helping other people's children. After the class she went away to play with the children of a family I had arranged it with, and I taught two more classes. That evening I picked her up, and as we were driving to the hotel, I asked, "So, Fiona, how'd you like the writing class?" And she sighed, "Oh daddy, it was just wonderful."

"Yep, I'm good," I thought. And then she said the thing that changed my life.

"Daddy, how come you're not like that at home?"

And in that moment I realized how easy it is for me to be unconditionally enthusiastic toward, excited about, helpful to, and happy with other people's children, and how easy it is to forget to be that way toward my own. (Yes, I love you and you love me, and we know that, so would you please get to work? We have stuff to get done!) From that day forward I determined to be as expressive of my love to my own children learning at

home every day as I was to all the many students in my classes and workshops. Love really is the key.

So those are a few of the things I've learned in three decades of teaching. I doubt I will have thirty years more, but I do expect to continue learning as I teach and teaching what I learn. It's been a great life. I am profoundly grateful. All my children are grown and out of the home now, which is a strange feeling. But I have young grandchildren next door and down the road, and I am very much looking forward to the day not too far off when one or two of them will be in "Mr. Pudewa's writing class." I expect they will teach me a thing or two. ■

— Andrew Pudewa

Endnotes

1 Siri voice recognition software is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries.

2 The Alexa Voice Service (AVS) is a product of Amazon.com, Inc. Usage of the name of their product does not imply sponsorship or endorsement by Amazon.

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SOCIALIZATION by Dr. Brian Ray

It is well-known among educators, and many others, that there is a hidden curriculum in the schools, having more to do with values and acculturation than with reading, writing, and arithmetic. It has to do with how people behave and with what understanding of reality and society guides their thinking. The hidden curriculum affects the psychological and spiritual development of a child. While some have tried to argue that the public school environment and curriculum are value-neutral and religion-neutral, most scholars and educators have come to recognize that this is not true. Warren Nord, of the Department of Philosophy of the University of North Carolina, stated: "Indeed, I will argue that at least in its textbooks and formal curriculum students are indoctrinated into the modern (secular) worldview and against religion."¹

All of this is part and parcel of socialization.

When someone asks of home education, "What about socialization?" he or she usually means, "How will these children learn to get along with others when they are not in large, age-segregated groups of their peers most of the day?" He might mean, "How will this home-educated child learn to accept the American—or Canadian, German, or Japanese—way of thinking and living?" Of course, the questioner has already made some unspoken assumptions: that a conventional school classroom is the best setting for learning how to get along with others; that a child in such a

classroom will learn best how to stand on his own; that an age-segregated situation with a government-certified teacher is best for learning how to function and think in society; and that the conventional classroom setting is the healthiest setting for the psychological development of a child who is trying to become a mature adult in a democratic republic.

"What about socialization?" is a perennial question asked of home educators and their children. Several researchers have explored the self-perceptions, which are related to socialization, of the homeschooled. Their findings should help put this question to rest.

Self Concept

Regarding the significant aspect of self-concept in the psychological development of children, several studies have revealed that the self-concept of homeschooled students is significantly higher than that of public school students. One researcher concluded: "A low anxiety level could be a contributing factor. More contact with significant others, parental love, support, and involvement, peer independence, and a sense of responsibility and self-worth may be other contributing factors."² Their academic self-concept, at the 72nd percentile, was above the national average and was positively related to achievement.³

They have above-average self-esteem, in multiple studies.⁴

They are “Not Isolated but Active, Contributing Members of Society, Even in Childhood

Ninety-eight percent are involved in weekly church meetings and other activities that require interfacing with various ages and settings.”⁵

Private school nine-year-olds were seen to be more influenced by or concerned with peers than a comparative home-educated group. It appears that home-educated children perceived their parents as primary authority figures more often than did the private school children.⁶

Homeschoolers’ self-concept was just as strong as that of private school students and higher than that of public school

students, all of whom in this study attended Baptist (Christian) churches. All of the three groups were above national norms.⁷

An Evaluation of the Communication Skills, Socialization, And Daily Living Skills of Demographically-Matched Publicly-Schooled and Home-Educated Students Revealed that “the Home-Educated Children in this Sample Were Significantly Better Socialized And More Mature Than Those In Public School

The immediate implication is that homeschool families are providing adequately for socialization needs.” Further, the researcher stated more strongly, “The findings of this study

MYTH: Homeschoolers are unsocialized

TRUTH: A plethora of opportunities for socialization exist for homeschooled children. Family, neighborhood peers, the library, sports, scouting adventures, co-ops, and more offer time for relationship building.

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Sports



Drama



Field Trips



Co-op



Band



Library



Playground



Scouting



4-H

indicate that children kept home are more mature and better socialized than those who are sent to school.”⁸

Problem Solver

Institutionally-schooled students have been shown to receive significantly higher problem-behavior scores than their home-educated age mates. The conventionally schooled tended to be considerably more aggressive, louder, and more competitive than were the home-educated. Larry Shyers, the author of this study, noted that his findings draw into question the assumption made by many people that traditionally educated children have better social adjustment than those who are home educated.⁹

In summary, as far as researchers have found, the home-educated are doing well in their social, psychological, and emotional development. Perhaps the fact that most of these children have siblings and are engaged in a variety of social and community activities make the research findings on socialization not surprising (Figure 7).¹⁰ There have been very few negative findings in this area. A small study of six- to 10-year-olds (56 homeschooled and 44 conventionally schooled children) in Michigan revealed that the home-educated were lower in some of the self-perception domains tested when compared to the conventionally-schooled group. The authors pointed out that their findings regarding perceived competence seemed to contradict findings by a number of other researchers.¹¹

In a study of families drawn from the directory of one nationally circulated homeschooling magazine, one-fifth of the parents said there was some form of social isolation involved. However, many of these parents explained that the problem was not isolation itself but the challenge of the effort parents needed to expend, in order to provide an acceptable type and degree of social contact. It is significant, too, that the parents did not say that this isolation resulted in children with poor social skills.¹² ■

—Dr. Brian Ray

Excerpted from *Worldwide Guide to Homeschooling: Facts and Stats on the Benefits of Home School* by Brian D. Ray, Ph.D. Dr. Ray is the president of the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI) and founding editor of the quarterly refereed academic journal *Home School Researcher* (est. 1985). He has published numerous journal articles and books, been repeatedly interviewed by major media, served as an expert witness in court cases on homeschooling, and testified to legislatures regarding educational issues. Dr. Ray is a leading international expert in research on homeschooling. In addition, he has been both a classroom teacher and a university professor through the graduate level. He earned his Ph.D. in science education from Oregon State University and his M.S. in zoology from Ohio University. Brian and Betsy have been married 27 years and have eight children, all of whom they have home educated since birth. The nonprofit NHERI educates and influences courts, legislatures, media, and

policymakers regarding the benefits of parent-led education. You are encouraged to support and contact them at:

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FOOTNOTES

1 Warren A. Nord, *Religion and American Education: Rethinking a National Dilemma* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1995): 160

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