

A Comprehensive Guide to  
**HOME EDUCATION**

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CHEC.org 

 Generations

# ***The Homeschool Guidebook***

*A Comprehensive Guide to Home Education*

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## **Christian Home Educators of Colorado**

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# Introduction

## What is Homeschooling?

Mention home education to a group of people and you will receive a wide variety of responses. It seems that everyone has a different perspective. Some visualize a room in a home with a chalkboard, a flag, and several desks. Others see children sitting on a sofa or at the kitchen table with textbooks spread around. Still others think of trips to museums or the park or children learning as they help Dad with a carpentry project.



*All your sons [and daughters] will be taught by the Lord, and great will be your children's peace.  
(Isaiah 54:13)*

*... the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ....  
(Proverbs 9:10)*

*And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and men.  
(Luke 2:52)*

So, what is the definition of homeschooling? It is the educating of children in their own home by their parents or guardians (or another adult relative). There are as many styles of homeschooling as there are families. While this Guidebook cannot answer every question, it is intended to give you enough information, or sources for information, to help you make wise decisions concerning the education of your children at home.

Any experienced homeschool parent can tell you that teaching your children at home is hard work. With everyone home all the time, relationships are fine-tuned daily, and your house will show wear and tear. Some mornings you might not “feel” like doing school work. Strong commitment is needed to weather these stresses.

However, there is more joy in home education than you ever realized was possible: helping your child read his or her first book, developing lasting relationships with your children, and discovering the beauty and wisdom of God's creation together. Veteran homeschool parents will also tell you that the greatest joys are yet to come, when you launch your children into adulthood knowing they are well educated, spiritually mature, loving individuals who will be useful servants of the Lord.

Use this Guidebook in whatever way best suits your needs. Beginners may choose to read it straight through from beginning to end. Veterans might choose to read chapters according to their current needs. Many sections will be an ongoing resource which you will refer to again and again. Most of all, we pray this Guidebook is an encouragement and blessing to you on your own homeschooling journey!

# CHAPTER 1



## A Vision for Home Education

### CONTENTS:

- A. Your Family's Homeschool Vision
- B. Why Have a Vision?
- C. What is the Vision of Christian Homeschooling?
- D. Go For It!
- E. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
- F. Establishing Your Family's Homeschool Vision
- G. Resources

*- Revised by Tammy Sechrist -*

# A. Your Family's Homeschool Vision

In picking up this Guidebook you probably have some sort of a vision for homeschooling. It might be starting with a small vision — you like the idea of setting up a “school room.” Or your vision might be



*See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. (Colossians 2:8)*

*Knowledge puffs up [fills one with false pride], but love builds up. (1 Corinthians 8:1b)*

*If I have the gift of ... all knowledge, but have not love, I am nothing. (1 Corinthians 13:2)*

larger — your children will be the next generation of missionaries, scientists, and business leaders to influence the world for Christ. Our family's initial vision to homeschool was somewhere in between. We wanted our children to have a Christian education unbound by classroom and peer dynamics.

In the 1980s, Dr. James Dobson interviewed Dr. Raymond Moore on the Focus on the Family radio show. Dr. Moore talked about the idea of homeschooling. Many families, including ours, became interested as a result of his information. At that time we had no children, but we began to prepare. Knowing nothing of the benefits of phonics, I snatched up some Dick and Jane readers from a garage sale so that we would have some real school books in case homeschooling was illegal and school books unavailable. Yes, God had given us the vision to homeschool no matter what!

It was a few years before children came and a few more years before the first one got to use a newly sharpened pencil. We thanked God that homeschooling was legal and began to live the vision. God has since enriched and deepened our vision, as He will yours.

# B. Why Have a Vision?

*Where there is no vision the people perish.* (Proverbs 29:18). It's probably safe to say that without a vision your homeschool will perish. Here are some reasons a vision will improve your homeschool journey:

1. A vision can keep you focusing on what is really important.
2. A vision can assist you with choosing curriculum and activities for each school year.
3. A vision can help you strain out things that don't fit and might distract from your goal.
4. A vision can give your family something to hold on to when challenges come and you are tempted to quit.
5. A vision can give meaning to your children's daily work. As the Israelites crossed the Jordan River into the promised land, God told Joshua to have 12 stones brought from the river bed and stacked up as a memorial. The purpose was so that future children, seeing the stones, would ask their fathers “What do these mean?” This would give the parents an opportunity to teach their children about God's faithfulness so they would “fear Him forever.” A solid vision is like the memorial stones. When our children ask, “Why this algebra?” or “Why not that activity?” we have the opportunity to review the vision and teach about God.

## C. What Is the Vision of Christian Homeschooling?

In our early days of homeschooling, our vision was mostly to protect our children from the negative aspects of schools. Then the studies came out showing how strong homeschooled students stood academically and that validated our choice. As time went on and the children grew, we realized that we enjoyed being with them, and we felt sorry for the parents who were missing out.

Protection, academics, and relationships are great reasons for, and benefits of, homeschooling. But shouldn't Christian homeschooling be more than that? Our own family came to realize our homeschooling vision was to make our children's education richer by the deliberate purpose of bringing glory to God in it.

One of our sons is partially color-blind. One Christmas we gave him a pair of special sunglasses that were designed to separate color wavelengths a little more than they are naturally separated. There was a lot of anticipation in the room as he put on the glasses and looked out the window. "It's so beautiful!" he managed to choke out as he saw intense color for the first time in 23 years. Everything he saw was enriched!

In the same way, all we do should be intensely colored by God's glory. Let's disciple our children, not so we can have an impressive family, but for the glory of God! *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God* (I Corinthians 10:31).

How do we give God glory? The Greek word for glory is *doxa*, which means reputation. The Hebrew word for glory is *kabod*, which means weight. As we disciple our children, we are to uphold God's reputation by showing His weight and meaning to our children. We put the full weight of God's importance in everything and give Him all the credit He deserves. If His splendor shines through, your days will be intensely colored with God's glory.

Though glorifying God is the ultimate aim of your family's homeschool journey, are there a few ways you can realistically apply this vision in your home? The following ideas are a few ways that our family strived to glorify God through our homeschool.

- 1. Protection for God's Glory** - One of the elements of our family's vision for homeschooling was to protect our children and to prepare them for the fight. We have all heard the 'ain't-it-awfuls' about government schools, and even though God says there is nothing new under the sun, it certainly seems that there is always a new evil or danger we become aware of. Homeschool parents will have better control over when and how their children will be ready to know about some things, as well as provide the biblical mind-set to answer those issues. How much better for our kids to be in a secure environment where they can thrive than one wherein their spirits are so often wounded. Our family was once criticized for raising our children as decidedly Christian rather than leaving it up to them to make up their own minds. The comment from one of our children in response to this criticism was, "Hey, I'm glad to have known the truth from the very start rather than having to struggle along all these years!" Thankfully all our children have embraced faith in Christ as their own and are serving Him as adults in various ways outside our home. Our goal was always to equip our children to be launched as mighty arrows that, at the right time, would be fully prepared to assault the gates of hell.

- 2. Academics for God's Glory** – We wanted our vision for academics to be serious enough to equip our children for fruitfulness in whatever God had for them. Studies by **Dr. Brian Ray** of the National Home Education Research Institute show that homeschooled students score 15 to 30 percentile points higher on average than government-schooled students. Another one of his studies shows that adults who were home educated participate in local community service more frequently than the general population and are more likely to vote and be active in politics. These studies show seriousness for academics and fruitfulness in serving God.
- 4. Relationships for God's Glory** – Our relationships should not be child-focused or parent-focused, but rather God-focused. That is the way to have relationships that glorify God. Sometimes parents feel they have to come across as perfect to their children in order to maintain authority over their children, but that attitude gets in the way of good relationships. Sometimes the children also feel that they have to put on a perfect exterior, and so they may hide their struggles from their parents, which puts distance in the relationship. The truth is that we parents are also on the journey of growing more Christ-like, and we need to show our children what it looks like to be faithful and humble on the journey by admitting our own faults and taking them to the Lord in repentance. Children are very forgiving when parents are humble. We want the focus of our homeschool to be the gospel — that God is the only perfect one and we can't save ourselves or do anything good without Him. That is the best way to glorify God in family relationships.

As Christian home educating parents, our greatest desire is to have our children not only retain our faith, but also to continue to grow in Christ throughout their adult years. But will homeschooling help or hinder this goal?

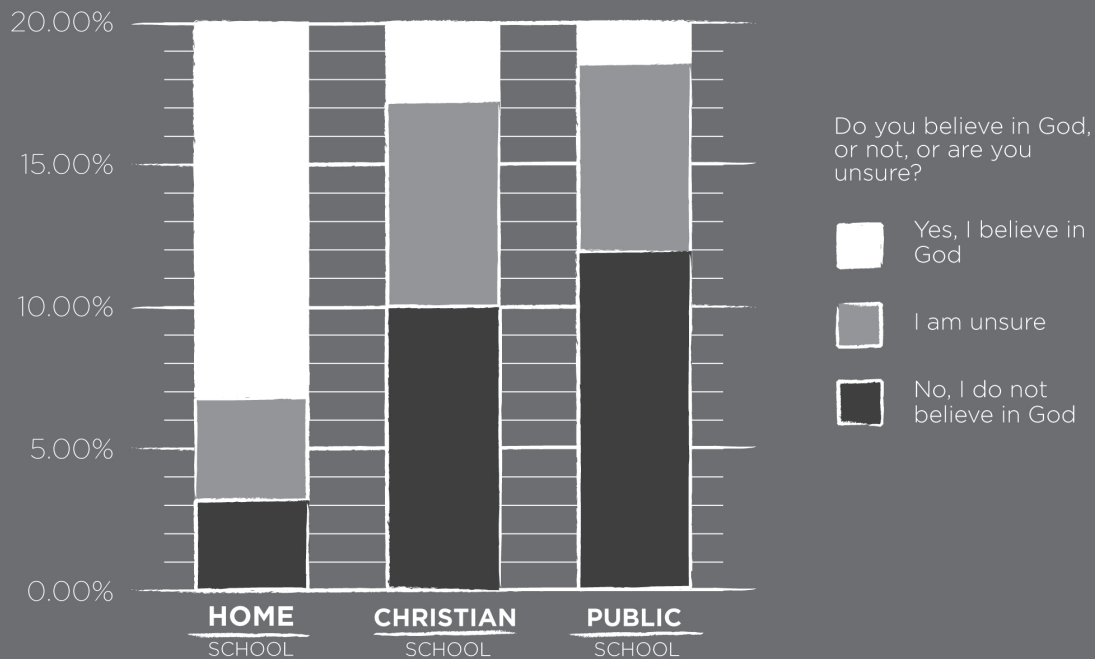
**Dr. Brian Ray**, a research scientist who studies home education and its outcomes, and **Generations**, an affiliate ministry to CHEC, teamed together to conduct a large survey of second generation homeschool graduate adults. This massive survey called the Gen2 Survey included Millennials who were educated in public, private, and homeschool systems. Their goal was to observe whether those of the Millennial generation held onto the faith of their parents or became apostate, and what factors influenced them. (“Apostasy” in simple terms refers to when Christians, or children raised in Christian homes, desert or revolt against their Christian faith.)

This first graph displays the rate of apostasy (leaving the faith) by Millennial adults, according to which type of education they experienced in their growing up years. As you can see, the chart illustrates that Christian homeschooling is a proven education system for retaining the Christian faith of students.

**We believe this strongly** – that as parents work with their children to increase their Christian faith, it will lay a sure foundation for their adult years.

## EDUCATION TYPE & DISBELIEF IN GOD

Based on Millennials who were educated in a particular school methodology for 9-13 years.



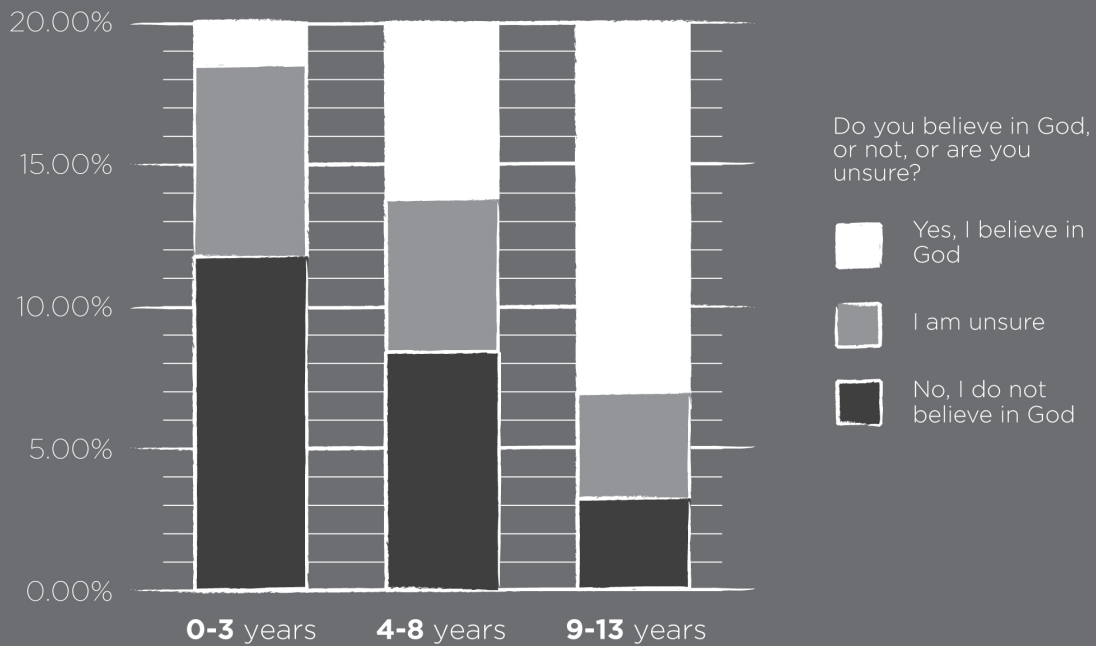
\*This data is taken from the Gen2 Survey, a survey conducted in 2014-2015 by Generations on the millennial generation to identify spiritual influences and their effects. For more information, go to [Generations.org](http://Generations.org).

This next graph, also from Dr. Brian Ray’s research, illustrates the high value of a long-term commitment to the discipleship of children through many years of continued home education. This chart dramatically demonstrates the contrast of faith retention between those Millennials who were home educated for the majority of their school years as opposed to those who were home educated for only a few years.

As you think through your homeschool vision, I want to encourage you to highly prize having good relationships with your children. After all, Christ wants our children to be in relationship with Him. They can better understand – and treasure – a relationship with Him if their relationship with Mom and Dad is highly valued.

## FAITHFULNESS AMONG HOMESCHOOLERS

Based on Millennial groups who were homeschooled for 0-3, 4-8 and 9-13 years respectively, showing how the number of years they were homeschooled correlates with their current faith.



\*This data is taken from the Gen2 Survey, a survey conducted in 2014-2015 by Generations on the millennial generation to identify spiritual influences and their effects. For more information, go to [Generations.org](http://Generations.org).

## D. Go For It!

In Psalm 78:4-7, God asks us to pass along His vision:

*We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands, not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy.*

We know that the “wonderful works” mentioned in Psalm 78 were only the beginning. With the coming of Christ, God’s wonderful works toward us increased infinitely! And then, Christ’s last words were to remind us to ... *teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age* (Matthew 28:20). Christ reminds us that we will have even greater works to tell our children of. Our children are our greatest mission field!

You can do it, with God’s help. May your home educated children love God, love their family, and love the lost. May they and their children impact the world for Christ for many generations. May God give you wisdom, strength, and joy for the journey. Here is how **Kevin Swanson**, former CHEC Executive Director, casts a vision for homeschooling in his book *Upgrade, 10 Secrets to the Best Education for Your Child*:

“A journey begins with a destination in mind. You may not have the whole road map in front of you, but you should know approximately where you are headed before you set out on the journey. Attempting to educate and train children without a purpose, without a vision, and without an understanding of the principles that govern that process is a sure way to fail. Success will come when we are headed in the right direction and we take one step at a time in that direction. It may be slow and painful at times. But if our mission is right, we can move ahead with faith and confidence, counting on the blessing of God.”

### Quotable Quotes

“**EDUCATION** comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations. To give children a good education in manners, in arts and science, is important; to give them a religious education is indispensable; and an immense responsibility rests on parents and guardians who neglect these duties.” – **Noah Webster**, *Webster’s 1828 Dictionary*

“**MANY** Christian parents have made the fatal mistake of entrusting their children’s education to those whose gifts were wholly intellectual and not spiritual, and who have misled the young pupils entrusted to their care, into an irreligious or infidel life, or, at best, a career of mere intellectualism and worldly ambition. In not a few instances, all the influences of a pious home have been counteracted by the atmosphere of a school, which, if not godless, has been without that fragrance of spiritual devoutness and consecration which is indispensable to the true training of impressible children during the plastic years when character is forming for eternity.” – **George Muller**

“I am much afraid that schools will prove to be the great gates of Hell unless they diligently labor in explaining the Holy Scriptures, engraving them in the hearts of youth. I advise no one to place his child where the Scriptures do not reign paramount. Every institution in which men are not increasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt.” – **Martin Luther**

“I am as sure as I am of the fact of Christ’s reign that a comprehensive and centralized system of national education separated from religion ... will prove the most appalling enginery for the propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, and of anti-social, nihilistic ethics, individual, social, and political, which this sin-rent world has ever seen.” – **Dr. A.A. Hodge**

## E. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Maybe all this talk about vision sounds too overwhelming because you have questions and doubts about teaching your children. Hopefully the points below will encourage you that God ... *is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us* (Ephesians 3:20).

### 1. Am I qualified?

Yes, you are. God has given the command for parents to train their children, and He will surely equip us ... *above all that we ask or think* ....

By the time your children are school-aged, you have already taught them to talk, use the bathroom, get dressed, love Jesus, etc. You can just keep going! As they get older they are learning to learn. In our family, all of our children developed interests and skills so different from my husband’s and my own that my biology degree didn’t even matter. In fact, parents who do not have degrees are just as successful at teaching their children as parents with degrees (and that includes teaching degrees).

Who better than you knows your child’s strengths and weaknesses? Who loves them as much as you? Who is as motivated as you to see them grow in Christ?

### 2. Is it legal?

Yes, homeschooling is legal in all 50 U.S. states and several foreign countries. (See **CHAPTER 2** The Law).

### 3. Can we afford it?

Yes, it is possible to homeschool within a tight budget. It’s also possible to spend as much as you want. There was one family who spent hundreds of dollars on one reading program after another for their son, but with no success. He finally learned to read through the *Book It* program at Pizza Hut, where students were given a free pizza for reading whatever their parents wanted them to read that month. Try the teaching methods that are less expensive, first.

Make use of used curriculum sales and homeschool groups to buy or borrow from. It also saves money

to use the library and internet. Parents should always use discretion with resources of any type, regardless of location, and especially with the internet. Teach your students safe guidelines to assist them in making appropriate decisions as they begin to research and study on their own. Part of the Gen2 Survey showed that having unrestricted internet access as a child made a Millennial 40% more likely to be weak in their faith as an adult. (See **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum for ideas on economical curricula.)

#### **4. My children are too unruly and disobedient. They won't listen to me. Can I get them to obey me as their teacher?**

Yes, and if that is the case, now is the time to get serious about training them, whether they are school age or not, and whether you homeschool or not.

- Seek Christian advice on parenting through your church, books, classes, and fellow Christians.
- Build relationships with your children. Rules without relationships do not change hearts.
- Be consistent. It's tiring to always follow through on your words, but the fruit will come, and you'll save time in the long run. It will be much easier to be consistent if your children are schooling at home.
- Apologize to your children for having done it wrong in the past. Explain that you want to be a better parent because you love them and want your family to glorify God. Tell them how things will be different and ask for their help.

#### **5. I'm not sure I want to be around my children all the time. Will I physically and emotionally be able to handle them 24/7/365?**

Yes, and ask God to change your heart. Realize that Jesus came to be with us – “Emmanuel” means “God with us.” That's something we can help our children understand by wanting to be with them. Look at them as a blessing and a reward (Psalm 127:3-5) and not as a burden.

#### **6. My spouse is not on board regarding home education. How can I do this without support?**

You both should seek unity in all aspects of your marriage. Study God's Word and get counsel for help on the roles and relationship of marriage. In addition:

- Ask if you can pray together about homeschooling.
- Ask your spouse if you could read books on home education and attend a homeschool conference together.
- Have your family meet and spend time with other homeschool families.
- Find out the objections and humbly address them.
- Ask for a trial period.

#### **7. I don't want my kids to be weird. What about socialization?**

This question presupposes that a conventional school is the best way for children to learn social skills. Yet, spending eight hours a day with 30 people of their own age is probably not what your children will be doing the rest of their lives! Homeschooling parents can:

- Provide interactions with all ages and generations.
- Provide social situations that are real life (ministry, commerce, creative expression).
- Help shape the fun times with friends into what is good for the children and glorifying to God.

The home is an excellent environment for children to learn social skills and good character qualities such as conversing, listening, manners, self-control, empathy, forgiveness, helpfulness, repentance, deference, initiative, conflict resolution, and standing for truth.

Don't worry. There are so many extracurricular activities available to homeschoolers that you will have a hard time choosing between all of them. In fact, the temptation will be to do too many and possibly distract from your family life. Get settled into your routine first, then slowly add the activities that fit your family and glorify God.

### **8. How will I know if what I teach is academically equal to what is taught in government schools?**

Colorado law does not require that homeschool curriculum be equal to that in institutional schools; however, parents usually want to make sure that their children are getting a good education. A scope and sequence chart is a good tool to see what textbook publishers (such as Bob Jones University Press) have in mind for certain grades. There is also *What Your (1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc.) Grader Should Know*, by **E. D. Hirsch** (a secular resource). These are just guides, not goals. Your children may have different learning speeds in different subjects. You decide what is best, and when.

## F. Establishing Your Family's Homeschool Vision

### **1. Defining Your Vision for Homeschooling**

In defining your homeschool vision, rate the statements below to gauge their importance to your family.

- 5** - most important
- 3** - somewhat important
- 1** - not important

- \_\_\_ We want an educational method that assists us in biblically raising our children in all areas.
- \_\_\_ We want a flexible schedule.
- \_\_\_ We want our children to know Jesus Christ and follow Him.
- \_\_\_ We want our children to have a biblical view of the world and to stand for truth.
- \_\_\_ We want to have an impressive family.
- \_\_\_ We want the individualized educational needs of our children met.
- \_\_\_ We want our children to have the desire and ability to proclaim the Christian faith.
- \_\_\_ We want the academic success that one-on-one tutoring can provide.
- \_\_\_ We want to make better use of our students' time, not keeping them waiting for other students.
- \_\_\_ We want flexible curriculum choices.
- \_\_\_ We want purpose and fulfillment by educating our children each day.
- \_\_\_ We want the good results we have seen in other homeschoolers.

- \_\_\_\_\_ We want to homeschool our children.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We want our children sheltered from negative peer influences and temptations.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We don't want our children to be expected to learn ungodly theories, beliefs and attitudes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We want our children to be physically safe.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We want more time for our family's ministry or business which homeschooling might provide.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We want our children to be educated in a flexible location.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We want good relationships within our family.

## 2. Establishing Your Family's Homeschool Vision

I encourage you to create a personalized, written Vision Statement for homeschooling that is specific to your family. Some parents select a certain Bible verse (e.g. Luke 10:27 '*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind*'; and, '*Love your neighbor as yourself.*') Or husband and wife each discuss their individual vision then together develop a sentence or paragraph (e.g. "Our family exists to glorify God and serve others in our family, our neighborhood, our church, and our community.")

This Vision Statement then serves as the 'compass' for all the home education decisions made throughout the years. Write down your Vision Statement here:

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In order to make your Vision Statement become reality, it is helpful to define some goals based upon it, and then establish steps to carry out those goals. Perhaps you can start by having an informal family meeting after a meal this week. Read aloud your Vision Statement, then discuss with your spouse and kids a few concrete ideas which support and carry-out your Vision Statement. These can be grand ideas or small details, ie: everyone goes on a short-term mission, or have family Bible devotions once a week. Each person in your family should have at least one suggestion so feel as though they have contributed.

Write down the ideas here: \_\_\_\_\_

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Next, prioritize three of these ideas into goals to be accomplished this year:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

After that, list the first goal you decided to work on; determine three steps to help reach that goal.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, choose a favorite family Bible verse that reinforces what your ideal homeschool this year will focus on (if your Vision Statement was a scripture, then use that verse). Read the verse aloud together, then pray. Agree to meet again next week to read the verse aloud together, and write it down on an index card for each person to keep as a bookmark. Plan a time when your family can together make a wall stencil or poster with the verse written out in large letters, and then everyone can color a border or accent design. Hang the poster in a prominent place in your home – perhaps in a central location or where your family conducts the majority of school work. Write the verse here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Finally, **once a week** review this verse and your goals listed above.

**Pray** to stay on course to pursue them.

## G. Resources

- *The Heart of HomeSchooling*. Christopher J. Klicka.
- *A Mom Just like You; The Homeschooling Mother*. Vickie and Jayme Farris.
- *Upgrade, 10 Secrets to the Best Education for Your Child*. Kevin Swanson.



*To Him who is able to keep you from falling  
and to present you before His glorious presence  
without fault and with great joy — to the only God our Savior be glory,  
majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages,  
now and forevermore! Amen.  
(Jude 1:24-25)*

*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.  
(Proverbs 22:6)*

*And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:  
but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.  
(Ephesians 6:4)*



# CHEC IS HERE FOR YOU!

Whether you are attending your first **Intro Seminar**,  
reading another great article in the **Homeschool Update** magazine,  
speaking with a **staff member** over the phone,  
enrolling in the **CHEC Independent School**,  
or taking your family to the annual **Rocky Mountain  
Homeschool Conference**;  
please know that the **leaders** and **volunteers** of **CHEC**,  
as well as the **affiliate ministries...**

**...are all** here to back you up, and help you along your journey as you  
build a strong family, disciple your precious children, and most importantly,  
as you learn day by day how to walk with **Christ!**





# Rocky Mountain Homeschool Conference



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FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP | CURRICULUM FAIR | PRACTICAL HELP  
WORLDVIEW | FELLOWSHIP | ENCOURAGEMENT

FOR MORE INFO VISIT [RockyMountainHomeschoolConference.com](https://RockyMountainHomeschoolConference.com)

Presented by **Christian Home Educators of Colorado**

# CHAPTER 2



# The Law

# A. Legally Homeschooling in Colorado



*He who keeps the law  
is a discerning son.  
(Proverbs 28:7a)*

*But happy is he  
who keeps the law.  
(Proverbs 29:18b)*

Home education is legal in all 50 United States. Your state has statutes related to home education which can be found through contacting your state department of education or the Homeschool Legal Defense Association at [HSLDA.org](http://HSLDA.org). We encourage you to know and follow your state's statutes regarding home education, and to follow them both in the spirit and the letter of the law.

# CHAPTER 3



## Ten Steps to Getting Started

### CONTENTS:

1. Catch the Vision
2. Know the Law
3. Get Connected
4. Explore Homeschooling at Each Grade Level and Other Considerations
5. Set Priorities
6. Research and Choose Curriculum
7. Create School Space in Your Home
8. Establish Structure
9. Set Up Record Keeping
10. Start!
  - A. Resources
  - B. Tips and Schedule Examples

*- Revised by Marcie Watkinson -*

# 1. Catch the Vision

Before embarking on your homeschooling journey, it is wise to chart a course. Whether you have made the commitment to educate your children at home or are still exploring the possibilities, there are 10 basic steps you can take to help you as you proceed.



*In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.  
(Proverbs 16:9)*

*If the Lord delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with His hand.  
(Psalm 37:23-24)*

*Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat — for He grants sleep to those He loves.  
(Psalms 127:1-2)*

Although you may be tempted to skip on down to the more practical steps, you will gain greater benefit by taking the time to explore homeschooling in a more philosophical sense. It is very important to know why you are making this decision. Homeschooling is a wonderful journey, but there probably will be difficult days. On those days, you will need to be confident that you made a sound, informed decision.

Begin your journey by working through **CHAPTER 1** A Vision for Home Education. Resist the urge to skim through it! Reading carefully and doing the activities will be beneficial, not only today but also in the years to come.

## 2. Know the Law

It is imperative that each homeschooling parent have a thorough understanding of the law in their state. Reading about the law may sound intimidating, but it is actually relatively simple. Reading it first-hand will empower you to understand your rights and enable you to fulfill your obligations with clarity and peace of mind.

## 3. Get Connected

It is not wise to embark on this journey alone. The support of other families is vital to your homeschooling efforts not only for support and encouragement but also for the sharing of ideas and information. Find and join an established homeschool group. (See **CHAPTER 8 - PART I** Joining a Homeschool Group for specific suggestions.)

Seek out like-minded families in your church. Team up with a close friend who is also teaching her children at home. Subscribe to home education magazines and online newsletters. Attend a homeschool convention or workshop. Utilize social media to follow blogs ([www.CHEC.org/blog](http://www.CHEC.org/blog)) or join a group page. Whichever way you choose, it is worth your effort to reach out and get connected.

## 4. Explore Homeschooling at Each Grade Level and Other Considerations

Although most homeschoolers will consider a child to be in a certain grade, it is common for a student to be working at levels other than his actual grade level. For example, a nine-year-old fourth grader might be doing sixth grade math and third grade language arts. In this way, homeschooling offers the wonderful benefit of tailoring a child's education to his academic needs and strengths, allowing him to take more time in difficult subjects or progress to the next level of a subject that has become easy, even in the middle of the school year.

Scope and sequence charts that offer a detailed list of what a child typically learns at each grade level are available in different forms and from a variety of publishers. (See **CHAPTER 5** Testing and Evaluations.) While these publications can be very helpful as a guide, it is not necessary to follow them exactly. Instead, you might want to consider your child's school years with broader divisions, such as those on the following pages, and use the other charts as a place to get ideas and track progress.

### Preschool Do's and Don'ts

If you have had the wonderful privilege of deciding to homeschool before your child reaches school age (maybe even before he was born!), you might be anxious and excited to get started as soon as possible. That's great! There are many things you can begin doing right now that will lay a strong foundation for your child's school years.

**DO** - Pay attention to your preschooler. Get to know his learning styles. (See **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum for more information.) Identify his strengths and weaknesses.

**DO** - Spend time in the library. Check out books about anything your preschooler is interested in at the moment. Read aloud as much as possible. Make those books come alive by using voice inflections, pointing out the illustrations, talking about the story, and asking follow-up questions. Audiobooks are another fabulous way to instill a love for books. While they are listening, give them one type of toy to play with (Duplos, puzzles, magnets, dolls, etc.) and set them in a specific area for about 15-20 minutes. This is a great way to teach them to work independently, focus on something for an extended period of time, and introduce them to great literature.

**DO** - explore and discover with your preschooler. Be 'interruptible' enough to look at the cool bug he found. Go for long walks or just sit in the park and talk about what you see. Set an example of observing the world around you. Instill a love of learning; it will benefit them for the rest of their lives.

**DO** - create a rich play environment at home. Indoors provide opportunity for pretend play using costumes, vehicles, kitchen toys, doctor's kits, dolls, art supplies, and stuffed animals. Even though it can create a bit of a mess, make blanket forts with them, build a train track, and cook with them.

**DO** - expect to have messes and embrace the opportunities the messes will provide to teach your preschooler to clean up after themselves.

**DO** - allow for plenty of outside time for this age. A sandbox, water station, play gym, slide, bubbles, trike/bike, trampoline, and sidewalk chalk are all excellent ways to allow them to use their energy, stir their imagination, and provide opportunity to learn through play. Provide appropriate outerwear so he can enjoy all four seasons of fun and exploration.

**DO** - begin now to establish discipline. Teach your child how to sit still, be polite, wait, obey, listen, and be quiet at the appropriate times. If discipline is not established early it will not be easily attainable in the older years.

**DON'T** - establish a rigorous school schedule for your preschooler.

**DON'T** - emphasize reading and writing or sitting at a desk for long periods of time.

**DON'T** - expect too much of your preschooler.

### **Kindergarten: Easy Does It**

Kindergarten may not be required in your state, and not every five-year-old is ready to sit at a desk for even an hour each day. Be sensitive to the needs and abilities of your kindergartner.

If your child is ready and excited to start school, start a very basic phonics program and progress as slowly as needed. Add to this a few fun math activities like playing games, sorting and grouping, charting and graphing, and counting. Continue to read aloud regularly, remembering to read non-fiction as well as fiction. Don't overdo it! Kindergarten may take only an hour a day, and this hour could be split into smaller segments throughout the day.

If you have a child who has no desire for school, consider waiting to start formal schooling. During this time of waiting, there might be some character traits or behaviors you could work on with him. There is wisdom in asking yourself, "What skills does he need in order to start school?" Work on equipping your child with those skills before starting school.

Whether he is ready for academics or not, one of the best ways to teach a child is to invite him to work alongside you as you go through your day. Cooking, sorting laundry, emptying the dishwasher, and putting toys away can be wonderful educational moments.

### **First Grade: Laying a Firm Foundation**

First grade is a good time to focus on foundational reading and math skills. A good phonics program is a must. It is also a good time to incorporate a manipulative-based math program that thoroughly covers beginning math skills (e.g.: counting, sorting, and grouping). Handwriting can be started, but only if the child seems ready. Science, history, and geography can be taught using projects, field trips, and library books. Make sure these subjects are taught at an appropriate level. It would be a mistake to expect a first grader to comprehend world history or biology. Instead, choose a few interesting people and events from history to learn about and two or three simple scientific concepts to explore over the course of the year. It is important to instill into a first grader a positive attitude toward learning.

### **Elementary Grades: Exploration and Discovery**

Grades two through five can be exciting years as a student discovers the world. Continue individualized

language arts and math studies. Develop a greater emphasis on science, history, and geography by using the library and the myriad of resource-providers able to supply creative ideas, lesson plans, and unit studies, which make these subjects come alive for your student.

It is not too early to start learning computer and keyboarding skills. If your child is ready and shows interest, get them started with some educational software. Be sure to balance computer time with book reading and creative play time. Mastery of penmanship is suggested before beginning keyboarding.

### **Junior High: Transition**

Junior high students are entering that time between childhood and adulthood. Be especially sensitive to your child's needs and emotions during this time. Overloading a young teen with a mountain of school work who is floundering emotionally can be disastrous. Equally dangerous is inadequate challenge or too much freedom.

Academically, junior high is a transition to high school. Now is the time to make sure learning 'gaps' are filled. Good study and test-taking skills are necessary. Writing skills need to be honed. It is time to start charting a course of study for high school and to make sure your student is going to be ready.

Emotionally, the junior high student needs support, encouragement, and direction. The older student who might be able to work more independently still needs attention, a listening ear, available help, and lots of love.

**High School:** (See **CHAPTER 6** High School.)

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Taking a Child Out of School**

A child who has been in a traditional school for a period of time will have different needs than the one who has been homeschooled exclusively.

Why he is taken out of school can affect your curriculum choices. If he is taken out of school because he is struggling academically, be careful not to duplicate the curriculum (along with the problems) at home. Evaluate his learning styles and try a different teaching approach. (See **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum.) If you take your child out of school because he is not being challenged academically, beef up his program by moving him up to his ability level or expanding a certain subject.

If your child is coming home because of behavioral or social problems, you might need to temporarily back off academically so you can concentrate on relationships and character.

Whatever the reason for taking your child out of school, consider having him tested or evaluated. Test and evaluation results can be valuable tools in determining a course of study. (See **CHAPTER 5** Testing and Evaluation.)

Your child's attitude toward being taken out of school also needs to be taken into consideration when planning a program of study. The child who wants to be homeschooled will be excited about the new experience, although he may have somewhat unrealistic expectations as to how 'fun' this adventure is

going to be! The child who resists being taken out of school will need a time of transition and some space to get used to this new situation along with definite boundaries.

If you are taking children out of school due to a crisis, most likely you will have very little time to prepare a course of study for each child. That is okay. You all will need time to transition, and the biggest mistake would be to dive in too deep, too soon. Be sure to fulfill the requirements of your state's laws. Then pick one subject, and start with it alone. Give yourself a few weeks to pick out the next subject; then find appropriate materials and add it to your daily schedule. Continue adding a subject every few weeks until your schedule is comfortable — four or five subjects. Stop before it is too full!

No matter what your reasons for bringing your children home, transition from traditional schooling to homeschooling is important. Prayerfully consider: Do you need to take some time off before your official first day? Do you need to ease into homeschooling little by little or start everything at once? Have you taken ample time to communicate with your children why you are doing this, what it is going to look like, and what is expected of them? Have you and your spouse talked through how life is going to be different now? Answering questions like these will help to defuse some of the stress of taking a child out of school.

### **Special Needs**

Each child's special needs — whether developmental disabilities, physical limitations, or giftedness — need to be taken carefully into consideration when choosing curriculum and setting up a program. (See **CHAPTER 7** Different Learners.)

## 5. Set Priorities

### **How, When, and Where will homeschooling fit in your life?**

It is important that you make this a matter of prayer in your family. As 'big' as homeschooling is, there may be many things much more important to your family. Do not let homeschooling 'take over' your life and usurp priority that should be given to other issues.

- Consider relationships with God, in the marriage, between parent and child, and among siblings.
- Consider parenting needs for discipline, character training, spiritual guidance, and nurturing.

Ask yourself: "What is my primary calling?" and "What robs me of the joy of fulfilling this calling?" Do a reality check: "Is there enough time to do everything I feel I should be doing?"

'Clean house' by making a list of everything you do and eliminating those things that are unnecessary, steal your joy, fall outside your calling, and might be 'good' but not the 'best.'

### **Priorities within Homeschooling**

Not only is it necessary to know where homeschooling fits into your life, but it is also crucial to know what is most important within your homeschooling efforts. Knowing this will help you determine where to spend most of your time and effort. It will also give you the confidence in times of crisis to know what can be temporarily dropped.

A first step toward setting priorities is making a list of what subjects you would like to cover, putting them in groups of equal importance, and then ranking the groups according to importance. For example:

1. Most Important: Bible, Grammar, Math, Reading, Spelling, Writing
2. Important: Geography, History, Literature, Science
3. Less Important: Art, Computer, Foreign Language, Music
4. Least Important: 4H, Hobbies, Scouts, Sports

Of course, each family's list and groupings will be different according to interests, abilities, and future plans. It is also important to take into account what is required by state law, what subjects you as parents are passionate about, what training you want to make sure your child receives before they are adults, and how much your child is capable of handling during a given year. To help in this process, you could ask yourself, "What is essential to my child's life?" Or, "If he learns only one subject, what should it be?" This question will need to be answered for each child according to that child's needs and strengths. Establishing priorities is a tool necessary to keep on track, to emphasize the important, and to not get distracted or drawn away by seemingly good opportunities.

## 6. Research and Choose Curriculum

There is much to consider when setting out to buy curriculum. The abundance of materials available can make it hard to make choices. Doing some thinking and researching can narrow down the possibilities. However, be careful not to get too bogged down in the process of research. Curriculum can be changed, even mid-year, so select one and just get started.

**If a particular curriculum is not working for your child, you have not ruined them for life. Simply try something else and keep moving forward.**

Sometimes, a curriculum that works exceptionally well for one of your children does not work at all for siblings. If this happens, don't let this frustrate you. One of the wonderful aspects of homeschooling is that we are able to meet the needs of each of our children individually instead of forcing them into a mold that doesn't fit them. The task of choosing curriculum, although daunting at times, should not be something that is feared. Spend time in prayer, get feedback from your husband and children, keep using the materials that are working well, and change the items that are not proving to be of much value. **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum will help you in that process.

### A 'Generic' Model For Home Education

If you have read, researched, asked questions, and followed all the steps, but you are still not quite sure what to do, here is a 'generic' model you can try that will give you the opportunity to try a few different learning/teaching styles. It is not a guaranteed formula, nor is it comprehensive; it is merely a bare-bones place to get started.

**Language Arts:** Choose a ‘package’ from a school-at-home curriculum provider such as Bob Jones or School of Tomorrow. Each child will need his own package at his own level.

**Math:** Pick a math program for each child at his own level such as Saxon or Math-U-See.

**History:** Choose an era in history you feel all your children would like to study. For example:

- Ancient History (Egyptian, Greek, Roman)
- Medieval History (European Middle Ages )
- Birth of the Modern era (U.S. War of Independence, Civil War, Victorian Age)

Make a list of people, events, and places associated with this era. Use the library to study these topics. Get books — nonfiction, historical fiction, and biographies — for each child to read and for reading aloud. (As you do this, teach your children how to use the library.) Assign research projects and written reports to students as appropriate. Make a time-line and add events and people to it as you learn about them.

**Science:** Choose an area of science that appeals to you and your children. For example:

- Life Science/Biology (Animals, Human Body, Plants)
- Earth Science (Geography, Oceans, Rocks, Weather)
- Chemistry (Atoms, Elements, Energy, States of Matter)
- Physics (Electricity, Friction, Gravity, Light, Machines, Motion, Sound)

Search online resources and catalogs to find material to help you. There are books, project ideas, experiment kits, and many other science helps available to you, such as Science by Mail, Bob Jones Science Kits, and Janice Van Cleave books. There is also a vast amount of information, videos, experiment ideas, and other tools available online that you could opt to use as a supplement to whatever subject you are studying.

If these four subjects were all your children studied, it would be fine (at least temporarily). As you go, you will get a clearer picture of what works for you — and what doesn’t! You can add other subjects or activities as you feel comfortable.

# 7. Create School Space in Your Home

Many homeschooling families set aside a room just for school. Other families prefer to use their whole house. In either case, a homeschooling family needs space both to ‘do’ and to ‘store’ their school stuff!

## The Student’s Needs

- **A place to do their daily school work:** Each child needs to have access to a desk or table where they can have comfortable, proper writing posture. However, school work need not be limited to one particular space. They might enjoy reading in a recliner or spreading out on a table or the floor to work on a science project. Keep in mind that a younger student might need more supervision, so their work area needs to be easily visible and accessible to the teacher. Likewise, some students will need to have access to an area that is quiet and solitary.
- **A place to keep their daily school work:** If your children do not have their own desks, you can assign each of them a drawer in a file cabinet or a shelf on a bookcase. Or you could give each child a tote bag, box, or bin for their books. Provide a smaller container for pencils, scissors, erasers, etc. Requiring each student to keep track of their own school ‘stuff’ is a good way to teach neatness and stewardship.

## The Teacher’s Needs

- **A place to keep daily school tools:** A chest of drawers is a handy way to store answer keys, teacher edition books, and lesson plans. It could also contain supplies like pens, pencils, crayons, glue, and erasers.

## Other Needs

- **A place to store the paraphernalia needed in a homeschool:** Bookshelves will come in handy for reference books, school books not being used currently, science equipment, math manipulatives, and educational games. A file cabinet is an efficient way to store paper goods such as construction paper, writing paper, newspaper articles, report cards, lesson plans, and attendance records.
- **A place for completed daily work:** One option is for each child to put his completed daily work in his own expandable file pouch. At the end of the year, this file can be emptied and reused, or taped closed and packed away in a box. Remember, you don’t have to keep every piece of paper that your child completes. Sort and keep only what is important to you. It can be fun to keep a special file for each child to show progress in art and writing skills. Likewise, take photos of special items and store on your computer in a folder for that child. Younger children enjoy displaying their work on a bulletin board. Be sure to review your state’s laws regarding what work needs to be kept in long-term storage for complete records.

If your space is limited, don’t worry. You will not be able to accumulate as much homeschool ‘stuff’ as others will, which might be a real advantage! When and if a need arises, you will find creative ways to store what you need.

## 8. Establish Structure

Getting organized is a must for every homeschool. However, the extent to which you are organized is up to you and dependent on your personality and your natural organizational skills.

### **Schedules**

Establishing schedules is not a matter to be taken lightly. You need wisdom and caution as you set limitations and budget your time. Adding “Homeschooling Parent” to the already full-time job description of “Parent” makes your life very full! It is very easy for your life to become a juggling exercise as you add wonderful activities to your children’s schedules as well as participating in activities and ministries of your own. With prayer and caution, however, you can keep from being unnecessarily pulled in too many directions.

If a homeschooling parent also has a full or part-time job or operates a home-based business, it is an added stress to the family and must be considered carefully. The school load needs to be kept at a realistic level. The whole family — including both spouses — must pitch-in with housework. Extracurricular activities will need to be limited. It is not impossible to be a homeschooling, working parent, but you must have realistic expectations and be able to set healthy boundaries around your time and energy. (Review “Time Management Tips” later in this chapter)

### **School Year Calendar**

Before your first day of school, it is wise to plan out your school year. A general plan, even if it is very flexible, will help you make sure you will complete the total number of school days and hours per day required by your state’s law.

You are free to choose what kind of school year schedule you want to follow. Following your local school district’s schedule is an option. (Obtain a copy by calling your school district or visiting their website.) Making up your own schedule allows you the freedom to tailor the year to your needs and desires. You may want to school only four days each week, take a week off every six weeks, or school year-round. Many homeschoolers consider birthdays as “no school” days. Scheduling several extra days will give you a ‘buffer’ for sick days or other unexpected events that require time off. (See “**How to Create a School Year Calendar**” later in this chapter.)

### **Master Calendar**

A master calendar for your family will help to keep everyone informed of what needs to happen on any given day. Choose one calendar in your home where all activities, appointments, and other commitments are written down. Train your children to consult the calendar before making commitments.

### **Weekly Schedule**

Make a weekly schedule by drawing and labeling a grid on a piece of construction paper. Cover the paper with clear contact paper. Use a dry erase marker to fill in your grid with your regular weekly activities. You can use a damp tissue to erase when changes are needed. There are also a variety of homeschool planners, apps for your phone or tablet, and software for your computer available to help with this important task of staying organized. It may take trying a few methods before you find out what works for your family, but it is completely worth the effort and will most certainly help life flow more smoothly for everyone.

Things to consider when making a weekly schedule: church activities, sports, music lessons, community clubs (4-H/Scouts/AWANA), homeschool work, laundry, housecleaning, work schedules, errands, family time, Mom and Dad dates, ministry, holidays, and shopping.

By posting this schedule near your master calendar, you eliminate the need to write in all the regular weekly activities on the master calendar. Whenever an opportunity or request for your time comes up, you merely look at the weekly grid to see if there is any regular activity at that time, then look at the master calendar to see if anything special is happening that day.

### **Daily Schedule**

A majority of homeschoolers do most of their schooling during the morning hours. Afternoons are used for finishing up assignments and for other activities in which the students are involved. However, each family has the freedom to tailor their school schedule to their own unique situation. (See Schedule Examples later in this chapter.)

To make a schedule, it is wise to have an idea of what you want to accomplish each day and in what order (based on what you have determined to be most important). Remember that every school subject does not have to be covered every day.

Things to consider in making a Daily Schedule: chores, grooming, school work, naps, bedtime, housecleaning, devotions, exercise, phone calls, spouse time, work schedules, mid-day teacher breaks, and meals (including preparation and cleanup). Don't forget other activities such as sports, music lessons, and co-ops. Don't forget travel time!

If every time-block of your schedule is all filled in, it is probably too full. No matter what kind of a schedule you are making, you need ample 'white space' or 'margin' time that is not allotted to a certain task. This buffer will help you absorb an unexpected event and give you the freedom to be more flexible.

### **Daily Issues**

Though each of our homeschools is unique, we all deal with some of the same daily issues. These daily issues will only be as frustrating as you allow. If you perceive them as 'hassles,' they will be just that. But if you make them opportunities to teach your children valuable character qualities (and maybe grow a little yourself), you will find yourself less stressed.

### **Interruptions**

It seems now more than ever before, the phone is a big source of interruption for the homeschooling family. Phone calls, apps, texts, emails, and social media are now easily available to you throughout the day. It is easy to spend hours on your phone or computer and neglect the variety of needs of your family and home. One helpful way to combat this is to set up a specific time of day that you can devote to technology. It could be 30 minutes, 2 hours, or however much time you think is necessary to accomplish what you need to get done. It may take place during lunch time, in the afternoon when the children are taking a break from their school, at night after they go to bed, or even early in the morning. The important thing is to set a timer to start school and set everything aside when the timer goes off. During school, if possible, turn your phone to vibrate or set it in a different room so that it will create the least amount of distraction. Most of the time, texts, emails, and phone calls can all be responded to at a more convenient time. The phone and computer are incredible tools for your use; don't allow them to rule over you.

If your children have phones or computers, it is possible to set up restrictions for them as well. There are apps and software that will allow you to manage and guard their use of the internet. You can also have all phones placed in a basket or other location during school hours to reduce the temptation of using them when they should be focusing on other things. If necessary, you can explain to friends, neighbors, and relatives that you will not be available during certain hours and ask them not to call during those times. The goal is to set appropriate limits, neither isolating yourself nor allowing unnecessary intrusions.

Well-meaning friends who don't fully understand homeschooling might assume that since you and your children are at home, you are available to baby-sit or do other odd jobs. Use wisdom to avoid taking on too many responsibilities. As wonderful an opportunity as it may be (to meet a need or for your children to make some money), remember it is still an interruption to your school schedule. If the requests become overly persistent or burdensome, it might become necessary to make it clear to your friend what your limitations are.

Dealing with toddlers and infants while teaching older ones has the potential of being frustrating, but it doesn't have to be. Remember, your toddler is part of your family and therefore part of your homeschool. That child should not be made to feel 'in the way' or a bother. At the same time, they can learn that certain behavior is expected at certain times. It is a good thing to teach a little one to wait their turn, not to interrupt, and to sit or play quietly for a period of time. Likewise, it is good for the older child to cultivate patience and the ability to stay on task even through interruptions.

With some thought and prayer, you will find realistic, creative ways to deal with this situation effectively. Baby's nap-time is a good time to focus on older students. Set aside special 'school toys' that your toddler is allowed to play with only during school time. Find ways to involve him in what you are doing. If you are doing a science activity, find something they can do to make him feel he's a part of it! If it's writing time, give him paper and crayons and 'assignments.' During math time, give him his own manipulatives to sort or count or stack or build. Have older children take turns reading or playing with the younger ones so that you can direct your attention elsewhere for a time.

There will be interruptions in school days. Some you can control (the phone) and others you can't (a sick child, a spilled glass of juice). Look at it as an opportunity to learn and to teach by example. Both you and your children will do well to develop flexibility and the ability to stay on task even through interruptions.

### **Meeting Everyone's Needs**

If you have more than one child, there will be times when you will wish you were more than one person! Solving this problem is twofold. First, the children need to learn to wait their turn, to be patient. They need to know how to go on to something else while they wait for you. Second, you need creative ideas to keep this situation from happening too often. Scheduling adjustments can help, for example, assigning easier subjects for one child to work on while you are working with the other on a harder subject. You can also schedule one-on-one time for each child each day to take care of any problems she may be having. As you plan your curriculum, choose a combination of independent-study items along with material that has to be taught by you. Multi-level teach some subjects like history or science.

### **Getting the Housework Done, Too**

Setting aside daily and weekly time to get housework done is necessary to a homeschooling family. Take time to establish what absolutely needs to be done on a daily basis, like kitchen cleaning and making beds. Weekly

chores can be done a little each day: vacuum on Monday, laundry on Tuesday, dusting on Wednesday, etc. Or establish one house cleaning day when everything gets done. Whichever way you choose, involve your children in the process. Each child — no matter what age — can do something. (Don't forget to add chores to your weekly and daily schedules.)

## 9. Set Up Record Keeping Systems

Your state will have requirements for record-keeping which may include such things as: attendance, immunization, and test score records, and possibly more. Go to [HSLDA.org](http://HSLDA.org) to find helpful information on knowing, navigating and fulfilling these requirements.

### **Attendance**

Attendance can be kept merely by circling days in a planner, on a wall calendar, or entering them into your phone or computer. If you want to be more detailed, you might want to log each child's individual accomplishments every day as you go along through the year. This can be helpful for high school students when creating a transcript. It can also be useful to review the log when making lesson plans, which will help you to set realistic daily goals.

### **Immunizations**

Your doctor's office should be able to provide an immunization record. Keep it up-to-date by writing dates and immunizations given or by asking the nurse to do it at the time of each visit. Those who choose not to immunize their children can keep on file either the physician's certification that immunizations would endanger the life or health of the student, or a document certifying that the parent's personal or religious beliefs oppose immunization. Find out your state's requirements so you can fulfill them.

### **Test Scores**

Take time to learn about your state's rules and requirements on testing and evaluations so you can be confident that you are safe within the bounds of your local laws. (See **CHAPTER 5** Testing and Evaluations.)

### **Other Record-Keeping**

Any record keeping you desire to do beyond what the law requires is up to you. If you are a 'visual' person, getting lesson plans and assignments and schedules down on paper can be a great help and relief. If recording on paper is a struggle for you (or you do your record keeping on your phone or tablet), then use water and vermin-proof storage boxes or cabinets to organize your student's completed work per individual child, organized by school year. Electronic records can be stored digitally on an external hard-drive or left on your computer, but often it is helpful to print-out what records you have created on your computer and store them along with your student's other workbooks. One caution: don't wait until your children are in high school to start keeping records. It might take you some time to establish a system that works for you so begin as soon as you can.

Finally, school records should be kept in adequate storage for an indefinite period of time. Like tax records,

you never know when you might need them for proof of legal homeschooling, and you can always give them to your children as childhood memorabilia when they move out to their permanent adult residence! Whether your family prefers to keep hard copies or digital records, it is essential for homeschooling families to keep records easily accessible for when they may be requested or required.

### **Report Cards**

You may or may not be required by your state's law to give or keep a record of grades and report cards. You can create your own report cards (see **CHAPTER 6** High School, E. Keeping Good Records and Transcripts) or use ones offered in homeschool record-keeping packages. There are also report card template software and online downloads available.

### **Lesson Plans**

Lesson plans can be tools not only for daily use but also as a set of permanent records of what each child has accomplished. Lesson plans can double as an attendance record too.

There are many different ways to make lesson plans. What you choose needs to reflect your personality and your goals. The detail-oriented, organized person might like the more complex grids and will probably plan several weeks, or maybe even months, in advance. A more flexible person might like a simpler, more general format and will make plans on a day-by-day basis. You might want to see all your children's assignments on one grid, or you may want separate pages for each child. Look through some samples, choose one that looks comfortable, then experiment until you find the method that works best for you. There are endless online resources, and many software programs, that can also keep things simple and easy for this necessary task.

### **Assignment Sheets**

There are many different ways to give assignments. Very young students might not need assignments at all since they don't have that much to do, and a lot of it might be done with you. As they get into elementary grades, a simple check list might work. Sticky notes as bookmarks inside a book can work. Upper elementary students might profit from their own assignment notebooks where you give daily assignments or write reminder notes. You could give your junior high and high school students the opportunity to make their own assignments by giving them weekly or quarterly goals and teaching them how to divide the work into daily portions, giving them the freedom to do bigger chunks less often if they wish. If planning is a struggle for a student, begin teaching this skill with only one subject.

If you do use assignment sheets, they should be tailored to your own needs and personality, and to your student's ability to follow written directions.

Your record-keeping system will be unique to you. Give yourself the freedom and the time necessary to develop a system that is effective for you. Copying someone else's system for the first year or so while you are figuring out what works for you is a good way to begin. In subsequent years you can customize it with improvements that work best for you.

# 10. Start!

Whether you have had months, weeks, or merely days to prepare, there comes a time when you just need to start, whether you feel completely ready or not. If you ask a veteran homeschooler, they will most likely admit that they are still getting organized, still learning, still making adjustments. Do not wait until every single detail is in place — it will never happen! Instead, do your best to plan and get ready, then start and expect to continue the process as you go.

## A. Resources

### Books

- *Full-Time Parenting, A Guide to Family Based Discipleship*. Israel Wayne, Christian Homeschooling as a lifestyle choice.
- *The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling*. Debra Bell, with wit and wisdom gleaned from experience, sets forth a compelling vision for the joys of home-based learning and the essential tools for success.
- *The WholeHearted Child*. Clay and Sally Clarkson, an easy to read, informative, and encouraging book that covers the “gamut” of homeschooling topics.

### Websites

- [www.HSLDA.org](http://www.HSLDA.org)
- [www.donnayoung.org](http://www.donnayoung.org)
- [www.flylady.net](http://www.flylady.net)
- [www.thehomeschoolmom.com](http://www.thehomeschoolmom.com)

# B. Tips and Schedule Examples

## Time Management Tips

### 1. Every Day: Pray, Listen, and Obey

Make a habit of daily seeking God about your schedule. Commit to Him your ‘to do’ list. Ask Him to open your spiritual ears and eyes to see the path He has for you. (Read Deuteronomy 28:9-14; Psalm 139; Psalm 23; Psalm 37:5; Psalm 118.)

### 2. Know Your Priorities

Give your best, your full attention, to what is most important. Continually reference your family’s Homeschool Vision Statement to stay on course. (Read Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:23-24; Luke 10:38-42; Ecclesiastes 3:1-14.)

### 3. Discern and Disarm Distractions

As you learn to focus on the task at hand, it will be easier to recognize distractions. Before you get frustrated, ask yourself: “Should I fight this distraction?” (Read Matthew 16:23, John 10:10.) “Should I flow with this new direction?” (Read Isaiah 30:20-21, Isaiah 43:19.) Take whatever steps are necessary to guard against repeated distractions.

### 4. Don’t Over Commit

Set healthy limits on your time. How many evenings will you be out each week? How many commitments can you fulfill in one day? How many weekend activities can you handle each month? Schedule only one-half to two-thirds of your time. You need a buffer of time to absorb unexpected circumstances. You also need time for rest and quiet. Expect projects to take longer than planned. Don’t plan on doing more than one thing at a time. When your schedule is full, know that for each thing you add to your calendar, an equal item must be eliminated.

### 5. Use Visual Tools

Establish a master calendar for your home. Make and post whatever charts and schedules you need to keep your activities in order. Have clocks clearly visible in your home and car.

### 6. He Who Hesitates is Saved

Don’t rush into making commitments – even small ones. Take time to think it through, pray about it, count the cost, consult your calendar, check with your spouse. A delayed “Yes” is always better than a “Yes” that should have been a “No.” (Read James 1:5; James 3:17; I Timothy 2:2b-3; Romans 14:17-19.)

## How to Create a School Year Calendar

Use your smartphone, pad, computer, or obtain a year-at-a-glance calendar. If you have calendar software on your computer, you can probably print one out very easily. Otherwise, you can photocopy one, enlarging it if necessary, from the front of a monthly wall or pocket calendar. If you are planning on schooling during the typical school year, you will need your calendar to cover August through June of the next year. This calendar can be both your planning tool and your record keeping tool.

Decide what kind of school year schedule you want to follow. Type into your digital calendar, or use a pencil (not an ink pen in case you need to make changes later) and begin to fill-out your calendar as follows:

- a.** Cross out “no school” days including holidays, birthdays, vacations, Christmas/Winter Break, Easter/Spring Break, etc.
- b.** Mark the days you would ideally like to begin and end the school year.
- c.** Count the days available for school between those two days. If it is more than the minimum required by your state, you can mark off additional days you can have off. (Consider scheduling several extra days as a buffer for sick days or other unplanned events that could require a day off.) If it is less than the minimum required, you will need to have an earlier starting date, a later ending date, or less time off during the year. Make changes necessary to end up with at least the minimum number of days to meet the requirements of your state’s laws.
- d.** Count your planned school days for each month and record that number along with the accumulative total for the year in the margin.
- e.** If you wish, you can use your calendar as your attendance record as you progress through your school year. Circle each day of school in pen. (A triangle could indicate half days if necessary.)
- f.** At the end of each month, count how many school days you had and record it in the margin, comparing it to your plan. (Remember, your state will have a minimum number of hours per school day in which school work must take place.)

## Daily Schedule Examples (Adjust the hours to comply with your state's regulations)

### “Family A”

(Amy - 6, Beth - 9, Peter - 14 who works very independently.)

Monday - Thursday:

6:00 Mom: shower/morning grooming, devotions, breakfast (alone), personal reading if time allows

7:45 Devotions with Peter

8:00 Get girls up, morning grooming

8:30 Mom reads aloud during breakfast

9:00 Devotions with girls

9:30 Reading and go over assignments with Amy

10:00 Go over assignments with Beth

10:30 History, geography or science with Peter, then he works on his own

Beth and Amy together

11:15 Girls work on assignments — Mom does housework and fixes lunch

12:00 Lunch

Afternoon: Finish assignments, errands, activities

Fridays:

6:00 Mom: shower/morning grooming, devotions, breakfast (alone), personal reading if time allows

7:45 Devotions with Peter

8:30 Get girls up, morning grooming

9:00 Breakfast

9:30 Piano lessons for Peter & Beth (Mom teaches)

10:00 Spelling tests

10:30 Art Appreciation

11:00 Poetry

11:15 Finish assignments (less than other days)

Afternoon: Mom checks work and cleans up

### “Family B”

(Kyle - 10, Ryan - 12)

7:00 Devotions with Dad

7:30 Personal Devotions

8:00 Breakfast with Mom, discuss day's schedule

8:30 Read aloud

9:00 History or Science discussion

10:00 Math

11:00 Language Arts

12:00 Noon lunch break

1:00 Independent work

3:00 Turn work into Mom for corrections

Free time, music lessons, sports

**“Family C”**

(Trevor - 5, Melissa - 7)

Flexible schedule with work to be accomplished each day as follows:  
(Be sure to meet your state’s requirements for the total number of hours required)

15 min. Bible/Devotions/Memorization  
45 min. Math  
30 min. Phonics  
20 min. Music Appreciation/Singing  
10 min. Handwriting  
60 min. Unit Study  
30 min. Read Aloud  
30 min. Physical Education

**“Family D”**

(Dad works second shift)

9:00 Mom and children up, chores, breakfast  
10:00 Science with Dad (Mom does housework, prepares dinner, errands)  
11:30 Dinner (big meal of the day), kitchen clean-up  
12:30 Dad leaves for work, Baby’s nap, Math, Language Arts  
2:30 Unit Study  
4:30 Mom gives any necessary assignments for children to work on before supper.

**“Family E”**

(4 children, 12 and under)

8:00 Children awake  
8:30 Healthy snack (fruit, yogurt, bread); Devotions together  
9:00 Mom gives each child assignment for independent work  
10:00 Brunch (substantial meal)  
11:00 School (approximately 30 minutes each) Language Arts, Read Aloud, Math, History or Science  
1:00 Physical activity break  
1:30 Nap / Quiet time / Independent schoolwork / Mom alone-time  
3:00 Snack time, free time



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

*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances,  
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.  
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

*Surely every man walks about like a shadow; Surely they busy themselves in vain;  
He heaps up riches, And does not know who will gather them.  
And now, Lord, what do I wait for? My hope is in You.  
(Psalm 39:6-7)*

# CHAPTER 4



## Choosing Curriculum

### CONTENTS:

- A. Preparing to Choose
- B. Other Considerations
- C. Teaching Approaches
- D. Starting to Choose
- E. Which Curriculum Might  
Be Right for Your Family?
- F. Resources

*- Revised by Cindy Puhek -*

# A. Preparing to Choose

“What curriculum do you use?” is probably one of the most frequently-asked questions of homeschoolers, second only to “What about socialization?” This chapter will address how to choose what is right for your family.



*In all your ways  
acknowledge him [make  
Christ known] and he  
will make your  
paths straight.  
(Proverbs 3:6)*

*If any of you lacks  
wisdom, he should  
ask God, who gives  
generously to all  
without finding fault,  
and it will be  
given to him.  
(James 1:5)*

*He who walks with the  
wise grows wise, but  
a companion of fools  
suffers harm.  
(Proverbs 13:20)*

## Curriculum Concepts

Today’s homeschooling family is faced with a plethora of curriculum choices. It can feel very overwhelming to a new homeschooler. Which curriculum is the right one for you and your family? This section is designed to give you some things to consider first, such as learning styles and different methods of education that will then make choosing curriculum much easier.

In order to choose a curriculum, you must know what your goals are for your children’s education. Determining your goals is a several step process, which begins with a review of your philosophy of education. If you have not already done so, please take time to work through **CHAPTER 1** A Vision for Home Education.

## Learning Styles

There are three basic ways in which children take in information: vision, hearing, and touch. Most children find one of these modalities to be their dominant ‘learning style,’ and information is most easily understood and retained when presented in that mode. A ‘visual’ learner learns best by seeing the information in print or having a concept illustrated for him. A child who learns best through hearing the information is called an ‘auditory’ learner. A ‘kinesthetic’ learner needs to touch and physically experience the information. This can mean anything from drawing his letters in the sandbox to acting out a piece of history. There are also many books that can help you discover your child’s learning style, including *The Way They Learn*, by **Cynthia Ulrich Tobias**.

Also keep in mind that most children are a combination of these learning styles with one style being more dominant than the others. So finding a curriculum that involves all three modes is usually ideal.

If your child is a visual learner (enjoys reading, and color or graphics catches his eye), he will probably prefer colorful texts and interesting workbooks such as those produced by Abeka, Bob Jones University Press, or Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) School of Tomorrow. Most traditional school materials are developed for the visual learner.

An auditory learner (enjoys being read to and listening to music or audio books, and follows verbal instructions well) may enjoy information set to songs on tape and curriculum with simple, succinct instructions and uncluttered pages. Rhymes can be used to teach many facts, such as the names of the state capitals or the multiplication tables. Unit studies are often fun for auditory learners, since much of the learning comes through discussion. Reading aloud and talking about the material will enhance any curriculum you choose. Look for Grammar Songs and other teaching tapes or cds.

Products from [www.singnlearn.com](http://www.singnlearn.com) can be helpful along with My Father's World, Christian Cottage Unit Studies, and KONOS Unit Studies.

If your child is a kinesthetic learner (uses his body to navigate life, has good fine and gross motor control, seems to learn by doing) you will want to include hands-on activities and movement in your curriculum. Whenever possible, give concrete examples of abstract concepts. Many times this can be accomplished by using 'manipulatives' — such as plastic letters, learning wrap-ups, counting blocks, map puzzles, and science experiments. Unit studies and science or history projects will be the best part of this child's educational experience. No matter what their learning style, most younger children learn well using hands-on methods. Curriculum choices include Making Math Meaningful or Math-U-See, as well as KONOS, Christian Cottage Units, Weaver, Timberdoodle, or Five-in-a-Row.

### **Academic Assessment**

Before you purchase a curriculum, it can be helpful to pretest or evaluate your child to assess his current academic level. (See **CHAPTER 5** Testing and Evaluations for more information on skills for suggested grade level placement and testing.) The results of pretesting can point out gaps or weaknesses that may exist in your child's current skill level. Testing may also reveal areas where your child excels and will need an extra challenge. One of the greatest benefits of home education is the ability to custom tailor your child's curriculum to meet his individual needs. Many parents find that their child is working at several different grade levels, depending upon the subject.

## B. Other Considerations

As each family is unique in so many ways, the following items should be taken into consideration when choosing curriculum.

### **Schedule**

The first thing to keep in mind is your schedule. Homeschooling definitely takes time, but some curriculum choices are more time-consuming than others. In general, unit studies will take more teacher preparation time and more student work time. If your schooling must fit within a tighter time schedule, you might want to consider a more 'self-learning' curriculum such as ACE School of Tomorrow or Switched-On Schoolhouse.

### **Number of Children**

If you have several children, close together in age, it will be more difficult and time-consuming to have each child working in separate textbooks. Unit studies lend themselves more easily to multi-level learning, enabling you to teach several children at the same time. If you are not comfortable with a complete unit-study curriculum, try it for only a few subjects, such as history and science. If you are using a unit study with an only child, it will be helpful to find other homeschooling families with whom you can do special group projects or presentations. However, in all likelihood you will have some children that thrive with one curriculum or methodology and others that need something different. I have taught five children how to read and my approach was different with each one.

## Space

If physical space is a problem for you, limit projects or be willing to get rid of completed projects. Photographs can be a good record of what your student has completed. Use the library instead of purchasing literature books. Have each student keep his or her materials in a plastic bin that can be put away on a shelf at the end of each day.

## Budget

A moderate homeschooling family spends about \$400 per year per child on curriculum, which is a great bargain compared to a year of private schooling. Nevertheless, this is an impossible amount for some families. The good news is there are ways to homeschool on a 'shoestring' budget. Using the library will help if your budget is limited. A considerable amount of money can be saved by shopping for used books at curriculum fairs or used bookstores in the spring and summer. Buy curriculum that can be used by more than one child. Have your children write their answers on paper instead of in their workbooks to keep the workbook available for another child to use. For more money-saving ideas, HSLDA has a series of articles on their website about homeschooling on a shoestring.

## Spouse

Consider the amount of time each parent will be able to devote to this endeavor. In most cases the mother will do the majority of the teaching. Each parent should feel comfortable with the curriculum they are using. Work together to plan your school year, keeping in focus the goals you decided upon in the **CHAPTER 1** A Vision for Home Education exercises.

## Resources

The resources you have available to you can influence your curriculum choices. Without easy access to a public library, some unit studies will be difficult, and you may have to purchase more literature and resource books. If your home library is not extensive, you will need to spend more time at the public library. If you spend a lot of time schooling on the road, a self-contained curriculum like ACE (Worktexts) or Switched on Schoolhouse (if you have a computer available) would work better for you. Other resource considerations might include a car for field trips and your proximity to museums and recreation centers.

## Homeschool Groups

Take advantage of a good local homeschool group. If there are no homeschool groups in your area, consider starting one. See **CHAPTER 8 - PART I** Joining a Homeschool Group in this Guidebook for more information on getting involved. We all have moments of doubt during our homeschooling journey. Non-homeschooling family or friends may not understand about your struggles, but you can bring your questions to your local homeschool group. A mentor can also encourage you during times of difficulty. Homeschool groups often have a time when parents can share regarding the curriculum they are using successfully and can also explain why other choices have not been beneficial. Often, members have curriculum lying around they are not using that you could try out, then eventually purchase if it seems to work. Other groups have their own "Free Curriculum" tables during meetings or annual sales for previewing books and purchasing for great discounts.

Special classes like science labs or writing workshops offered by co-op groups, Friday groups, or special groups like Classical Conversations often have their own curriculum to recommend for use. Be sure you are clear on what the group expects and promotes before you buy curriculum if you are part of such a group.

## Outside Activities

Some curriculum choices require field trips and outside activities that may not fit into your schedule or teaching style. Consider the ages of your children and whether you have the financial resources, transportation, time, and energy it takes for these activities before you commit to this kind of curriculum choice.

## Experts

If you know someone who is knowledgeable in photography, you might ask her to teach your child once a week for a semester. This can work with computers, farming, writing, and many other subjects. Consider using the elderly, who often love to share life experiences. Many times those around you would love to teach your student a subject that is dear to their hearts. These experts might require topic-related books or resources that are not traditional curricula, and you will need to budget for and purchase what they recommend.

# C. Teaching Approaches

It is also important to consider the parent's teaching style along with the student's learning style. Are you a planner? Do you mind doing a lot of prep work for school? I found out quickly that I hated prep work. I wanted to spend my time with my children teaching them and minimize the time I spent preparing to teach them. If a curriculum could not be pulled off the shelf and used right away, I found I never used it.

Homeschooling is not one-size-fits-all! Individuality is the key to success. The following teaching approaches are all valid ways to meet the unique educational needs of your children, while taking into consideration the teaching style that best suits you.

## Traditional School-at-Home: Textbooks and Workbooks

Many parents who have recently removed their children from public or private schools continue their education at home with much of the same structure that was found in the classroom. This can sometimes make the transition easier for the children and works well for parents who do best with lots of structure. Traditional school-at-home programs start at scheduled times and have their students work at desks in a school center in the home using textbooks. Many of these families plan their school schedule to closely correlate with the neighborhood school schedule. If this is your style, then your family will probably prefer to use traditional curricula such as Abeka, Bob Jones, Christian Liberty Press, Rod and Staff, ACE School of Tomorrow, or Switched-On Schoolhouse.

## Classical Approach

Dorothy Sayers revived the Classical Approach in the first part of this century when she saw that other more traditional educational methods were not teaching children to think. This approach focuses on giving students the tools they need in order to be lifelong learners using a learning pattern called the Trivium. Grammar (the mastery of facts) is taught first, then Dialectic (the study of logic). After the student has mastered these two steps, he moves on to Rhetoric (the expressive or creative use of language). This method is a little more difficult to teach but is considered by many to be excellent training for future leaders. More

information about this teaching approach can be found in *Teaching the Trivium* by **Harvey Bluedorn**, or researching the phrase “classical education.” Veritas Press, My Father’s World, Logos Press, Memoria Press, Peace Hill Press, Tapestry of Grace, and Classical Conversations are great places to find resources for the Classical Approach to learning.

## **Unit Studies**

If textbooks make you yawn, if you are teaching children working at different levels, or if you and your children prefer exploration and in-depth research of a topic over reading chapters and answering questions in a textbook, then unit studies may be right for you. Unit study instruction is a multi-sensory, multi-subject approach. Pre-planned materials can be purchased or you can design your own study. Choose a topic and go as deep as you and your children wish, with each child studying the subject at their own ability level. Read about it, write about it, dramatize it, design your own models, create your own costumes and artifacts, and go on a related field trip or two. It can be especially fun to combine a weekly activity day with another family. Most unit studies need to be supplemented with phonics, grammar, and math programs. Prepared unit studies include KONOS Character Curriculum, Christian Cottage Units, The Weaver Curriculum, My Father’s World, and Five in a Row. An internet search yields numerous blogs, books, and websites on the topic of creating your own unit study.

## **Living Books/Charlotte Mason Approach**

The Living Books approach was developed by Charlotte Mason at the turn of the last century. It focuses on learning from ‘real’ books instead of textbooks. Children begin by developing basic reading, writing, and math skills. After that, the role of the teacher is to expose the children to the best sources of knowledge for all other subjects. The child learns by having his imagination sparked, expanding his vocabulary, observing character qualities, and absorbing information from books and stories. Narration, dictation, and discussion are key elements to the Living Books approach. *The Original Home Schooling Series* by **Charlotte Mason**, *The Charlotte Mason Companion* by **Karen Andreola**, and *For the Children’s Sake* by **Susan Schaeffer Macaulay** discuss this approach. Consider using Beautiful Feet, Total Language Plus, Progeny Press Literature Guides, Learning Language Arts Through Literature (LLATL), and materials from SimplyCharlottMason.com if you are interested in using Living Books.

## **The Unschooling Approach**

Some families leave the structured school setting with a vow never to return. They prefer that their students pursue real life experiences and learn about the world through exploration and investigation. Textbooks are only used as resources for information, if at all. Diligent parents can mentor their children through this system of exploration and apprenticeship. Consistent self-assessment is recommended to ensure that students are learning needed skills. To learn more about this approach, read *Teaching Your Own, How Children Learn* by **John Holt**, and *The Unschooling Handbook* by **Mary Griffith**.

## **The Eclectic Approach**

If several of these approaches sound a little like you and your family, you may enjoy picking and choosing your way through your curricula choices. For example, you may choose to use traditional workbooks but complete them at your own pace. Some families combine a traditional math and language arts program with science and history unit studies. By combining styles, you will be able to tailor your approach to create a method uniquely suited to your family. This is the preferred method of most experienced homeschool families. However, it takes time and experience to assemble the curricula you prefer. When putting together your own curricula, keep in mind that according to your state’s law you may need to include reading,

writing, speaking, mathematics, history, civics, literature, science, and regular courses of instruction in the Constitution of the United States. These subjects may not all need to be studied concurrently but should be covered in a timely and age-appropriate way. If you have any questions about your state's requirements go to [HSLDA.org](http://HSLDA.org).

## D. Starting to Choose

It is common to use only one curriculum company your first year and then expand your choices in the following years. Fine-tune your choices each year until you have what works best for each of your children. Of course, by then, the child may change, and it is back to the drawing board, trying new things again! The important thing to remember is that your children are God's gift to you. Do not worry about what other families are doing or learning. The Bible clearly warns us not to compare ourselves with others, for it leads to discontentment. This is never more true than in homeschooling your children.

Now that you have studied your children and have begun to figure out their learning styles, it is time to research curriculum. For most beginning homeschoolers, it is a good idea to use a packaged curriculum, which will teach you how to schedule your day and how much to expect from your children. As homeschoolers gain experience and continue to observe their children, many begin picking and choosing different products for different subjects and often different curriculum for different children. But for a new homeschooler it is best to let other people do the planning for you. Here are a few good places to start: Abeka, Bob Jones, Alpha Omega, ACE School of Tomorrow (each are textbook/workbook — used by many Christian schools), Timberdoodle (hands-on learning), Christian Cottage School (unit study), My Father's World (unit study, classical, and living books combination), Memoria Press (classical), and Classical Conversations (classical, homeschool/classroom combination) to name just a few. All of these companies would be happy to send you a catalog.

Christian Book Distributors ([www.cbd.com](http://www.cbd.com)) also has a wonderful homeschool catalog, and you can contact them to get a copy. Their online store has a “see inside” much like Amazon.com offers, so you can actually view pages before you make your determination to purchase. Rainbow Resource is another good company with their exhaustive catalogue which includes product descriptions and reviews.

It is also good to look for materials that were created by homeschoolers and for homeschoolers. These materials tend to maximize the strengths of a homeschool and minimize some of its challenges. Materials that were originally created for a classroom are often excellent, but they do not take into account the need for a wide age spread to use the materials at the same time or the lack of a subject matter expert who has time to dedicate to classroom preparation. Classroom materials also contain a lot of busywork to keep advanced students occupied while slower students finish. This busywork is typically unnecessary within a homeschool.

### **Changing Curriculum**

New and innovative products are continually being produced for homeschoolers. Changing curriculum can be tempting when a new product or methodology looks exciting or if all your homeschooling friends are

using the newest and latest thing. But the best axiom to go by is, “If it’s not broke, don’t fix it.” In other words, if what you’re currently using is working, it’s probably best for you and for your children to stick with it.

However, you may want to change a part or all of your curriculum if your child:

- Consistently misses more than half of the questions
- Has little or no retention of the material covered
- Experiences serious emotional responses to the material (constant tears, illness, etc.)
- Takes over three times the intended time to complete the task
- Consistently zooms through all of the material, with 100% right, in half the time expected

## Teaching Options

You may choose to do all of the teaching of your children yourself or you may choose a variety of methods for having your children taught by others. **CHAPTER 6** High School discusses options for students learning outside of your home.

**Co-op and enrichment classes:** Supplemental classes that may be taught by a parent, an expert in the field, or a certified teacher. Ask the provider regarding the required curriculum, and find out how it will be obtained.

**Tutors:** Experts hired to teach your student or just to assist with a troublesome subject. Tutors may require a certain curriculum or work with what you already have for your student. Clarify the requirements ahead of time to obtain the correct curriculum.

**Online classes:** There are many exciting online options for homeschoolers with new options becoming available almost every semester. Abeka and Bob Jones University both offer complete schooling packages in which classes can be viewed on DVD or streamed online. Potter’s School and Landry Academy offer classes that can be live streamed and the students can interact with the instructor. Veritas Press and Apologia offer both live-streamed classes and self-paced classes.

Here are a few final thoughts. Homeschoolers easily become overwhelmed with choosing curriculum. But I can assure you that having the perfect curriculum is not the key to your homeschooling success. Actually, the perfect curriculum doesn’t exist. In my years of homeschooling I have known people who have used every method listed here, and some had great success and some had failures. The key to success seems to stem not from curriculum choices but from depending on Christ. He knows your needs. He knows your children. He will lead and guide you and create something beautiful out of your homeschool for His glory.

## Observable Characteristics Indicative of

# MODALITY STRENGTHS

	<b>VISUAL</b>	<b>AUDITORY</b>	<b>KINESTHETIC</b>
<b>Learning Style</b>	Learns by seeing; watching demonstrations	Learns from instructions, from others or self	Learns by doing; direct involvement
<b>Reading</b>	Likes description; sometimes stops reading to stare into space and imagine the scene; intense concentration	Enjoys dialogue, avoids lengthy description, unaware of illustrations; moves lips or subvocalizes	Prefers stories where action occurs early; fidgets when reading, handles books; not an avid reader
<b>Spelling</b>	Recognizes words by sight; relies on configuration of words	Uses a phonics approach; has auditory word-attack skills	Often is a poor speller; writes words to determine if they feel right
<b>Handwriting</b>	Tends to be good, particularly when young; spacing and size are good; appearance is important	Has more difficulty learning in initial stages; tends to write lightly; says strokes when writing	Good initially, deteriorates when space becomes smaller; pushes harder on writing instrument
<b>Memory</b>	Remembers faces, forgets names; writes things down, takes notes	Remembers names, forgets faces; remembers by auditory repetition	Remembers best what was done, not what was seen or talked about
<b>Imagery</b>	Vivid imagination; thinks in pictures, visualizes in detail	Subvocalizes, thinks in sounds; details less important	Imagery not important; images that do occur are accompanied by movement
<b>Distractibility</b>	Generally unaware of sounds; distracted by visual disorder or movement	Easily distracted by sound	Not attentive to visual, auditory presentations - appears distractible
<b>Problem Solving</b>	Deliberate; plans in advance; organizes thoughts by writing them; lists problems	Talks problems out, tries solutions verbally, subvocally; talks self through problem	Attacks problems physically; impulsive; often selects solution involving greatest activity
<b>Response to periods of Inactivity</b>	Stares; drools, finds something to watch	Hums; talks to self or to others	Fidgets; finds something to move; holds up hand
<b>Response to New Situations</b>	Looks around; examines structure	Talks about situation, pros and cons, what to do	Tries things out, touches, feels; manipulates
<b>Emotionality</b>	Somewhat repressed; stares when angry; cries easily, beams when happy, facial expression is a good index of emotion	Shouts with joy or anger; blows up verbally but soon calms down; expresses emotion verbally and through changes in volume, pitch of voice	Jumps for joy; hugs, tugs and pulls when happy; stamps, jumps and pounds when angry, stomps off; general body tone is a good index of emotion
<b>Communication</b>	Quiet; does not talk at length; becomes impatient when extensive listening is required, may use words clumsily; describes without embellishment; uses words such as see, look, etc.	Enjoys listening but cannot wait to talk; descriptions are long but repetitive; likes hearing self and others talk; uses words such as listen, hear, etc.	Gestures when speaking; does not listen well; stands close when speaking or listening; quickly loses interest in detailed verbal discourse; uses words such as get, take, etc.
<b>Response to the Arts</b>	Not particularly responsive to music; prefers the visual arts; tends not to voice appreciation of art of any kind, but can be deeply affected by visual display; focuses on details and components rather than the work as a whole	Favors music; finds less appeal in visual art, but is readily able to discuss it; misses significant detail, but appreciates the work as a whole; is able to develop verbal association for all art forms; spends more time talking about pieces than looking at them	Responds to music by physical movement; prefers sculpture; touches statues and paintings; at exhibits stops only at those in which he or she can become physically involved; comments very little on any art form

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## Curriculum Comparison Chart

STYLE	PROS	CONS	CURRICULUM OPTIONS
Classical	Systematic Time tested Rigorous	More challenging to teach Time consuming	Veritas Press Logos Press Memoria Press Classical Conversations Classical Academic Press Tapestry of Grace
Textbook/ Workbook	Good for self-starters Confidence Familiarity Easily Graded Visual Learner	Can be boring Can be expensive Trouble for auditory and kinesthetic learners Not reusable	Abeka Bob Jones Christian Liberty Academy Rod and Staff ACE School of Tomorrow Alpha Omega
Unit Study	Creative Can be cost effective Multi-age approach Fun, interesting Great for kinesthetic learners	More time intensive Unfamiliar	KONOS Christian Cottage Units My Father's World Weaver Galloping the Globe Five in a Row The Prairie Primer Further Up and Further In
Living Books	Uses real books Develops imagination Teaches character	Does not prepare for testing Can be expensive	Simplycharlottemason.com My Father's World Beautiful Feet Timberdoodle Learning Language Arts Through Literature
Unschooling	Flexible Delight driven Trains for real life situations	Can be inadequate for college preparation Does not teach discipline in studying	<i>Teaching Your Own Way</i> by John Holt  <i>Growing Without Schooling</i> by John Holt
Eclectic	Enhances individuality Enhances academics	Time-consuming for parents Difficult for new homeschoolers	Any combination of the above May be different for every child and every subject

## E. Which Curriculum Might Be Right for Your Family?

1. List each of your children under their primary learning modality and explain why you place him or her where you did:
  - a. Visual Learners
  - b. Auditory Learners
  - c. Kinesthetic Learners
  
2. Now list each of your children under the method of education you think would best suit them and explain why:
  - a. Classical
  - b. Unit Studies
  - c. Textbook/Workbook
  - d. Living Books
  - e. Unschooling
  - f. Eclectic
  
3. Based on the above observations, circle the curriculum below which you intend to investigate. Make notes where space allows for follow-up.
  - a. A Beka Book
  - b. ACE School of Tomorrow
  - c. Alpha Omega: Life Pacs/Monarch/Switched on Schoolhouse
  - d. Beautiful Feet
  - e. Bob Jones
  - f. Christian Cottage Unit Studies
  - g. Christian Liberty Academy
  - h. Christian Light Educatin
  - i. Classical Conversations
  - j. Five in a Row
  - k. KONOS
  - l. Memoria Press
  - m. My Father's World
  - n. Rod & Staff
  - o. Tapestry of Grace
  - p. Teaching Textbooks
  - q. Timberdoodle
  - r. \_\_\_\_\_
  - s. \_\_\_\_\_

## F. Resources

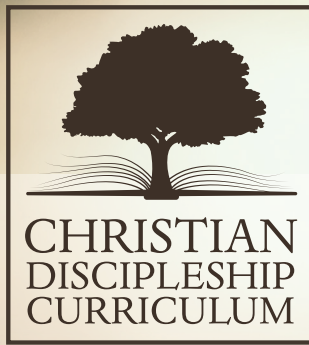
The following recommended resources would be a great place to start for more in-depth reading on curriculum choices and learning styles.

- ***102 Top Picks***. Cathy Duffy. CHEC highly recommends this book.
- ***The Way They Learn***. Cynthia Ulrich Tobias. This book identifies a wide variety of learning styles that affect a child's comprehension and attention.
- ***A Big What Now Book of Learning Styles: A Fresh and Demystifying Approach***. Carol Barnier. Another excellent look at learning styles.
- ***How to Get Your Child Off the Refrigerator and on to Learning***. Carol Barnier. A great encouragement if you have a child who doesn't sit quietly and do his or her schoolwork.



*... but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.*  
(Romans 16:19b)

*But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love  
is with those who fear Him, and His righteousness  
with their children's children — with those who keep  
His covenant and remember to obey his precepts.*  
(Psalms 103:17-18)



The Barna Group reports that 97% of kids raised in Christian homes have jettisoned a biblical worldview by the time they are 18 years old. Are you ready for your kids to leave the faith? Or are you looking for something better?

INTRODUCING THE ...

# Christian Discipleship Curriculum



*A project of Kevin Swanson and Generations*



## **PILLAR #1**

### **Family Discipleship**

Fathers and mothers are responsible for raising their children in the atmosphere of the Lord's nurture (Deut. 6:7, Eph. 6:4). Family discipleship must involve the consistent and diligent teaching of God's recommended curriculum: the Bible.



## **PILLAR #2**

### **Biblical Worldview**

Training in a biblical worldview is the crying need of our day. What will it look like to teach our children with a biblical worldview? First, Jesus Christ must be preeminent in history, literature, and science (Col. 1:18). Secondly, the most essential building block of knowledge (above and beyond every other component) is the fear of God (Prov. 1:7). Thirdly, our children must be prepared with strong biblical foundations to defend the faith (2 Cor. 10:4-6).



## **PILLAR #3**

### **Best Teachers, Best Books**

The best teachers write the best books. Therefore, we must always prefer Christian teachers over non-Christian teachers because our students will be like those that teach them (Luke 6:40). Abiding and enduring books are a thousand times worth reading over the books that come and go through the centuries. It is wise to set your children at the feet of the best teachers by reading the greatest Christian books.



## **PILLAR #4**

### **Worship & Life Application**

Without life application, knowledge is fleeting and becomes an exercise in pride and self-deception (James 1:22-24). Discipleship and mentorship must include life application. The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and real reverence will result in worship and obedience to the Word.

[Generations.org/Curriculum](http://Generations.org/Curriculum)



# CHAPTER 5



## Testing and Evaluations

### CONTENTS:

- A. Interpreting Test Scores
- B. Testing FAQs
- C. What Should My Child Know to do Well on a Standardized Achievement Test?
- D. Testing for College Entrance

*- Revised by Teri Spray-*

# A. Interpreting Test Scores

## Testing Norms

Nationally normed tests have measured thousands of individuals from various geographic regions, ages, and demographics to create a scientific norming base. This is the population with whom you are being compared in your testing scores.



*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience ....  
(James 1:2-3)*

*"... And it shall come to pass in all the land," says the LORD, "That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, I will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, 'This is My people'; and each one will say, 'The LORD is my God.'"  
(Zechariah 13:8-9)*

## Percentiles/Norms (PR or NPR)

In Colorado, the homeschooling law requires that you measure your child's progress by percentiles. Here is how a percentile is measured: if a score is 88th percentile, that means that in a group of 100 children across the nation at your child's grade, your child would most likely measure above 88 of them or in the top 12%. Percentile scores may be abbreviated "PR" or "NPR" on your test results. (For homeschool law purposes, we only use the national composite percentile scores, which indicate your student is obtaining a score of 13% or higher.)

## Grade Equivalencies (GE)

Grade equivalencies compare a child's progress according to a "typical" measure of other students at that particular grade level. For example, if you have a fifth grade child and your child scored 9.5 on a grade equivalency in math, then that means, given this particular set of problems, your child scored as well as an average student in the 5th month of the 9th grade would typically score when taking this test. However, this does NOT mean that your child can do all the math that a ninth grade child can do. Similarly, a 7.2 would mean your child scored as well as an average student in the 2nd month of 7th grade.

## Standard Scores (SS)

Regarding tests such as the Woodcock-Johnson, during the norming process, various co-efficiencies will be used to establish the final scores. One of these numbers is called the standard score. This number is only understandable to the test administrator who holds the book of norming tables to interpret the score. Therefore, standard scores should not be given to parents as a measure of a student's progress unless the test administrator is available to interpret them for the parent.

## B. Testing FAQ's

### How can I prepare my child for testing? Do the R's!

- **Review:** math skills, especially calculation.
- **Refresh:** capitalization rules and punctuation marks.
- **Resist:** cramming for the test; last-minute learning is often lost on testing day.
- **Rest:** be sure that you and your child are well fed and rested for testing. Drink water!
- **Relax:** testing is only one measure of your child's progress.
- **Reduce:** distractions; get childcare for the younger children, etc.
- **Reset:** if you would like to see different results than previous tests, work on specific low score areas.

### When should we do a professional evaluation (assessment) instead of an achievement test?

Factors to consider for choosing professional evaluation (assessment) instead of achievement testing include:

- Is my child ready for an achievement test?
- Is my child able to maintain focus and attention for the testing process?
- Is my child physically able to do the test?
- Is my child emotionally able to be tested?

If you answered “Yes” to the above questions, then perhaps a standardized test is an appropriate assessment for your child.

If you answered “No” to the above questions and will answer “Yes” to the following, then perhaps an alternative form of assessment is a more appropriate choice for your child.

- Is anything affecting my child's learning at this time: illness, stress, crisis?
- Is my child a ‘different learner’ and perhaps an interview or portfolio presentation would more suit his needs for assessment?
- Would I rather have a written assessment of my child's progress than an achievement test score?

### When should testing be completed?

Colorado statutes do not specify a time during the year for assessment or testing. It makes sense that a child would be tested or assessed at the end of the enrolled year. For example: third grade testing is typically administered at the end of third grade. (The parent determines what year the child will be in third grade as well as the date of completion.) Most schools will require that the assessment be completed in the spring, so if you utilize a private (independent school), find out their required date for assessment.

### Is an achievement test an accurate measure of a child's knowledge?

Yes, typically. An achievement test is a measure of long-term memory. It is important to understand that such a test is a ‘snapshot’ of what your child has learned previously and can recall on test day. He may or may not have had the opportunity to learn the things he is tested on. The items which show mastery on

testing day are usually items which the child knows well. The scores on the test show your child's abilities in comparison to other children with a similar age or grade level.

### **What if my child's test results are low?**

Be proactive and conduct 'practice' tests before the actual test so you know if the scores might be low beforehand. If they might be low, then you might consider choosing a professional evaluation as an alternative.

**Terri Spray**, the author and revising editor of this chapter, is a professional evaluator. She wants to specifically share this with readers:

“When I conduct professional evaluations (portfolio assessments) for struggling students, I ask parents to bring the following items with them to the assessment conference:

- a.** A list of goals or objectives for the school year(s).
- b.** Samples of work at the beginning, middle, and end to show progress.
- c.** A list of materials being used in their program.

In conclusion, I write a letter of recommendation with my observations for the parent's file and records.”

Check with your evaluator at the beginning of the school year so you will know what will be expected for your bi-annual assessment.

The chart below lists, compares, and briefly explains nationally standardized testing options.

Nationally Normed Achievement Test	CO Home School Law Compliant	CHEC Independent School compliant	Test Administrator Requirements	Results	Comments	How to acquire the test
California Achievement Test CAT/6  TerraNova2	yes	yes	No special administrator requirements	Comprehensive  5.5 hours of testing, timed	Online version is now available  If bought from CLASS, take the next grade entering. (Take the entering 6th grade test to measure 5th grade achievement)  Request Composite Score	Academic Excellence  Bayside School Services  CAT forms Testing Services  Christian Liberty (CLASS)  Seton Testing  FLO
Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	yes	yes	4-year-degree required to administer	Comprehensive  5.5 hours of testing, timed	Science and Social Studies are optional	Bob Jones University Press
Stanford 10 Achievement Test	yes	yes	4-year-degree required to administer	Comprehensive  5.5 hours of testing, untimed	NOT the SAT for College Entrance	Bob Jones University Press  ABeka Books  Seton Testing
Woodcock Johnson Achievement Battery	yes	yes  See required results for CHEC Ind. School	Administered one-on-one by a professional educator	2-3 hours of testing 80% oral test  Optional 2-3 short written portions	Results available on day of test  Consultation services may be included	Not for sale to homeschool parents  Schedule with a professional tester

# C. What Should My Child Know to do Well on a Standardized Achievement Test?

**This list is compiled by author Teri Spray and comes from years of achievement testing.**

Every child is going to vary greatly in skills. Children do not all learn to walk and talk at the exact same time; they also do not learn math and reading skills at exactly the same time either. The following list is a very general set of academic expectations here in the United States.

By the end of each grade it is generally expected that your child will probably have mastered the following basic academic skills:

## **Kindergarten:**

- Knows colors, shapes
- Knows alphabet letter names and sounds
- Has pencil control, can color, and write own name
- Can read short vowel three-and-four-letter words
- Can recognize numbers to 50 and can count to 20 forward and backward
- Can solve simple addition and subtraction to 10
- Can recognize 50 sight words

## **First Grade:**

- Can read 200+ words on sight
- Can read a short paragraph independently
- Can write a complete sentence with a capital and a period
- Can add and subtract numbers to 20
- Can count and recognize numbers to 100

## **Second Grade:**

- Can read an entire page of one-to-two-syllable words independently
- Can write a three-sentence paragraph with proper use of capitals and punctuation
- Can add and subtract to 100 with beginning borrowing and carrying
- Knows coin values

## **Third Grade:**

- Can read chapters independently (two-to-three-syllable words)
- Can write a one-page paper (7-10 sentences with capitalization and punctuation)
- Can add or subtract to 1000, multiply and divide to 100
- Knows basic measures and money
- Solves simple story problems

**Fourth Grade:**

- Can read simple chapter books independently (reads three-syllable words well)
- Can write essays and stories up to 10-15 sentences
- Can add, subtract, multiply, and divide to 1000
- Solves beginning fractions
- Solves two-step story problems

**Fifth Grade:**

- Can read chapter books with four-syllable words
- Can write a two-page paper or story
- Can add, subtract, multiply, and divide to 1000s
- Can add, subtract, multiply, and divide simple fractions
- Can apply capitalization, punctuation rules

**Sixth Grade:**

- Can read 200-page children's book independently
- Can write a three-page paper or story
- Can diagram and/or identify all parts of speech
- Can add, subtract, multiply, and divide to 1000s
- Can add, subtract, multiply, and divide fractions
- Can add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals

**Seventh Grade:**

- Can read a children's classic/biography independently
- Can write a three-to-four-page research paper with three resources
- Can write vivid, descriptive paragraphs
- Can work all operations with whole numbers, fractions, and decimals
- Can work all operations with percentages
- Has covered life science and world geography

**Eighth Grade:**

- Can read American literary classics
- Can write four-to-five-page paper with five or more sources
- Can write dialogue, vivid descriptions, and poems
- Can work operations with whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percentages
- Can apply basic geometry formulas for triangles and circles
- Can solve pre-algebra equations
- Has covered earth science and U.S. history (remember to include the study of the U.S. Constitution in your history studies)

High School levels and expectations vary widely. The following course load would prepare a student for a four-year university. (See also **CHAPTER 6** High School.)

### **Ninth Grade:**

- Can appreciate classics of literature
- Can write five-to-seven-page papers with seven or more sources
- Can write a story with character development
- Has covered Algebra 1 and/or consumer/business math skills
- Has covered physical science and U.S. government

### **Tenth Grade:**

- Can analyze literature
- Can write 7-10 page papers with seven-to-ten sources
- Can write a story with a plot, theme, and characters
- Has covered geometry and/or consumer and business math skills
- Has covered biology and world history

### **Eleventh Grade:**

- Can analyze literature
- Can write 8+ page papers with 10-12 sources
- Has covered Algebra 2 with trigonometry
- Has covered consumer and business math skills
- Has covered U.S. history and may cover physics
- Latin or another foreign language

### **Twelfth Grade:** (*This high school student will graduate with 8 or 9 college credits.*)

- Can analyze European literature
- Can write 10+ page papers with twelve or more sources
- Has taken college algebra at community college
- Has possibly taken chemistry with a lab at community college
- Has covered current events with or without economics
- Latin or another foreign language

## D. Testing for College Entrance

It's very important to remember that your college may not require an ACT or SAT test for entrance. Two-year schools and the military may only require an Accuplacer or ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational and Aptitude Battery) test for entrance.

Be aware that College Entrance exams are not considered standardized achievement tests and are not acceptable tests for families who filed a NOI and are following the home-based education law. Private schools may or may not accept college entrance exams for their assessment requirements.

### **Students register themselves for the ACT and SAT online.**

- Register for the ACT at: [ACTstudent.org](http://ACTstudent.org) (Use Homeschool Code: 969-999 or the code of your private or independent school, if they have one).
- Register for the SAT at [collegereadiness.collegeboard.org](http://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org) (use Homeschool Code: 970000).

(For the CHEC Independent School reports, make sure your results include the Composite for the ACT or Total Score for the SAT.)

### **SAT**

Students can now prepare for the SAT online through Khan Academy services at no extra charge. The link for Khan is on the SAT website registration page. The SAT has been updated. These are some important highlights from the website listed above:

#### **Key Content Changes**

Like other assessments in the SAT Suite of Assessments, the new SAT includes a Reading Test, Writing and Language Test, and a Math Test. The SAT has an optional essay component, which some colleges will require. SAT questions focus on skills that matter most for college readiness and success, according to the latest research.

#### **Words in Context**

Many questions on the new SAT focus on important, widely used words and phrases found in texts in many different subjects. Some questions ask you to figure out a word's meaning based on context. The words are ones that you will probably encounter in college or in the workplace long after test day. No longer will students use flashcards to memorize obscure words, only to forget them the minute they put their test pencils down. The redesigned exams will engage students in close reading and honor the best work of the classroom.

#### **Command of Evidence**

The Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section and the SAT Essay ask you to interpret, synthesize, and use evidence found in a wide range of sources. These sources include informational graphics, such as tables, charts, and graphs, as well as multi-paragraph passages in the areas of literature and literary nonfiction, the humanities, science, history and social studies, and on topics about work and career.

For every passage or pair of passages you'll see during the Reading Test, at least one question will ask you to

identify which part of the text best supports the answer to the previous question. In other instances, you'll be asked to find the best answer to a question by pulling together information conveyed in words and graphics.

The Writing and Language Test also focuses on command of evidence. It asks you to do things like analyze a series of sentences or paragraphs and decide if it makes sense. Other questions ask you to interpret graphics and to edit a part of the accompanying passage so that it clearly and accurately communicates the information in the graphics.

Note: The New SAT makes the essay portion optional.

The SAT Essay also tests command of evidence. After reading a passage, you'll be asked to determine how the author builds an argument to persuade an audience through the use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive devices. Scorers look for cogent, clear analyses supported by critical reasoning and evidence drawn from the text provided.

## **ACT**

At ACT.org, students can prepare for the ACT using a free Prep Guide. The Official ACT Prep Guide includes:

- Three practice tests
- Explanations for all correct and incorrect answer choices
- All-new test forms, including the writing test
- Test-taking strategies for each test section
- Hundreds of additional practice questions in the online bonus content area

In conclusion, tests, assessments and evaluations are tools for you to use in the home-based education of your children. We encourage you to use them to your advantage. Homeschooling parents and their students should embrace these opportunities as an indication of the successful results of their hard work. Research proves that homeschooled students test above average on standardized tests. Beyond that, tests can show you areas of strengths and weaknesses in your student, allowing you to fine tune teaching methods and curricula for even greater success.



*No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.  
For I am convinced that neither death nor life,  
neither angels nor demons,  
neither the present nor the future,  
nor any powers,  
neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation,  
will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
(Romans 8:37-39)*

# CHAPTER 6



## High School

### CONTENTS:

- A. Homeschooling Through High School
- B. High School and Beyond Q & A
- C. Personal Issues for Teens During High School
- D. Planning Your High School
- E. Keeping Good Records and Transcripts
- F. Other High School Learning Opportunities
- G. Graduation
- H. Preparing for Careers: Post-High School Work and Service
- I. Preparing for College

Appendix I: Resources

Appendix II: A Calendar for College-Bound Students

*- Revised by Julianna Dotten -*

# A. Homeschooling Through High School

Hundreds of thousands of homeschooling families have successfully home educated through high school, finding great success and accomplishment in doing so. Whether you are beginning or ending your home education journey with high school, we want to encourage and prepare you for the years ahead so your student can finish strong!



*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.*

*And we boast in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.*

*And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.*

*(Romans 5:1-5)*

## The Benefits

Homeschooling in the high school years can be a great joy for your family. If you have had the opportunity to teach your children through their early, formative years, then now is the season of harvest! Your teenagers can be a tremendous blessing in your home. They are more independent learners, helpful around the house, and excellent companions.

There are many advantages you can provide for your teens through home education. They can continue to learn responsibility and self-governance, develop confidence, grow spiritually, and pursue academic goals. Many homeschooled teens are able to experience more of 'real life' than their counterparts in a classroom. The flexibility of homeschooling allows time for volunteering in the community, working at a part-time job, traveling, and spending time with a wide variety of people. There is also time to develop special talents and work on personal projects such as writing a novel or preparing for a senior music recital.

## Understanding the Purpose of High School

In the early years of our country, most people's education ended at eighth grade. Soon afterward they entered adulthood, either through marriage, employment, or apprenticeship. Many young women started teaching school when they were 15. Many young men entered college at 16. It was not until the beginning of this century that what we now call "high school" came into existence. From its roots as a method of training workers and assimilating immigrant children, high school

has now evolved into a basic educational entry level into society — either directly into the world of work or to further studies at the college level.

In order to get the most benefit from these years, take your focus off the specific subjects young people study in high school, and step back far enough to look at the bigger picture. What kind of adult would you like your child to become? What are their interests, passions, and gifts? What areas of special ability do they demonstrate? Involve your teen in this discovery process. During the elementary years you took the primary responsibility in setting the direction for your child's education; in high school this responsibility should be shifting. It is almost impossible to motivate a young person to work and strive toward a challenging goal for which they feel no personal ownership.

Hopefully, you will have provided a wide range of studies and experiences in the younger years so that your young person has an idea of what interests them. Through prayer, reading, evaluating, and asking many questions, you and your teenager can together begin to sketch out a future destination.

The most important thing you can give to your teen as you prepare them for life is **good character**. The young person who shows honesty, promptness, an alert and interested attitude; takes initiative; knows how to learn; can follow instructions; gets along with other people; and acts responsibly will have no problem getting a job, being promoted, succeeding in college, or eventually running his own company. Use the high school years to cement these character traits into your teenager.

The second thing you need to give to your teenager during these years is a gradual increase in his level of **personal responsibility**. A teen needs to take more and more responsibility for his own learning, finances, time, relationship with God, and personal growth. Help him to develop these skills under your guidance and direction, providing the structure and opportunity for trial and error without irreversible repercussions.

Be sure your teen is prepared to function independently with his **life skills**. Consider all the skills you take for granted: maintaining a checking account, driving a car, cooking dinner, sewing on a button, caring for the yard, paying bills, booking airline tickets, and so many other items. Don't let your teen leave home without these basic skills. (More ideas for teaching life skills are discussed later in this chapter.)

Your young person must also be prepared to compete in the larger arena of differing **worldviews**. Now is the time to introduce the conflicting ideas and arguments that he will encounter in college and in the workplace. Study **David Nobel's** book *Understanding the Times*, or *Let Us Highly Resolve* by **David Quine**. Subscribe to *World* magazine. Familiarize your teen with national and world events, and current modes of thinking (such as postmodernism). Have deep discussions about poverty, feminism, euthanasia, the role of government, the environment, welfare, abortion, violence and crime, and biblical family structure.

Prepare your teens with **discernment skills** they need to live in the world, but not be of the world. The high school years can be a time of transition before your teens leave home when they are taught — and can practice — discernment for making friends and the myriad of choices they will be free to make as adults. Alert your teens to the dangers of pornography, alcohol, and drugs, and provide specific tools and strategies they can use to guard themselves in these areas. Look for answers to tough questions in the Scriptures. A Christian health textbook, such as Abeka's *A Healthier You*, studied during their middle or early high school years will help establish a foundation for good choices based on biblical principles.

Finally, don't just worry about what your young person needs to know; teach him **how to learn**. This might include how to conduct research, read for information, study efficiently, take notes, outline a book or lecture, and then skillfully communicate what he has learned verbally and in writing. Help him develop his vocabulary. Study logic and thinking skills. Teach time management. A young person who is skilled in these areas will be a lifelong learner.

Since most adults change careers several times during their working life, these skills are necessary for survival. Once you have considered the bigger picture, you are ready to start thinking about **academics**; however, even in this area, don't limit your thinking to your own high school experience. There are so many creative ways to reach your goals. The more clearly you define the destination, the more efficiently you can map out the route. Your teen has only a limited amount of the precious commodity time. Focus his efforts on reaching the final goal.

## Words of Encouragement

As you and your student seek the Lord for His will for the high school years, be assured that He will equip you for whatever that road may look like. Even if you're going through a crisis — be it a family member with cancer or a major remodeling project — God will use those years for the good of your student. The remarkable **Corrie Ten Boom**, a faithful servant of the Gospel of Christ and survivor of the Holocaust, said in her classic autobiography, *The Hiding Place*:

“**EVERY** experience God gives us, every person He puts in our lives is the perfect preparation for the future that only He can see.”

The information contained in this chapter may seem daunting at first, maybe a bit overwhelming. Remember, many other ordinary families just like yours have successfully homeschooled their children through high school and have raised amazing adults with whom they now enjoy a life-long friendship as brothers and sisters in Christ. Relax. Read. Learn. Discuss. Plan. Achieve. Work together with your student to chart a course for the high school years. The course can be modified as you go. In the end, you will be glad you helped your student enjoy his high school years by challenging his mind, molding his character, and helping him set goals to achieve in his future adult life.

## Challenges to Consider

The decision to continue, or to begin, homeschooling through high school is one that requires serious consideration. Choices involving classes, career goals, college preparation, work, volunteer experience, driver's training, and social development will all affect your young person's entrance into adulthood.

Since the essence of home education is individualized instruction, this section cannot outline one perfect course of study for your high school student. Deciding upon the best course of study will involve research and multiple decisions. Class choices should be made with consideration of your student's long-term goals, interests, and abilities.

Once you start homeschooling your high school student, be prepared to follow it through! In the elementary years you may have homeschooled on the theory, “If it doesn't work out she can go back to public school next year.” That is not necessarily true in high school. The acceptance of homeschool credits has varied from state to state, and even from district to district, and you cannot assume that your local public high school will accept your student's work without question.

School districts have the legal authority to test previously homeschooled children to determine grade placement. According to the law, they are to accept transcripts so long as they correspond with testing placement. Private schools are usually more accepting of homeschool credits if re-entry into a traditional school becomes necessary.

If homeschooling is begun during the high school years due to a dissatisfaction with the previous school situation, parents may have additional challenges to consider. Social problems can take time to overcome, especially if rebellion is involved. Take whatever time is necessary to address problems with your child's heart and attitude. Make it your highest priority. Academic problems are more easily addressed when godly attitudes and relationships are restored.

Even if you have homeschooled for many years and feel fairly comfortable with the way you have always done things, ninth grade is still a time to take a deep breath and dive back into the research mode. Start with

this guide, then expand your reading with some of the supplemental books and resources listed at the end of this chapter. This is the home stretch, so plan to finish strong!

### Years of Unprecedented Opportunity

God has uniquely positioned each of us as parents to be amazingly influential in the lives of our teens. It makes little sense that God would design these special years as difficult and unproductive, as is often the perspective in today's culture. Perhaps it is necessary to ask God to renew our minds and give us a new perspective on the adolescent years.

**Paul Tripp** identifies this time as:

“**YEARS** of unprecedented opportunity. They are the golden age of parenting, when you begin to reap all the seeds you have sown in their lives, when you can help your teenager to internalize the truth, preparing him or her for a productive, God-honoring life. These are the years of penetrating questions, the years of wonderful discussion never before possible. These are the years of failure and struggle that put the teen's true heart on the table. These are the years of daily ministry and of great opportunity. These are not years merely to be survived! They are to be approached with a sense of hope and a sense of mission.”<sup>1</sup>

We made the decision to home educate our children when our oldest was a preschooler. By the time each of our four children had entered first grade, our commitment to home education had both widened and deepened.

However, when our daughter reached ninth grade, my husband and I found ourselves rethinking the entire area of homeschooling. Almost as if we were beginners, we needed to pray and think through once again what we were doing. Questions plagued us: Could we teach high school subjects? How were we going to survive dissections? I had not studied algebra since I was in the ninth grade, and even then I did not enjoy the subject! How could I teach quadratic equations? Would I know all the correct answers to the secondary curricula as easily as I knew the colors of the rainbow, the days of the week, and the multiplication tables? Was I equipped to cover American literature from a Christian perspective, talk about the ethics of euthanasia in biology, and discuss the causes of the Civil War?

God has been incredibly faithful to us as a family to provide the answers to these questions and to a hundred more! He has provided excellent teacher's guides, good spiritual guidance, and a desire to learn right along with our teens. With one young person recently graduated and now enrolled in college, and another teen managing well through geometry and world history, we smile as we remember our previous insecurities about teaching our high schoolers. This has been more fun than the younger years with our children! Beginning to see some of the fruit of our efforts has encouraged us tremendously and caused us to praise the Lord for directing our steps into home education!

Following are some reasons we have found for continuing to home educate our children through these challenging and exciting years. The reasons are grouped into six categories; the first four follow the pattern as stated in the Gospel of Luke: *And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man* (Luke 2:52); the remaining two reasons relate to your family and personal beliefs.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul David Tripp. *Age of Opportunity*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1997), p. 19.

### **Spiritual Reasons** — As a parent you believe:

- God gave you your teens; therefore, you are accountable to Him for how they are raised. You need to raise your teens according to the guidelines God has given us in the Bible.
- God gave you the conviction in your heart to homeschool, and He did not set an age limit.
- All curriculum should be taught in relationship to Scriptural truths and principles.
- God has a unique plan for your teen's life.
- These are the years when your young person internalizes a worldview as his own. A cohesive and complete biblical worldview is needed to make wise choices throughout life.
- It is necessary to instill Christian values and principles in your teen.
- It is your job personally to lead your teen to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ or to disciple your teen in his established walk with the Lord.
- Your teen needs to learn how to communicate his faith to others.

### **Academic Reasons** — As a parent you believe:

- Parents are quite able to teach their own teens.
- The tutorial method is a superior method of education; you can truly individualize your teen's instruction to his or her specific educational needs.
- Because you know and love your teen, you have a distinct advantage as their teacher.
- It is both important and rewarding to share the educational experience with your teens.
- With fewer distractions at home, teens can listen more attentively and study better.
- A secondary level student can be involved in making academic decisions, textbook choices, and planning the academic year to an extent not possible in any other educational setting.
- Homeschooled teens learn to work independently — a vital skill for college-level work.
- Students should learn at their own pace; home education provides the time for review if necessary and the opportunity to accelerate academics if that is needed.
- Home education reduces grade pressures and peer competition.
- There can be a balanced presentation of both evolution and creation in the sciences.
- These are the years when a young person decides what a Christian worldview means to him or her and how it relates to each subject area.
- Colleges are actively seeking out homeschooled students because they know these students are excellent 'college material.'
- You desire to convey a lifelong love of learning to your teen.
- You have the responsibility for overseeing the curricula to which your teen will be exposed.
- Home education is more efficient with your teen's time, creating opportunity for work and service.
- There are special opportunities in the life of a teen that are not-to-be-missed teachable moments.

### **Character Reasons** — As a parent you believe:

- It takes time to shape the godly character of your teen.
- Your teens are to be conformed to the image of Christ, and this can best be done in the context of a godly home and family.
- Your teen needs to practice godly wisdom in his or her decisions.
- Colleges and employers are actively seeking out homeschooled students because they know these students have the character qualities necessary to excel at the college level and in business.

### **Social Reasons** — As a parent you believe:

- Homeschooling will improve or strengthen your teen's self-image.
- The truth of the 'Companionship Principle' is accurate; Proverbs 13:20 states, *He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.*
- Your teens need both quality time and quantity time with godly adults in an educational setting.
- Spending large amounts of close contact with an important adult role model is the best way to learn social skills.
- The teen needs to be protected to some degree from false philosophies, humanism, peer pressure, and immoral temptations.
- Your teens need to be age-integrated rather than age-segregated in their socialization experiences, learning social skills with all ages rather than in the unnatural setting of large groups of same-age young people. Teens teaching other teens social skills is a case of 'the blind leading the blind.'
- Home education at the secondary level provides a springboard for godly moral standards to be exercised and for good manners to be practiced and reinforced daily.
- Education at home relieves the emphasis on boy/girl relationships, and alternatives to worldly, immoral dating practices can be encouraged.
- Homeschooled young people are available for ministry outreaches and hospitality opportunities during the day.

### **Family Reasons** — As a parent you believe:

- You and your teens wish to demonstrate that the home should be the center of a Christian family.
- Being together with your teens is truly enjoyable.
- With your teens alongside you every day, you are definitely motivated to build healthy relationships in the family.
- There needs to be time available for parents and teens to develop and maintain a unique bond of love and closeness.
- You should be the primary authority to whom your teens respond.
- Homeschooling gives siblings the opportunity to practice loving each other, resolving conflict and sharing on a daily basis, thus strengthening the relationships among them in your home.
- Home education permits the family to learn and grow together.
- Teens need a strong family foundation to help combat self-esteem issues; high teen pregnancy rates, high suicide rates, and dropout rates; schooling at home gives teens the extra love and support they need at this time.
- Your family is a laboratory of relationships.
- Teens learn best in a physically safe environment — a godly, Christian home is typically gun-safe, bomb-free, and drug-free.
- The family's schedule should be decided by the family members and not driven by the demands of the conventional school.
- It is possible to erase the effects of prior negative experiences your teens may have had in another school environment.
- The flexibility of your own scheduling is desirable.
- You can take advantage of frequent or extended educational field trips.
- Home education provides an excellent solution to the dilemma of parents serving as missionaries who do not want to be separated from their children for educational purposes.

## **Personal Reasons** — As a parent you believe:

- You wish to continue to grow in your own relationship with the Lord; godly home education requires that the parents have a strong relationship with the Lord.
- The Lord will use this process of education to teach and refine you as parents.
- Home educating your teens gives a unique sense of fulfillment.
- You need both the time and the motivation to review your own education from a Christian perspective.
- If you have been homeschooling all along, you can have the sense of accomplishment in persevering to complete what you have started.

## B. High School and Beyond Q & A

**Q.** What graduation requirements are required by my state's law?

**A.** Check with your state or **HSLDA.org**. Keep in mind that if your student is college-bound, you will want to check with any prospective colleges for the credits they look for in high school. The High School Planning sheets later in this chapter contain more specifics about what credits you might want to include.

**Q.** Do colleges accept homeschool graduates?

**A.** Most colleges now accept homeschool students on an equal basis as other students. Keep in mind that colleges typically put more weight on ACT/SAT scores to validate a homeschool transcript. By planning ahead, homeschool students have an equal if not better chance of being accepted into a college than their public school counterparts.

**Q.** What about high school science labs?

**A.** Most high school science textbooks written for homeschoolers have easy-to-follow instructions for completing labs at home. Supply companies such as Nature's Workshop Plus and Hands On Labs sell science lab and dissection kits. Consider gathering a group of friends to do labs together or having your younger children participate as much as they are able.

**Q.** What about socialization in high school?

**A.** Spending time with parents and other wise adults builds the most profitable relationships and is more important than ever during the high school years. Encourage your teen to seek out godly mentors from your church, community, or homeschool group and teach him to grow accustomed to talking with adults. It's also important to encourage wise friends of all ages who will encourage your student in the Lord. Try to make friendships family-based rather than peer-based, and your teen will benefit from the skill of being able to relate to a variety of age ranges.

**Q.** How do dual enrollment hours count toward high school credits?

**A.** Typically, three college credit hours equals one high school credit. So if your student has taken one semester of English Composition for college credit, that can count toward his whole year of high school English. Even if a college course is over three credits, you may want to consider only counting it as one year of high school credit to avoid too many credits per subject on the transcript.

**Q.** I'm not good at higher math. What should I do?

**A.** There are many helps out there for teaching higher math. Video courses, online classes, online helps, and private tutors are some of the many options for higher math. Do you know any college students or adults in your community who are majoring or majored in math and would be willing to help your student out? Also, consider having your spouse help with subjects (such as math) if it is more their specialty.

**Q.** Is grading necessary?

**A.** Although often not necessary in the elementary years, it's important to keep track of grades once you reach high school. A simple percent system of problems correct over total problems works well for many subjects. For more details on grading options and determining grade point average (GPA) see the High School Transcripts section later in this chapter.

**Q.** How can I teach high school writing?

**A.** If writing is not your thing, consider using a video course (such as **Andrew Pudewa's IEW**), an online class, using a co-op, or hiring a private tutor. Most of all, have your children read good books and write frequently (whether it be correspondence, essays, learning journals, poems, or short stories).

## C. Personal Issues for Teens During High School

### Emotional Issues of Teens

Parents often begin homeschooling to address academic issues, but they soon find there is so much more to the educating of children than books and report cards. In the teen years, many other issues surface. Having broken out of the mold of traditional schooling methods, home educating parents are also reevaluating the current social expectations of teenagers. There are many resources available for traditional methods of dealing with social issues, and this section will explore a few of these areas from an alternative perspective.

### Independence

The gradual transfer of responsibility over to our children for their own lives started when they were toddlers learning to dress themselves. Little did we realize how quickly the years would fly by and we would be watching them prepare to leave home and start a life of their own. The beauty of home education is that this

process of becoming independent can be individualized to meet the unique needs of each teen, just as it has been in the area of academics. Continue increasing your child's level of independence gradually throughout the high school years. An abrupt change in accountability, responsibility, and independence at age 18 will cause many young people to flounder instead of facing the world with confidence, while a gradual transition can help set them up for success.

## **Rebellion**

Rebellion is the ultimate result of losing the heart of your child. In essence, they are checked out of the relationship and uninterested in honoring you as parent because of their lack of affection and respect for you. This can happen for many reasons. Perhaps you have contributed to the loss by past anger and lack of love, and you need to ask for forgiveness. Perhaps the child has had his or her heart stolen by the world — maybe by friends, television, or computer games. Developing a 'smart mouth' and hiding his or her private life is not healthy behavior in your child. Only at your own peril will you overlook it as 'just a teenager thing.' Do whatever it takes to rebuild a love relationship with your child. Winning back his or her heart is far more important than academic achievements. Not only is this young person's future at stake, but also the future of your grandchildren.

## **Socialization**

Frequent concerns expressed by parents wanting to homeschool their teens involve socialization. Socialization is the set of social skills which are required in order to effectively relate to people of all ages. The home is an excellent environment in which to instruct young people in conversation skills, good manners, resolving conflicts and learning to deal with anger, learning to forgive and to ask for forgiveness, yielding to authority graciously, and seeing a situation from another's point of view. Positive socialization can be modeled within the home, at church, in the neighborhood, at work in the community, and within homeschool groups.

The flip side of the positive socialization coin is the negative socialization which can result from inappropriate peer pressure often associated with conventional schools. Schooling at home increases the opportunity for positive social skills to be modeled and reinforced, and for negative skills to be decreased or eliminated.

Homeschooled teens often continue to honor the morals, values, and counsel of their parents because of the time spent together and the respect that is built. In contrast, teens from conventional schools often quickly learn to replace their parents' values with the values of the young people with whom they spend time.

Homeschooled teenagers are well known for their ability to talk to adults coherently and to care for younger children gently. Studies have shown that they tend to be self-confident and independent thinkers instead of peer dependent, primarily because they have had godly, adult role models with whom they have spent much time.

These high school years provide a marvelous opportunity to prayerfully put the finishing touches on our young adults and to send them into the world and into God's keeping with our blessings as they commence the rest of their lives!

# D. Planning Your High School

As your student grows older, he should gradually take more responsibility for his high school education. The start of high school is an excellent time to sit down together and plan for the next four years, and the high school planning charts below are an excellent place to begin. Write out each subject required and decide together what specific credits best fit your child, keeping in mind your student's gifts and interests. Although some subjects are simply required, he will have much more motivation if he can focus on his interests and passions. An engineering-minded student's high school may look much different than the more creative, artsy type. After all, part of the beauty of homeschooling is its flexibility!

More than creating the perfect transcript, you want your children to be lifelong learners. The goal in high school can't be to teach your young people everything that they will ever need to know — that would be impossible and overwhelming! Instead, teach them how to teach themselves, and they will be equipped for whatever God calls them to in the future.

There are different approaches to homeschooling high school, and it's important to pray and seek the Lord about where He would lead you. Consider your own personality, your child's personality, your own goals, and your child's goals for his future. Some children are independent learners and are able to handle a full load, and a more traditional, textbook-based approach will work wonderfully. Others have been gifted in perhaps art, music, or relationships, and it's important to nurture a love of learning outside the traditional approach. Either way, the goal is for your children to love learning. Yes, there are times when your children will have to do subjects that they don't like, but you want the bulk of learning to be enjoyable. Also, keep in mind your passions. If you just love science, you may want to focus your attention as a teacher on learning biology and creating experiments with your kids while you use more textbooks or video courses for history and English.

Each family and each student's high school years will look vastly different. So don't compare — between families or even between your own kids. God has given you the unique opportunity to encourage each child in their gifts and talents.

What are your student's goals? Is he interested in attending college, or would he rather take a more entrepreneurial route? The college-bound student will need to follow a much more traditional approach. Your teen might have a goal of starting a business right out of high school for which a less traditional approach might be prudent. Be sure to continue reading through this chapter as we present the wide variety of opportunities and how to chart a course for your student to get there.

## **Typical Course of Study**

When considering a course of study, the very first step is to determine goals for this young person in the following areas: spiritual, academic, social, physical, leadership, character, life skills, and work skills. A wise plan for future career, education, service, and/or work will take into consideration your child's desires, abilities, interests, and the Lord's calling on his life. As a general rule, prepare for the most challenging, realistic possibility on his list so that should your teen change his mind, no doors will have been closed on his future.

Although it is common to look at the subjects traditionally taught at each grade level, do not unnecessarily tie yourself to choices inconsistent with the individual goals you have set for your teen. The “typical” course of study outlined in this section closely parallels the public school curricula. Do not feel constrained to follow it exactly, using only a traditional curriculum — especially in an area where your child is gifted or has a strong interest. For example, there are many creative ways to study biology other than with a textbook. Perhaps you could arrange an apprenticeship with an exotic reptile store in combination with a reading program, several dissections, and laboratory experiments. Use your imagination!

## **Sample Course of Study, Grade by Grade:**

### **Grade 9**

- English: Grammar, Composition, Introduction to literature, or High school vocabulary
- Math: Consumer math, Pre-algebra, or Algebra I
- Science: Physical science or Earth science
- Social Studies: U.S. history, Geography, World history, Government
- Foreign Language: choose according to interest and availability of materials or tutors
- Bible: (design your own study or use a Christian curriculum publisher)
- Electives: (choose 1-2 from list below)

### **Grade 10**

- English: Advanced grammar, World literature, High school vocabulary, Practical writing
- Math: Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II
- Science: Biology or Physical science
- Social Studies: U.S. history, Geography, World history, Government
- Foreign Language: (best to continue with same language)
- Bible: (same as above)
- Electives: (choose 1-2 from list below)

### **Grade 11**

- English: Shakespeare, American literature, Advanced composition, Pre-college vocabulary, Speech
- Math: Geometry, Algebra II, Advanced mathematics/Pre-calculus, Applied mathematics, or Business math
- Science: Physics or Chemistry
- Social Studies: U.S. history, Government, or Economics (Colorado law requires instruction in the U.S. Constitution beginning in 7th grade.)
- Foreign Language: (best to continue with same language)
- Bible: (same as above)
- Electives: (choose 1-2 from list below)

## Grade 12

- English: Shakespeare, European literature, Journalism, Pre-college vocabulary, Speech and Drama
- Math: Algebra II, Business math, Advanced mathematics/Pre-calculus, or Calculus
- Science: Physics or Chemistry
- Social Studies: Government, Economics, Sociology, Psychology
- Foreign Language: optional (colleges prefer to see 3-4 years of the same language)
- Bible: (same as above)
- Electives: (choose 1-2 from list below)

### Electives

Typing, computer science, physical education, drawing, oil or watercolor painting, home economics, auto mechanics, family living, wood-shop, carpentry, music, dance, driver's training, music, construction, agriculture, photography, computer programming, business experience, theology, etc. Record time spent on each elective and include all evaluations from tutors, mentors, instructors, and any proficiency tests. List relevant textbooks.

### Note:

The following three charts are examples of high school planners; they show what to expect to accomplish during the four years of high school – depending on what the student's intentions are after graduation.

# High School Planning Chart

## General Education - Not College bound

Use the following chart to plan your high school program for a non-college bound student. In the columns marked 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, mark in the years in which you expect to cover that subject. Included are subjects covered in public schools. There are no graduation requirements for Colorado; this is just a guide. Keep in mind the interests/goals of your student.

<b>Subjects</b>	<b>9th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>11th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Bible					4 years suggested
English					3 years; emphasize writing skills
Mathematics					2 years; can be Consumer or Business math, Pre-Algebra, Algebra, or Geometry
Science					2 years; labs are optional
Social Studies					3 years; full year courses of U.S. and World history plus 1 semester each of government and economics
Foreign Language					2 years
Fine Arts					1-2 years
Physical Education					2 years
Electives					5+ credits; seek out future job-interest related work experience, investigate apprenticeships
<b>Credit Totals:</b>					<b>22 credits minimum</b>

The above sample credits were taken from Colorado school districts. This is only a sample as non-college bound students have much more flexibility.

# High School Planning Chart

## College-Preparatory

Use this chart to plan your high school program for a college bound student. In the columns marked 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, mark in the years in which you expect to cover that subject. Although not included in this chart, critical thinking skills and personal development are necessary.

Subjects	9th	10th	11th	12th	Comments
Bible					4 years suggested
English					4 years required; include 2 years of Composition
Mathematics					4 years required; Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II are typical, plus at least 1 year of college preparatory math such as Trigonometry or Calculus
Social Studies					3 years are required; full year courses of U.S. and World history, 1 year of Government combined w/ Economics
Science					At least 3 years with lab; Biology and Chemistry and Physics usually required
Foreign Language					2-3 years of the same language.
Physical Education					2 years required
Fine Arts					1 year minimum
Electives					5-6 credits in area of career/degree interest; leadership/academic-related preferred
<b>Credit Totals:</b>					<b>28 credits minimum</b>

The above sample credits were taken from Colorado School of Mines and University of Colorado – Boulder. Make sure to check with prospective colleges for their required credits.

# High School Planning Chart

## Highly Selective/Ivy League Bound Students

Use this chart to plan your high school program for a student interested in a highly-selective college. In the columns marked 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th, mark in the years in which you expect to cover that subject. Although not included in this chart, critical thinking skills and personal development are necessary.

<b>Subjects</b>	<b>9th</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>11th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Bible					4 years suggested
English					4 years required; include Classical Literature and Composition
Mathematics					4 years required; Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II are typical, plus at least 1 year of college preparatory math such as Trigonometry or Calculus
Social Studies					2-4 years; including U.S. and European history
Science					4 years with lab; including Biology, Chemistry, Physics and at least one of these at an advanced level.
Foreign Language					4 years of the same language
Physical Education					2 years required
Fine Arts					In spite of varying requirements, plan on 1 year of fine arts
Electives					5+ credits in area of career/degree interest; leadership/academic-related preferred
<b>Credit Totals:</b>					<b>30 credits minimum</b>

The above sample credits were taken from Harvard University and Dartmouth College. Make sure to check with prospective colleges for their required credits.

## Choosing Curriculum

A high school education should take into account your teen's personal and career goals, learning style, special abilities, and unique interests — in addition to your family's budget, lifestyle, and values. Except for selecting more self-teaching and independent study materials, choosing high school curricula is very much like choosing curricula in the lower grades. (Review **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum to understand different teaching styles and approaches.) Be sure to find out what your state's requirements are regarding coursework, so you can choose curriculum accordingly.

There is far too much curricula available to review in this chapter. Please reference **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum for some basic suggestions. As a supplement to this Guidebook, CHEC recommends purchasing the *Christian Home Educators' Curriculum Manual: Junior/Senior High* by **Cathy Duffy**. This comprehensive book reviews all the major publishers plus materials available for individual subjects such as Bible, music, construction, agriculture, photography, computer programming, business experience, theology, mathematics, language arts, history, social studies, geography, science, foreign language, visual and performing arts, physical education, thinking skills, and personal development.

## Teaching 'Hard' Subjects

If the thought of teaching chemistry is scaring you away from homeschooling through high school, take heart! Homeschooling families are much too resourceful to let a little thing like chemistry stand in their way. Your student has many creative options for learning those more difficult subjects.

Most home educated young people become more and more self-taught as they reach the high school years. This is not a bad thing; it is a skill that will keep them learning for the rest of their lives! Many home study courses for high school students are designed to be self-teaching. With the right motivation and resources, students may move ahead of their parents in one or more subjects.

Your options are limited only by your resourcefulness. Some families use a video course, a computer CD, or even an online class with a master teacher in another state. Khan Academy and Thinkwell cover multiple subjects through online videos and practice problems. The computer and the Internet have revolutionized education at all levels, from kindergarten through college.

Other families find a retired teacher or an expert in the field to tutor their student in a difficult subject. Many times you can find an expert in your church congregation who would be thrilled to help your teen. Some high school correspondence schools offer a "full" program, which includes the availability of a teacher to answer questions, grade papers, and provide support.

Students might consider taking one or two classes that might be offered through a local homeschool co-op. This can be especially helpful for courses such as choir, drama, or a chemistry lab. Often Advanced Placement (AP) classes can be taken at your public high school with the instructor's permission. The other students in these advanced classes are usually more studious than the general school population and inspire each other to excel. Be cautious, however, with becoming entwined with the public school system.

Sometimes Dad can take over the teaching responsibilities in math or science classes when Mom starts to feel like she is over her head (or vice versa). This is often a great relationship-builder for fathers and sons or daughters. Teaching can take place in the evenings or on the weekends to accommodate the father's

work schedule. Dad must be committed to following through with this arrangement in order for it to be successful.

Another creative solution is to share expertise with another homeschool parent. Maybe you can teach English composition, and the other parent can teach geometry. Ask around! Your homeschool group might even consider sharing the cost of expensive lab equipment for high school level science.

Finally, more and more students are starting to combine their high school experience with college classes. These can be taken online, through remote live classroom internet feed, correspondence course, or more often classes at a local community college. Not only are these students fulfilling their high school requirements, they are also accumulating credits toward a college degree.

## E. Keeping Good Records and Transcripts

There are many different ways to keep these records. To record daily activities, some parents find a Daytimer® calendar the easiest, simply recording the work accomplished each day in 15-minute increments, including any extracurricular activities. Make sure you understand how to properly fulfill any requirements your state's law requires for keeping records, including transcripts.

The Quarter Credit Hour Report is an alternative to the daily record keeping option mentioned above. The form on the following page may be photocopied for your personal use.

### **Quarter Credit Hour Report Form**

- List the title of the course in the "Course Name" space.
- Identify which quarter is being completed (1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th).
- The space labeled "Period" is already numbered for you.
- Next, record the date on which the student worked on the subject for at least 45 minutes.
- Under "Activity" briefly explain the work the student accomplished.
- If a grade was awarded for this work, record the grade in the right-hand column. Not all periods of work will have a grade. Average the periods which are graded. You can also 'average in' scores for participation, discussion, and consistency.
- When the student works on a subject a little longer than 45 minutes, you may wish to count the additional few minutes as homework time. However, if the student is diligently putting in 1-1/2 hours of work, you may count it as two periods. Repeat the same date beside two periods of work to show that two periods were completed in the same day.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter Credit Hour Report Form for \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter

Period	Course Name	Date	Activity	Grade
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
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18.				
19.				
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25.				
26.				
27.				
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30.				
31.				
32.				
33.				
34.				
35.				
36.				
37.				
38.				
39.				
40.				

## High School Transcripts

- Although a high school transcript is not required by law, keep in mind that colleges, trade schools, the workforce, and the military all require one.
- A transcript must include personal information such as full name, birthdate, grade level, grade in course, GPA and cumulative GPA for each year, specific courses taken for each year, credits per course, total credits, and signature/date. Some higher education and workforce training programs require the student's social security number to be listed.
- Extracurricular activities related to school, honors, awards, and a brief evaluation by you as Daily Teacher or Supervising Principal can also be listed.
- Be sure to date and sign the transcript to make it official.

## Grading in High School

Even if your state does not require you to, and you as a family choose not to do grading throughout elementary or middle school, it's generally important to find a grading system for high school. Colleges and other institutions weigh high school grades and grade point averages heavily in the admissions process. If you can, choose your grading method before you begin the course.

Often, the simplest way to determine a grade is simply to average the chapter tests or reviews throughout the year. Simply divide the correct questions by the total problems on the test and multiply by a hundred. If you teach your children to grade their own work, not only will you have less on your plate, but they will gain from the responsibility and motivation that comes from immediate evaluation of their work. It is wise to occasionally check their completed work and grading in order to maintain accountability and honesty, and use it as an opportunity to build integrity.

For English, social studies, or less objective courses, HSLDA recommends in their article *Grading Guidelines for High School Credit*, "In general, when coming up with a final grade, determine at the beginning of the course what percentage each category of a grade will receive. You will then use the individual scores for each category and take a weighted average using the percentages that you have assigned."<sup>2</sup> You may determine the grade achieved based on your criteria, such as the completion and mastery of the assigned tasks. For example, an A would require reading five books and writing a 2,000-word paper while a B would mean only three books and 1,500 words.

HSLDA also notes that some courses, such as Physical Education or electives may receive a simple pass/fail that will not be included in the grade point calculation.<sup>3</sup>

## How to Determine Credit Hours

Typically, one school year of work equals one credit hour. Often, an elective will equal .5 credits. Keep in mind the typical coursework required from the High School Planning Chart above. Most institutions look for one year/one credit of algebra, geometry, and so on. If you're keeping a logbook, Carnegie Units typically define one credit as 120 hours. Some public schools use 180 hours. For dual-enrolled classes, three

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<sup>2</sup> *Grading Guidelines for High School Credit* HSLDA, accessed September 3, 2016, <https://www.HSLDA.org/highschool/docs/GradingGuidelines.asp>.

<sup>3</sup>ibid.

college credit hours equals one high school credit. To avoid having too many credits on your transcript, you may choose to keep a four-to-five-credit-hour college class to one high school credit. (Read on for more information about having too many credits.)

### What is High School Work?

Some homeschoolers are able to begin high school work in middle school, cutting back on some of the redundancy of middle school and instead taking high school level courses at a slower pace. But how does this method work when it comes to creating a four-year high school transcript? First of all, even if a student is younger, to count as completed material for high school credit, he must demonstrate mastery of the subject. **Robin Zook** notes, “Remember that high school courses are preparing students for college. If a student puts in the right number of hours but does not master the subject matter, that student may not be adequately prepared for college.”<sup>4</sup>

However, some students truly are ready to begin Algebra or Biology in eighth grade and are motivated to finish their high school requirements early. If so, that’s great! Encourage their diligent effort, but don’t slack on the requirements. It’s always wise to take the time to plan out the high school years and your requirements for graduation with your student before you begin. Keep in mind that your state’s graduation requirements are not the only requirements to consider, it’s crucial to look at college admissions requirements if your student ever decides to do college work.

If your student chooses dual-enrollment classes or takes an AP or CLEP test, make sure to include those on the transcript.

Be aware, however, that you may not want to include all high school credits earned on your transcript. For example, a college would look suspiciously on a transcript that included six high school math credits and 40 total credits. Especially if your student began high school work before ninth grade, he may very well have completed a large amount of credits during his high school years, but it is best only to include the credits a particular college is looking for. The previous High School Planning sheets offer the specific credit hours colleges want to see.

### Determining Coursework Titles

Colleges prefer general titles to overly specific. They would rather see the traditional title World Literature than *Christian Classics*, or simply Biology than *Exploring God’s Creation with Biology*. Sometimes even simply naming courses English 1 or English 2 is best. Try to follow the wording of the previous High School Planning Charts, or consider looking at your local school district’s coursework titles.

There is room for some creativity in awarding credits, especially in electives. For example, you could assign your son one credit for “Construction Lab” in his early high school years for designing and building a detached garage on your property. Or award your daughter for the extensive time she spent helping on a conference committee and call it “Project Management.” If it’s possible to mimic the titles of a public or private school transcript or even a course from a college your student is interested in, they are much more

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<sup>4</sup>Robin Zook, “Homeschool Transcript Advice” (unpublished manuscript), hard copy.

likely to accept their work. Once again, keep in mind the credits and titles a college will want to see. If you have any questions, HSLDA's high school consultants are an excellent resource.

## Transcript Resources and Samples

- HSLDA's website has a wealth of information on transcripts (<http://www.HSLDA.org/highschool/academics.asp>). If you are a member of HSLDA, consider using their Fast Transcript Service and Transcript Review.
- Letshomeschoolhighschool.com also has transcript forms, articles, and slide shows about transcript preparation.
- Howtohomeschooltoday.com has a free transcript creator ([http://www.howtohomeschooltoday.com/transcript\\_creator](http://www.howtohomeschooltoday.com/transcript_creator)).
- TranscriptPro: Homeschool Transcript Generator is available at (<http://www.homeschooltranscripts.com>).
- Donna Young.org Printables and Resources has a number of forms to download (<http://www.donnayoung.org/forms/planners/hs-transcript.htm>).

## How to Compute Grade Point Average

For each semester grade of:

A - award four points	4.0
B - award three points	3.0
C - award two points	2.0
D - award one point	1.0
F - award no points	0.0

Simply add up all of the scores and divide by the number of classes. This number will be the student's grade point average. It is customary to extend the grade point average to two decimal places. It is not necessary to show a plus or minus, unless you choose to do so. If your child is college bound, then do calculate grades with plus and minus because high school GPAs are often competitive for college admissions and scholarships. A tenth or hundredth can be a make or break difference for a qualifying GPA. To determine the cumulative GPA, add separately the credit hours and grade points from all semesters up to that point and total grade points by total credit hours. Check out [www.back2college.com](http://www.back2college.com) and [www.gpacalculator.net](http://www.gpacalculator.net) for detailed instructions and online grade calculators.

### Note:

The following are several samples of high school transcripts used by students accepted into colleges.

Produced for a homeschool student  
accepted into Metro State College:

High School Transcript			Living Hope Academy			
Date Issued: September 1, 2011				Address		
Student:	Anonymous	Date of Birth: -----	Credits Earned: 25.00			
Street Address:	Street	Place of Birth: City, State		Weighted GPA: 3.95/4.00		
City/State/Zip:	City/State/Zip	Gender:	Male			
Phone:	000-000-0000	Graduated:	Jun 16, 2011			
Class				Grade	Credits	
<b>FRESHMAN</b>						
Combined Algebra 1 and Geometry				A	1.00	
Composition and Grammar				A	1.00	
Physical Science				A	1.00	
French 1				A	1.00	
PE				A	1.00	
World History				A	1.00	
Biblical Concepts				A	1.00	
<b>SOPHOMORE</b>						
Composition and Literature				B	1.00	
French 2				A	1.00	
Biology				A	1.00	
Algebra 2				A	1.00	
PE				A	1.00	
Logic and Rhetoric				A	1.00	
<b>JUNIOR</b>						
Economics				A	1.00	
French 3				A	1.00	
English Grammar and Structure				A	1.00	
Speech and Debate				A	1.00	
Chemistry				A	1.00	
PE				A	1.00	
Survey of European History				A	1.00	

Continued >>

>> Continued

<b>SENIOR</b>		
Trigonometry/ Pre-Calculus	A	1.00
Advanced Chemistry	A-	1.00
English Literature	A	1.00
U.S History and Government	A	1.00
Public Speaking and Communications	A	1.00
Exams /Tests		
SAT (12/10) - 2190		
Activities / Honors Finalist- Financial Literacy Challenge 2009 4H State Public Speaking Award Music Teacher's Association of California Merit recipient 2009 & 2010		
<b>CERTIFIED BY: Parent Signature:</b> _____ <b>DATE:</b> _____		

Produced for a homeschool student  
accepted into the University of Florida

HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT										
Name: [REDACTED]			Gender: [REDACTED]					Date: 04-01-2009		
Address: [REDACTED]								Birth Date: [REDACTED]		
[REDACTED]								SSN# [REDACTED]		
School Name: [REDACTED]								Graduation Date: 6/2009		
Phone: [REDACTED]								Person to Contact: [REDACTED]		
Grade Level	Year	Course Title	1 <sup>st</sup> Semester		2 <sup>nd</sup> Semester		Final		Yearly Cumulative Totals	
			Grade	Credit	Grade	Credit	Grade	Credit	Credits	GPA
9	05-06	Algebra II	B	0.50	B	0.50	B	1.0		
		American History	B	0.50	B	0.50	B	1.0		
		American Literature 1	A	0.50	A	0.50	A	1.0		
		Introduction to Composition	A	0.25	A	0.25	A	0.5		
		Biology	A	0.50	A	0.50	A	1.0		
		Biology I Lab	A	0.25	A	0.25	A	0.5		
		Physical Education	A	0.25	A	0.25	A	0.5		
		Art I	B	0.25	B	0.25	B	0.5		
								6.0	3.55	

Continued >>

10	06-07	Ancient History Bible Chemistry Chemistry I Lab Composition II Computer Aided Design Literary Analysis Music (Guitar) Physical Education	B A A A A A A A A	0.50 0.25 0.50 0.25 0.25 0.25 0.25 0.50 0.25 0.25	B A B A A A A A A	0.50 0.25 0.50 0.25 0.25 0.25 0.25 0.50 0.25 0.25	B A B+ A A A A A A	1.0 0.5 1.0 0.5 0.5 0.5 1.0 0.5 0.5	6.0	3.75
11	07-08	History of Christianity Bible as Literature (Honors) Anatomy & Physiology Pre-Calculus Spanish Weight Training Internship: Photography /Computer	B A A A B A A	0.50 0.50 0.50 0.50 0.50 0.25 0.25	B A A A A A A	0.50 0.50 0.50 0.50 0.50 0.25 0.25	B A A A B+ A A	1.0 1.0 1.0 1.0 1.0 0.5 0.5	6.0	3.75
12	08-09	British Literature American Government Economics SAT Math Review Psychology Spanish I (Dual Enrollment)* Spanish II (Dual Enrollment)* Life Management	A A A B A B -- -- B	0.50 -- 0.50 0.50 0.50 1.00 -- -- 0.50	A B A A A -- B B B	0.50 0.50 -- -- 0.50 -- 1.00 1.00 0.50	A B A B A B B B	1.0 0.5 0.5 0.5 1.0 1.0 1.0 1.0 0.5	6.0	3.41

Continued >>

Credits and Grading Scale: A 90-100; B 80-89; C 70-79; D 60- 69; F  
below 60

Weight for one-credit courses (120 hours): A=4; B=3; C=2; D=1;  
F=0

Activities: Varsity Soccer (Team Captain), Competitive  
Paintball

Volunteering: Soccer Camp Assistant, Teaching Assistant, Tutor, Multimedia Assistant,  
Construction

\*All courses were taken in a home education program except for dual enrollment courses  
taken at Hillsborough Community College, Brandon Campus.

SAT Score: 610 M/640 V May/Oct 2008

**CERTIFIED BY: Parent**    **SIGNATURE:** \_\_\_\_\_    **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

# F. Other High School Learning Opportunities

## **Extracurricular Activities**

Extracurricular activities can round out your young person's education, give her a taste for different vocations, develop leadership skills, and can lead to lifelong interests and hobbies. They are also important for college admission. College admissions personnel are interested in well-rounded students with a wide variety of experiences.

Extracurricular activities are not limited by the choice to homeschool; in fact, they are multiplied. Group activities such as basketball, baseball, band, and choir can be found at your community center, a local Christian school, through your homeschool group, and sometimes at a nearby public school. Private music lessons are readily available. Community centers have swim teams, exercise classes, and gymnastics lessons. Martial arts studios are easily found. Churches offer many opportunities for service and leadership training. Families can join together to form debate teams, chess clubs, public speaking opportunities, and just about anything else you can imagine.

Youth leadership opportunities are also available through the Civil Air Patrol, numerous community volunteer programs, and 4-H type organizations. Businesses offer internships during the summer. Mission agencies offer short-term opportunities for the whole family. The flexible schedule of homeschooling can enable your teenager to work part-time in a family business or for a local employer.

Travel can be a joy with older children. Visit the historical sites of your own state or take a few weeks to visit Civil or Revolutionary War sites. See our nation's capital, explore the Grand Canyon, take a family bicycle tour, or discover Europe. Your imagination and determination (and budget!) are your only limitations.

## **Teaching Life Skills**

When setting up a homeschool curriculum it is very easy to forget about common, but very necessary, life skills. One of the easiest ways to teach life skills is to follow the biblical instruction to teach our children as we walk along the way and sit with them in the home. Imagining what your child would need to know to move out on his own can help you create a personalized list of life skills. Here are some general areas to start your thinking process.

## **Automobile**

- Routine care and maintenance, driver's license, and emergency procedures (changing a flat, jumping a battery)
- Purchase of a vehicle, registration, license plates, insurance coverage, and emission testing if applicable
- Understanding of vehicle insurance coverage, rates, and 'good student' discount
- Understanding of appropriate interaction with law enforcement if stopped while driving and requirements for possession and presentation of insurance coverage, license, and registration

## Household

- Cleaning, laundry, dishwashing
- Sewing, simple mending
- Basic electrical, plumbing, and carpentry skills
- Gardening, lawn care, winterizing a home, repair skills, painting
- Basic understanding of nutrition, menu planning, grocery shopping

## Finances

- Maintaining a checking account, using credit cards appropriately
- Budgeting, shopping, paying bills, tithing
- Loan procedures, investing, saving
- Taxes
- Self-employment skills
- Buying insurance

## Legal Skills

- Writing and executing a will, voting, military draft registration, reading contractual agreements

## Job-Related Skills

- Self-discipline, self-understanding, initiative, loyalty, promptness, honesty, dependability, submitting to authority, proper etiquette, phone skills, following instructions, time management
- Conflict resolution, problem solving, logic and thinking, research and study
- Filling out a job application, writing a resume, interviewing skills
- How to write a business letter
- Public speaking and negotiating, general communication
- A marketable vocational or trade skill, basic administrative and management skills

## Personal Care

- How to fill out medical paperwork
- Personal physical fitness, first aid, health care, identification and treatment of common illnesses, personal hygiene
- Clothing — purchasing, care for, personal style and colors
- First aid and emergency skills

## Social/Ministry Skills

- Understanding his or her spiritual gift
- Experience in serving and ministering to others
- Understanding worldviews
- Training and practical experience in sharing his or her faith
- Good manners, etiquette

- Roles of husband and wife
- Conflict resolution
- Understanding and respect for home, church, and civic accountability/leadership/structure

## Travel-Related Skills

- Take a taxi, use public transportation, book airline tickets, maneuver through airports, check into a hotel, rent a car, map skills, understand other cultures, apply for a visa, passport or work permit, security screening

## Computer Skills

- Keyboarding skills mastered to the point of typing as fast as you can think to write
- Computer purchase and setup, program installation, understanding of the Mac or PC/Windows platform
- Microsoft Office, spreadsheets, databases, email, and safe and effective use of the Internet
- For students interested in computer education beyond word-processing, basic coding skills such as HTML, CSS, or JAVA (needed for many jobs or to create your own website for a business, etc.)

## Driver's Education

Information on obtaining a learner's driving permit and eventual license should be found on your state's government and transportation website(s).

### What are some Driver Education programs other homeschool parents recommend?

- **American Driving Academy** has a home-study program allowing for parents to teach both the classroom and driving portion of the training ([www.americandrivingacademy.com](http://www.americandrivingacademy.com)).
- **Driver Ed in a Box** ([drivedinabox.com/home/](http://drivedinabox.com/home/)) is another popular program.
- **National Driver Training Institute** is a full service program ([www.nationaldrivertraining.com/index.php](http://www.nationaldrivertraining.com/index.php)).

## Making a Safe Driver for Life!

A thorough driver's training program has four essential elements: maturity assessment, unlimited exposure and experience, peer dependency shield, and performance-based evaluation processes. Let's look at these elements which make this system so important when teaching young people to drive.

### 1. Maturity Assessment

Since 70% of all fatal crashes within this age group involve high-risk behavior, any viable training program must include an assessment of maturity. The importance of parental participation in maturity assessment is crucial. Who but the parent will have the intimacy, interest, time, and commitment to adequately address whether or not a young driver is mature enough to possess a license? Within a family environment, consequences can be attached to behavior and plans enacted to affect real behavior modifications.

## 2. Unlimited Exposure and Experience

Because of the common experience of learning to drive in one semester of public government school, or societal expectations, or the rush to do everything sooner and faster instead of better, many parents have come to believe that driver education is to be completed within a few short weeks, or, at most, over the summer. However, just as there is no way to quickly grow a tree, become a concert pianist, or play golf at the professional level, there is no way to quickly become a good driver. The driving environment is much like the culture of a foreign country; it takes time to learn the language and customs. If, for example, an American were to travel to Japan for fifty hours and then return home, what would he or she really know about Japanese society? Would there not be more questions than answers, and more impressions than understanding of facts? Effective driver training must focus on maturity and competency under a variety of driving conditions — no matter how long it takes!

## 3. Peer Dependency Shield

While traveling across the country it is my habit to read the local newspapers. I commonly find a story of a fatal crash involving multiple teenage deaths. According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, 44% of the crashes for this age group involve three or more passengers. Teenage passengers have a deadly effect on a teen driver.

## 4. Performance-based Evaluations

Besides road proficiency, an evaluation process must be provided for determining whether or not the teen's attitude and maturity are progressing along with his driving skills. Without such evaluation, it is impossible to know if the young driver is truly ready to be released. The effectiveness of any training program is only as good as its ongoing evaluation and retraining process. Students achieve greater skill and proficiency when they are allowed to graduate from elementary levels to higher levels only upon proven performance.

# G. Graduation

## Issuing a Diploma

Homeschool students can earn diplomas through various avenues: a correspondence school, some independent schools, or a parent-issued diploma. Parents are often concerned that their teen will not have a diploma from an “accredited” school. Accreditation typically means that all teachers and administrators are state certified or credentialed, and the entire school program has been scrutinized over a period of years by a legitimate accrediting agency. A correspondence school may or may not be accredited. Homeschools, though not accredited, have ample authority to issue diplomas in Colorado. A diploma simply means that your child has completed a required course of study, whether or not the program was accredited. Some out-of-state colleges and universities — particularly in California and Florida where “state certified” diplomas are required for high school graduation — may question the validity of your parent-generated diploma. You will need to explain that in Colorado, the state does not require state certified diplomas. A call to HSLDA (if you are a member) will further validate your explanation.

Other than certifying the basic knowledge acquired, the only long-term importance of a diploma is the future doors that it will open for your young person. Home education has become such an accepted educational option that very few, if any, opportunities are closed to homeschooled students if adequate learning and record keeping have taken place. A college or future employer simply wants to know if your teenager has basic intelligence and can stick with a project. An official homeschool diploma and transcript, college entrance tests, and samples of the student's work are usually more than sufficient to prove competency. Once college level work has been completed, the high school diploma takes on a much less important role.

If you choose a parent-issued diploma, plan to keep complete records, including samples of your child's work, test results, and report cards or transcripts, in order to substantiate that your student met the graduation requirements for a diploma. Document the books and curricula used and the method for calculating grades. HSLDA sells diplomas and covers to homeschooling families who are members.

### **General Education Development Test**

Designed for those who do not successfully complete a regular high school program, the General Education Development (GED) test is not usually necessary or recommended for a homeschooled student. Five subject areas are tested: Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics. The tests correspond to about a 10th or 11th grade education level.

In the past, the GED was required by some post-secondary schools if the student's diploma was not from a state-accredited school on the grounds that he would be ineligible for Federal Aid. The Higher Education Act Amendments of 1998 (Pub. L. No. 105-244) enacted in October of 1998 changed that requirement. One of these amendments, drafted by the National Home Education Research Institute, states that, in lieu of an accredited high school diploma or GED, a student is eligible for federal financial aid if "the student has completed a secondary school education in a homeschool setting that is treated as a homeschool or a private school under state law." [*Pub. L. 105-244 amending 20 U.S.C. § 1091(d)*]. Fulfillment of this requirement is usually accomplished during the college admissions process when a student supplies a college with a transcript and other evidence of meeting the credit hour requirements for the completion of a high school education. If a college or university is asking you to take the GED as a condition of admission, refer them to this Act and to the National Home Education Research Institute at [www.nheri.org](http://www.nheri.org).

If students choose to go the GED route, they can take preparation classes through local community programs or order practice tests from Steck-Vaughn at [www.gedmarketplace.com](http://www.gedmarketplace.com). In some areas GED courses are available on PBS or cable television channels. The websites: [www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/GEDIndex.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/GEDIndex.htm) and [ged.com](http://ged.com) contain information on preparation, testing centers, and answers to frequently asked questions.

# H. Preparing for Careers: Post-High School Work and Service

High school graduates (in theory) are at the prime of their life. They still have their youthful energy, a flexible schedule, no heavy financial burdens, and a world of opportunities. This is part of the great providence of living in America with Christian privilege. Single, educated, and able servants of Christ, they should be able to soar into the next season of their life. Whether it be entering the workforce, pursuing higher education, serving in the military, heading to the mission field, beginning their own business, or preparing for marriage and family, this coming season should be a time for them to flourish and find success however and wherever they pursue a productive life. It has been said that if you love your work, it is never work. With that in mind, parents need to prepare their high school students to be productive and content with their upcoming choices.

## Careers

We all hope our teen will mature into a fulfilled adult, joyfully following God's plan for his life. But at age 14 or 15 this ultimate goal can seem so vague and distant. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to decide on the best way to spend the high school and college years without at least some kind of an ultimate destination in mind. Here are some suggestions to help your young person begin to set a career goal (for at least the first portion of his adult life).

One of the best things you can do to help your teen select a career he can love is to help him 'know' himself. Studies have shown that people who have a strong sense of 'who they are' from a young age tend to be successful as adults. Getting to know himself can be as simple as asking a set of questions, such as the following from **Jack L. Rettig's** book *Careers: Exploration and Decision*.

- Do I prefer working indoors or outdoors?
- Do I prefer physical work to mental work, or vice versa?
- Do I prefer working alone or as a member of a group?
- Do I like to move around or work in one place?
- Do I prefer working with papers or with products?
- Do I like to lead others or do I prefer to be led?
- Do I like to persuade people to do things?
- Do I like to take risks?
- Do I have a strong need to be secure?
- Do I like to create things with my hands?
- Do I like to work with machines?
- Do I like to work with numbers?
- Do I enjoy a lot of variety in my work?
- Do I like work that really makes me think?
- Do I like to work at helping people?
- Do I like to travel?
- Where do I want to live?
- What do others tell me I am good at?

- What are my favorite hobbies?
- How do I like to spend my free time?

This is not a magical list of questions; you can probably think of many others to add. Some of these areas may be much more important to your teen than others. Add to the above list some deeper questions, such as: What is my purpose for existing? What are my spiritual gifts? If I could do anything I wanted, without regard to financial or time restraints, what would it be?

You might have big dreams for your teenager after investing thousands of hours over the past 14-15 years to help him grow and mature. However, now more than ever, your teenager's motivation must come from within himself in order for him to truly put forth the time and effort it will take to finish high school and get the further training needed to start a career. Employers and college admissions officers are eagerly searching for young people who have a passion within themselves to go after something they love. Striking his own path will also give him a better sense of self-worth, not an artificially inflated one. Once your teen has a better understanding of his interests, it is time to go to the library and check out books on different careers. There are many such books available with titles such as *The Top 100: the Fastest Growing Careers for the 21st Century*, by Ferguson Publishing Co. *The Occupational Outlook Handbook*, published by the U.S. Department of Labor, describes about 200 of the most popular occupations in great detail.

After narrowing down his choices, it would be a good idea for your young person to interview several people already working in the field he may wish to enter. He should shadow them in their jobs for a day, if possible, asking questions like these: What do they like about their field? What is the working environment like? What skills and abilities are needed? What will you have to 'put up with' to do this job? What classes are recommended to be taken in high school and college? Can you get a summer apprenticeship in this field? Very few teenagers have a clear picture of what a job truly entails and this experience can be very eye-opening!

Once he has chosen a specific or even a more general career direction, your teenager can then outline a clear picture of the steps needed to enter that field or occupation.

### **Military Service**

Since before our nation was founded, young men and women have found service in the military to be honorable and meaningful. Today, our nation's armed forces need willing workers in every field imaginable, and provide training and education to young men and women of every background for a wide variety of careers.

If your student is interested in entering the United States military, he should contact a local recruiting office for the branch of the military that interests him, ideally in the fall of his senior year, or even sooner if the student likes to plan ahead and really be prepared for recruiting. The address and phone number for these offices can be found in the blue pages of government listings in your local phone book. A recruiting officer will talk to your student about his motivation to enter the armed forces and review the opportunities available to him. The officer will discourage the student from entering if he does not believe the student will be successful or satisfied in military service. The recruiter will review an extensive list of things the student should not do or be involved with if he/she wants to be fit for service. This is very good for a student to know ahead of time so their behavior is within certain parameters.

If the student expresses a sincere interest, he will be asked to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). This test measures the student's ability to learn various military vocations. The recruiting officer will use the results of this test to decide the jobs for which the young person is qualified. A position will be chosen jointly by the recruiting officer and the student. Job descriptions, videos, and information from individual bases are available to help fully explain each choice. The ASVAB test may be taken at a recruiting center or a local high school.

The student will then be screened for mental, moral, and medical qualifications. He will be asked about drug use, law violations, use of antidepressants, and medical conditions. Ritalin use disqualifies a person from entering the service for one year after its last use. The onset of asthma after the age of 12 is also considered a disqualification. Those over 18 with a felony conviction have very little chance of entering the military. Recruits must also meet the military's height and weight standards.

Some branches of the military have a "delayed" enlistment program. During the time before the recruit goes off to boot camp he locks in the dates for camp, confirms his job destination, takes initial strength tests, and is in many ways prepared for the boot camp experience. Once the student "signs up" he must realize that he cannot change his mind without being considered absent without leave.

Serving our country in the military is a high calling. However, Christian parents should take into consideration the readiness of their 18-year-old to face challenging situations in our modern military, including co-ed working and living environments and the frequent use of our troops under foreign command.

### **Academic Requirements for Entering the Military**

Since the recent congressional amendments to the National Defense authorization act, homeschoolers now have equal opportunity to enter the military. HSLDA recommends not obtaining a GED since the military now accepts very few GED holders. Homeschoolers will need a diploma and transcript of their high school work. For more information on homeschoolers and the military, visit [HSLDA.org](http://HSLDA.org). Each branch of the military has its own ASVAB score requirements. It is best to meet with your local recruiters to discuss the different opportunities and requirements for the specific branches of Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy. Some have high academic expectations, while others are seeking recruits who are of average academic ability. All branches are in need of recruits willing to work hard and have integrity. The military branches train their recruits and soldiers for every career imaginable. Pay is often considered mediocre but there are many benefits including educational scholarships, insurance discounts, and medical benefits for soldiers and their families.

For further consideration, read this from a long-time homeschooling parent on her son's recent experience with acceptance into the military:

**“MY** son had wanted to become a Marine since he was seven years old. He had many learning and behavior issues related to his background (he was adopted into our family at the age of six). My husband and I firmly believed it was my son's God-given dream to become a Marine, and so we helped him pursue a course in homeschooling that would prepare him for admittance right out of high school. This student was not 'college material' in our estimation.

As time passed, homeschooling helped him reach his goal. The most important skill he learned in 12

years of home education was reading. In his elementary and middle school years he was a below average student; in his high school years he improved to become an average student. Home education allowed him to first survive, then thrive in school. He had the time to work on physical fitness for several hours each day because of our flexible schedule in homeschool. During high school he took on a part-time job working at a feed store. He learned to organize inventory, load customer orders, interact with fellow employees, and be accountable to his boss. All of these skills helped him gain a strong work ethic and an accountability to others.

Simultaneously, he met and began working with our local military recruiting office. He found out the straight and narrow way the Marine Corps expects of their recruits, and he stuck to it. He studied for the ASVAB his senior year as part of his assigned coursework in homeschool, and also read a variety of books along with watching a number of documentary videos on preparing for and becoming a Marine. After high school graduation he took a year off and worked full-time at a factory labor job because that is what all his buddies were doing.

The Lord used this time in his life to reignite the fire of his life-long desire to become a Marine. He saw that his job could be a dead-end without further training and skills. He saw that many of his friends had no dreams to pursue. He experienced living on his own with frustrating roommates then the isolation of living in a tiny apartment on his own.

Encouraged by his recruiter, he took several practice ASVABs. He took his first official one, but did not attain a high enough score for the Marines. He decided to study more. He continued physically training and passed his health test and other requirements. He sought prayer and spiritual guidance from me and his older brother (I am a widow) and increased his Christian faith.

Several months later he took the ASVAB a second time, attaining a 10-point higher score (he only needed to score two points higher). He saw God work in his life. He went to boot camp in California – his first time away from our small hometown on his own. In just 13 weeks, the Marines molded him into man – a man of strong Christian faith and high moral principles! He is now being trained to be a large vehicle operator and absolutely loves military life!

I would not have thought 10 years ago he could reach his dream, but with God's leading, homeschooling opportunities, and the skilled men in the Marines guiding him, he did. We have been very satisfied every step of the way with this journey for my son's future. Both he and I were very excited and relieved about the number of Christian men in leadership positions whom my son encountered during the recruiting and boot camp phases. His Christian faith was accepted – even encouraged – during the grueling training.” – **Shari McMinn**, Fort Morgan, Colorado

## **Apprenticeships**

An apprenticeship is on-the-job training in an art, trade, or craft. It may involve a legal agreement with a master craftsman or professional over the course of several years leading to a career in a specific field. Or, it could mean just an informal short-term arrangement during after-school hours.

“**WHILE** there are those today who think this model of training is outmoded or perhaps only appropriate for ‘blue-collar’ careers and ‘less-educated’ labor, the fact is that the principles by which apprenticeship operates are still highly effective in every possible work context: trades and crafts, artisans, business, and professions.” – **Inge Cannon**, *Mentoring Your Teen*, p. 347.

*Mentoring Your Teen* is an older resource that also covers everything you need to know to launch your child successfully into adulthood and specifically contains a whole chapter on apprenticeships. It analyzes current government and private programs and explores the requirements of crafting your own program. Cannon suggests you might even find that the best option for your son or daughter is a judicious combination of college courses blended with hands-on experience. Sample contracts and check lists are included also.

An excellent resource for parents and teens regarding mentorship is *Kickstart, Launch Your Life*, edited by homeschool graduate **Daniel Craig** and published by **Generations**. The resource section of this chapter contains further information on this multi-media course.

Seeing the need for mentorship-based education in the lives of homeschooled young people, CHEC launched **AME: Apprenticeship, Mentorship, and Entrepreneurship Program**. The AME Program provides an online database of apprenticeship and mentorship opportunities as well as events and materials to support family economics and entrepreneurship. Visit [www.ameprogram.com](http://www.ameprogram.com) for more information.

### Trade Schools

A skilled and honest craftsman will always be in demand. This is just as true today as it has ever been. Vocational training can take place through correspondence or on a school campus. Visit [www.trade-schools.net](http://www.trade-schools.net) for a list of trade schools. Thoroughly research a school before enrolling. Ask about accreditation, visit the school, and talk to some of the school's graduates.

### Alternatives to Traditional College

The door to traditional college enrollment is wide open to homeschooled students, but there are other ways to obtain a college degree. *Bears' Guide to Earning College Degrees Nontraditionally*, by **John B. Bear**, Ph.D. and **Mariah P. Bear**, M.A., is a great place to start your search for an alternative to traditional college.

Homeschoolers, having literally reinvented K-12 education for their children, are starting to take that same initiative, thoughtfulness, and creativity with them into the area of higher education. The college years are a time when young people explore the world of ideas and cement their own personal worldview. After years of diligent labor to teach their children godly character, values, and a biblical worldview, parents are reluctant to 'risk it all' in a learning and social environment that may fall far below the family's standards. The high cost of a traditional college education is another factor motivating parents to search for alternatives.

Colleges are increasingly offering online degree programs. Lumerit Education (formerly CollegePlus) offers an individualized degree program through CLEP, AP, and distance learning. Liberty University and many other Christian colleges offer a variety of online degrees.

**Voddie Baucham** offers these points in his talk, *A Parent's Perspective on College*:

- College is not for everyone
- The cost is enormous, often causing oppressive student loans
- A high percentage of college graduates are not working in their field of study
- An unbiblical worldview and culture
- An unaccountable and unrealistic environment<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Voddie Baucham, "A Parent's Perspective on College," YouTube video from a webinar hosted by College Plus on May 21, 2013, posted May 25, 2013, <http://confessingbaptist.com/a-parents-perspective-on-college-free-webinar-with-voddie-baucham-tonight/>.

High school students should look forward to their future. Homeschooling through high school is an opportunity for parents and students alike to grow in Christ and in relationship with each other. Parents, team with your student and work together to explore and pursue a one-of-a-kind future for your one-of-a-kind student, whether that will be an immediate career, trade school, apprenticeship, Christian missions, college, or a mix.

## I. Preparing for College

### College

If you are interested in a traditional college experience for your child, admission should be no problem if you are properly prepared. No college will refuse to consider a student for admission solely on the basis of home education. Furthermore, many schools actively recruit homeschooled students and have developed specific admission procedures to accommodate their needs.

It is impossible to outline an exact list of what every college will require, since no two are the same. Call the schools that interest you well in advance to ask for specific requirements for homeschooled students. Here are some general guidelines you can follow, which will help your student in the admissions process.

- Review the list of admission requirements in this chapter. These are typical requirements for various types of schools.
- Consider the number of credits your students will need to complete for their future beyond high school. Will they need simply the minimum to enter the workforce? Would more credits be appropriate for college entrance? Be sure that you schedule enough credits, but not too many. Too many credits from dual enrollment programs (taking college classes during high school) are actually looked down upon by some higher education institutions when they are considering freshman year scholarships! Again, research requirements of possible institutions.
- Outline a realistic plan to meet these requirements over the next four years. This can be as simple as enrolling in a correspondence or online school, where all the curricula is pre-planned for you, or as complicated as designing your own course of study for each class. The correspondence or online school option is the easiest for the parent, but is the least individualized for the student. Designing your own course of study is challenging, but it can be the most rewarding and exciting for the student — especially if he can be involved in the planning process.
- Consider instituting a grading system in ninth grade if you have been unaccustomed to grading in the lower levels. (Correspondence and online schools will usually take care of this for you.) There are various ways to calculate grades, which are used by the educational world to summarize achievement.
- The most common form of grading is an alphabetic grading scale of A, B, C, D, and F. According to **Inge Cannon**, assigning percentages across the board to letter grades can be a mistake. “Eighty percent success on one task might be adequate, or ‘C’ level, whereas on another task 80% success might indicate failure or an ‘F’ grade.” (*Mentoring Your Teen*, 1998 Education PLUS, p. 119) Keep a record of the grading standard used for each class.
- Sometimes words can be used to describe the quality of work that is not objectively measured by right or wrong answers on a test. **Inge Cannon** gives examples of this form of evaluation, such as: “A = Excellent/ Outstanding/ Superior Achievement,” through “F = Failure/ Unacceptable, Little or

No Achievement.” (*Mentoring Your Teen*, p.120.)

- In a less traditional ‘contract’ method, the parent outlines what is expected of the student for an A, B, etc., before the class begins. For example, in an American literature class an A might require the student to read 12 books and write a four-to-five-page report on each book, whereas a B would require only eight books and a two-to-three-page report on each. The book *Home School, High School, and Beyond*, by **Beverly Adams-Gordon**, has many great forms for tracking these less traditional methods of learning. The parent as teacher and the student then agree to this contract.
- Colleges are very interested in a student’s GPA (grade point average) and will want to know your standard of grading for each course. Many scholarships are also based on GPAs. Whatever system you use to calculate a letter grade, be sure to describe your method of grading in detail at the end of the transcript
- Adopt a transcript form that you will use and keep up-to-date throughout the high school years. In addition to the information on the form itself, record time spent, curricula and books used, samples of your student’s best work, and the grading system for each class. This gives depth and credibility to your transcript.
- Plan to take the traditional college entrance examinations: the SAT and/or the ACT. In addition, any SAT subject tests or Advanced Placement tests your teen takes will be of great interest to a college admissions officer. These are standardized tests with which they can more directly compare your student with his peers, validating his homeschool GPA.
- Research financial aid availability. The admissions department at the college of your choice should be able to help in this area. There are also books at the library and helpful Internet sites to assist in your search.
- Consider taking Advanced Placement or CLEP exams to reduce the time and expense of college. Make sure to check with the four-year institution you want to transfer your credits to make sure they accept CLEP or AP scores. Although almost all colleges will accept at least some AP scores, some will not transfer any CLEP credits.
- Talk to three to five colleges of interest to you and obtain information regarding their entrance requirements, application deadlines, and scholarship offerings. Plan ahead to meet these requirements, which may include SAT or ACT test results, a transcript and GPA, an essay, and letters of recommendation.
- It is best to apply to several colleges: one that may be out of reach but you would really like to try for anyway, and several others that are a more ‘safe’ bet. Entrance requirements often change from year to year, even for the same school, so keep in touch and up-to-date.
- It is not too early to start thinking about a college essay topic. For competitive admissions, the personal essay is a very important component. It is the college admissions officer’s chance to look behind the numbers to see the real person. Don’t leave it until the last moment.
- Don’t get behind in the college admission process. Consult the time-line in this chapter (Appendix II) and keep up with the required activities. This is especially important when applying for scholarship money and financial aid.

For a more gradual path to university admission, consider having your young person take a few courses at a local community college in his junior or senior year of high school. The entrance requirements are much less stringent at the community college level. Once your student has accumulated some college credit — proving he can do college level work — he should have an easier time getting accepted into a four-year college or university. Remember to avoid too many credits.

Consider choosing a smaller college for undergraduate studies. Students will have access to the Ph.D.s,

smaller class sizes, more personal instruction and attention, and will be more likely to have professors teaching their classes, not graduate students. A larger, more prestigious college may be more worth the expense for postgraduate studies. Compare your GPA and test scores to the last year's entering class at the colleges which interest you to evaluate your chances for admission.

### **Typical Graduation Requirements for College-Bound Students** (1 year = 1 credit)

- Language Arts: 4 years Literature (British literature, American literature, World literature), Writing (Creative Writing, Journalism), and/or Speech
- Math: 4 years (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, include at least 1 college preparatory course such as Trigonometry, or Calculus)
- Science: 3 years (including labs) Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Earth science, Space science, Advanced biology, Advanced chemistry or Advanced physics (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics are typically considered essentials)
- Social Studies: 3 years (U.S. history, U.S. government [Colorado law requires the U.S. Constitution be studied], Economics, World history, or Geography)
- Foreign Language: 2-3 years of the same language: Spanish, French, Russian, etc. (check with prospective college to see if they will accept classical languages)
- Electives: 4 years (arts, computers, electives in area of career/degree interest)
- Physical Education: 2 years (if your student is interested in pursuing a sports scholarship for college, or looking forward to a professional sports career, discuss options with a coach or athletic director for intensive preparation and potential prospects)

### **Combining High School and Junior or Community College**

Four-year colleges and universities have been considered the standard in higher education for years, but for many people there is a more effective alternative — the community college. Homeschoolers in particular, who have been involved in alternative education all their lives, find that a junior or community college better fits their needs at first.

Tuition at community colleges can be as little as half that of universities; entrance requirements are simple; the campus is usually conveniently located (in your community!); and the student/teacher ratio is much lower at a community college, leading to a lot more interaction. The icing on the cake is that once you have a certain number of college credit hours behind you, you can simply transfer to a university with no questions asked about high school transcripts or diplomas! Keep reading for a more complete coverage of community colleges later in this chapter.

### **Dual Enrollment Programs**

With the increase of online degree programs, high school students can often take college courses online for discounted prices. The Master's College, for example, offers discounts for dual enrollment. Many community colleges offer their onground and online classes to high school students for a lower price than traditional colleges.

High School students should also consider taking CLEP or AP tests, especially if they have been covering a subject in their high school. Be sure to check with the admissions office of any colleges you are interested in to ensure they accept those credits.

College programs such as Lumerit Education (formerly CollegePlus) and Verity College offer individualized degree programs for much less money and time — and right from home.

## **Admission to Four-Year Colleges and Universities**

Most four-year institutions do not have explicit guidelines for admission of home educated students. However, do not let that intimidate or discourage you. If you can prove that you are the type of student the institution wants, you can gain admission and possibly financial aid. Students should complete rigorous college preparatory work. If a student is not admitted as a freshman at the desired school, he may want to take college-level classes at a community college (and get good grades) then reapply as a transfer student.

To request information from a school, call or email the admissions office. Often, college websites cover in-depth the admissions requirement and process as well. Go the extra mile in your application. For instance, if an essay is optional, have the student write a good one. You may want to include the reasons for having chosen to homeschool, the type of curriculum that has been followed, the form of instruction, the evaluation methods used to determine student mastery of a subject, and an assessment of the strengths and limitations this background has afforded the student in preparation for college. Even if not required, letters of recommendation from individuals who have worked with the applicant in educational, volunteer, religious, or professional capacities can also strengthen a homeschooler's application. Set up appointments with both an admissions counselor and with someone from the chosen major educational department for when you tour the campus.

When transferring into a four-year school, you will want to make sure your previous credits will transfer. Some institutions will give you this information before applying; others will only tell you after you have been accepted. If you are attending a community college, they may be able to help you with this information.

## **Typical Admission Requirements by Type of College**

Requirements below are an approximation. Make sure to check with the admissions office for each college's standards.

- Highly selective colleges look for students in the top 10% of their class with a GPA of 3.74+, an ACT composite of 29-33 and an SAT (verbal and math) of 1370. These colleges usually require 4 years each of English, math, and science; 3-4 years of social studies; and 3-4 years of a foreign language.
- Selective colleges want students in the top 25% of their class with a GPA of 3.5+, an ACT composite of 22-27 and an SAT of 1050-1250. They require 4 years of English; 3-4 years of math; 2-3 years of science; 2-3 years of social studies; and 2-3 years of foreign language.
- Traditional admissions look for students to be in the top 50% of their class with a GPA of 3+, an ACT composite of 20-23 and an SAT of 900-1060. They want to see 3-4 years of English; 3-4 years of math; 2-3 years of science; 2-3 years of social studies; and possibly one year of foreign language.
- Community colleges may have an open admissions policy. The ACT and SAT are not required, instead the college will most likely have the applying student take a placement test. In addition, 3 years of English, 2 years of math, 2 years of science, and 2 years of social studies are recommended.

## Service Academies

Homeschooled students make up a small but increasing number of applicants for admission to the service academies. Contact the academy in which your student is interested to request their admission guidelines and any particular recommendations or requirements for homeschooled students. The following narrative outlines the advice of one homeschool mother, whose son was successfully admitted to the Naval Academy and did very well there.

**“IF** you are searching for a school that will challenge your student academically and physically, look into one of the military service academies. Admission to a service academy depends on being scholastically qualified, receiving a nomination (usually from a Senator or Congressperson), being medically qualified, and passing the fitness aptitude test.

To prepare academically, be sure to take advanced math and science classes. Scoring well on the SAT and ACT is very important. The academies are also physically demanding, so preparation must include individual workout time, along with team sports. A solid record of extracurricular activities is needed, preferably in leadership positions. It is more helpful to hold a leadership position in one or two core areas over the course of several years than to jump from activity to activity.

A pre-candidate questionnaire must be completed during your junior or senior year and sent to the academy. The Naval Academy then assigns you to a local Blue and Gold officer who will conduct an interview and help you with any difficulties in the application process. The academy will also send you information regarding your medical, dental, and vision exam, plus the accompanying ton of paperwork! Your physical aptitude test should be supervised by a teacher with a physical education degree. Graded on a point system, it consists of pull-ups, a shuttle run, and a basketball throw.

To receive a nomination, your Senators and Congressperson should be contacted in early fall of your senior year. They will send you an information packet, outlining what is expected of you. The forms — and possibly an essay — must be turned in before the deadline listed. If a Senator or Congress person considers you to be qualified, you will receive a letter stating when and where your personal interview is to take place. Acceptance and rejection letters are sent out a few weeks later. The application process is extensive and grueling, but it is part of the weeding-out process. You have to be very determined to get into (and succeed at) a service academy.” – **Janet Stephens**, Loveland, Colorado

The United States Air Force Academy encourages homeschooled students to contact the Admission’s Office and request an application in the spring of their junior year. In their admission’s formula, academics account for 60% of the overall score. Extracurricular activities (both athletic and nonathletic) make up 20%, with the remaining 20% coming from a combination of Admissions Liaison Officer interview and Selection Panel review. In the absence of graded coursework completed at a public or private high school, they place greater weight on the standardized ACT and SAT scores. Community College classes are highly recommended. Make sure to read over the United States Air Force Academy and the Home Schooled Candidate pamphlet available on [www.academyadmissions.com](http://www.academyadmissions.com).

For entrance to a military academy, your student should take a strong college prep set of classes, including laboratory sciences. Proficiency in typing is also recommended. Homeschooled students must provide a transcript and, as a minimum, the transcript must include the following academic information: course/class title, length of course and date completed, grade, grading scale, grade point average, curriculum/course

description, text/materials used, field work/trips, and supplementary research or study.

Many homeschooled students are able to qualify academically for admission, but their overall record is not competitive due to a significant weakness in the area of extracurricular activities, the portion of the application process used to predict leadership potential. Some ways to prove leadership abilities are by participating in leadership of a church youth group, give speeches to local service clubs, give a musical recital in church, work, and do community service. For athletic activities you might participate in competitions for swimming, tennis, or gymnastics; play baseball in summer league; run 5K and 10K races for track or cross country experience; or join a homeschool basketball team.

Homeschool veteran **Cafi Cohen** has an excellent list of suggestions in her book *And What About College?* for students interested in attending a service academy. Her own son was accepted to the Air Force Academy.

## Academy Contacts

- United States Air Force Academy USAFA, CO 80840 [www.usafa.edu](http://www.usafa.edu) 800-443-9266; 719-333-2520
- United States Coast Guard Academy New London, CT 06320-8103 [www.cga.edu](http://www.cga.edu); 800-883-8724
- United States Military Academy West Point, NY 10996 [www.usma.edu](http://www.usma.edu); 845-938-4041
- United States Naval Academy Annapolis, MD 21402-5018 [www.usna.edu](http://www.usna.edu); 410-293-4361

## Scholarships and Financial Aid

When considering how to pay for college, you have the following options: student pays, parent pays, and/or grants and scholarships cover costs. Use loans as a last resort. There are innumerable books available through the public library on financial aid, grants, and scholarships (look in the 361.7 and 378.3 sections of the library). There are also helpful Internet sites, many of which can be found on the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators FinAid Page: [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org). Colorado State University's guide to conducting a scholarship search encourages students to apply for everything, be persistent, update and recycle excellent essays and letters of reference, and remember that late applications are not considered! One often overlooked source of funds is the parent's employer. Millions of dollars in matching scholarships go unclaimed each year. For more information on creative sources of funding, read *Bear's Guide to Finding Money for College*, by **John B. Bear**. Additional books and websites are listed in the resource section later in this chapter.

Tuition costs can easily seem overwhelming to the average family. Many homeschool families are living on one income and barely slip by without having the additional load of college costs. However, the resources later in this chapter can help you put together a plan that includes saving and investing as well as shopping for grants and scholarships.

College costs seem to be an area that can conflict with a homeschool family's values. Many Christians are committed, as a lifestyle, to avoid going into debt, and accumulating huge debts due to educational loans runs counter to that. It is also not a good way to begin a new marriage to have outstanding debts hanging over the relationship. In addition, homeschoolers have traditionally avoided any programs that were government funded. Serious prayer and consideration needs to be given to this.

**The homeschool movement has changed how elementary education is done; we have changed how secondary education is done. Now perhaps it is time that we change how college and advanced studies are accomplished and funded.**

### **College Credit During High School**

Homeschooled students can gain college credit through special nationally standardized proficiency tests while still in high school, if they plan ahead and score well. Always check with your college of choice before you take one or more of these tests, since each college has different standards for the number of nontraditional credits they will accept. The following sections contain such opportunities.

### **Advanced Placement Tests**

Advanced Placement (AP) is the College Board program that provides secondary teachers with curriculum guides for over 30 college level courses. AP Exams are created and graded on a scale of 1 to 5 by college and school faculty. Grades of 3, 4, or 5 qualify students for credits and/or placement into advanced courses at most of the nation's colleges and universities. A parent or teacher may order a text from the College Board and tutor the student throughout the year. HSLDA also offers online AP courses for high school students. In mid-May the student can then take the exam. For more information go to the website [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org). See HSLDA's webinar *How to Navigate the World of Advanced Placement (AP) Courses* on their website.

### **College-Level Examination Program**

If you have an able student, he or she may be able to reduce the number of courses needed to complete a college degree by taking CLEP (College-Level Examination Program) exams. CLEP exams cover five subject areas with a total of 33 subject tests including American Government, Biology, English Literature, and Spanish language. Depending on the college's transfer policies, each successful CLEP can earn three or more hours of credit.

CLEP exams reflect introductory college courses. Test prep materials are available at public libraries and college bookstores. You can purchase the *CLEP Official Study Guide* at <https://store.collegeboard.org>. Almost every community college in Colorado has an open test center where you can take the CLEP exams or get additional information.

To find out whether the college you will be attending grants credit for CLEP exams, call or write the college's admission office or counseling and testing office. The college can also provide information on the scores required for granting credit, the number of credit hours granted, and the specific courses that can be bypassed with satisfactory scores. The credit given will vary from college to college for the same test score. A limited number of CLEP credits will be granted toward your degree. At a cost of \$80 per test plus a registration fee, you will want to take only the tests you are confident of passing and which will apply toward the degree you are seeking. For more information on CLEP tests, check out <https://clep.collegeboard.org>.

### **Thoughts on College Testing for High School Students**

A variety of tests will be required for your high school students planning to enter college. Please help your teens to understand that their scores on the ACT, SAT and other higher education placement tests have absolutely no relationship to their value as a human being or their worthiness in the sight of God. There are

many kinds of intelligences other than the linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences measured by standardized college admissions tests. In his book *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, **Dr. Howard Gardner** outlines five other areas: spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, and interpersonal intelligence. Daniel Goleman adds a sixth category, emotional intelligence. Seek to understand the unique gifts and strengths with which God has blessed your child. Don't try to make a beautiful round peg fit in a tidy square hole just because society favors square holes!

### **College Aptitude Testing PSAT/NMSQT**

The PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) serves several purposes. It can give students feedback on their strengths and skills necessary for college study, allow them to compare themselves with other college-bound students around the country, and give them an idea of what the SAT will be like. It also enables them to enter the competition for scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation. It is for 10th and 11th grade students or for homeschooled students working at those grade levels.

The PSAT measures critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing and language skills. It does not require students to recall specific facts. The test may be taken as a sophomore, but will be considered a practice test; the scores will not count. The test taken in the student's junior year is the one that enables him to enter the competition for scholarships. However, taking the PSAT is only the first step in qualifying to become a National Merit Scholar. Students who score in the top three percent on the PSAT qualify for the next level of competition. A high score on the PSAT/NMSQT must be validated by a high GPA (grade point average) and a subsequent high score on the SAT.

The most common place to take the PSAT/NMSQT is at your local high school. A Christian school in your area may also offer the test. Face School ([www.faceschool.com](http://www.faceschool.com)) also offers the PSAT to homeschool students. The PSAT/NMSQT is given only a few times during the year. Check with your test site for upcoming dates for registration and testing.

The official website for PSAT/NMSQT is: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10>. Another informative website is: <https://www.kaptest.com/psat/kaplan-psat-prep/all-about-the-PSAT>.

The new PSAT is scored on a range of 320-1520, with individual sections ranging from 160-760. Sophomores who take the test need to remember that their score is being compared with that of juniors, so they shouldn't be discouraged if they score low their first time.

You can view test information, sample questions, and scoring methods on [www.collegereadiness.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegereadiness.collegeboard.org). The timed test takes about 2 hours and 45 minutes to complete. Personal information asked for at the beginning of the test includes name of school, name of student, address, phone number, social security number, and school code. The homeschool code for Colorado is 990699. Social Security numbers are needed if you are granted a scholarship, but it is not mandatory to include them on your test. Fall test scores will be available by mid-December online, with more detailed scores sent to your home. Likewise, spring scores will be available by mid-May.

## SAT

The SAT is a popular college board test designed to help colleges predict a student's freshman grades and aid their admissions office in its decisions. However, SAT scores are only one factor a college admissions office takes into consideration. A student's high school academic record, extracurricular activities, service and leadership positions, letters of recommendation, personal essay, and possibly an interview all play a role in the process.

For years the College Board maintained that a student could not "study" for the SAT. After independent research proved them wrong, they now sell multiple study aids to help raise your score. No one said they were not flexible! The reason a student was not supposed to be able to study for the SAT is that it is intended to measure aptitude, not knowledge of facts. However, knowledge of basic mathematical operations in algebra and geometry, a large vocabulary, strong reading and comprehension skills, and an understanding of how the test is constructed are major factors in the student's success.

The College Board has issued a redesigned version of the SAT as of 2016 to better reflect the skills needed for college readiness and success. Changes include an optional, reading-based essay, more relevant vocabulary, more graphs and charts, updated reading excerpts, and more. The SAT is now scored on a scale of 400-1600. It takes around three to four hours to complete depending on if you choose the optional essay. It is recommended that your student completes the essay portion as not many students do; even an average score is favored over no score. The College Board has now partnered with Khan Academy to provide free, online SAT test prep at [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org).

Colleges may place slightly more emphasis on the SAT (or ACT) scores of homeschooled students, simply because they do not have a traditional high school transcript. The SAT can be taken as many times as needed, as colleges will only look at your highest score (on both the SAT and the ACT).

Students may register to take the SAT through a local high school. **Dr. James Stobaugh** (homeschooling father and author of *The SAT & College Preparation Course for the Christian Student*) believes that the student's best scores will occur in May or June of his or her junior year. If the scores are not satisfactory, the test can be retaken the next fall. A student should not attempt to take the SAT on the same day he takes the SAT Subject Tests.

## SAT Subject Tests

Subject Tests are a set of 20 different subject tests in five different subject areas. Unlike the SAT, these tests are designed to measure specific knowledge in the areas of literature, history, biology, French, and other subject areas. Colleges use the Subject Tests to measure academic performance in a form that easily compares students from various schools and backgrounds. These tests can be used by homeschooled students to prove that they have a solid academic background and are capable of college-level work. Subject Tests are administered six times a year: in October, November, December, January, May, and June. In order to meet college admissions deadlines, a student should plan to take the tests before January of his senior year.

Many test preparation books are available. Check your local library or bookstore or websites such as [www.prepscholar.com](http://www.prepscholar.com) or [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org). The College Board web site, [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com), is very helpful. Register directly at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

## ACT

“The Enhanced ACT Assessment is a comprehensive evaluation performed in Grades 11 and/or 12. It contains four academic tests designed explicitly to measure student achievement in skills that are developed in high school. The tasks presented in the tests represent a wide range of academic skills. They depend upon the student’s skill in applying the content knowledge and reasoning skills acquired in high school. The Enhanced ACT Assessment has these stated purposes: to help colleges and universities in their college admissions process; to provide educational and vocational planning for high school students; to aid in academic advisement and counseling in post-secondary planning; to aid in recruitment and retention.”  
***ARCO ACT: American College Testing Program***, by **Joan U. Levy, Ph.D.**, and **Norman Levy, Ph.D.**, 1994

The ACT is divided into four sections: an English test, a mathematics test, a reading test, and a science reasoning test. There is also an optional writing test, which we recommend your student take. It is given five times a year: in October, December, February, April, and June. Test scores are reported on a scale of 1-36. The ACT is more popular with colleges in the Midwest and Southern United States. You can learn more and register online for a test date at a local high school at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org). For more information, contact 1-800-525-6926 or [www.act.org](http://www.act.org). For test preparation, see [khanacademy.org](http://khanacademy.org), [prepscholar.com](http://prepscholar.com), the ACT online prep at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org), or ***The Official ACT Prep Guide*** available through your local library or online.

## Appendix I: Resources

### How to Teach High School

- ***Home School, High School, and Beyond: Time Management, Organization, and Career Exploration Course for Christian Home School Teens.*** Beverly Adams-Gordon.
- ***Homeschooling All the Way Through High School.*** Renee Mason. Includes practical advice on homeschooling supplies, resources, and activities, along with a discussion of the blessings and challenges of a home-based education.
- ***Homeschooling High School: Planning Ahead for College Admission.*** Jeanne Gowen Dennis. Lynnwood, WA : Emerald Books, 2000. “You can design a solid high school program that both maximizes educational freedom and leads to successful college admission! Find answers to your questions about grading scales, diplomas, entrance exams, scholarships, application procedures, and much more, all while maintaining your family’s ideal balance between autonomy and accountability in your home high school.”
- [www.homeschooloasis.com](http://www.homeschooloasis.com).
- ***HSLDA High School Brochures.*** A wealth of information on homeschooling through high school. They contain high school planning sheets, scope and sequences, and more. Available online at [HSLDA.org](http://HSLDA.org).
- [www.letshomeschoolhighschool.com](http://www.letshomeschoolhighschool.com). Curriculum directory, planning resources, free templates and downloads, and more.
- ***Senior High: A Home-Designed Form+u+la.*** Barbara Edtl Shelton. An independent, flexible system for those who want to design their own high school program.

## Transcripts

- [www.Howtohomeschooltoday.com](http://www.Howtohomeschooltoday.com) has a free transcript creator.
- [www.HSLDA.org](http://www.HSLDA.org) has a wealth of information on transcripts (<http://www.HSLDA.org/highschool/academics.asp>). If you are a member of HSLDA, consider using their Fast Transcript Service and Transcript Review.
- ***Transcript Boot Camp on DVD***. Inge Cannon. EducationPLUS+. Everything you need to know about planning and documenting high school achievement in a well-illustrated, lively presentation by **Inge Cannon**. Includes 4 hours of DVD, a 76-page syllabus, and a handsome storage binder.
- ***TranscriptPro: Home School Transcript Generator***. Transcript software designed to walk the busy homeschooling parent through all the steps necessary for creating a professional high school transcript. If all your high school records are in order, you can produce a professional transcript in less than two hours per child! If your records are ‘hit and miss,’ the software will help you sort them out and make you look great in the process. You can organize each child’s academic history with a traditional format or an alternate format that highlights all the advantages of the home school tutorial method. Visit [homeschooltranscripts.com](http://homeschooltranscripts.com).

## Curricula

There is far too much curricula available to list here. (See **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum for more information.) However, there are several books devoted to listing and reviewing the myriad of curricula choices available for high school.

- ***ARCO Reading Lists for College-Bound Students***. Doug Estell, et. al. “Why wait until college to start reading recommended works of literature? Start reading in high school when you can have your parents around to discuss controversial issues with you. This book lists specific reading lists from over 100 colleges and universities.” (This is a secular book, not Christian.)
- ***100 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum: Choosing the Right Curriculum for Your Child***. Cathy Duffy. Also visit **Cathy Duffy’s** helpful website: [www.cathyduffyreviews.com](http://www.cathyduffyreviews.com).
- ***The Big Book of Home Learning: Junior High Through College***. Mary Pride. Chapters cover materials for teaching the Bible, foreign and classical languages, higher math and science, economics, civics and government, worldview, fine arts, driver’s education, and independent living skills. Also covers choosing a college and careers without college.
- ***The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education at Home***. Jessie Wise and Susan Wise Bauer. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. This essential guide provides techniques, curriculum, and resources for tailoring your teaching to your students’ cognitive development: elementary school “grammar” stage (concrete thinking, memorizing facts); middle school “logic” stage (analytical thinking); and high school “rhetoric” stage (abstract thinking, articulation).

## Mathematics

- **A Beka Books** at [www.abeka.com](http://www.abeka.com) is traditional in book and format; does an excellent job developing computation skills; has more than enough review and practice; explanation of new concepts in student worktext means the student can often work independently; weak in developing conceptual understanding.
- **Ask Dr. Callahan** offers video courses that go along with **Howard Jacob’s** algebra and geometry

courses (see below). **Cathy Duffy** sums up his method: “Elementary Algebra covers all concepts typical of a first-year algebra course, but it invites students to explore algebra concepts in a friendlier environment than other texts. Cartoons, comic strips (e.g., Broom Hilda, B.C., Wizard of Id, and Doonesbury), interesting and creative applications, puzzles, and even poetry capture the interest of students who struggle with abstract mathematics.”<sup>6</sup>

- **Bob Jones University Press** at [www.bjup.com](http://www.bjup.com) is strong on conceptual development; needs to be taught by the parent and is not good for independent learning; consequently, the lessons take longer to complete.
- **Chalk Dust Math Courses** at [www.chalkdust.com](http://www.chalkdust.com). **Prof. Dana Mosely**. For sixth grade (Basic Math) through early college courses (Calculus 1). “Courses like these are critical for many families who are deciding whether or not they can handle homeschooling through high school. These courses really do allow students to work independently, which means parents who never went beyond Algebra 1 can still provide their children with a solid math education.” The textbooks used are from Houghton-Mifflin, a secular publisher. Read the entire review by **Cathy Duffy** at [www.chalkdust.com/duffy1.html](http://www.chalkdust.com/duffy1.html).
- **Howard Jacobs/Paul Forester** covers both algebra and geometry, and Paul Forester wrote a similar-style Trigonometry. Although both are written for a classroom setting, they can be used independently. **James Nickel**, a Christian mathematician has a helpful article on Jacob’s work at [www.biblicalchristianworldview.net](http://www.biblicalchristianworldview.net).
- **Math Without Borders** at [www.mathwithoutborders.com](http://www.mathwithoutborders.com). **David Chandler** offers home study companion video courses.
- **Math-U-See** at [www.mathusee.com](http://www.mathusee.com) is a hands-on, manipulative-based K-12 math curriculum that uses instructional DVDs and student worktexts. You can request a free demonstration video from them in order to see their philosophy for yourself.
- **Khan Academy** is an excellent resource either for additional math help or as a complete course in itself. The instructor, **Sal Khan**, does an excellent job at explaining concepts. There are instructional videos, written explanations, and practice problem for kindergarten through linear algebra. The site also offers science, computer programming, test prep, arts and humanities, and economics.
- **Life of Fred**. **Dr. Stanley Schmidt** was a retired math teacher who wanted to share his enthusiasm about math with students. His books cover middle school through high school including Beginning and Advanced Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Calculus, and Statistics. Schmidt has also published several handbooks with additional practice problems. **Life of Fred** follows the life of a young math genius and ties in math concepts to the story. The program is very suitable for independent study and very affordable. Read **Cathy Duffy’s** helpful review at [cathyduffyreviews.com](http://cathyduffyreviews.com).
- **Saxon Math** at [www.saxonpublishers.com](http://www.saxonpublishers.com). Their website says they are “the only major math program on the market today that systematically distributes instruction and practice and assessment throughout the academic year as opposed to concentrating, or massing, the instruction, practice and assessment of related concepts into a short period of time – usually within a unit or chapter.” Many homeschoolers have liked this program, and Saxon has worked hard to accommodate this portion of the market. (They are a secular publisher.)
- **Thinkwell Math** offers online math courses taught by **Edward Burger** for grades six through AP Calculus. The program gives the students 12 months to complete each course.

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<sup>6</sup>Jacob’s Elementary Algebra, Cathy Duffy Review, last updated March 1, 2016, <http://cathyduffyreviews.com/homeschool-reviews-core-curricula/math/grades-9-12/jacobs-elementary-algebra>.

- **Video Text Interactive** includes two courses: *Algebra: A Complete Course* (covering Pre-algebra through Algebra 2) and *Geometry: A Complete Course* (covering geometry, trigonometry, and precalculus). Written by math and science teacher **Tom Clark**, the courses include instructional videos, practice problems, and tests and reviews. **Cathy Duffy** recommends it for the independent learner. Video Text Interactive now offers their course online as well.

## Catalogs

- **Creative Teaching Press**, [www.creativeteaching.com](http://www.creativeteaching.com)
- **Hand2Mind supplies**, [www.hand2mind.com](http://www.hand2mind.com)
- **Learning Resources**, [www.learningresources.com](http://www.learningresources.com)
- **Nasco Math**, [www.eNasco.com/math](http://www.eNasco.com/math)
- **Right Start Math**, [rightstartmath.com](http://rightstartmath.com)

## Books

- *Across the Board: The Mathematics of Chessboard Problems*. John J. Watkins.
- *Champions of Math*. John Hudson Tiner. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2000.
- *The Joy of Mathematics: Discovering Mathematics All Around You*. Theoni Pappas. Wide World Publications, 1989.
- *Math Curse*. Jon Scieszka. New York; Viking, 1995.
- *Math Magic*. Scott Flansburg. New York: Perennial Current, 2004.
- *The Math Teacher's Book of Lists*. Judith A. and Gary Robert Muschla. Upper Saddle River, NJ; Prentice Hall, 1995. This book provides over 300 useful lists for elementary and secondary students. Some of the lists supply teacher background; others are to copy for student use. Especially see Chapter III. Geometry, Chapter IV. Algebra, and Chapter V. Trigonometry and Calculus.
- *Mathematics in a Postmodern Age: A Christian Perspective*. Russell Howell, James Bradley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001. "There are a number of ways in which a Christian perspective can enrich our understanding of mathematics. Conversely, we think that many ideas in mathematics can enhance our understanding of the Christian faith." Available from [www.christianbooks.com](http://www.christianbooks.com).
- *Mathematics: Is God Silent?* James D. Nickel. Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 2001. This book revolutionized the prevailing understanding and teaching of mathematics. It is a must for all Christian [home] school ... teachers. It will serve as a solid refutation for the claim that mathematics is one subject which cannot be taught from a distinctively Biblical perspective. Referencing primary source materials, he explores the motivation for the research and study these people pursued. Overwhelmingly, their goal was to learn about and glorify the Creator by studying His creation. In another indispensable section, **Mr. Nickels** explains a Biblical approach to mathematics instruction that involves connecting abstract mathematical concepts to their concrete origins rooted in God's creation. Numerous examples and illustrations make this book an invaluable resource for the Christian school teacher.
- *More Joy of Mathematics: Exploring Mathematics All Around You*. Theoni Pappas. Wide World Publishing, 1991.
- *Truth and the Transcendent: The Origin, Nature, and Purpose of Mathematics*. Larry L. Zimmerman. Cincinnati: Answers in Genesis, 2000.

## Articles

- *Biblical Integration in Mathematics: Why and How?* James Sellers, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, Cedarville College. [www.iclnet.org](http://www.iclnet.org).
- *The Christian Teaching of Mathematics*. Chapter 8 in *Christian Education: Its Mandate and Mission*. Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1992.
- *The Mathematics Textbooks Authored By Harold R. Jacobs — An Analysis*. James Nickel. [www.biblicalchristianworldview.net](http://www.biblicalchristianworldview.net). Click on “Mathematical Circles Quadrant I,” then on the article title.
- *Saxon Mathematics Program — An Analysis*. James Nickel. [www.biblicalchristianworldview.net](http://www.biblicalchristianworldview.net). Click on “Mathematical Circles,” then on the article title.
- *Shapes, Numbers, Patterns, and the Divine Proportion in God’s Creation*. Fred Willson, M.S. IMPACT Article No. 354, December 2002. Institute for Creation Research. [www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org).

## Websites

- [www.acmsonline.org](http://www.acmsonline.org). Association of Christians in the Mathematical Sciences
- [www.biblicalchristianworldview.net](http://www.biblicalchristianworldview.net). Click on Quotable Quotes for some great quotes about mathematics!
- [www.christianperspective.net](http://www.christianperspective.net); go to their math section.
- [www.transformingteachers.org](http://www.transformingteachers.org). Go to articles, biblical integration, and mathematics.
- [www.godandmath.com](http://www.godandmath.com).

## Science

### Curriculum

- **A Beka** science textbooks.
- **Apologia** science textbooks.
- **Answers in Genesis, Biology 101, Chemistry 101, Physics 101** dvds.
- **Bob Jones University Press** science textbooks.
- **Homeschoolsciencepress.com**.
- **Superchargedscience.com** by **Aurora Lipper**. Recommended for non-college bound students.

### Other Science Resources

- **Timberdoodle.com** – science section.
- **Alpha Omega LifePacs. Alpha Omega Publications.**
- **Anatomy Coloring Workbook, 2nd Edition.** Princeton Review. Grades 8-12.
- **The Astronomy Book.** Dr. Jonathan Henry. Grades 3-12.
- **Biology Coloring Book.** Princeton Review. Grades 7-12.
- **Botany Coloring Book.** Princeton Review. Grades 7-12.
- **Zoology Coloring Book.** Princeton Review. Grades 7-12.
- **Exploring Planet Earth.** John Hudson. Tiner. Master Books.
- **Exploring the World Around You.** Dr. Gary Parker. Master Books, 2003. Researcher and biologist **Dr. Gary Parker** brings vast knowledge of ecology to a teaching setting, exploring and

explaining ecosystems, population growth, habitats, adaptations, energy problems, and much more. Junior high - adult.

- ***Exploring The World of Chemistry.*** John Hudson Tiner.
- ***Fearfully and Wonderfully Made.*** Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey.
- ***Footprints in the Ash.*** Dr. John D. Morris and Dr. Steven Austin.
- ***The Geology Book.*** Dr. John D. Morris. Grades 3-12.
- ***Handbook of Nature Study.*** Anna Botsford Comstock and John F. Ashton. Written in 1911 to help teachers Grades K-12.
- ***The History of Medicine.*** John Hudson Tiner.
- ***In His Image.*** Dr. Paul Brand and Philip Yancey.
- ***Keeping a Nature Journal: Discover a Whole New Way of Seeing the World Around You, 2nd Edition.*** Clare Walker Leslie and Charles E. Roth. Storey Books: North Adams, 2000.
- ***Lyrical Earth Science--Geology*** with CD-Rom. Grades 6-9.
- ***Lyrical Life Science, Bacteria to Birds, Volume 1.*** Grades 5-8.
- ***Lyrical Life Science, Mammals, Ecology, Biomes. Volume 2.*** Grades 5-8.
- ***Lyrical Life Science, The Human Body, Volume 3.*** Grades 5-8.
- ***Men of Science, Men of God: Great Scientists Who Believed the Bible.*** Dr. Henry Morris. Ages 12-adult.
- ***The Mystery of the Periodic Table.*** Benjamin D. Wiker. Ages 12 and up.
- ***National Audubon Society Field Guides.***
- ***The Ocean Book.*** Frank Sherwin. Master Books.
- ***The Weather Book.*** Michael Oard. Master Books, 1997. Grades 3-12.

## Creation Science

- ***Alien Intrusions: UFOs and the Evolution Connection.*** Dr. Gary Bates. Master Books, 2004. "UFO researcher **Gary Bates** exposes truths that will change readers forever. Written with the non-Christian in mind, this book leads the reader inexorably to one conclusion: there is an "intergalactic" battle over the history of life in the universe. Eye-opening insights for you and your non-Christian friends! Great pre-evangelism tool." Teen - adult. Also available as a DVD.
- ***The Amazing Story of Creation.*** Duane Gish. Grades 4-12.
- ***Arguments Creationists Should Not Use DVD.*** Dr. Jonathan Sarfati reveals the out-of-date, faulty and downright "flaky evidences" that reputable creationists must avoid. In his trademark style, **Sarfati** challenges some of the most-loved arguments of modern creationists. Bottom line: hold "facts" loosely and focus intensely on God's written Word as the absolute guide to evidence interpretations!
- ***Astronomy and the Bible.*** Donald De Young. Grades 4-12.
- ***The Biblical Basis for Modern Science.*** Dr. Henry M. Morris. Master Books.
- ***Biblical Creationism.*** Dr. Henry Morris. Master Books.
- ***Body by Design: The Anatomy and Physiology of the Human Body.*** Alan L. Gillen. Master Books.
- ***Champions of Science.*** John Hudson Tiner. Master Books.
- ***God's Creation: Creative Biblical Approach-Natural Science.*** Betty Smith.
- ***Creation Science: A Hands-On Study Guide.*** Felice Gerwitz.
- ***Darwin's Black Box.*** Michael Behe demonstrates the total inadequacy of Darwinism to explain the "irreducibly complex" mechanisms within living cells. Grades 9 - Adult.

- ***Darwin On Trial.*** Phillip Johnson. This book is perhaps the best overall critique of Darwinism. Grades 9 - Adult.
- ***The Evolution of a Creationist.*** Dr. Jobe Martin.
- ***The God Factor: 50 Scientists and Academics Explain Why They Believe in God.***
- ***In Six Days: Why Fifty Scientists Choose to Believe in Creation.*** Edited by John Ashton. Master Books.
- ***In the Beginning: Compelling Evidence for Creation and the Flood.*** Dr. Walt Brown's classic book is both compelling and comprehensive, now in its 8th edition.
- ***In the Days of Noah.*** Gloria Clanin.
- ***It Couldn't Just Happen: Fascinating Facts About God's World.*** Lawrence Richards Thomas Nelson, 1987.
- ***Of Pandas and People: The Central Question of Biological Origins, 2nd Edition.*** Davis and Dean Kenyon. Grades 9-12.
- ***The Origin of Life Equipping Course.*** Mike Riddle and Dr. Bob Compton. Answers in Genesis. Grades 9 - adult.
- ***Our Created Moon.*** Dr. Donald DeYoung and Dr. John Whitcomb. Master Books.
- ***Pathways in Science: Understanding God's Universe.*** Kathleen Julicher. Castle Heights Press.
- ***Reasonable Faith: A Scientific Case for Christianity.*** Dr. Jay Wile. Apologia Educational Ministries.
- ***Science in Faith: A Christian Perspective on Teaching Science.*** Christian Schools' Trust, 1998. For high school and up.
- ***Scientists of the Faith: 48 Biographies of Historic Scientists and Their Christian Faith.*** Dan Graves. Kregel Publications, 1996. Written for junior high and up, it will prove fascinating to mature older children as well.
- ***Scopes: Creation on Trial.*** Dr. John Morris and Dr. R. M. Cornelius.
- ***The Six-Day Creation Faith Devotional: For Teenagers to Discover Why Naked People in the Garden Really Matter.*** Dan and Dave Davidson.
- ***Universe by Design.*** Danny Faulkner. Master Books.
- ***Unlocking the Mysteries of Creation: The Explorer's Guide to the Awesome Works of God.*** Dennis Petersen. Grades 5 - Adult.
- ***Weather and the Bible: 100 Questions and Answers.*** Donald B. DeYoung. Grades 4-12.
- ***The Young Earth.*** Dr. John D. Morris. Master Books. Grades 7-12.

## Creation Resources

- **Alpha and Omega**, [www.discovercreation.org](http://www.discovercreation.org).
- **Answers in Genesis**, [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org).
- **Biblical Discipleship Ministries**, [www.biblicaldiscipleship.org](http://www.biblicaldiscipleship.org).
- **The CHEC Blog**, [www.CHEC.org/blog](http://www.CHEC.org/blog). Search science articles.
- **Creation Ministries International**, [www.creation.com](http://www.creation.com).
- **The Creation Research Society** is a professional organization of trained scientists and interested laypersons who are firmly committed to scientific special creation.
- **The Institute for Creation Research**, [www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org).
- **Mission Imperative**, [www.missionimperative.org](http://www.missionimperative.org).
- **Rocky Mountain Creation Fellowship**, [www.youngearth.org](http://www.youngearth.org).

## Catalogs

- **Home Training Tools**, [www.HomeTrainingTools.com](http://www.HomeTrainingTools.com). “A complete source for quality science supplies to meet all your education needs. Bring the world of science to life in your homeschool with homeschool science curriculum, home science lab supplies, home science kits, science fair projects, microscopes, and everything else you need!”
- **Masune First Aid and Safety**, [www.masune.com](http://www.masune.com).
- **Nature’s Workshop Plus**, [www.naturesworkshopplus.com](http://www.naturesworkshopplus.com). Sells home-based lab kits.
- **Space Shots**, [www.spaceshots.com](http://www.spaceshots.com). The wonderful world of satellite image viewing: offering the galaxy’s best selection of astronomy books, software, star atlases, observing guides, and related products.
  
- **Tobin’s Lab**, [www.tobinlab.com](http://www.tobinlab.com). “What do you do with a kid obsessed with the physics of space travel and the mystery of electricity? Where will you find the copper sulfate and the prism he needs for his experiments? This was our quandary when Tobin was small. Baking soda and vinegar provided limited appeal, so we began to have a vision in 1994 for a science supply service that would benefit our resident mad scientist as well as yours. Since then, we have delighted in offering cool science stuff at great prices.” Tobin’s Lab is still family owned and operated.

## Magazines/Newsletters

- **Acts & Facts. Institute for Creation Research.** ICR’s monthly *Acts & Facts* newsletter. Stay tuned to what is going on in the world of creation research, news, and ICR in general.
- **Answers. Answers in Genesis.** Keep your family informed on the latest easy-to-understand evidences for creation and against evolution! This unique full-color family magazine gives God the glory, refutes evolution, and gives you the answers to defend your faith. Exciting articles and great witnessing material you won’t find anywhere else! Includes a beautifully illustrated full-color children’s section in every issue. Powerful ammunition to intelligently discuss nature, history, science, the Bible, and related subjects.
- **Creation Illustrated. Creation Illustrated Ministries.** [www.creationillustrated.com](http://www.creationillustrated.com). Sometimes referred to as the Christian ‘National Geographic’ for their beautiful photography.
- **Creation Research Society Quarterly.** [www.creationresearch.org/crsq.html](http://www.creationresearch.org/crsq.html).
- **Think and Believe. Alpha Omega Institute’s** newsletter. You’ll enjoy creation science in-depth! A great complement to Answers magazine! Read the latest in creation research, stay up-to-date on creation/evolution controversies, and find out the latest flaws in evolutionary arguments! This journal offers analytical and inclusive comments in well-referenced articles that will keep you powerfully informed on many topics. A one-year subscription includes three issues, delivered to your home every four months. Also available from **Creation Ministries International**.

## Websites

- [www.aop.com](http://www.aop.com). Alpha Omega Publications. Vendor for Alpha Omega LifePacs and Switched-On Schoolhouse.
- [www.answersingenesis.org](http://www.answersingenesis.org). Answers in Genesis Ministries: Ken Ham. AIG is a Christian

apologetics ministry that equips the church to uphold the authority of the Bible from the very first verse. The thousands of articles and media programs on this site answer questions about creation/evolution, dinosaurs, and much more.

- [www.apologia.com](http://www.apologia.com). Apologia Educational Ministries. They “offer high school science curriculum that is especially designed for the homeschool. Written by a former university professor (Dr. Jay Wile), it is readable, easy to understand, and has experiments which can be performed at home.”
- [www.bctours.org](http://www.bctours.org). Home of BC Tours, founded by Bill Jack, offering tours of various Colorado locations from a creationist viewpoint. There are more educational materials offered at the website’s store. Tours include the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Denver Art Museum, Denver or Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, Dinosaur Ridge in Morrison, Colorado, and the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder.
- [www.bluebio.com](http://www.bluebio.com). Blue Spruce Biological Supply Company. Located in Boulder, Colorado.
- [www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/creationist-schools.html](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/creationist-schools.html). A list of universities, colleges, and seminaries accept and teach a literal Genesis — including a six 24-hour day Creation, no death before sin, a global Flood, and a young Earth.
- [www.creationresearch.org](http://www.creationresearch.org).
- [www.digitalfrog.com](http://www.digitalfrog.com). Net Frog Digital Dissection.
- [www.hubblesite.org](http://www.hubblesite.org). See what NASA’s orbiting Hubble Space Telescope sees.
- [www.snowcrystals.com](http://www.snowcrystals.com). “Your online guide to snowflakes, snow crystals, and other ice phenomena.”
- [www.masterbooks.com](http://www.masterbooks.com). Master Books: creation science books for the entire family.
- [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov). National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.
- [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org). American Red Cross. Information on health and safety (fire, tornado, flash floods), first aid and babysitting, CPR, and other classes. See Mile High (Denver Chapter) for local class information.
- [www.summit.org](http://www.summit.org). Summit Ministries.
- [www.spacecamp.com](http://www.spacecamp.com). Space Camp (for 15-18 years-old), located in Huntsville, Alabama.
- [www.spaceshots.com](http://www.spaceshots.com). Space Shots. The wonderful world of satellite image viewing: offering the galaxy’s best selection of astronomy books, software, star atlases, observing guides.

## **Language Arts**

- **Institute for Excellence in Writing.**
- *Learn to Write the Novel Way*. Carol Thaxton. KONOS curriculum.
- [www.rockymountainstoa.org](http://www.rockymountainstoa.org) has a list of Colorado speech and debate clubs.
- **World Journalism Institute** seeks to identify aspiring journalists who are Christians and help them become proficient and professional in their calling of journalism. “Our focus is mainstream media as opposed to Christian media, because the daily newspaper and broadcast news media outlets are primary sources of information about the world. Christians, joining those of many persuasions in the newsroom, can be beneficial in accurately understanding and reporting the events of the day. The Institute contracts with many outstanding working journalists and teachers of journalism to provide the instruction in our courses, choosing people of faith with records of high professional achievement as reporters, writers, editors and teachers. We do not require our guest teachers and students to adhere to an elaborate set of theological doctrines or political axioms. The Nicene Creed is the basic creedal statement of the Institute; thus the Institute has Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Greek Orthodox journalists as guest teachers.” [www.worldji.com](http://www.worldji.com).

## History

- [www.bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com). An internet publisher of literature, reference, and verse, providing students with unlimited access to books and information on the web, free of charge. Included: Bartlett's Familiar Quotations; Gray's Anatomy; Strunk's The Elements of Style; Columbia Encyclopedia, Sixth Edition; American Heritage Dictionary, Fourth Edition; American Heritage Book of English Usage; World Factbook; and Columbia Gazetteer.
- **Beautiful Feet Books** takes a literature, whole-book approach to history.
- **Christian History Magazine** helps you discover historical treasures of your Christian faith in the pages of Christian History & Biography magazine. Each fascinating issue offers thoroughly researched accounts of the people and events that have shaped Christianity through the centuries. Published quarterly, every issue brings timeless reference material in a fresh, lively manner. Great graphics, beautiful illustrations and photos, and colorful timelines and maps all enhance the interesting and informative writing. [www.christianitytoday.com](http://www.christianitytoday.com).
- **Gileskirk Humanities** is one of the most inspiring history curricula! **Dr. George Grant** gives lectures on American Culture, Modernity, Christendom, and Antiquity. Covers literature, worldview, economics, writing, and moral philosophy. Available from the **King's Meadow Study Center**.
- **Story of the World History**. Susan Wise Bauer. Four books cover all of history from ancient times to the present in a way that is interesting to children.
- **Truthquest History** — one of Cathy Duffy's top picks — takes a whole-book approach to history, providing reading lists of biographies, historical fiction, and more for each time period.
- **Veritas Press History** is a classical-based history curriculum.
- **Vision Heirs** offers high school history classes by **Pete Olson** and a homeschool Revolutionary War reenactment group based out of Arvada.

## Bible

- [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) offers a free online digital format and search for every major English translation of the Bible, as well as devotions, study materials, audio and many other resources. HarperCollins Christian Publishing, Inc.
- [www.bibles.net](http://www.bibles.net). From this website, you can read the entire Bible in many different translations, locate any verse with an online concordance search, look up Scripture cross-references and commentaries, access the original Greek or Hebrew for any verse. Compare King James and Revised Versions side-by-side, learn about the fascinating history of the English Bible, download the complete text of several Bibles via FTP, review the classic writings of historic Christianity, listen to hundreds of hymns in MIDI Files, and hear any passage of God's Word read aloud with Real Audio.
- [www.bibleplaces.com](http://www.bibleplaces.com). This excellent website features photographs and descriptions of sites in Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, and Greece with an emphasis on biblical archaeology, geography, and history. Many of the photos can be downloaded for free to use for Bible study or in school reports. Check out the Pictorial Library of Bible Lands which is available for a reasonable price on CDs. The section entitled Great Ideas gives you ways to utilize these photos.
- [www.e-sword.net](http://www.e-sword.net). Free downloadable software for Bible study. e-Sword is a fast and effective way to study the Bible. e-Sword is feature-rich and user-friendly with more capabilities than you would expect in a free software package. The fact that e-Sword is free is just one of the blessings and does not speak of the quality of the software. Included are various Bible versions, commentaries, and

dictionaries; create your own study notes; Strong’s definitions are available by hovering over the word; and search capabilities. Great tool for homeschoolers!

## Worldview/Literature

- **Generations** is an event, publishing, and radio ministry, with a daily broadcast presented by **Kevin Swanson**. Swanson was once the Executive Director for CHEC, and this ministry is an affiliate to CHEC. His programs are relevant to homeschoolers throughout the state, as well as the world. [www.generations.org](http://www.generations.org).
- **Focus on the Family** believes traditional marriage is worth defending. Also, if you’re alarmed that children encounter pornography on the local library computer, if you’re offended that the Boy Scouts are under attack, and you want to know what you can do about it — read *Citizen* magazine. *Citizen* gives you information no one else offers — stories that set the record straight on the issues that affect your family, your neighborhood, and your church — plus stories of local heroes who’ve overcome great odds (and their own fears) and stood up for the values you cherish, along with practical steps that help you make a difference. Recommended for anyone who wants a nation that honors faith, family, and freedom. [www.focusonthefamily.com](http://www.focusonthefamily.com).
- **Plugged In** is a Focus on the Family publication designed to help equip parents, youth leaders, ministers, and teens with the essential tools that will enable them to understand, navigate, and impact the culture in which they live. “Entertainment is a potent influence on our culture for both good and evil. Through our reviews and discussions of that entertainment (movies, DVDs/videos, television, and music), we hope to spark intellectual thought, family discussion, spiritual growth, and a strong desire to follow the command of Colossians 2:8. ‘*See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.*’” [www.pluggedin.com](http://www.pluggedin.com).
- **Starting Points**. David Quine. [www.cornerstonecurriculum.com](http://www.cornerstonecurriculum.com).
- **Understanding the Times**. Summit Ministries curriculum covers apologetics and worldview about major world ideologies/religions.
- **WORLD Magazine**. A sharp, full-colored news weekly magazine that deals with important cultural issues in a morally sound, journalistically responsible, and interesting way. It reports news you won’t find anywhere else, helps readers think biblically about the world around them, and is like TIME or Newsweek magazines, but from a Christian perspective. There was a time in earlier parts of American history when Christian journalists were bold to assert their view of things as it applied to public affairs. WORLD seeks to do again what those courageous journalists once did.
- **The Worldview in Five Minutes** newscast from a biblical worldview put out by Generations. [www.theworldview.com](http://www.theworldview.com).
- **Worldview of the Western World**. David Quine [www.cornerstonecurriculum.com](http://www.cornerstonecurriculum.com).
- **Christian Classics I and II** surveys the greatest Christian Classics in all of history. This set can count as two high school credits. [www.generations.org](http://www.generations.org).
- **Worldviews in Conflict** surveys secular literature from a Christian perspective. [www.generations.org](http://www.generations.org).

## Leadership Training

- **Generation Joshua**. Generation Joshua seeks to “assist parents to raise up the next generation of Christian leaders and citizens, equipped to positively influence the political processes of today

and tomorrow.” They provide civics education, student action teams, igovern camps, and more. [www.generationjoshua.org](http://www.generationjoshua.org).

- **Summit Ministries** “is an educational Christian ministry whose very existence is a response to our current post-Christian culture. Countless Christians, and especially Christian youth, are renouncing their faith and countless more are adopting the false humanistic philosophies of our day. Summit views its role in God’s kingdom as a catalyst to counteract this alarming trend. However, our ultimate goal supersedes simply training. As Christians are challenged to stand strong in their faith and defend truth, they will also be equipped to have a positive influence on the society in which they live. Best known for the summer conferences, these are intensive two-week educational conferences (for high school and college students) that analyze the major humanistic worldviews of our day, contrasting them with the Christian Worldview. Also offered is a spring conference, worldview workshops, and worldview weekends. They have also produced curriculum to teach about a Christian worldview for elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and homeschoools.” [www.summit.org](http://www.summit.org).
- **TeenPact** “is a comprehensive leadership experience that challenges students to grow both personally and spiritually. During TeenPact, students will enjoy meeting and interacting with other Christian young people and leaders from across their state. Students will come away from TeenPact with a realization of their spiritual capacity as young people and a desire to change America for Christ. The first step in the TeenPact Leadership School is the State Capitol Four-Day Class for ages 13-18. The TeenPact One-Day Class is an abbreviated version of the Four-Day, designed specifically for ages 8-12. This class focuses on the biblical responsibility to pray for our leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-3), the principle of “higher authority” (Romans 13:1-2), the “bill-to-law” legislative process, and public speaking for young students.” [www.teenpact.com](http://www.teenpact.com).
- **Worldview Academy** a non-denominational organization dedicated to helping Christians to think and live in accord with a biblical worldview so that they will serve Christ and lead the culture. “Since 1996 we have been fulfilling this mission through our nation-wide Leadership Camps, our Christianity & Culture Conferences, and through the creation of many books and resources. Our curriculum falls into three broad categories: worldview training, evangelism and apologetics training, and servant leadership training. These three concentrations come together and form a solid foundation upon which students build a consistent biblical worldview. Students are prepared to defend themselves against the culture’s attacks and, at the same time, are equipped to lead the charge to win the culture back for Christ.” [www.worldview.org](http://www.worldview.org).

## **College Options**

- **Accelerated Distance Learning.** Home school graduate Brad Voeller earned his four-year, fully-accredited college degree in less than six months for less than \$5,000 by applying the revolutionary techniques of accelerated distance learning. In this book, he shares with you tested approaches to learning that will allow you to earn a college degree in less than half the normal time — for a fraction of the cost. Discover how to: receive college credit for life experiences; earn college credit quickly and easily through credit-by-examination; speed up the learning process while improving comprehension; cut study time by at least 50%; make a wise decision in choosing a distance-learning program; and complete college in less than half the time for less than half the cost.
- **Bob Jones University**, located in South Carolina, offers degrees from biology to music from a conservative Christian background. [www.bju.edu](http://www.bju.edu).

- **Chambers College** is an academic institution designed specifically for those who have been homeschooled. You may study on site or at a distance. The academic program is oriented to training young men and women for advancing the Kingdom of God by teaching them to think in conjunction with Scripture from foundational perspectives. Its liberal arts orientation gives the student a broad exposure to the major disciplines of life the student will face. The style of teaching is patterned after the Oxford and Cambridge tutorial method. Located in Greeley, Colorado. Affiliated with CHES (Colorado Heritage Educational School System) and run by Steve and Teri Ong. [www.chamberscollege.com](http://www.chamberscollege.com).
- [www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/creationist-schools](http://www.christiananswers.net/q-eden/creationist-schools). A list of universities, colleges, and seminaries that accept and teach a literal Genesis — including a six 24-hour day Creation, no death before sin, a global flood, and a young earth.
- **Hillsdale College**, although not Christian, is becoming increasingly popular amongst homeschool graduates. Hillsdale provides a conservative liberal arts degree. [www.hillsdale.edu](http://www.hillsdale.edu).
- **Liberty University**, a Christian, homeschool-friendly college based in Virginia. Liberty also offers a variety of online degrees. [www.liberty.edu](http://www.liberty.edu).
- **Lumerit Education** (formerly CollegePlus!), “How will we afford the tuition? How can my son receive a superior education without worldly philosophies? Can my daughter earn credit for her practical real-life experiences? Is it really worth four years? The answer to these questions is finally here: Lumerit Scholar! Using cost and time efficient methods such as credit by exam along with accelerated study skills including speed reading and memory techniques, Lumerit Scholar! students are able to earn the same accredited bachelor’s degree as their traditional college counterparts, but in half the time and for a fraction of the cost. Best of all, this is done on their own schedule and from their own location, enabling students to continue with other activities such as jobs, internships, ministry, and family life. Whether you’re a high school student looking to finish college early, a college student looking for a more efficient method, or a parent looking to finish up a degree for career advancement, Lumerit Scholar! can help you reach your goals.” [Lumerit.com](http://Lumerit.com)
- **The Master’s College and Seminary**, located in California, the Master’s College provides students with a thoroughly Christian education. The Master’s College also offers online degrees. And a plus: dual-enrolled students pay much less! [www.masters.edu](http://www.masters.edu).
- **Patrick Henry College**, the mission of Patrick Henry College is to prepare Christian men and women who will lead our nation and shape our culture with timeless biblical values and fidelity to the spirit of the American founding. Educating students according to a classical liberal arts curriculum and training them with apprenticeship methodology, the College provides academically excellent, baccalaureate level higher education with a biblical worldview. The distinctives of Patrick Henry College include practical apprenticeship methodology; a deliberate outreach to homeschooled students; financial independence; a general education core based on the classical liberal arts; a dedication to mentoring and discipling Christian students; and a community life that promotes virtue, leadership, and strong, lifelong commitments to God, family, and society. Located in Purcellville, Virginia.
- **Patrick Henry College Online** distance learning courses are designed to assist your young person in his or her academic preparation to influence the world. For Christ and For Liberty courses will provide the student with a classical liberal arts foundation rooted in a biblical worldview. Moreover, the academic excellence and the quality of the faculty can be found at few other colleges. Students who are interested in getting a degree from Patrick Henry College but want to take distance learning classes will choose the Campus & Home program. The Campus & Home program allows a student to take as much of the PHC core curriculum through distance learning as they choose and then to

come to campus to complete the degree. [www.phc.edu](http://www.phc.edu).

- **Pensacola Christian College** provides a distinctly Christian, traditional, liberal arts education. PCC produces the Abeka curriculum. If your family has used Abeka and appreciated its content and wants a very conservative college at an affordable price, this may be a good fit for your college-bound teen. [www.pcci.edu](http://www.pcci.edu).
- **Tyndale Biblical Institute and Theological Seminary** offers an intense biblical focus, conservative doctrine, complete biblical language programs for both Greek and Hebrew, study on campus or by extension, and economical course costs. Located in Fort Worth, Texas. [www.tyndale.edu](http://www.tyndale.edu).
- **Verity College Education** is a distinctly Christian college and offers an affordable distance learning program. Credits are transferred to partnering learning institutions, giving students an accredited degree from home. [www.veritycollegededucation.org](http://www.veritycollegededucation.org).

## College Admissions

- ***Homeschoolers' College Admissions Handbook: Preparing Your 12- to 18-Year-Old for a Smooth Transition.*** Cafi Cohen. Prima Lifestyles, 2000. The transition from homeschooling children to preparing them for success in college deserves both planning and preparation. As the parent of a homeschooler, you have many issues to consider besides academic excellence: fulfilling other people's expectations and standards, tackling standardized tests and application essays, and introducing your homeschooler to the atmosphere of a college campus. Now you can direct your child confidently and effectively. This important addition to Prima's acclaimed homeschooling series is filled with tips and insider advice from homeschooling families whose children now attend the schools of their choice. Inside are the answers to your questions, including how to decide what type of college is right for your homeschooler, develop the proper college-preparatory curriculum for your child, learn what colleges expect from homeschooled applicants, and prepare your homeschooler for the admissions process. Available used only.
- ***How to Stay Christian in College.*** J. Budziszewski. NavPress, 2004. Trading home life for dorm life can be exciting, scary, and wild! Interactive and encouraging, this best-selling guide lets your teens know what to expect when they arrive on campus, examines the different worldviews and myths students encounter in college, and reassures them that they can even attend a secular school and still maintain their faith.
- ***The Incredible Four-Year Adventure.*** John and Chris Yates. Baker, 2000. Are your kids going to college? Prepare them spiritually and emotionally! Gen-Xers and fairly recent grads, the Yates brothers help students stay true to their faith by giving them a heads up on what to expect at college. Here's the inside scoop on roommates, choosing classes, finding Christian fellowship, and more from two guys who've been there!
- ***Keeping Your Faith in College.*** Abbie Smith. Faithworks Publications, 2003. Written by students for students, this book is a compilation of stories and experiences shared by students from over 35 colleges across America. Dealing with the tough issues of transition, peer pressure, dorm life, dating, sports, fraternity life, academics, and much more. This book is highly beneficial to any high school senior or college student in not only maintaining a strong Christian faith in college, but also living radically with passion for the glory of God during these years.

## Books

- *College Student's Guide to Merit and Other No-Need Funding*, 2005-2007. Gail A. Schlachter and R. David Weber. Only available used.
- *Confessions of a Scholarship Winner: The Secrets That Helped Me Win \$500,000 in Free Money for College - How You Can Too!* by Kristina Ellis.
- *The Financial Aid Handbook: Getting the Education You Want for the Price You Can Afford* Paperback by Carol Stack, Ruth Vedvik.
- *Financial Aid for Veterans, Military Personnel, and Their Dependents*, 2004-2006. Gail A. Schlachter and R. David Weber. Only available used.
- *High School Senior's Guide to Merit & Other No-Need Funding*, 2005-2007. Gail A. Schlachter and R. David Weber. Only available used.
- *Money for Christian College Students*, 2005-2007. Gail A. Schlachter and R. David Weber. Only available used.
- *Peterson's Scholarships, Grants, and Prizes 2016*.
- *The Ultimate Scholarship Book 2017: Billions of Dollars in Scholarships, Grants and Prizes*. Gen Tanabe and Kelly Tanabe.

## Online Articles

- [www.Bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.Bigfuture.collegeboard.org). Grant and scholarship information.
- **Crown Financial Ministries** has resources and articles on getting a college education debt free and more. [www.crown.org](http://www.crown.org).
- [www.soundmindinvesting.com](http://www.soundmindinvesting.com) has many articles on making the most of your college savings program, places to look for college funding, and more.

## Websites

- [www.collegescholarships.org](http://www.collegescholarships.org).
- [www.financialaidsupersite.com](http://www.financialaidsupersite.com). Applying for Financial Aid: Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
- [www.nationalmerit.org](http://www.nationalmerit.org). The National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). Each year some 50,000 high school students are honored in NMSC programs, and 7,400 of the most outstanding participants receive scholarships for college undergraduate study.
- [www.savingforcollege.com](http://www.savingforcollege.com)
- [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)

## Careers & Life Direction

- **Career Direct® - Educational Version** “Many college students change majors two, three, or even four times, adding to the number of years needed to complete their degrees. When you consider that the cost of just one year at a public, four-year college averages \$9,410 (Source: The College Board) for tuition alone, you can see why it pays to get it right the first time!”
- **The Career Direct® Guidance System** allows you to profile your personality, interests, skills, and values. This version is specifically tailored to those high school juniors and seniors and older who need to make educational decisions. The Career Direct Guidance System is an individual, one-time

use assessment. [careerdirect-ge.org](http://careerdirect-ge.org).

- **Career Direct-YES!**® For ages 13-16! Includes: YES! Guidebook, YES! Passport, YES! Parents' Guide.
- **The Career Direct - Youth Exploration Survey**® covers four areas: personality, vocational interests, abilities, and priorities. It helps students apply survey results to their current activities and relationships, and it points them toward an exciting future career. YES! is fun, informative, interactive, and biblically based. YES! can be administered to individuals or groups, such as Christian schools or youth groups. [careerdirect-ge.org](http://careerdirect-ge.org).
- ***Discover Your Spiritual Gifts the Network Way: Five Assessments for Gift-Identification.*** Bruce Bugbee. Zondervan, 2004. At one time or another, you've probably taken a simple, one-dimensional inventory to determine your spiritual gifts — and you may have questioned the accuracy of the results. That's why Bugbee now offers five assessments (traits, observation, experience, conviction, and ministry) that measure your strengths from different approaches — making sure you've correctly identified your God-given talents!
- ***Finding the Career That Fits You.*** Larry Burkett and Lee Ellis. Suitable for individual or group use, this workbook includes a Personality Analysis as well as surveys for examining your interest, skills, and work priorities. Through this self-assessment process you will gain a clear understanding of your pattern for work.
- ***The Guidance Manual for the Christian Home School.*** David & Laurie Callihan. Career Press, 2000. College and careers may seem far off, but the time to prepare your students for life after homeschool is now. Serving as a high school guidance counselor, this resource gathers the information you need to make wise, Christ-centered decisions. Learn to foster active thinking and moral discernment in your children as they ready themselves for the future. Provides plans, procedures, and reproducible forms.
- ***Kickstart, Launch Your Life.*** Generations. “When 36% of college graduates show no cognitive gains after four years of study, and only 51% can find full-time employment after exiting a higher education system with an average price-tag of \$72K (public) to \$140K (private), it's impossible to deny that the college paradigm has failed us. How then are we to prepare our young people for their God-given calling so that they're able to successfully engage the marketplace in a difficult economy? Though man's education systems are declining, God's program of relationship-based, character-focused, and life-integrated education has never been more effective. Mentorship prepared 12 men who change the world 2,000 years ago, and it's still the most powerful method for launching young men and young women into life today. Designed for young men and women, ages 15+, this breakthrough self-study program includes: 30 powerful training session on 4 DVDs, a 300 page full-color companion guide and workbook, a step-by-step personal launch planner, four real-life mentoring stories on DVD.” (<https://generationswithvision.com/Store/2013/10/kickstart-launch-your-life/>.)
- **The PathFinder - Crown Financial Ministries.** The PathFinder is a tool for individuals and families who are making career decisions. The manual provides a wealth of information and offers many resources for making career and life decisions. It provides practical steps for choosing the right career field and also gives instructions for getting a job. Some of the topics include: looking at work from a biblical perspective, understanding your pattern, defining your purpose, making career decisions, gaining wisdom for a career transition, identifying keys to employment in the 21st century, searching for a job, and writing a résumé.
- ***Your Career in Changing Times.*** Larry Burkett and Lee Ellis. In *Your Career in Changing Times*, Lee Ellis and Larry Burkett present career planning from a biblical perspective to help you become a better steward of your talents. Understanding changes in the workplace, making career decisions,

identifying your talents, and finding a job are some of the many important subjects covered.

- **Youth With A Mission (YWAM).** Training and Discipleship aim to better equip Christians to serve others in everything from agriculture and health care to drug rehabilitation and biblical counseling. Through YWAM's University of the Nations (U of N), missionaries can study in specialized areas such as science and technology, linguistics, the humanities, and Christian ministry. Most YWAM schools combine classroom teaching with relationship-centered discipleship and practical service. The Discipleship Training School (DTS) is a requirement for applying as YWAM staff and serves as a prerequisite to all other training programs. Check out YWAM publishing for good Christian biographies and books with a missions emphasis. [www.ywam.org](http://www.ywam.org).

## **Homeschool Graduates Speak Out**

- ***Home Educated and Now Adults: Their Community and Civic Involvement, View About Homeschooling and Other Traits.*** Brian D. Ray, PhD. For nearly 20 years, critics and the curious have been asking about the homeschooled, But how will they do in the real world of adulthood? As a corollary, they have also asked, What about socialization? This unique study takes a look at the lives of over 7,000 adults from across the United States who were home educated during their elementary and secondary school years. The purpose of this study was to describe and gain more understanding about these adults. In particular, the focus was on their general demographics, attitudes toward their own home education experiences, and successes in life. Success was evaluated with respect to civic, social, educational, employment, and worldview traits. The target population was all adults in the United States who had been home educated, regardless of whether thought positively or negatively about having been homeschooled. A written survey (questionnaire) and follow-up interviews were used to gather information about the participants.
- ***Hot House Transplants: Moving From Home School Into the “Real World.”*** Matthew Duffy: This book is written by sixteen homeschool graduates who share the stories of how God has worked in their lives. They discovered that there is much more to education than what goes on in traditional schools. They share their ups and downs as homeschoolers, the pros and cons, and how homeschooling has changed their lives forever.
- ***No Regrets: How HomeSchooling Earned Me a Master’s Degree at Age 16.*** Alexandra Swann. The Swann family is receiving national attention of homeschooling their ten children at accelerated rates. This book is written by their oldest child, Alexandra, who at fifteen became the youngest student ever to graduate from Brigham Young University. She shares her experiences growing up in a Southern Baptist home where love, friendship, perseverance, and sacrifice reigned. “The insights which this book offers will help you create an atmosphere in which your children can excel.” This should be encouraging for those who thought they would stop when their children reached junior high level!

## **Life Skills**

- ***Foundations in Personal Finance for Homeschool.*** Dave Ramsey. For grades 9-12, an overview of biblical financial responsibility. [www.daveramsey.com](http://www.daveramsey.com).
- ***100 Words Every High School Graduate Should Know.*** Editors of the American Heritage Dictionaries. Houghton-Mifflin. Quick — define “fiduciary.” Now, how about “abrogate,” “pecuniary,” and “quotidian”? If these have you (or your high schoolers) stumped, here’s a great way to expand your vocabulary — and improve SAT scores! Features definitions, etymologies, and contexts for 100 “5-star” words commonly used in newspapers, novels, and media broadcasts.

- ***Better Thinking and Reasoning.*** Ron Tagliapietra. BJU Press. Provides a biblical approach to the principles of logic and offers practical applications for the development of thinking skills. Each chapter contains a memory verse, specific examples from the Bible, and applications of logic to various areas of study.
- ***Bible Type*** (Computer Typing Curriculum). Far more effective than software programs, you can begin to build keyboarding skills as early as age seven with this book. Why practice with silly sentences when you can complete all your exercises with Biblically-based content in this self-paced program? [www.bibletype.com](http://www.bibletype.com).
- ***The Elements of Style, 4th Edition.*** William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White. According to the St. Louis Dispatch, this “excellent book, which should go off to college with every freshman, is recognized as the best book of its kind we have.” It should be the “daily companion of anyone who writes for a living and, for that matter, anyone who writes at all” (Greensboro Daily News). “No book in shorter space, with fewer words, will help any writer more than this persistent little volume” (The Boston Globe).
- ***Etiquette Advantage in Business.*** The subtitle of this fantastic 296-page etiquette guide is “Rules for the Business Professional,” but the content is so balanced, well-organized, and thoroughly defined that every young person would benefit from mastering it.
- ***The Hidden Art of Homemaking.*** Edith Schaeffer. Tyndale House, 1985. Artists and homemakers, prepare to be inspired. Schaeffer transfers domestic tasks into masterpieces of creative expression — whether she’s filling the house with flowers, music, and literature; building a toy rocking horse from scratch; dipping homemade candles; and more in this timeless classic.
- ***How to Read a Book, Revised.*** Mortimer Adler and Charles Van Doren. Simon & Schuster, 1972. Originally published in 1940, Adler’s living classic has now been updated. This respected guide to reading comprehension takes you through the processes of skimming; summarizing content; criticizing an author’s writing fairly; and using different techniques for reading practical books, imaginative literature, plays, poetry, history, science, mathematics, philosophy, and social science. Ideal for high schoolers and college-bound students!
- ***How to Read a Christian Book.*** David L. McKenna. Baker, 2001. This is a helpful guide to building and enjoying your personal library. McKenna explains the importance of reading as spiritual discipline and offers tips on how to judge the quality of a book. He also includes a varied title list and a monthly reading program.
- ***How to Study: A Practical Guide from a Christian Perspective.*** Edward J. Shewan. Don’t even think about attending college unless you have these skills down pat! The Christian worldview perspective in this guide makes it especially valuable.
- ***How to Study Your Bible.*** Kay Arthur. Every student should learn how to mark his or her Bible in the inductive manner that Kay Arthur teaches. Her how to book thoroughly explains the method. The whole family can work with this approach one Bible book at a time.
- ***Money Matters Workbook for Teens, Ages 15-18, New Edition.*** Larry Burkett and Todd Temple, Moody Publishers, 2001. They’re on the brink of adulthood, but are your teens ready for financial independence? Burkett shares Bible-based wisdom on getting and keeping a job, how banks and creditors works, managing a savings/checking account, paying for college, knowing when to borrow, stewardship, and more.
- ***Once-a-Month Cooking.*** Mimi Wilson and Mary Beth Lagerborg. It’s true. You can cook just once a month and feed your family tasty, homemade meals all month long! This practical cookbook offers easy-to-follow directions for nutritious, freezable meals to prepare — 30 at a time. You’ll also find tips on saving money, cooking for kids, stocking a super-efficient kitchen, and more!

- ***Our Christian Heritage in Art.*** Kathryn L. Bell. BJU Press. This very special course in art appreciation blends a historical survey throughout Christianity with hands-on exercises to allow students to develop their creative skills. Appropriate for a full high school credit, this material avoids nudity and other compromising elements that often make Christian parents uncomfortable with art training.
- ***The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict, 3rd Edition.*** Ken Sande Baker, 2003. The experts agree: this is the best guide to conflict resolution and reconciliation you'll find. Biblically steeped and worldly wise, Sande's time-tested principles will help you transform bitter oppositions into valuable opportunities for growth. Breathe God's grace into hostile disputes in the church, workplace, or home — and receive the immeasurable blessing reserved for "the peacemakers."
- ***Plants Grown Up: Projects for Sons on the Path to Manhood.*** Pam Forster. Doorposts. "One day we noticed that our boys were growing up on us! There was (and is) still lots more to teach them about becoming godly men! We realized that we needed goals to aim for and a plan to help us reach those goals. Plants Grown Up is the result. This 500-page, spiral-bound book offers hundreds of ideas for Bible study projects, reading material, and practical, everyday activities to help train your sons for godly manhood." One copy of this book can be used with all your sons from the time they can memorize simple Bible verses until the day they each get married. (And then they can save it to use with your grandsons!)
- ***Polished Cornerstones: Projects for Daughters on the Path to Womanhood.*** Pam Forster. Doorposts. Raising daughters can be a challenging task! This 575-page, spiral-bound book will help you focus on the skills and attitudes your daughters need to develop. Polished Cornerstones offers hundreds of different ideas for Bible study projects, reading material, and practical, everyday activities to help prepare your daughters for godly womanhood (and to help them live godly lives as young women).
- ***Speed Cleaning.*** Jeff Campbell and The Clean Team. Do the weekly, or every other week, chores in half the time! An easy-to-read, good humored paperback that is going to give you back your weekends. It teaches you step-by-step techniques to cut your housecleaning time in half — or your money back — not by working harder, just smarter. It's a streamlined approach developed by experienced professionals who can't afford to waste time with extra cleaning steps. Separate chapters are devoted to how to hire and manage housecleaners, and which environmentally safe products work best. [www.thecleanteam.com](http://www.thecleanteam.com).
- ***The Twelve Trademarks of Great Literature.*** J. F. Baldwin. While it may be true that you can't judge a book by its cover, it is also true that you can apply biblical principles to judge what's inside that book. Jeff Baldwin of Worldview Academy does a wonderful job of identifying the key characteristics (or trademarks) that make a piece of literature great. We should be reading literature that is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, and praiseworthy. At a time when great books and worthwhile literature are being assaulted by the politically correct crowd, we need to return to the basics and learn from Jeff Baldwin how to use biblical tools to judge the quality of literature.
- ***Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary.*** It is reported that Noah Webster's 1828 American Dictionary contains the greatest number of Biblical definitions given in any reference volume. Webster considered "education useless without the Bible." Noah Webster believed that the Bible and Christianity played important roles in the lives of a free people and its government. "In my view, the Christian religion is the most important and one of the first things in which all children, under a free government, ought to be instructed."

# Appendix II: A Calendar for College-Bound Students

## **Freshman Year in High School**

- Map out a homeschooling schedule that takes into account student's long-term goals, interests, and abilities
- Include a foreign language
- Keep a journal or other record of all activities
- Choose a transcript form and update it at the end of each quarter or semester
- Keep a record of books read
- Start a SAT preparation course
- Begin college research
- Get involved in one or two extracurricular activities to which you can stay committed the next four years

## **Sophomore Year in High School**

- Reevaluate goals, curriculum, and interests
- Continue foreign language study
- Continue SAT preparation
- Register for and take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST), which is given in October (practice test)
- Consider studying for a SAT subject test (take in the spring)
- Keep transcript updated
- Keep records of all special activities, evaluations, work programs, etc.
- Consider visiting colleges during the summer
- Consider trying an apprenticeship or entrepreneurial venture during the summer
- Step up your research into college options, financial aid, testing programs

## **Junior Year in High School**

- Review college admission requirements; for selective colleges make sure you are exceeding the listed requirements; adjust your curriculum as needed
- Continue with your SAT preparation program
- Study for and take SAT II exams if needed (May or June)
- Register for and take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT)/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST), which is given in October (this one counts)
- Continue to select appropriate courses to meet college entrance requirements
- Register for the SAT and/or ACT early in the year and take it in May or June
- Examine financial resources and review plans for financial aid
- Consider which adults to ask for letters of recommendation
- Visit college campuses; talk with graduates and students at the colleges you are considering

- Read college guides; search their web sites
- Begin military academy application process
- Attend local college fairs during September-November to examine a wide variety of schools
- Continue to keep copious records and maintain your transcript
- Consider taking one or two classes by correspondence or at a local community college
- Keep up your involvement in extracurricular activities; seek leadership opportunities

## Senior Year in High School

### June, July, and August

- Contact 5-10 colleges requesting application forms, catalogs, financial aid information, and information about departments or activities which are of interest to you
- Review college entrance requirements and make any adjustments to your curriculum
- Visit college campuses
- Many colleges require that students requesting financial aid provide a Parent's Confidential Statement (parents should prepare this during the summer before your senior year)
- Research scholarships — national, local, and college-sponsored
- Continue SAT preparation course if you plan to retake test in the fall
- Make a calendar listing all the testing dates, college registration deadlines, scholarship deadlines, and other dates of which you need to keep track; keep records of phone conversations; check off items as completed
- Start a filing system for keeping track of all correspondence sent to or received from colleges

### September

- Record progress in fulfilling application requirements, follow up on all paperwork — do not assume it has reached its destination
- Maintain or improve academic grades during the senior year; colleges look unfavorably upon falling grades
- Learn which entrance tests are required and complete registration packet; mail to appropriate testing agency

### October, November

- Apply for need-based state and/or federal financial aid by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). FAFSA has moved up their date to begin application for the following year's aid; begin working on your student's FAFSA October 1, using your previous year's tax information
- Complete a resumé of your high school course work, activities, etc. at this time
- Update your student's "projected" transcript; include courses in progress and those planned for the spring
- Recheck your application forms, get advice and assistance, if needed
- Submit online or postal mail completed forms to your top three to five college choices by November 1
- Send your official transcripts and other required forms to the colleges to which you apply by the due date

- Take necessary entrance tests; have your test scores forwarded to the colleges you are considering; be sure all entrance testing requirements have been satisfied (ACT, SAT, and Achievement test, if required)
- Continue to research college scholarships; be careful to meet all deadlines
- Meet with college representatives when they visit your area
- Many schools require letters of recommendation; notify those people you plan to use as references
- Take SAT II Writing and Math achievement tests if you are going to apply to a very selective college
- Make arrangements for personal interviews with college admission officers, if required

## December

- All applications and a copy of your high school transcript should be sent to the colleges of your choice by Christmas, unless a college states otherwise; many colleges use December 1 as a deadline for scholarship consideration
- Take the SAT II tests if required (also offered in November and January)

## January

- Some colleges offer tentative acceptance to outstanding candidates at this time

## February

- Send your first semester grades to the colleges, along with other information not yet forwarded

## March

- Recheck college catalogs and handbooks; make sure you have taken all necessary tests

## April, May, and June

- Keep track of acceptances, rejections, and financial aid awards; many financial aid awards are made during this time
- Reply promptly to each college to notify them of your decision
- Pay close attention to deadlines for acceptance
- Promptly submit deposits required for admission and housing to the college you will attend



*Here is what I have seen: It is good and fitting for one to eat and drink,  
and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life  
which God gives him; for it is his heritage.  
As for every man to whom God has given riches and wealth,  
and given him power to eat of it, to receive his heritage and rejoice in his labor — this is the gift of God.  
For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life,  
because God keeps him busy with the joy of his heart.  
(Ecclesiastes 5:18-20)*

# CHAPTER 7



## Different Learners

### CONTENTS:

- A. A Different Kind of Homeschooling
- B. You Can Successfully Teach Your Different Learner
- C. Get Started
- D. Testing
- E. Learning Challenges and Teaching Strategies
- F. Exceptionally Bright Learners
- G. Resources

*- Revised by Teri Spray -*

# A. A Different Kind of Homeschooling

## Homeschooling Different Learners

Each of us is fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of our Creator. We have been blessed with gifts and talents, areas of strength and areas of need. God has a plan for each and every life that He has created. When we become parents, the Lord blesses us with the responsibility of raising His children. Our ultimate purpose as parents is to raise His children to seek Him and discover His will for their lives. This purpose does not change with our circumstances.



*For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How great is the sum of them!*  
(Psalm 139:13-17)

The Lord has given some parents a special assignment in the form of children who learn about their world very differently. He has promised to give us the wisdom we need to meet this challenge when we seek Him.

Our attitude toward our children is a great test of our faith as parents, whether or not they have a special needs label. Only as we seek the Lord on our knees can we hope to meet the challenge of parenting. Blessings await when we meet the challenges in His strength and follow His plan.

Many parents decide to home educate their 'different learner' because of their struggles in institutional schools, but they don't know where to begin, or what to do. This can be disconcerting, but parents do not need to remain in this place. They can analyze, evaluate, learn, observe, and resolve how to successfully homeschool their different learner.

We might describe these children as out-of-the-box learners, and we may need to become out-of-the-box teachers! On the following pages you will find helpful information as well as many practical tips and suggestions for educating children who learn differently. Nothing in these pages is meant to be the final authority, for only the Lord holds that position.

The most important advice we can give you is to ask the One who has all the answers. Pray to the Lord for His wisdom and guidance. May He bless you abundantly in this journey as you parent and educate your children.

## B. You Can Successfully Teach Your Different Learner

### Advantages of Homeschooling a Different Learner

- **FOCUS:**  
You love your child more than anyone. Now you can become your child's advocate and expert. You are free to research and coordinate a special learning program based around your child's particular needs and strengths.
- **SAFETY:**  
Home education provides a safe, nurturing environment proven to enhance learning.
- **VARIETY:**  
Children and parents are free to use a variety of methods and approaches.
- **ONE-ON-ONE:**  
One-on-one, tutorial instruction that is natural in a home environment may be necessary for a child with special learning needs.
- **AT YOUR OWN PACE:**  
An individualized learning program is easy to provide at home and can be paced according to needs and abilities.
- **PRACTICAL:**  
Life skills are more easily taught as a natural part of daily living in the home. (Deuteronomy 6, Proverbs 22:6)
- **HEALTHY:**  
Physical activity becomes a part of the education process. Home cooking reduces allergens and additives.
- **COMMUNITY SUPPORT:**  
Consultants and therapists are increasingly available to parents of children with special needs.
- **BEHAVIOR TRAINING:**  
Children can learn self-control in a safe, structured environment from a loving adult. Behavior expectations should be the same for 'different learners' as they are for typical learners. Clear expectations and consistent training can be provided in your home.
- **SCHEDULES:**  
At home, therapy becomes a part of your school day instead of an addition to it.
- **FREEDOM:**  
For accelerated learners, being at home allows more time for the child to be challenged in areas of special interest.

Sue Welch, former editor of *The Teaching Home Magazine* (out of print), says:

“**AS** Christian homeschoolers, we are committed to the belief that God, having entrusted children to our care, has also enabled us to provide for their needs in all areas. Armed with faith in God's wisdom and knowledge of His Word, we may begin to examine the confusing array of information available on the subject of learning disabilities.” (*The Teaching Home, July/August 1994*, p.1.)

**NOTE:** HSLDA believes that with receiving government funds, certain freedom and privacy is lost. Each homeschooler should weigh the cost against the benefit he or she would receive from accepting public school services. To enable families to not feel obligated to take government support for their special education students, HSLDA has established a private fund through the Home School Foundation that makes support available.<sup>7</sup>

### **Assistance and Funding for Special Needs**

CHEC encourages families to search out and advocate for services from which their special needs students can perhaps benefit. Auditory, occupational, physical, speech, vision, and other therapies may be available through medical, private, or school district providers. Contacting your school district, local hospital, or private (independent) school is a place to start finding out what is available, the cost, time involved, and through what means services can be paid for. It may take a great deal of time on the part of parents to obtain these services, but hopefully the results will be well worth the effort.

Parents are encouraged to check with their health insurance provider for coverage if these are not available through federal, state, or district funds. Reiterating HSLDA's concern regarding government funding, parents are ultimately responsible for their children's needs regardless of circumstances, whether physical, emotional, spiritual, or academic. Christian families have a variety of sources for support available through family, church, and parachurch ministries.

## C. Get Started

### **Home Evaluations of Learning Challenges**

You can begin to help your different learner overcome their struggles by evaluating their areas of weakness and strength. This will take time and patience, but take heart: parents can evaluate their children better than anyone because of the sheer amount of time spent with them.

Begin by praying that God would reveal to you or others one or more areas of need your child has. Maybe you are expecting too much; maybe it is a discipline problem; perhaps your child has a visual problem; maybe there is a learning disability. Be careful not to overreact. Look at the easy-to-fix issues first; perhaps it's a need for corrective lenses, a more suitable curriculum, or brain training. Make sure the child is at a maturity level that suggests he is ready to learn before assuming he has a learning disability. See the resources listed at the end of this chapter G. Resources for books you might consider reading. If your child is struggling, then these four action steps might be helpful and necessary.

1. Spend time closely observing your different learner at home. During chores, school, play, and other social times, you can observe what your child is doing (or not) and how he is interacting with others inside and outside the home. Be sure to record your observations in a journal or calendar.

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<sup>7</sup>[http://www.HSLDA.org/strugglinglearner/sn\\_states.asp](http://www.HSLDA.org/strugglinglearner/sn_states.asp)

Your observations should be detailed and consistent at first, and then they should be ongoing as part of your homeschool teaching/supervision. Begin to implement practical strategies to deal with your different learner's needs and struggles during your daily homeschool routine. (See the next two sections: D. Testing and E. Learning Challenges and Teaching Strategies in this chapter.) Complete the suggested activities to help you pinpoint your child's specific needs. Continue to observe your student and note any changes both positive and negative.

2. If making practical changes with your teaching methods does not seem to be helping your different learner's needs, then it is time to meet with a specialist or professional. Research what help is available in your area, contact providers, and have questions prepared to determine if a meeting with the provider would be beneficial.
3. When you meet with a provider, explain the issues you have observed in your child and what strategies you have already employed in homeschool. Find out what experience the provider has with these types of issues, and ask for their professional opinion on what could be done to help, the length of time it might take, and how you can assist with the progress through your teaching and follow-through at home. If you engage the provider's services, work with the provider to establish outcomes and practices to help your different learner become more successful in school and life.
4. Finally, don't despair. Effective teaching and consistent routine can help your different learner flourish! Recent brain science discoveries are revolutionizing the world of learning differences. In the 1990s, new therapies began as a result of the discoveries that the brain has "neural plasticity." This means that the brain can be trained to re-route neural connections. If there is damage or weakness, the brain can actually be trained to compensate with new learning pathways through rhythm and exercise, even neural feedback. As you start to observe and identify issues your child has that causes him to learn differently, you can help them achieve significant gains. Realize and accept that God created us each in His image and we are wonderfully made. There are solutions and helpful tools available for your child's brain to increase in its ability to process and retain information for increased academic performance.

**HSLDA** has an excellent series of articles on their website for parents of 'struggling learners.' They describe four 'Learning Gates': Visual processing, Visual/motor (writing) processing, Auditory processing, and Focus/attention processing. See Websites, in the resource list of this chapter.

## D. Testing

### **To test or not to test Different Learners ... THAT is the question!**

The question of using a standardized test or an evaluation for your child can only be answered on an individual basis. Please refer to **CHAPTER 5** Testing and Evaluation for more detailed information. There are three types of testing (aka assessment) which shall be discussed here: Parent as Teacher Evaluation, Professional Evaluation, and Standardized Testing. One or more can be helpful for understanding strengths and weaknesses of different learners.

Just as if your child had undetermined medical issues, you should first have some testing or evaluation completed so you know what course of action might be helpful. The first step in helping your different learner become a more successful student is evaluation by you, the parent as teacher.

### Parent as Teacher Evaluation

This type is likely the most helpful of all testing. Homeschooling parents should regularly evaluate the progress of their students, particularly different learners. Teaching methods and strategies in the homeschool can be immediately changed and implemented based on the parent's observations and evaluation on yearly, monthly, weekly, even daily basis.

The following chart identifies potential different learner issues by school subject, challenge, possible reasons, and potential helps. Use this to begin to pinpoint your child's struggles and to help them have greater success in their schooling.

Area of Concern	Differences/ Challenges	Possible Underlying Reasons	Potential Helps
Reading and/or Spelling	Skips words, tangles letters  Slow reader  Comprehension confusion	Visual processing  Auditory Processing	Vision training  Auditory Training  Intensive phonics program  PACE/ Master the Code  ReadingRX  Linda Mood, The Gift of Dyslexia; Youtube
Mathematics	Cannot retrieve math facts  Math understanding challenges	Memory skills  Dyscalculia	Drill entire facts to rhythm in minute bursts  Right Start Math makes concepts plain and simple

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<b>Area of Concern</b>	<b>Differences/ Challenges</b>	<b>Possible Underlying Reasons</b>	<b>Potential Helps</b>
Writing Skills	<p>Pencil resistant</p> <p>Pressure on pencil is inconsistent</p> <p>Writing goes uphill/downhill</p>	<p>Dysgraphia</p> <p>Fine Motor Skills</p> <p>Vision Problem</p>	<p>Handwriting Without Tears: Rhythmic writing and tracing</p> <p>Fine motor activities</p> <p>Eye exercises PACE Training Brain Integration</p>
Social Skills	<p>Misses social cues which affects friendships</p> <p>Poor eye contact</p> <p>Touching challenges (too much, too little over-sensitive) impulsive</p>	<p>Asperger Syndrome</p> <p>Sensory Integration Processing problem</p> <p>ADHD</p>	<p>Occupational Therapy</p> <p>STAR Therapy Institute</p> <p>Anna's House</p> <p>Brain Balance Centers</p> <p>PACE Training</p>
Life Skills	<p>Needs help with Hygiene</p> <p>Confusion with money</p> <p>Safety concerns</p> <p>Community awareness challenges</p>	<p>Dyspraxia</p> <p>Developmental Delays</p> <p>Down Syndrome</p>	<p>Occupational Therapy</p> <p>Personal goals</p> <p>Routine excursions</p> <p>Daily chores in small steps</p>

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<b>Area of Concern</b>	<b>Differences/ Challenges</b>	<b>Possible Underlying Reasons</b>	<b>Potential Helps</b>
Physical Wellness	Chronic congestion/ Headaches  Dark purple circles under the eyes  Fatigue after meals  Stomach problems/ Bowel issues  Sleep disorders	Allergies: foods, pollens, dust, etc.  Candida (yeast overgrowth)  Gluten intolerance  Dairy intolerance	Remove/ rotate sensitive (allergic) foods  Add probiotics and anti-fungals with the help of a professional  Remove gluten (wheat, barley, spelt)  Remove dairy (milk, yogurt, cheese butter, ice cream)
Mental/ Emotional Wellness	Anxiety Anger outbursts  Emotional "meltdowns"  Obsessive-compulsive behaviors  Rigidity	Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactivity (ADHD)  Asperger Syndrome  Anxiety disorder	Neural Feedback Brain Mapping and Counseling  Food sensitivity testing  Naturopathy/ Homeopathy

With your Parent as Teacher Evaluation complete, either of the following two types of assessment should then be conducted both to meet the state bi-annual requirement and also to assist you in understanding your child's strengths and weaknesses for more successful education.

If your child is behind his expected grade level, do not delay having him evaluated or tested. You need to understand his ability and inability so you can modify your homeschool program accordingly to ensure he is making progress from year to year. Even if he is only doing first grade work but is in the third grade, and the law requires testing to begin in 3rd grade, you should still have an assessment completed for him so you know of what he is, or is not, capable.

Regardless of how your child is performing in home-based education, you need to meet the requirements of your state's law.

## Standardized Testing

If you choose a standardized test you may choose the test for the grade level at which your child is working, without regard to his age. Therefore, if your fourteen-year-old has just finished third grade curricula he should take the third grade test. In this situation, an evaluation might be a better choice of assessment for the struggling student. (See below.) Likewise, if your child is highly gifted, perhaps doing high school level work though she is only ten years old, then test at her ability level so you know exactly at what level she is working.

If your child is significantly behind in school and therefore also scoring low on standardized tests, it is wise to have documentation proving any diagnoses, as well as what you are doing as teacher to ensure educational progress. (See **CHAPTER 5** Testing and Evaluations for helpful hints about test taking preparation to insure your student's best test performance.)

## Professional Evaluation in Lieu of Standardized Testing

If your child is significantly behind his age equivalent grade level, perhaps standardized testing is not the best option. A qualified evaluation may be better suited to his situation.

Children with special needs are perfect candidates for the evaluation option if available in your state. If this is the option you choose for your child, it would be prudent to contact the “qualified evaluator” at the beginning of the school year. This enables the parent/teacher to understand the documentation and record keeping that is expected by the evaluator. It is also beneficial for the evaluator to see the child at the beginning of the year in order for them to establish a baseline. This enables the professional to fully assess the progress made by the child over the school year.

The method of evaluation may be chosen by the parent and the qualified evaluator. It may include an evaluator speaking with the child, assessing samples of academic work, observing the child working at home, or assessing the child's progress toward goals established at the beginning of the year. It may even include a test such as the Woodcock/Johnson.

These options allow the child to progress at his own pace and to be tested by the means that best demonstrate the child's abilities. There is no pressure on anyone, which can alleviate stress for the child as well as the parent.

## E. Learning Challenges and Teaching Strategies

Whether you have completed the previously described assessments or not, you can use this section to help you pinpoint your student's areas of need and strategies to assist with those needs. This section is in alphabetical order by topic. The following learning challenge labels will be covered:

1. ADD with Hyperactivity (ADHD)
2. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
3. Auditory Memory Deficit
4. Auditory Processing
5. Autism and Asperger's Syndrome
6. Developmental Disabilities
7. Dysgraphia
8. Dyslexia
9. Lack of Motivation/Reluctant Learner
10. Late Bloomer
11. Math Challenges — Dyscalculia
12. Math Challenges — Story-Problem Struggles
13. Physical Disabilities
14. Reading Difficulties
15. Sensory Integration Processing Disorder and Dyspraxia
16. Vision, Vision Processing Challenges, and Visual Perception
17. Visual Memory Deficit
18. Visual-Spatial Learner
19. Writer's Block
20. Writing Struggles — Pencil Resistance

### **1. ADD with Hyperactivity (ADHD)**

Please fill in the questionnaire below by scoring each of these behaviors from 1-5. (1= My child almost never has this behavior. 5 = This is a very common behavior at home and elsewhere.)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ My child is fidgety.
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ I find myself constantly telling my child to settle down or sit still.
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ My child is constantly tapping or fiddling with things.
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ I have to stop the horseplay because my child does not know when to stop.
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ Things seem to mysteriously break when my child touches or plays with them.
- f. \_\_\_\_\_ My child seems confused about how to control behaviors.
- g. \_\_\_\_\_ I am often reminding her to think before she acts.
- h. \_\_\_\_\_ My child has difficulty controlling himself in groups of other children.
- i. \_\_\_\_\_ This child is an excessive talker. I am often looking for the “off” button.
- j. \_\_\_\_\_ Manners have been a struggle for my child due to her constant interrupting, blurting out, or having trouble taking turns.

Review your child's scores; if there are 5s, it's an indicator that your child may need extra help with this challenge. Children who experience this problem seem to have a faulty “stop it” switch. Their bodies crave constant activity; their voices are louder and sillier. Consequently, they may hear a lot of negative responses (“Sit still!” “Stop talking!” “Get down!” “Quit asking!” “Don't hit!” etc.) from others around them.

Hyperactivity has a number of causes. The first cause of hyperactivity may just be sin! Our children are wonderfully made by our Creator, but they are also sinners from the get go. It is important to separate the sin from a special need. This is a task that requires patience, perseverance, and Proverbs among other good

child training resources. Each family needs to stick to their ‘house rules’ for all their children, regardless of what type of learner each child is. Working on character and appropriate behavior is crucial to helping students focus and progress in both academics and life. Slowing down your family’s schedule to allow for a calmer atmosphere where rule-setting and child training can be implemented is essential in a home where hyperactive children live and are being homeschooled. All parents need to work with their children to teach and train each to soothe themselves, increase their ability to sit still and pay attention as they mature in years, use inside and outside voices, and know when calm play is expected versus rough and rowdy.

If you are appropriately and consistently dealing with the sin nature of your child, and the hyperactivity continues to be present, then consider the second cause: physically, your child’s “stop it” signal in their brain is not functioning properly. Consequently, this is a child who is stimulated by everything and has the impulse to pursue, touch, run, explore, and discuss everything under the sun. In some children it is caused by brain dysfunction. This means that there are short circuits in the child’s brain (neurotransmitters) which do not connect properly. These areas need stimulation to connect with the calming areas. A structured home-life and consistent school expectations can create a peaceful and expected routine which helps with calming. If your child suffers with this issue, first try environmental changes such as your routine, your expectations, your structure, and your living spaces. More severe cases may need diagnosis and therapeutic solutions from medical professionals. Extreme cases may require prescription stimulant medication which can enable the child to slow down.

A third cause of hyperactivity is hyperkinesis. A child with these symptoms is a Willy Wiggle Worm. His little body simply needs lots of activity in order to think. This child will need to have a large amount of physical exercise before attempting to concentrate. Learning is best accomplished through hands-on activities and lots of breaks during the day. This child learns best by doing a physical activity at the same time as the academic drills — skipping rope or jumping on a mini-tramp while reciting spelling words or memorizing arithmetic facts.

A fourth cause of hyperactivity with distractibility is vision struggles. Children who see a confused or distorted picture may test as though their eyesight is 20/20. These vision problems are related to muscle movements more than eye formation. When children cannot see clearly, they are often fidgety and distracted. They may wiggle excessively when trying to focus on academics.

### Teaching strategies:

- Structure your day full of regular routine including active and quiet times.
- Use consistent academic patterns with routine assignments.
- Teach solid lessons in short, small bites (more is NOT better!)
- Include short breaks for the wiggles.
- Organize your subjects carefully for the maximum concentration. (You may find that distractible children are worse after eating, so a main meal has to wait until the academics are completed, or a snack should be followed by PE instead of math.)
- Do offer snacks and water to maintain reasonable energy for schoolwork and brain function.
- Keep the lesson as short and to-the-point as possible. Hyperkinetic children may need to run off large amounts of energy before settling into schoolwork. Start your day with PE, and use exercise with rote drills such as counting or spelling in-between sit and listen activities.

- Allow children to use finger fidget gadgets or play quietly with Legos while you read aloud.
- If your child struggles with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder then charting behavior is imperative. Points should be awarded every ten minutes to create an accountability without nagging; points can translate to daily coins or can be added up for rewards.

## **2. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)**

This is a “new” diagnosis that has been greatly misunderstood in recent years. Perhaps if we begin by defining ADD by exclusion, it will help clarify the picture.

- Attention Deficit Disorder is not a motivation problem, though children can learn to compensate for the disorder when they are highly motivated.
- Attention Deficit Disorder is not a food allergy, even though some children naturally become extremely restless when they eat sugar, bright food colors, dairy, wheat, corn, or other foods.
- Attention Deficit Disorder is not a discipline problem only, although logical consequences and firmly set boundaries will benefit this child.
- Attention Deficit Disorder does not mean your child is lacking in ability or intelligence. Many children with ADD have exceptional intelligence.

Attention Deficit Disorder occurs in children who have a malfunction in the sensory input areas of the brain. Stimuli are not filtered properly by the brain, and consequently the children cannot focus well. It is thought by many neurologists that the frontal lobe (focus area) is not processing as well as it should be. The receptive area in the back of the brain (occipital region) is doing extra work. Sometimes just bending over from the waist and dangling the arms for one minute intervals can help students to focus. Here are some additional things to know:

- Children with Attention Deficit Disorder have a great deal of trouble focusing their attention.
- Everything seems to grab at their attention. They battle with over-stimulation.
- Even as little babies, these children often seem to be hypersensitive to their environment.
- They may forget something the minute after it happens, such as a fact of learning or instructions that were just given.
- ADD children will often not seem to be aware of the consequences of their behavior even though they were clearly defined.
- Pediatricians can sometimes assess ADD or can refer you to someone who can.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

- Keep this child constantly accountable for being on-task every 10 minutes of the day.
- Award points on a chart for on-task behavior.
- Award points for successful completion of each task.
- Remember, completing a task is as difficult for this child as high-speed perfection is for the slow learner.
- Break up the day with stretches for circulation and short drills to help with focus and memory.

### **3. Auditory Memory Deficit**

Children with auditory memory deficits often confuse and mispronounce terms. Memory verses can be extremely difficult for these children because they say the words again and again yet they cannot remember the verse. They often confuse directions and instructions. Remembering more than two things at once is usually very difficult.

#### **Teaching Strategies:**

- Always repeat your instructions and then have your child repeat the instructions back to you once or twice in the same order you gave them. Begin with just one instruction at a time; increase in number until your child can easily follow three to four instructions in sequence.
- Repeat new terms many times V-E-R-Y S-L-O-W-L-Y.
- Write terms on cards for word games and drill later.
- Use Auditory Processing Strategies and therapies to increase Auditory Memory. (See also **14. Reading Difficulties** sub-section.)
- Use tactile strategies such as molding spelling words with playdough or access visual memory with prompts such as writing spelling words in block color to make learning multi-sensory, therefore, more effective.

### **4. Auditory Processing**

A common reason for reading difficulties is auditory perception and processing. Your child may be able to hear well, but confuses sounds easily. A child with this problem will confuse the message or often mispronounce words. When sounding out words, they read “C-A-T” and then say “tap.” (Reference G. Resources, HSLDA at the end of this chapter.)

Please fill in the questionnaire below by scoring each of these behaviors from 1-5. (1= My child almost never has this behavior. 5 = This is a very common behavior at home and elsewhere.)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ Misunderstands oral directions regularly.
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ Prone to ear infections as a baby or younger child.
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ May tune out during discussions or read-aloud times.
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ Cannot function well in a group setting (behavior problems, work not turned in, etc.).
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ Must repeat instructions back to you.
- f. \_\_\_\_\_ Cannot remember names or vocabulary words.
- g. \_\_\_\_\_ Works best in a very quiet setting.
- h. \_\_\_\_\_ Slow in speech development (i.e., did not speak in sentences until age three or older).
- i. \_\_\_\_\_ Talked baby talk or made up own words for things longer than most children.
- j. \_\_\_\_\_ Has trouble remembering sounds of letter combinations.
- k. \_\_\_\_\_ Has difficulty applying phonics rules.
- l. \_\_\_\_\_ Sounds out the word repeatedly within the same passage.
- m. \_\_\_\_\_ Can't spell phonetically and/or spells the same words differently each time.
- n. \_\_\_\_\_ Guesses at words because reading words with multiple syllables is hard.
- o. \_\_\_\_\_ Says “What?” a lot.
- p. \_\_\_\_\_ Sub-vocalizes when reading silently.

- q. \_\_\_\_\_ Is easily confused when listening especially if the speaker uses a lot of words.

Review your child's scores; if there are 5s, it's an indicator that your child may need extra help with this challenge.

### Teaching Strategies:

You can help this child to read by exercising the ear-gate: Practice sounds rhythmically:

- Have the child listen to a word you say, then have her say the sound the first letter makes, the second sound, the vowel sound, etc. until full word is sounded out phonetically.
- Slowly sound out a short word and have the child tell you what the word is.
- Spell by sound rather than by letter names while jumping, marching, and clapping. (/b/-/a/-/t/ - BAT)
- Practice writing words and sounding each letter or letter combination as the word is written.
- Practice writing the alphabet one sound at a time every day.

**Amplify:** Cup the student's hand behind their ear to help to amplify letter sounds. Add a whisper-phone, phono-phone, or talk-back device to help your child to hear their own voice while reading and spelling. (See G. Resources.)

**Recite:** Read and recite simple rhymes and verses over and over until the child is comfortable with all of the sounds in them.

**Train Phonics:** A child with auditory perception problems will not learn to spell without a good phonics base. Even though phonics may not be easy for your child, keep working because the results will be worth all the effort.

Resources are now available to therapeutically assist a child with Auditory Processing challenges. (See G. Resources.)

## **5. Autism and Asperger's Syndrome**

Please fill in the questionnaire below by scoring each of these behaviors from 1-5. (1= My child almost never has this behavior. 5 = This is a very common behavior at home and elsewhere.)

- \_\_\_\_\_ My child struggles socially and is not able to understand or respond to normal cues.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is hard for my child to have eye contact.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child is highly sensitive to chaos and noise, tastes and smells.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Touch can be very difficult for my child; my child doesn't understand personal space.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child seems to obsess over unusual things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child doesn't understand logical consequences.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child is prone to "meltdowns" and simply cannot function at times.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Language and communication are difficult for my child.
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child wants to connect but doesn't seem to know how. (Asperger's Syndrome)
- \_\_\_\_\_ My child would be happy to live in his own world entirely. (Autism)

Review your child's scores; if there are 5s, it's an indicator that your child may need extra help with this challenge. Parents of children on the Autism Spectrum will often choose to home educate their children for practical reasons. A quiet, well-structured home with clear consistent rules will help the Autistic child to grow and develop. Social experiences can be selected very carefully and be a useful part of the homeschool curriculum.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

- BE FLEXIBLE!
- Use many different strategies and approaches.
- Don't worry about what others may think; do what works best for you and your child.
- Make routine your friend; some students 'ritualize' their day in careful, concise patterns for success.
- Prepare for social situations; use a checklist of events for the day.

## **6. Developmental Disabilities**

The difference between learning disabilities (LD) and developmental disabilities (DD) is mental ability. A child with a Learning Disability is usually quite intelligent, but needs some special attention in learning and a different approach or strategy. A child with Developmental Disability is below average in intelligence. (IQ is usually below 80.) This child requires much more practice and time to learn and is delayed when tracked on developmental charts. In some cases, these children will need supervision for the rest of their lives. Schooling for a child with DD will look very different from the norm. A five-year-old may be potty-training rather than learning reading skills. Teaching colors may take a long time with much repetition and many days of starting over. But what a joy when a skill is learned!

### **Teaching Strategies:**

**A. SELF-HELP SKILLS** - Children with DD often need to be taught things that other children just seem to pick up on their own, such as undressing, dressing, eating with utensils, drinking from a cup, brushing teeth, washing hands and face, bathing, and putting on coats and boots.

- Use the hand-over-hand method at first — your hand on top of his, and then gradually withdraw your help as the child's skill improves. Have the child hold the sock while you hold his hands so he gets the feel of needing to hold on tight against the pull from the foot. Break the task into small steps.
- Once these skills are learned, move on to more difficult tasks. This is a great time to start chores. Putting their own laundry in the basket, hanging up the towel, putting toys away, and making the bed in the morning are skills that can be broken down into steps and then taught one step at a time. Then, as the child is able, move on to emptying trash cans, emptying the dishwasher, and doing the dishes. This type of instruction is "school" for a child with DD until he is ready for more difficult tasks.

**B. LIFE SKILLS** - These skills of independence must be carefully taught, such as using public transportation, ordering at a fast food restaurant, knowing how and when to make a phone call, answering the phone at home, and making a purchase at the store. Again, break the task into its

smaller components and teach it one step at a time. Cooking, cleaning, basic hand sewing, and minor house maintenance skills are also important to your child's independence.

**C. ACADEMICS** - At some point you will begin to include academics in the child's day. When is the time right? Observe the child for readiness skills, such as his ability to sit and accept direction, the development of fine motor skills (ability to hold a pencil or use scissors), level of interest, and understanding of symbols. If you think your child is ready, give it a try. If you are right, the child will begin to demonstrate his ability. If it is too early, stop and come back to it at a later time. In the meantime, work on the skills necessary to prepare your child for academics, such as matching, sequencing, tracing, and those previously mentioned.

## **7. Dysgraphia**

This is a problem in which there appears to be a short-circuit between the brain and the hand. A child with dysgraphia will have a great idea but will be unable to put that idea on paper. Children with this problem will not show their work in math. They will write one sentence and call it a "paragraph." Dysgraphic children often beg to give their book reports orally. Dysgraphia is apparent when letters are formed with great stress, high pencil pressure, and inconsistent shape and/or placement on the line.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

- Trace, copy, and sound the alphabet daily for practice in saying and writing simultaneously.
- Practice writing and speaking simple phrases to rhythm and music daily.
- Assign low-stress writing tasks such as copying easy-to-read material onto lined handwriting paper.
- Use big tools — bigger is better! A whiteboard or chalkboard allows the child to use gross-motor functions by making large, easy-to-write letters or numbers.
- Allow your child to dictate a story first, then to edit and recopy it in short writing sessions. Note: If your child struggles with spelling, this type of exercise can help build success in both spelling and the creative process.

The child will benefit from pencil exercises and fine-motor exercises to develop pencil control — Legos®, LiteBright®, peg boards, and colorful dot-to-dot books. There are also pencil grips available wherever school supplies are sold.

## **8. Dyslexia**

Dyslexia is a complex and multifaceted learning challenge because the brain organizes information differently. Children with dyslexia must reorganize and reorient themselves in order to read numbers, letters, and words in a sequence. Reading, writing, and math calculations can be problematic for these students. Even sitting straight while learning can be hard for this child because their brain sends many confusing messages. This is why letters may seem strange and words are easily misspelled. A three-dimensional object doesn't change because it is turned in a different direction, but a letter does! (b, d, p, q.) Numbers also present a challenge. (3, 5, 6, 9).

- Dyslexia is not a disease, it's a difference.
- Dyslexics are challenged by disorientation, not intelligence.

- Dyslexic people are often highly creative, out-of-the-box thinkers.
- Dyslexics often excel in three-dimensional worlds but struggle in two-dimensions (paperwork).
- Dyslexics can sometimes visualize in three dimensions (e.g. they imagine seeing the backside of a figure).
- Dyslexia can be an issue for those who might need vision therapy because their eyes don't work together correctly.
- Dyslexia can be an issue for those with auditory processing challenges.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

- Multisensory Techniques — audio, tactile, visual.
- Whole Language Strategies — combine reading, writing, vocabulary, phonics, spelling and comprehension under one systematic theme.
- Phonics instruction — should be taught in a systematic sequence with daily practice on decoding and encoding words; review vowel sounds, digraphs, and phonograms often.
- Reading Instruction — Books should be read aloud so that students with dyslexia can follow along easily.
- Method of Instruction — work one-on-one with them so they can practice areas in which they are weak, reviewing errors so that positive changes can be made.

## **9. Lack of Motivation/Reluctant Learner**

The greatest teaching challenge of all is working with a child who would rather not be learning. It is important to remember that students may bring negative experiences, frustrations, and wrong expectations from the past with them into homeschooling. The phrase “reluctant learner” applies to these students.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

- Keep a very firm schedule. (It is better for a child to be frustrated with a clock, calendar, or timer than a parent.)
- Be firm and loving. Don't flex too much because you will invite arguing and manipulation.
- Chart attitude and cooperation. Some families break the chart into 10-15 minute increments. A child receives points or stars for cooperation and good attitudes during each of the little time blocks. The points are then translated to coins or privileges which are awarded the same day. (These points accumulate day-by-day toward an award based on effort and attitude.)
- Keep the consequences and privileges simple and logical. “Yes, you may go and do ‘Z’ as soon as ‘X & Y’ are completed.”
- Do not allow a reluctant learner to spoil things for you or the family. Clearly identify what your expectations are. (Be reasonable.) If the student does not finish the work in the fairly allotted time, then homework must be done on his own time, not yours. If the work is still not done, take disciplinary measures as disobedience is present.
- Be careful to keep your attitude and enthusiasm up as much as possible. This will rub off on your student, eventually.
- Vary your methods of instruction as much as possible. Use videos, models, field trips, games, experiments, white-boards, manipulatives, costumes, and drama to instruct and make learning more enjoyable. Many families reserve one day per week just for this type of instruction.

- Pray for your child each day and bless him with the love of learning. You will be amazed at the transformation which God will do when parents bless their children!

## **10. Late Bloomer**

**Sometimes the greatest teaching tool we can use with a child is time.** Some children need a very long time to be able to develop academic skills. We call these children 'late-bloomers'. Think about that name for a moment, and you can picture a beautiful flower which waits until the little spring pansies are faded to produce its late season blossoms in the glow of late summer and early fall. The late blooms are no less beautiful.

Your child may be a late bloomer if these things happen during school:

- After careful, patient instruction and concentrated effort, the information cannot be used or retained.
- Whenever you try to build upon a concept, all is lost.
- Your child cannot focus on material.
- Your child shows no inclination to read and does not recognize signs or symbols.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

- Focus on that which he can do, not on what he cannot do. Often these children are great at building and experimenting.
- Help them to develop their skills incrementally.
- Work heavily on character. Teach the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.
- Advocate for your child by communicating to all relevant parties, explaining the curriculum in which your child is working and cautioning them to keep disparaging comments to a minimum.

## **11. Math Challenges — Dyscalculia**

This is the educational term for a child who cannot remember basic math facts, even after long periods of drill. It seems as though the brain has become a sieve and the math facts just slip through. This also applies to a child who is often teary-eyed during the math lesson. Concepts are very difficult. Numbers seem to scramble in their brains.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

- A. INPUT** - teach the fact first. Show the math fact to the child in a variety of ways three times during the day. Use counters, use a timeline, and use a flashcard showing the answer. ( $3 + 5 = 8$ ) ( $5 + 3 = 8$ .) You can write it on a board. Flashcard option: Triangle Flashcards depict math facts in family groups. Three numbers appear in the corners of the triangular card. As each corner is covered, the question changes from addition to subtraction. (For example, the card might have the numbers 3, 5, and 8. Cover the 8, then  $3 + 5 = 8$ ; cover the 5, and  $8 - 3 = 5$ ; or cover the 3, and  $8 - 5 = 3$ .)

**B. RECITE** - review the fact orally without looking. Reteach as needed.

**C. OUTPUT** - Test the facts. Have the child write the answer to the fact on a 'short and sweet' drill sheet or flash cards (80% review, 20% new). Have them answer flash cards, then play learning games using the new fact.

- Continue daily drills by making many copies of one drill page. Give the same page to the child for a brief allotted time every day. Note the progress the child makes each day as he completes more problems. You may wish to chart his daily improvements in a colorful way with incentives and rewards (pennies, stars, etc.).
- Place a number line in the house where it is accessible at all times. Staircases are good places for number lines. Use colors when creating the line and provide plastic toys to 'jump' on the number-line as calculations are discussed and made. This will give the child both visual and hands-on memory 'hooks' for the math facts.
- Keep a One Hundred Grid Chart (a 10 x 10 square chart with numbers up to 100) posted on the wall. Refer to it often for counting and practice. If facts are rather dry and boring, help your different learner remember the beauty and order of God's creation, encouraging them to honor and have respect for His systems like mathematics.

## **12. Math Challenges — Story-Problem Struggles**

There are a lot of reasons children struggle with story problems. To answer a math story problem, a child needs to recognize key words to choose which operations are needed to solve the problem. Help your child identify the key words in the problem by underlining those words when they appear. Key words and phrases include sum, difference, more than, less than, each group, total, etc. Some children will solve story problems by drawing pictures. Even if your children can solve the problem in their head they still may not realize how they arrived at the answer, so it's still good to know the key words in the problem and make a number sentence (formula).

### **Teaching Strategies:**

- Use graph paper to help math problems align easily and clearly.
- Use colored pencils and pens to show different steps of a problem (great with long division).
- Work with manipulatives (pennies, dimes, and dollars are great for learning place value).
- Draw pictures of word problems.
- Use mnemonic devices to learn steps of a math concept.
- Use rhythm and music to teach math facts and to set steps to a beat.
- Use computer programs for drill and practice.

## **13. Physical Disabilities**

Physical disabilities include impaired vision or blindness, impaired hearing or deafness, sensory integration problems, and motor disabilities. Unless a parent is formally trained in these areas, it is recommended to

find a therapist who is willing to work with you on a consultation basis. The therapist can instruct you as to what needs to be done; you can then implement the therapy with the child at home. The more severe the disability, the more support that is needed, but most of the therapy can still likely be accomplished at home.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

- Practice lots of nonthreatening oral work for vocabulary practice.
- Listen to stories through headphones to develop verbal awareness.
- Read aloud every day.
- Make your instructions exceptionally clear.
- Have your child repeat instructions back to you.
- Use rhythmic auditory training therapies available to train the ear to be more alert and in tune.  
(See G. Resources at the end of this chapter.)

## **14. Reading Difficulties**

### **If reading has been coming slowly for your child, consider the following concepts.**

Readiness is the first issue to consider: Is my child ready to read? Children do not all walk at the same age, yet many in education think they should all read at the same age — **NOT TRUE!** Your child is ready to read when letter shapes are easily recognized. When a child can discern letter sounds and recognize rhymes, the auditory skills are ready. When he indicates a desire to read through noticing words on packages, signs, and books, he is becoming a pre-reader. Seize the opportunity at this point to begin basic reading skills, and continue to read aloud to your child to instill a love for the written word.

Reading difficulties can also stem from a variety of other issues. Read through all of the learning challenges in this section to possibly identify other root causes of your child's reading struggles. Work towards eliminating or resolving those complicating issues and perhaps reading challenges will begin to be resolved as well. Many students have struggled with reading through the elementary years, then when everything clicked, that student became a voracious reader. Don't despair, but do work on reading constantly and consistently, with gentle encouragement through the struggles. (See G. Resources at the end of this chapter.)

### **Teaching Strategies:**

If your child is not yet ready to read, relax! Pushing will not help your child to mature in readiness any more than yelling at plants will produce flowers. However, like plants, children need fertile ground for growth and maturity. Nurture your child's reading readiness by:

- Reading aloud every day.
- Playing games and making words with magnetic letters on the refrigerator.
- Teaching nursery rhymes and making up your own rhymes.
- Teaching Bible memory verses.
- Playing with pencil and paper (dot-to-dot games, tracing, drawing, copying shapes, coloring).

## **15. Sensory Integration Processing Disorder and Dyspraxia**

Dyspraxia is a disorder that is characterized by difficulty in muscle control, which causes problems with movement and coordination, language and speech, and can affect learning. Although not a learning disability, Dyspraxia often exists along with Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, or ADHD. A child with this problem

will struggle with movement and coordination, language and speech. Please fill in the questionnaire below by scoring each of these behaviors from 1-5. (1 = My child almost never has this behavior. 5 = This is a very common behavior at home and elsewhere.)

- a. \_\_\_\_ Exhibits poor balance; may appear clumsy; may frequently stumble.
- b. \_\_\_\_ Shows difficulty with motor planning.
- c. \_\_\_\_ Demonstrates inability to coordinate both sides of the body.
- d. \_\_\_\_ Has poor hand-eye coordination.
- e. \_\_\_\_ Exhibits weakness in the ability to organize self and belongings.
- f. \_\_\_\_ Shows possible sensitivity to touch.
- g. \_\_\_\_ May be distressed by various sounds.
- h. \_\_\_\_ Has difficulty with fine motor tasks (coloring, puzzles, cutting, and pasting).
- i. \_\_\_\_ Sensitive about clothing texture, weight, tags, etc.

Review your child's scores; if there are 5s, it's an indicator that your child may need extra help with this challenge.

### Teaching Strategies:

- Touch with understanding; prepare the child to be physically touched by you (a safe hug, etc.) by asking first so there are no surprises; use firm yet gentle, warm touch, not light, not hard.
- Provide a quiet place, without auditory or visual distractions.
- Speak in a soft voice when working one-on-one with the child; approach with calm.
- Provide earplugs or sterile waxes for noisy places.
- Be aware of light and light sources that may be irritating to the child.
- Offer manipulatives, but don't force student to touch them.
- Use occupational therapy or sensory integration training as needed (soft, gentle brushing of the skin may be used therapeutically).

### 16. Vision, Vision Processing Challenges, and Visual Perception

Please fill in the questionnaire below by scoring each of these behaviors from 1-5. (1 = My child almost never has this behavior. 5 = This is a very common behavior at home and elsewhere.)

- a. \_\_\_\_ Rubs eyes or blinks when reading.
- b. \_\_\_\_ Prone to headaches, nausea, or dizziness when using eyes while sitting.
- c. \_\_\_\_ Reads with one eye and then the other or covers one eye when reading.
- d. \_\_\_\_ Looks at the book from different directions, or looks away when reading.
- e. \_\_\_\_ Skips lines, or words, or reads letters reversed.
- f. \_\_\_\_ Cannot recognize a word from one line to the next.
- g. \_\_\_\_ Wiggles constantly when reading.
- h. \_\_\_\_ Misaligns numbers vertically and horizontally.
- i. \_\_\_\_ Reverses letters or numbers (12 is 21, bat is tab, was is saw, b is d).
- j. \_\_\_\_ Cannot reproduce simple shapes and designs on blank paper.
- k. \_\_\_\_ Writing seems to progress up or down hill on blank paper.

Review your child's scores; if there are 5s, it's an indicator that your child may need extra help with this

challenge. One reason for reading difficulties is that children can be farsighted until about 11 years of age. Your child's eyesight may be excellent, but their vision may be poor. After the age of six, children begin to focus their eyes more effectively. This is the time when vision difficulties can really surface.

Other reasons would be related to physical problems or processing issues. Be observant if you suspect your child has vision or visual processing issues. If children read with only one eye at a time, they will often scramble or misread letters. If one eye dominates over the other eye, letters will reverse easily and letters or words may seem to move around on the page. Reading will be very difficult if the eyes move in short jerks and jumps and cannot track or follow an object smoothly. When these problems are present, the child must concentrate very hard just to keep the letters 'holding still' on the page. Children with vision problems wiggle a great deal while learning to read. They also complain of headaches and that reading is 'boring' and are easily distracted.

If you suspect a vision problem, take your child to an optometrist. If you suspect processing problems, take your child to an optometrist who is also a vision therapist. Many vision therapy exercises can be done at home as a part of your school day. (See G. Resources, Vision Therapy.)

Correcting vision problems with eyeglasses or eye therapy may only be a first step. Visual perception challenges can be a result of something beyond vision issues, such as how the individual processes information, whether linearly or spatially. Processing issues can be more complicated and often require further professional diagnosis and resolution. Continue to seek help until your child gets the diagnostic and therapeutic support he needs to succeed.

### **Teaching Strategies:**

- Make intensive phonics your first choice in a reading curriculum. Drill the phonics to rhythm for stronger results.
- Place a white card or sheet of paper over text to reveal only one line of reading at a time.
- Try various colored transparencies over the writing. Some colors make reading easier for children. (See G. Resources, Irlen transparencies.)
- Limit reading time to short periods in the morning.
- Be as patient as possible when your child misreads. Remember, it is not laziness or inattentiveness; that "b" really does look like a "d"!
- Look for curriculum with large print.
- Keep plugging away! Though reading may be hard and your child is resisting, it's worth every bit of the battle!
- Make small incremental rewards for your child, such as library reading programs.
- Continue to listen to your child read each day, even as he gets older.
- Have your child practice eye exercises every day by following a pencil tip or the tip of the thumb from left-to-right across, around, and up or down your body area. Also, have your child try following your thumb as you make circles on the left, right, and in the center of your body area.

### **17. Visual Memory Deficit**

Visual memory means holding a 'picture' in the mind. Children with strong visual memory skills will often look **upward** to remember how to spell a word. They are recreating the 'picture' of the word they have

stored. When a child has poor visual memory skills, their spelling, reading, and math facts become very difficult to master because they cannot ‘picture’ them in their mind. Each time the child looks at a word or math problem, it might as well be a ‘new’ task.

### Teaching Strategies:

Here is a strategy for helping your students to remember what they see:

- Write words to be memorized on heavy card stock or other stiff paper using eye-catching colors and illustrations. (ALWAYS write the word in the proper letter sequence, never jumbled.)
- Hold the card in front of the child at about eyebrow level.
- Hide the card, then see if the child can describe it to you in detail.
- Bring the card back again and again until the child can ‘see,’ from memory, exactly what the card looks like.
- When the child is able to spell the word forward, backward, and inside-out while pointing to the imaginary ‘location’ of the letters, you know the visual ‘picture’ is now firmly in place.

**NOTE:** Visual memory is simply recalling what has been seen. In contrast, visualizing is creating stories and images in the mind. Both are helpful for learning. (Mental movies are what make reading exciting!)

### 18. Visual-Spatial Learner\*

Both a gift and a challenge, children blessed with Visual-Spatial learning abilities function primarily in their right brain hemisphere and so do not do well with the standard expectations of textbook-based rote learning. (Those tools are for Auditory-Sequential learners who are more left brain oriented.) Please fill in the questionnaire below by scoring each of these behaviors from 1-5. (1 = My child almost never has this behavior. 5 = This is a very common behavior at home and elsewhere.)

- a. \_\_\_\_\_ Seems to be lost in space, daydreaming, unfocused on lesson being taught verbally.
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ Seethes with impatience waiting for others to catch-up even though not fully finished with own work.
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ Has terrible handwriting and is a poor speller.
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ Has a wild imagination, original ideas, inventive; may start in the middle of a task or work backwards.
- e. \_\_\_\_\_ Understands higher math concepts but poor with math facts and calculation.
- f. \_\_\_\_\_ Good with maps and directions; knows how to get anywhere after just one time.
- g. \_\_\_\_\_ Draws or doodles while someone is teaching verbally.
- h. \_\_\_\_\_ Is absent-minded; loses everything; he is the mess!
- i. \_\_\_\_\_ Knows materials but does poorly on detail oriented tests.
- j. \_\_\_\_\_ Astounds with flashes of brilliance but never finishes anything on time.
- k. \_\_\_\_\_ Asks many questions; searches for words to use and gestures a lot.
- l. \_\_\_\_\_ Can recite the whole movie plot but can’t summarize it.
- m. \_\_\_\_\_ Is a late bloomer.
- n. \_\_\_\_\_ Can do math in his head but won’t write down any of the process getting to the solution.
- o. \_\_\_\_\_ Agonizes over multiple choice questions because they are all correct in some way.

Review your child’s scores; 5s, indicator that your child may need extra help with this challenge.

## **Teaching Strategies:**

- Present and teach ideas visually; teach student to visualize spelling words and math problems.
- Use discovery techniques as often as possible and allow for hands-on learning projects.
- Encourage student to translate learned information into a 2D or 3D image for retention and presentation.
- Incorporate spatial exercises, visual imagery, reading material that is rich in fantasy; include visualization activities in the curriculum.
- Avoid drill, repetition, and rote memorization; allow use of computer for instruction and assignments.
  
- Teach to the student's strengths of visualization and imagination; help the student learn to use strengths to compensate for weaknesses.
- Give un-timed tests; with appropriate documentation of student's disability, even college testing can be un-timed.
- Give more weight to the content of papers than to format, including mechanics such as spelling, punctuation, paragraphing, etc.
- Allow student to construct, draw, or otherwise create visual representations of a concept as a substitute for some written assignments.
- If a bright student struggles with easy, sequential tasks, see if he can handle more advanced, complex work. Acceleration is more beneficial for such a student than remediation.
- Expose student to role models of successful VSL adults. Many celebrated physicists were VSL; study their biographies.

\*This information was summarized from the website [visualspatial.org](http://visualspatial.org), which includes articles authored by Betty Maxwell, M.A. and Linda Kreger Silverman, Ph.D. for the Gifted Development Center.

## **19. Writer's Block**

"I don't know what to write!" Whenever children say this, the problem usually lies with inadequate experience or a limited vocabulary.

## **Teaching Strategies:**

- Prepare your student for writing through stimulating conversation, experiences, books, videos, or trips.
- Have your student keep a journal of terms and names while you do the above. These become the ingredients for the child's story.
- Generate a list of questions to be answered in the assignment if your student can't think of anything on his own.

## **20. Writing Struggles — Pencil Resistance**

Does a pencil seem like a terrible foreign object to your child? Is it constantly falling to the floor or the tip breaking? When children struggle with pencil resistance, consider the problem to be primarily related to

fine-motor skills, rather than an attitude problem.

### Teaching Strategies:

- Work on fine-motor skills in a variety of ways (modeling with clay, play pick-up sticks, play with money, cutting crafts, dot-to-dot games, etc.).

## F. Exceptionally Bright Learners

### Guiding a “Gifted” learner

Exceptionally bright children will bring their own challenges to your home education experience. Could your child be a gifted learner?

- Does your child use mature vocabulary and/or grasp advanced concepts easily?
- Did your child suddenly begin to read with little or no instruction?
- Did your child grasp advanced number concepts from a very early age? Grouping numbers by fives before the age of three, calculating with their own system, grasping a complex answer but can't tell you how they got there?
- Is your child always getting into things?
- Does your child often ask deep questions?
- Does your child remember amazing details or forget important things and remember the minuscule things?
- Is your child often challenging or questioning authority?
- Is your child often impatient with others who are slower in talent or ability?

If you answered “Yes!” to most of these questions, then the following list may be of interest to you.

### Pros and Cons of living with exceptionally bright people:

- You only have to explain a concept once, but you need to train a habit again and again and again....
- Learning is often exhilarating, but school work is tiresome.
- Their progress can be outstanding, but inconsistent. (90% of gifted children have weak areas which may not even be at grade level!)
- Boredom is a constant threat to their existence. Gifted children seem to cause trouble just for fun and bring an entourage of toys everywhere.
- Gifted children are often very reluctant to work at learning. They assume that **everything** should come easily. They can give up easily when faced with a difficult challenge.
- Gifted children will think very well on higher, more complex levels, but may be very poor on simple memory and comprehension levels.
- Bright children often have grandiose plans but have trouble completing them.
- Some bright children are **not capable** of doing large amounts of drill. It is as foreign to their way of thinking as abstract mathematics would be to the mentally disabled.

- Routines smack of boredom, so gifted children seems to crave variety.
- Potential is the key word for these children, but lack of self-discipline can be their undoing!
- Gifted children can make excellent entrepreneurs, but poor employees.
- Gifted children can be very prophetic, compassionate, and discerning but can also be easily lured by the occult.

### **Your child has a unique destiny in the kingdom of God!**

The United States of America has 350 million people out of the 7.4 billion currently on the earth. This equals approximately 4.7% of the population. Out of this number, America has 42.5 million of 688 million school children of the world. From this number, only about 2% of American children are homeschooled. Out of the children who are homeschooled, only about 2% have the God-given abilities of an exceptionally bright child. This means that only one child out of 50,000 children on this earth has been given both the ability and the opportunity that has been given to your child by God. Selah ... let's think about that!

### **Teaching Strategies: Ideas for Guiding an Exceptionally Bright Child**

Pray daily for God's plan to be revealed to you and your children that you might guide them in the direction which the Lord has planned for them.

1. Keep repetition and drill to an absolute **minimum!**
2. Use **open-ended** studies as much as possible:
  - How would you design a \_\_\_\_\_ to do \_\_\_\_\_?
  - Go research \_\_\_\_\_ and tell me \_\_\_\_\_.
  - How many more \_\_\_\_\_ can you make or think of that will do \_\_\_\_\_?
3. Seek your child's **natural bent** and provide opportunities for growth development in that area. (Train up a child in the way that he should go {his bent} and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6)
4. Offer opportunities for **variety** to help round-out your child's education. You might be amazed to find out that your bright child enjoys things which would bore you to tears (opera, great books clubs, chess clubs, fencing, symphonies, art history, computer clubs, drama, the civil war, aviation, etc.).
5. **Connect** with other families of gifted children. Pray for one another and hold each other accountable to the **Word of God**. It takes a lot of personal strength and stamina to deal with this type of child as they can be exceptionally persuasive.
6. **Condense** your basic skills into a skill-based, mastery-style curriculum. If they know it, go on!
7. Spend one day per week or at least 20% of your time pursuing **non-book** interests — building projects, researching, experimenting, etc.
8. Spend at least one day per week in output: develop **public speaking** and **writing!** When you have a brilliant child, you almost have an obligation to teach your child to communicate effectively. The world needs to hear what they have to say!

9. Use **unit studies!** Theme based units of learning integrating Bible, science, social studies/history, literature, creative writing, art and music. This is practical and logical to the advanced student, **not boring!**
10. Teach **character!** The brightest, most intelligent people can also be the most rude and inconsiderate. Etiquette, manners, and serving others are paramount to your child's success as an adult.
11. Reward **consistency** and **diligence**. Plan a party when the term paper is completed. Award stars and pennies for diligence during the difficult drudgeries. Reward yourselves as a family for consistency in completing books or days of school.
12. Use a **variety of levels of thinking** as much as possible. The *Bloom's Taxonomy* of thinking skills helps to challenge the learning levels of bright students.

**LEVEL 1:** Memory for facts (names, dates, definitions) example:

- Who is the president of the United States?
- What is the job of the president of the United States?

**LEVEL 2:** Comprehension of facts (how, explain, summarize) example:

- Explain what accomplishments the current president has achieved while in office.

**LEVEL 3:** Application of information (what does this mean in this/that situation) example:

- How does the US president's job affect your life?

**LEVEL 4:** Analysis (breaking it down into separate concepts, comparing and contrasting data) example:

- Explain how the president works with his Cabinet.
- Explain how the president works with Congress.
- Explain how the president works with the Supreme Court.

**LEVEL 5:** Synthesis (bring the pieces together, and form a new concept or conclusion) example:

- What would you do if you were president?
- Design your own to-do list as president of the United States.

**LEVEL 6:** Evaluation (summarizing and making educated choices and decisions) example:

- What are some of the greatest contributions our president has made?
- What are some of the mistakes our president has made?
- What recommendations could you give our president?

## Go Beyond the Basics with Bright Learners

### Enrich:

- Go beyond the textbooks! Find fun opportunities and activities that don't rely on bookwork.
- Give opportunities to get beyond the basics, reach out and explore new vistas. One new course or activity each year or semester is plenty!

### Accelerate:

- Faster and farther is not always better, but deeper into a subject is. Remember, your child is STILL a child! Just because they are mentally working at college level in middle school does not mean they are ready emotionally, socially, or spiritually to attend college.
- You may wish to try Algebra for fun in elementary school

### Accentuate:

- Even though your child may not remember the multiplication tables, they may still become a rocket scientist! Intensify learning to keep them productive and progressing.
- Pray that you will understand the strong gifts your child possesses and encourage them to grow those gifts. Take notice of weaknesses and help them learn to grow through them; observe strengths and find ways to develop them fully.
- Give them reflections of themselves as God sees them. Help them see themselves as incredibly blessed; build a sense of destiny into your child. Accent the positives in their life.

### Stimulate and Motivate:

- Lead your child to godly leadership and counsel as much as possible.
- Provide your child with every kind of practical application of learning that is possible.
- Use a variety of resources. Don't trudge through one textbook and regurgitate it. Use videos, audios, visually interesting books ....
- Collect different viewpoints.
- Seek out apprenticeships.
- Keep a clear structure of discipline and character development.
- Use logical consequences.
- Be VERY consistent and fair.
- Use if/then approaches often. "If you finish your math, then we will construct a ziggurat."

### Keep Your Eyes Upon Jesus:

He has an incredible plan for you and this child. Only the Lord can bring you to the place of real success in this life. His will is what will bring peace and contentment to your child.

# G. Resources

The following always-incomplete list of resources has been recommended by fellow Colorado homeschoolers.

- **Autism Information Center:** Helps parents to understand autism and where to get help. [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org).
- **Christian Learning Disability Consultants:** [www.littlegiantsteps.com](http://www.littlegiantsteps.com).
- **Cognifit:** Online assessments and all-computerized brain-training program. [www.cognifit.com](http://www.cognifit.com).
- **Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA):** membership organization with legal covering for homeschool and extra help for struggling learners. [www.HSLDA.org/strugglinglearners](http://www.HSLDA.org/strugglinglearners).
- **Learning Disabilities Association:** resource center to identify and explain learning problems and direct parents to support. [www.ldaamerica.org](http://www.ldaamerica.org).
- **National Center for Learning Disabilities** has a great site especially for parents: [www.understood.com](http://www.understood.com).
- **National Challenged Homeschoolers Associated Network**, P.O. Box 39 Porthill, Idaho 93953, 208-276-6246, Christian Home school information network for all kinds of special needs: [www.NATTHAN.com](http://www.NATTHAN.com).

## Vision therapy

Behavioral optometrists will train the muscles in the eyes to focus and align themselves. This can help in reading, spelling, handwriting, numbers, and sports.

## Books that Bless (Topical)

As busy home educators, we have limited time and resources for reading, but these books have proven to be very beneficial and are worth having on hand to read and re-read.

### Autism/Asperger

- *All Cats Have Asperger Syndrome.* Kathy Hoopman (An adorable picture book showing the natural behaviors of kittens while explaining Aspergers. Beautiful, compassionate, and entertaining.)
- *Autism Spectrum Disorder/ The Complete Guide to Understanding Autism.* Chantal Sicile-Kira.

### Brain Training

- *Disconnected Kids.* Robert Melillo (Not an easy read, but interesting information on the brain with activities and assessments parents can do at home by the founder of the Brain Balance Centers.)

### Gifted/Exceptionally Bright Learners

- *Boys! Shaping Ordinary Boys into Extraordinary Men.* William Beausay II.

### Motivation

- *Raising Motivated Kids.* Cheri Fuller. (Cheri Fuller is an educator's educator and is a regular visitor on Focus on the Family as well as national speaker and author.)

## Reading

- *The Gift of Dyslexia*. Ronald D. Davis (This classic includes basic therapy techniques to help you help your child.)

## Sensory Processing Disorder/Dyspraxia

- *The Out of Sync Child/Recognizing and Coping with Sensory Integration Dysfunction*. Carol Stock Kranowitz, MA (This is her first book, which explains Sensory Processing Disorder.)
- *The Out of Sync Child Has Fun/Activities for Kids with Sensory Processing Disorder*. Carol Stock Kranowitz, MA (This is a practical, helpful book.)
- *The Sensory Child Gets Organized/Proven Systems for Rigid, Anxious, or Distracted Kids*. Carolyn Dalglish (Well-known expert in the field, who helps parents help their child.)

## Visual Spatial Learner

- *Frames of Mind*. Howard Gardner. (see chapter on Spatial Intelligence.)
- *In the Mind's Eye*. Thomas G. West.
- *The Spatial Child*. John Philo Dixon.

## Websites

- [www.daviddyslexia.com](http://www.daviddyslexia.com)
- [www.HeadstrongNation.org](http://www.HeadstrongNation.org)
- [www.hslida.org/strugglinglearner](http://www.hslida.org/strugglinglearner)
- [www.NATTHAN.com](http://www.NATTHAN.com)
- [www.visualspatial.org](http://www.visualspatial.org)



*So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying,  
'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.'  
His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things,  
I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'  
He also who had received two talents came and said,  
'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.'  
'His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things,  
I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'  
(Matthew 25:20-23 NKJV)*

# CHAPTER 8



## **PART I** - Joining a Homeschool Group

## **PART II** - Leading or Starting a Homeschool Group

### CONTENTS:

#### **PART I**

- A. The Need for Support in Homeschooling
- B. Types of Homeschool Groups
- C. Choosing a Homeschool Group
- D. Participating in a Homeschool Group

#### **PART II**

- A. Forming a New Homeschool Group
- B. Seven Principles for a Healthy Homeschool Group
- C. Additional Ideas
- D. Resources

*- Revised by Katie Ward,  
with Tanya Poe and Pam Newberg -*

# PART I - Joining a Homeschool Group



*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: if one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. (Ecclesiastes 4:9)*

*If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. (Philippians 2:1-2)*

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:12-14)*

## A. The Need for Support in Homeschooling

The need for encouragement and support along the journey is one thread that binds all home educators together. According to one dictionary, **support** means:

“**To** bear; to sustain; to uphold; to prop up; to keep from falling or sinking — as the stem of a tree supports the branches.”<sup>8</sup>

So where and how can you find this support?

- 1. God Himself** is your most vital support system! Trust in Him and run to Him first with all your cares. *But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint* (Isaiah 40:31).
- 2. You yourself** can be your next important support system. Taking care of yourself spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally can never be replaced by the support you may receive from others. Develop your own daily disciplines to fill up these personal reservoirs so that you can give to your family, train your children, and be a blessing to others.
- 3. Your family**, and especially your spouse, should also be part of your support system. Pray together about the choices you make regarding your children and their education so that you can be in agreement. Be specific with your spouse about ways they can help. (Of course, remember you are their support system, too!) Grandparents and other relatives can offer support, and, not at all least, your own children can be enlisted on the team of your homeschooling effort. *Serve one another in love* (Galatians 5:13).
- 4.** These areas of support are at the center of our lives. Then, as we draw strength from all the sources God has provided, He will equip us to give as well as receive support from our **homeschool group**. *Abide in me and I in you* (John 15:4 NKJV).

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<sup>8</sup> Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, Second Edition, Collins World, 1976

As a homeschooling family, having a group of friends that you feel you can trust to share your burden or your triumph can sometimes be vital to survival. A simple prayer shared can be the kindest way to encourage another traveler. When home educators across the nation are asked what their greatest needs are, their responses include: building a strong network of support, avoiding burnout, planning for fun, avoiding feelings of isolation, and teaching children to be part of a team. A good homeschool group can make a difference in all of these areas. The weaknesses of one family can be built up by the strength of another. Skills or resources can be shared for the benefit of the whole group. Socialization can be a positive factor, and lifelong friendships grow out of your union with like-minded families.

All homeschool group members are drawn together by their common purpose — home educating their children. In the past, these groups formed out of the pioneers who paved the way for us by establishing our right to homeschool and helping to draft laws on our behalf. Now that home education has gained acceptance, we have the responsibility to keep encouraging one another and maintain the strong networks which have built that foundation. These networks can be used to share information that is pertinent to all. A homeschool group can also be a force to build positive relations between a local community and all of an area's home educators.

Many homeschool groups are united on the basis of a common faith in Christ. This provides fellowship in spiritual, as well as practical, areas of life. Every member of the family can benefit from this kind of encouragement. **Michael Farris** says, “Every homeschooling mom needs a friend who also homeschools. Every homeschooling dad needs a friend who will hold him accountable for carrying out his responsibility to his family in this arena of life.”<sup>9</sup> **There is a place for every family in a homeschool group** — new homeschoolers as well as seasoned ones need to be able to give, as well as receive, through the network of fellow home educators.

**One note of caution to consider:** In addition to the support and fellowship, homeschool groups also provide families with a valuable opportunity for accountability with other like-minded families. Adults who abuse may use any number of means to hide their abuse, including homeschooling or interacting with homeschool children. In the regular interaction and community within a homeschool group, parents should be mindful of their own children and others, and they should be ready to report first-hand information about child abuse to the appropriate civil authorities. If you have concerns related to child abuse, visit [www.childhelp.org/hotline](http://www.childhelp.org/hotline).

## B. Types of Homeschool Groups

Each group of home educators is unique and may have completely different goals and styles. One may exist as a source of general information for local homeschoolers, another may be based in a church and be a tightly knit group of church members. Some groups offer a highly organized Friday school co-op in which

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<sup>9</sup>Michael Farris, *The Future of Home Schooling*, 1997, Regnery Publishing, page 68.

parents take turns teaching classes once a week to a group of children; or where teachers are hired from the community and members share the cost. Other groups have a few leaders that organize field trips and meet informally once a month for a moms' night out. Or a homeschool group might be a small cluster of families using the same curriculum. Most groups are for people who live in or near their community and have leaders that are also busy homeschooling parents. Besides the factor of geographic location, homeschool groups may differ in all of these areas:

- The size
- The members of the family that are included (moms only, dads, young children, teenagers, etc.)
- The goals
- The frequency of meetings and activities
- The days, times, and location of meetings and activities
- The type of communication (email, Facebook group, online form, Yahoo group, mailed newsletter)
- The type of meetings (parents, moms, families)
- The type of activities (field trips, regular co-ops/classes, performance days, science fairs, etc.)
- The support offered for unique situations (single parents, special needs, etc.)
- The level of commitment between the members
- The organizational style and volunteer vs. paid leadership
- The cost of membership

One of the most important differences between groups is whether it limits its membership to those who share a common faith in Christ, or if it is for all homeschoolers. There are advantages to both of these positions. A group for all might be a vehicle for informing larger numbers of voters about legislation that would affect their common interests. A Christian group would provide other advantages like: freedom to share prayer requests, influences for your children that might guide them spiritually, and a bond that will go deeper than your common interest in home education. This type of group will usually adopt a Statement of Faith that prospective members would sign to indicate their agreement.

Many kinds of homeschool groups are needed to serve people with different needs and preferences. We should be able to work together without judging another's reason for belonging to a group that may be different than ours. However, we also need to have the freedom to state our convictions honestly and seek others who are like-minded. Most people are looking for this, including non-Christians. They can readily see that the most effective support comes with this kind of agreement.

A Statement of Faith need not alienate anyone if presented graciously. It will, however, present a clear and honest picture of the philosophical principles that unify the group. For many home educators, the desire to share their faith with their children and make that a central part of their education is a primary reason for choosing to homeschool in the first place. Why should that factor not be primary in their homeschool groups? The kind of loyalty that develops when the group is united by this bond will cause each member to feel truly nurtured in the Lord, whereas any other central purpose for the Christian homeschool group will eventually wear out and grow thin and weak.

## C. Choosing a Homeschool Group

In the community where you live there may be many different homeschool groups. How do you choose which one you will join? First of all, you must think through your goals as a family and know the needs you have in reaching those goals. (If you have not done so already, please turn to **CHAPTER 1** A Vision for Home Education and work through that chapter with your spouse.) Then, as with any decision, spend some time in prayer asking God for wisdom. It may be that two or more groups look like they are right for your family in different ways, but it is usually a good idea to participate wholeheartedly in one group rather than to be spread too thin with several. The relationships that will be most treasured by you and your children are the ones that will become deeper by time together and commitment. This is only possible with a few families.

The first place to check for local homeschool groups might be with your church. Find out who the other home educators are and ask them about groups they belong to. Maybe your church has organized a group.

Many groups are also listed online or on Facebook. Be aware that some online groups are simply that: online gatherings to share information, rather than facilitate activities and in-person support. Online groups (whether local or national) may be geared towards specific curricula, church denominations, parenting styles, and many other varieties. The information and ideas shared in these groups can be very helpful, but be cautious of sharing too much personal information or joining strong discussions with people you have not personally met. Online groups provide many great benefits, but also have inherent difficulties. Be intentional about your online communication and interaction and use it as a supplement to local communities.

### Questions for the Group Leader

Once you know about the groups in your area, you will want to call someone in the leadership of each to determine which is the best fit for your family. Here are a few questions that might give you a start for such a conversation:

1. Is this group open to new members?
2. Is this group open to any home educator, or is it for families of a certain faith?
3. What are the goals of the group?
4. Is a certain age range of children the focus?
5. What activities are planned for the coming year?
6. Are dads involved, and if so, how?
7. What level of commitment is required of the members?
8. How is communication facilitated? If online (Facebook, website, forum), how are privacy concerns addressed?
9. What is the cost of membership, both in money and volunteer time?

### **Pray Regarding Membership, Involvement**

You will want to prayerfully evaluate the input you receive based on your needs as a family and your focus at this stage in your home education journey. Consider visiting the group during a regular meeting or special event as a family or as a couple to gain a taste of the group's 'flavor.' You should also consider what your family has to offer others and where you might be most effective in serving. Don't choose a group only for what it can offer you, but for how it fits with the goals you have mapped out for your family and how you and your children can develop your gifts in serving others!

Ideally, each family member should have relationships where he or she can support those who are walking alongside him or her, learn from those who are more experienced, and encourage those who are less experienced. Plan to invest your time into the homeschool group that you will join; half-hearted members are not an asset but rather a drain on any group's resources and energy. When you choose a group, be intentional about getting involved, giving back, and contributing ideas and help. Be a blessing, and you will receive mutual encouragement.

## D. Participating in a Homeschool Group

When you join a homeschool group, please participate! It encourages group leaders when families show up on-time to scheduled activities, volunteer as they can, fellowship with other member families, verbally contribute to discussion and decisions, and are cheerful, grateful, helpful members who encourage their children to do likewise. A group is only as strong and vibrant as its members. The more you put into your group, the more you will get out of it!

## Ten Commandments of Successful Field Trips

*But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him (2 Corinthians 2:14).*

- 1.** Arrive at the location of the field trip 15 minutes early so that your group may assemble together prior to your scheduled time. Always let your group coordinator know the number in your family planning to attend by the sign-up deadline and ask if there are any special instructions of which you should be aware.
- 2.** Dress appropriately for the occasion and with regard to the fact that you are an ambassador for home education and for God wherever you go.
- 3.** Inform your children of the purpose of the trip and prepare them for the educational experiences they will have. Work into your studies beforehand any information that would enhance the trip. You can follow up afterwards with a report or quiz and keep these things in a memory file or book.
- 4.** Remind your children of the behavior that will be expected of them and remember to observe them to ensure that they follow the guidelines, holding them accountable. Encourage them to be an example to others. Be kind to one another (Ephesians 4:32).
- 5.** Children should obey their parent/teacher at all times and follow all rules of the location. Children who do not obey should be asked to leave the field trip with their parents. Children, obey your parents (Ephesians 6:1). Good behavior is a must to uphold a good testimony for all home educators.
- 6.** Be courteous and polite at all times.
- 7.** Respect others who are on the trip with you. Be patient if you have to wait your turn.
- 8.** Be attentive to any instructors and instructions on the trip.
- 9.** Be friendly and cheerful to those on the field trip.
- 10.** Be thankful to those who helped you on the trip. Follow up with a thank you note within a week of the trip. Use this as an opportunity for children to polish their writing skills and leave a lasting, positive impression of home education.

# **PART II** - Leading or Starting a Homeschool Group

## A. Forming a New Homeschool Group

In your search for a homeschool group that is just right for your family, you may discover other like-minded families that have not yet connected with a group and that you have a vision for a group that does not exist yet in your area.

Pray and consider if beginning a new group is part of your personal and family vision. Leading a group has many blessings, but also its share of challenges. (Again, refer to **CHAPTER 1** A Vision for Home Education and consider its principles and ideas as related to a potential homeschool group.) Whenever you embark on something new, it is valuable to have a strong, clear purpose and measurable, practical outcomes to help guide you through difficulty, excitement, conflict, and monotony alike. Is the Lord calling you to launch and lead a group? If yes, then jump in! Just make sure your vision and heart for the group are solid before digging into the details.

Do not think that you have to be endowed with some special ability to start a new group! All you really need to have is a desire to meet the need and a few basic administrative skills. Take the time to make some decisions now that will set your group on the right path. It is much easier to establish the foundation in the early stages of building than to wait until the walls are up! Here is a simple plan with six important prompt questions to get you started:

1. Why? Identify the need.
2. What? Set one or more goals to meet the need.
3. Who? Determine the people who will be involved.
4. When? Plan a simple schedule.
5. Where? Find a location at which to meet.
6. How? Decide how the group will function.

**Question 1. Why** will you come together? What is the primary need that you see for your group to meet? Your need might be informal fellowship with other moms, encouragement for couples, educational activities for students, or sharing resources with others using the same curriculum. Although you may identify several needs, it is a good idea to focus on just one, at least at first. One central purpose focused on clearly will be easier to reach than a broad, undefined one. You may find later that your secondary needs are being met in natural ways for which you had not planned. Write down your central purpose as a statement of your group's vision. See the following activity sheet Homeschool Group Planning Worksheet, after which you will also find two Sample Group Statements (**A** and **B**) and a sample **Statement of Faith**.

## Homeschool Group Planning Worksheet

*Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed* (Proverbs 16:3).

**Why?** State the vision of your group. You can include your theme of the year or an inspiring verse of Scripture:

**What?** List the goal(s) of this group:

**Who?** Describe the number of people and what qualifications for membership you are seeking:

**When?** List your group's proposed schedule of activities:

**Where?** Determine your meeting location(s):

**How?** Describe the rules of behavior for parents and students participating:

**What?** Determine the duties of the leaders:

**What?** Determine the duties or requirements for members:

## Sample Group Vision Statements

(These are just samples; use the ideas here to create your own style of homeschool group!)

### Homeschool Group A

**Vision:** Our purpose is to encourage homeschooling families as they train their children to follow godly principles in every area of their lives. *These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up* (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

**Goal:** The couples of our group will meet every other month for prayer and fellowship, and on the in-between months we will all meet together as families for an outing or family night. We will hold our meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at the home of the Smith family.

**Membership:** Families in the A homeschool group must be schooling all of their school-aged children at home. Each family must read and sign our Statement of Faith. Our group will be limited to six families.

**Policies:** Parents must take full responsibility for their children's behavior and encourage them to follow these ABCs when we meet together:

- A. Always behave in a manner which reflects Christ (1 John 15:12).
- B. Be willing to respond to correction graciously.
- C. Cooperate with others of any age in a spirit of mutual encouragement.

We will consider confidential anything shared at our meetings and agree to pray for one another. Each couple will volunteer to lead one of our couples' meetings, will help plan at least one family activity, and will contribute to the cost of each event as needed. Each member will make every effort to attend our meetings.

**Leadership:** Mr. and Mrs. Jones will lead our group, and their duties will be to keep a group calendar and to notify all the members of our monthly meetings. They will communicate prayer requests and the calendar by way of a monthly email update.

## **Homeschool Group B**

**Vision:** Our purpose is to encourage homeschooled students to grow in God’s wisdom and to give them opportunities to learn in a group setting. *Give me understanding, and I will keep your law and obey it with all my heart. Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight* (Psalm 119:34-35).

**Goal:** We will hold a group activity day the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month from 1-4 pm at First Church, 123 Main Street. Our activity day will include an educational class or presentation and time for a game or craft.

**Membership:** Each student participating in Homeschool Group B must be homeschooled. Membership will be limited to 10 children in any of the following age groups: Preschool, K-1, 2-4, 5-6, 7-12. A parent must be willing to volunteer for one position at each of the days in which their child participates.

**Policies:** Children must be under control, respectful, and obedient at all times. They must not roam the building or be out of the sight of an adult. A parent must be on the premises when their child is participating in the activity day. There must be at least two adults present in each class. Each family will pay a \$10 monthly fee to cover the cost of craft materials, teaching supplies, and copies. A parent who teaches a class or volunteers to create a monthly newsletter for the group will receive a discounted fee.

**Leadership:** A team of two group leaders will coordinate the activity days and will also receive a discounted membership fee. They will communicate news to the newsletter editor who will create a newsletter each month and pass it out at the activity day.

## Sample Statement of Faith

(This is an example for a homeschool group.)

- We believe that the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God and constitutes His completed and final revelation to man.
- We believe God has existed from all eternity in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ was God come in human flesh being fully God and fully man, except without sin.
- We believe all men are in violation of God's righteous requirements and His holy character both by nature and act, and are therefore under His wrath and just condemnation.
- We believe the central purpose of the coming of Jesus was to pay the penalty for man's sin through His substitutionary death on the cross, the successful accomplishment of which was attested to by his subsequent, visible, bodily resurrection. Salvation is only through the shed blood of Jesus and by no other means or method.
- We believe salvation is offered as a gift, free to the sinner. This gift must be responded to in individual faith, not trusting in any personal works whatsoever, but in the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ alone.
- We believe God's design is for the family to be: the male/husband/father as the spiritual head, the female/wife/mother in willing submission to his authority, and children in obedience to both parents. (In single mother households, the mother recognizes the headship of Christ.)
- The Biblical model for marriage is the physical, spiritual, and legal union between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:23-24, Titus 1:6, I Corinthians 6:9-10).

**Question 2. What** will be the way you choose to meet this need? If fellowship for moms is your need, then you may decide to structure your group around a monthly moms' meeting or night out for pie and prayer. If your need is to build up couples and help the dads stay connected, then your goal might be to have couples take turns hosting prayer and fellowship at their home, while older children in the group teach the younger ones in another room. Maybe you will choose regular field trips, or oral report days, or a class on a particular subject if your need is educational in focus. When curriculum connection is your defined need, you might try a Friday afternoon co-op. Always try to filter ideas through the vision statement of your group before making a decision to attempt them. Add these goals to your vision statement.

**Question 3. Who** will be a part of your group? It only takes two families to form a homeschool group, but you should think through how many families to which you would limit the group. Again, make this decision by referring back to your purpose and goals as a group. Small groups offer the deepest friendships and the ability to share in encouraging all the others, while larger groups may provide more teachers for a "Friday School" type of group. You need to think at this point about whether you will be meeting in members' homes or if you have a church or community facility available to you. Remember that it is easier to start small and grow than it is to downsize later! If you desire that everyone in the group share the same religious convictions, then you will need to establish a statement of faith to which each member must agree. Your church may have a statement like this, or you can use the sample provided above. You may like to create a membership form for prospective members to sign that includes a release of liability for your group. See the following Sample **Membership Form**. Pray that God will lead the right families to your group.

## Sample Homeschool Group Membership Form

(Your Group Name and Contact should go on this top line.)

Today's Date:

First and last name of parents:

Mailing address:

Contact email address(es):

Contact phone number(s):

Do you want to receive text reminders for upcoming activities?

Names and ages of children:

Number of years you have homeschooled:

Church you attend:

What curricula or teaching methods are you using?

Special family skills or hobbies:

Is there anything we should know about your family: ie: special needs, best times to contact you, how you would like to help support the group, specific needs for help with homeschooling?

Please check:

\_\_\_ We have read the *ABC Homeschool Group's Statement of Faith* and its *Purpose Statement*. We agree to abide by the policies of this group.

\_\_\_ Release of liability: I do hereby expressly release *ABC Homeschool Group* and their representatives from any liability and expenses incurred through my participation, or the participation of my minor children, in any organized group activity.

Legal Signatures:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 4. When** will your group meet? Setting a regular time to meet helps families plan group activities into their schedule and begin to look forward to each time together. Will you meet weekly, monthly, mornings, afternoons, or evenings? Plan enough time together so that your relationships will truly support each other, but not so much as to seem a burden. It will always be necessary to be flexible, and changes may need to be made in your schedule, but it helps to start with a plan. Some groups try to lay out a rough plan for the year before it begins; others plan one month at a time. Write down your schedule and communicate it to all the group members.

**Question 5. Where** will you meet? This question is related to the number of people in your group. A small group can easily meet in a member's living room, and this sometimes is the most comfortable place for sharing and prayer. The activities of a larger group can be held in a church or a community library. If you are meeting in one of these buildings, always make sure you let your group know that they will need to help keep it clean!

**Question 6. How** will the group function? How will the members contribute to the smooth functioning of your homeschool group? Now is the time to set down any rules or policies that are important to you including: the type of behavior that will be expected of students participating in activities, whether parents will be required to participate with their children, whether members will be asked to do a job within the group, or whether members pay a membership fee. By the time you have carefully considered your vision and goals as a group, you should have some ideas about the best way to carry them out. It is very important to get these ideas on paper and communicate them clearly at the beginning of the formation of your group. This will help safeguard against problems later. (There are more tips that will help you in the following section B. Seven Principles for a Healthy Homeschool Group.)

Now that you have thought through these basic steps, review and revise the samples to fit your group, and you are ready to get started! Pray that God will lead you in all your ways, that your pathway will be straight (Proverbs 3:5-6). Remember that the members and the needs of your group may change from year to year. Review your vision statement each year and make changes, if necessary. For long-term support for you and your group, be sure to contact CHEC and let them know about your group. Find out about the services CHEC provides in the next section.

## B. Seven Principles for a Healthy Homeschool Group

Although each homeschool group is a unique group of home educators, certain basic principles seem to be common among those that are thriving and healthy. Here are seven principles which will help any group in their endeavor.

### 1. Seek God in Every Area

A home education group is not a “church” and differs in many ways from a church organization, but whenever a group of Christians are together, they can benefit from following the guidelines God has given all of us for cooperating and working with one another. A group will benefit anytime it seeks God's wisdom in

His Word for direction! Some of these guidelines are found in the following places:

- Love is a priority — John 15:12, Romans 12:10, Proverbs 17:17, Matthew 22:39
- Working for unity — Philippians 2:2, Psalm 133:1
- Helping those who are weak — Romans 13:1, Hebrews 3:13, Galatians 6:2
- Using your gifts to serve — Romans 12:5-8
- Developing wisdom as leaders — Proverbs 15:33, James 1:5-8, Proverbs 15:22, James 3:13
- Solving problems — Matthew 18:13-16

If encouragement of fellow home educators is your purpose, then remember to direct people to the source of that encouragement: God Himself. Prayer is the simplest solution to so many needs, yet it seems to be frequently forgotten. It can bind a group together like nothing else! Small groups can plan time for prayer in their meetings, and larger groups can use a prayer chain, prayer partner network, or divide into smaller groups for a portion of the large meeting. An email or texting system can be effective for sharing immediate prayer needs in the group. Prayer is important both as an effective means of support and in preventing problems.

## **2. Have a Well-Defined Vision**

This is crucial for any group. The leaders of any homeschool group can get worn out if the vision is too broad and the expectations of the members unending. Each year review your purpose as a group and make sure it is clearly communicated to the group members. A lot can be accomplished if everyone is working together towards the same goal! (See the previous section, A. Forming a New Homeschool Group, for helpful suggestions on determining your group's vision and putting it in writing.)

What should you do if you decide that a change of direction is needed? A good way to address this is to call together the leaders of the group and discuss the changes. Pray for God's direction, and write down the leaders' decisions and your new goals for the group. You may wish to take this to the whole group and ask for a vote (or reach consensus) to confirm the decisions the leaders have made. Of course, you will need to apply a lot of prayer and graciousness to this transition time!

## **3. Plan Goals to Fit the Vision**

Make sure that the goals you set out to accomplish fit with the purpose and needs of your group. It is better to have just a few goals that are carefully planned than to have a shotgun approach. Too many goals without direction can lead to overload. Remember that your homeschool group is to support already busy homeschooling families, not to overburden them with additional activities. Also, realize that every activity you plan may not meet the need of every family. Allow each family the freedom to make decisions about what is best for them.

## **4. Cultivate Open and Honest Communication to Minimize Conflict**

This principle can make a big difference in the smooth functioning of a group and the prevention of potential problems. Honesty means saying what you mean and meaning what you say. Encourage members and leaders to be honest with themselves and the group about what they are able to commit to do and their needs or concerns. Take time to listen to others and make sure that what you hear them say is what they meant to say. Avoid judging the intentions of the person speaking, but try to understand the meaning of her message.

Confidentiality about concerns that are shared in the group meetings is an important courtesy. This should characterize all meetings and give people the security of knowing that what they share will not be heard outside the group.

Solicit feedback from the group often. Be sure to give others an opportunity to share their concerns and needs in a positive light. Being a good listener will foster an atmosphere in which everyone is working together toward a common goal. This can help to keep problems from growing out of proportion.

If there is a conflict, follow the scriptural pattern for addressing it as outlined in Matthew 18:15-16. *If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.*

## 5. Include the Fathers

While in most families the mother does the majority of the actual teaching at home, fathers also need support for their important role in the home educating family. However, if they are not intentionally included, they may feel unwelcome to participate in the homeschool group's activities. Here are some ideas for getting dads involved:

- Enlist the fathers' help when planning the overall purpose of the group and yearly goals.
- Encourage dads to participate as board members or on the leadership/visionary team. Couples serving together will provide balance and grounding.
- Dads will feel they can participate more wholeheartedly in what they have helped to plan. Maybe the moms would feel comfortable working out the details of how the group will be run after the fathers have worked with them to set the direction.
- Ask a father to lead a meeting or give a devotional talk.
- Open a meeting by giving dads a chance to share their favorite homeschooling experience.
- Include outings for fathers and their children in your plan.
- Dads might serve their families by treating their wives to a night out while they watch the children at home. This may not seem glamorous, but it will be long remembered!

## 6. Organize Your Resources

Taking time to organize your plans, time, activities, and finances will really help prevent problems down the road. Think ahead about how to make the most of your meeting times together. Each group will vary in the style it will adopt, from a formal Robert's Rules of Order style to an informal, homey style, but every meeting will benefit from someone planning and praying about it ahead of time. Organization is especially important in the financial area — be sure the person with this responsibility keeps accurate records.

Your leadership team needs to be organized, too. Each person should have a clear idea of what his or her responsibilities are, and it is a good idea to write down job descriptions. Leaders should know to whom they are directly accountable. Be sure to be praying about future leaders, and make a plan for how they will be chosen. Will they be elected, appointed, or volunteer? Decide on qualifications for leadership that will ensure that your leaders uphold the values of the group. You might like to set up an apprenticeship plan where leaders-in-training assist a veteran for a period of time.

## 7. Encourage Everyone to Share the Responsibilities

Many hands make light work, and many hearts and minds sharing in the leadership of a homeschool group make the load light. The important thing to remember is that everyone can do something, and the small things can make a big difference in the smooth functioning of a group. Do not think that the most experienced homeschoolers should always carry the group. Sometimes it is the new home educators that have the most enthusiasm and creative ideas. Even children can learn a great deal of responsibility by being given tasks that are overseen by an adult.

Yes, homeschool group leaders need support, too! Sometimes those that have a giving, servant's heart are the last ones to realize that they also need to receive. A healthy leader is one who knows his or her own limitations and is willing to delegate and ask for help and encouragement when needed. Be sure to remind the leaders of your group to put their own family's needs at the top of the priority list! Let them know you appreciate them! Concerning delegation of responsibilities to others, here are some helpful guidelines:

- Be willing to let others do the job in a different way than you would do it.
- Invest in the lives of others by training them for the job — this will pay off later.
- Encourage those to whom you delegate — make it your goal to see that they are successful.
- Thank them for a job well done!

Tasks that can be delegated include, but are not limited to, weekly/monthly activities coordinator, newsletter coordinator, special events coordinator or committee, and contact person for any event (to answer the questions such as “What time does it start?” or “How do I get there?”). New homeschooler counseling can also be a delegated task. This job may require more training but it is key to relieving leaders of some unnecessary work. Jobs that should not be delegated are speaking for your group to the media or community, correcting communication problems within the group, sharing your vision with the group, and giving encouragement to those to whom you delegate. One final note on delegation is to remember that for everything you have delegated that was not done effectively, there are probably ten more that were done better and in a fresh new way. You do not need to give up authority to make final decisions, but give people the freedom to effectively do the job you give them and do not forget the value of praise.

Some groups set up a buddy system in which an experienced homeschooling family pairs up with a younger family in order to encourage them during the year. This way the new families do not slip through the cracks, and the older ones experience the blessing of giving without having a few families get worn-out by over-giving.

## C. Additional Ideas

Here is a collection of ideas that can be used with your homeschool group.

### Ideas for Homeschool Group Events

- Plan a project fair for students to share their accomplishments with the group.
- Have the older teens prepare a lesson for the younger children to help out during a family night.
- Let the dads organize a camp-out for fathers and their children.
- Have a square dance.
- Give teens a section of the newsletter in which to publish their creative writing.
- Plan a day for children to share oral reports or art projects.
- Have a mother-daughter tea.
- Organize a couples' dinner or an evening out.
- Let families that are compatible trade evenings to allow couples a night alone, or trade afternoons for a moms' break from teaching.
- Plan a year's activities around a certain theme such as American history, state history, character qualities, or science.
- Invite a guest speaker to address your group.
- Pool resources to start a lending library, or set up a table to share curriculum.
- Go on a walk or a hike!
- Have a "Night of Blessing" in which families (or fathers) speak a blessing to their children and encourage them for the year's accomplishments.
- If your group is sponsored by a church or other ministry, host an appreciation night to bless the leadership and share the vision of homeschooling and your group.
- Have children present a talent program for a retirement center as an outreach project.
- Host a drama presentation by your own children or a guest performer.
- Organize a Geography Bee through the National Geographic Society.
- Plan a field trip to a local educational place.
- Have a curriculum swap or used book sale.
- Host an organized, guided dance or a Civil War Ball for older teens at a fancy venue.
- Purchase materials (like this Guidebook) to loan to new home educators joining your group.
- Create a "New Homeschooler Packet" to present to members just beginning their journey.
- Host curriculum sharing evenings where veteran homeschool parents bring and share favorite curriculum they have used and would recommend to new parents.
- Honor homeschool graduates with a graduation ceremony.

### Ideas for Encouraging Participation

- Facilitate clear communication so families are informed of the group's purpose, meetings, and activities well in advance.
- Make activity sign-up simple and quick.
- Seek feedback from families (personal interaction or online surveys) to gauge interest before spending time planning an activity that will not garner much interest.
- Make things fun! Add a random, out-of-the-box activity as a group ice-breaker to build relationships.

## Lessons from Geese

Most of us have all seen flocks of beautiful geese flying across our nation. This wisdom gleaned from an unknown observant author can be thoughtfully applied to your homeschool group.

### Fact 1:

As each goose flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the birds that follow. By flying in a V-formation, the whole flock (gaggle) adds 71% greater flying range than if each flew alone.

**Lesson:** People who share a common direction and sense of community can reach their goal (destination) quicker and easier because they are traveling on the thrust of their family/group, not alone.

### Fact 2:

When a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of flying alone. It quickly moves back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front of it.

**Lesson:** If we have as much sense as a goose, we stay in formation with those headed in the direction we want to go, willing to accept their help and give our help to others.

### Fact 3:

When the lead goose tires, it rotates back into formation, and another goose flies up to take the point position.

**Lesson:** It pays to take turns doing the hard tasks and sharing leadership responsibilities. As with geese, people are dependent upon each other's skills, capabilities, unique gifts, talents, and resources to reach common goals.

### Fact 4:

The geese flying in formation honk to encourage those up front to keep up their speed and stamina.

**Lesson:** We need to make sure our honking is encouraging. In groups where there is encouragement, the production is much greater. The power of encouragement to stand by one's heart or core values and encourage the hearts of others is the quality of honking we should seek.

### Fact 5:

When a goose is sick, gets wounded, or shot down, two other geese drop out of formation and follow the injured/ill goose down to the ground, to help and protect it, if at all possible. They stay with the injured/ill individual until it either is able to fly again, or dies. Then, they launch again and join another formation, or catch up with their original group, if at all possible.

**Lesson:** If we have as much sense as geese, we will stand by each other in difficult times as well as the good times, always with the original goal (destination) in mind.

## D. Resources

### Homeschool Leader Resources

- *Activity Days for Homeschool Groups and Families*. Marcia Washburn. [marciawashburn.com](http://marciawashburn.com).
- *Lead Like Jesus: Lessons from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time*. Ken Blanchard and Phil Hodges (2008).
- *Leading Like Jesus: 40 Leadership Lessons From the Upside-Down Kingdom*. Floyd McClung.
- *Learning to Love People You Don't Like*. Floyd McClung (2016).
- *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Handling Conflict*. Ken Sande (2004).
- *Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence For Every Believer*. J. Oswald Sanders (2007).
- *Spiritual Leadership: Moving People on to God's Agenda*. Henry Blackaby and Richard Blackaby (2001).
- *The Yellow Pages Guide to Educational Field Trips* edited by Gregg Harris (1993).



*Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess,  
for he who promised is faithful, and let us consider how  
we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.  
(Hebrews 10:23-24)*

*In everything I did,  
I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak,  
remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said:  
It is more blessed to give than to receive.  
(Acts 20:35)*

*But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today ....  
(Hebrews 3:13a)*

*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit,  
but in humility consider others better than yourselves.  
Each of you should look not only to your own interests,  
but also to the interests of others.  
(Philippians 2:3-4)*

# CHAPTER 9



## Encouragement For the Journey

### CONTENTS:

- A. We All Need Encouragement
- B. Veteran Homeschool Parents Share Their Wisdom
- C. Resources

*- Revised by Gabe Harder -*

# A. We All Need Encouragement

Are you in need of encouragement? We all are from time to time. Some days, a kind remark will keep us going. Occasionally, it is time to take a serious look at what we are doing and make adjustments. Hopefully, this section will be a friendly word of encouragement as well as a resource for tracking down serious underlying problems.



*Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired and weary, and His understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31)*

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1)*

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)*

## Positive Actions for Encouragement

- Go to the Lord with your troubles and concerns. He is our rock and our strength, the source of all wisdom and encouragement! Reading the Psalms can be a great source of strength and comfort.
- Re-read **CHAPTER 1** A Vision for Home Education. If you have thought out your reasons for homeschooling in the past, but it has been a long time since you considered these foundational ideas, pull out your dusty notes and refresh your memory. What were your long-term goals? Have they become obscured with the day-to-day reality? Make a list of the positive rewards you have reaped already. We can live successfully day-by-day only by keeping our long-term goals in view. Home education is a marathon, not a sprint. Maybe you have never carefully (and prayerfully) considered the reasons home education is best for your family. Follow the guidelines laid down in the Vision chapter to develop a firm foundation for your homeschool now.
- When you need help, ask someone who is committed to seeing your homeschool succeed. You need support to continue, not an unhelpful suggestion that sending your children to ‘real’ school will solve all your problems.
- Join a homeschool group, find a friend who has been homeschooling for many years, and get counsel from ‘successful’ homeschooling families.
- Attend a homeschool conference. There is no substitute for the kind of encouragement and inspiration these events provide. They will reinforce your vision to persevere for the long-term rewards.
- There are many good books to encourage you on your homeschooling journey. Check for encouragement chapters in your favorite how-to books, or look up a new book in the resource section at the end of this chapter.

## Identifying “Joy Robbers”

You might just need a little more sleep or an encouraging word to get through a busy week, but sometimes you feel an underlying dissatisfaction that a quick answer won’t cure. Experienced parents have found that many unexpected things can rob them of the joy of homeschooling. The next section covers a variety of areas that can weigh you down. Sometimes a few simple corrections can keep you going. Other times a deep reevaluation is in order.

## 1. Bad Time Management

- a. What did you give up to add homeschooling to your schedule? Are you trying to homeschool and lead the Cub Scout pack, teach Sunday School, run a local charity, hold down a part-time job, volunteer at the nursing home, sing in the community choir, and run a day-care home? If your schedule is too full, your best creativity and energy may not be directed toward your teaching. All those other things can wait for another season of your life. You only get one chance with your children.
- b. Even if you counted the time ‘cost’ when you started, have you overbooked your current schedule? You can only give your best to a limited number of things. Every child does not need piano, ballet, Little League, and gymnastics. You don’t have to go on every field trip, attend every class at the museum, and visit the zoo once a week. If you are never home, it is very hard to “home” school your children. Especially when your children are little, keep life simple.
- c. Are you disorganized? We all get the same 24 hours in a day, but some people are able to make better use of those hours than others. There are many systems available to help you get organized. Don’t try to force yourself into a system you can’t maintain; use ideas that work for you. Planning ahead, preparing for your school year, and reasonably scheduling your time will help you know you are accomplishing your goals and objectives. It is not how you start this adventure that counts, it is how you finish.
- d. Are you too tied to conventional schedules and structure? Consider making your school schedule more creative and adapted to your unique family. Some people find that having school for three weeks and then taking one week off every month for catching up with housework and taking field trips is a great year-round plan. Others school 3-4 days per week year-round. A vacation doesn’t have to come in July. Maybe a December vacation would relieve more stress in your family. If Dad works evenings, consider adjusting your schedule so that the children have free time in the mornings with him, and do their school work in the afternoon while he sleeps. A strength of homeschooling is its flexibility and personalization. Design the schedule that is best for your own family.
- e. Are you overwhelmed with housework? Maybe there is a homeschooled teen nearby who could help out once a week. Having a professional housekeeper come in occasionally would be great if you can afford it. You added a full-time job to your already busy schedule when you started to homeschool, and homeschooling puts a great deal of stress on the keeping of a home; with everyone home all day there is never time to catch up.
- f. Are you trying to do it all yourself? When your children are babies, you are the one that does the housework; but starting with toddlerhood, you had better be working yourself out of a job. Let your children work alongside you; teach them patiently to do a chore within their ability, then give them responsibility and hold them accountable. Overlook imperfect results. Keep working alongside your children as much as possible. No one likes to be sent off alone to do an unpleasant task. (A double blessing occurs when your children work with you — they aren’t in the other room creating more work!) By the time your diligently trained children reach their teens, they should be capable of doing almost any household task. This same principle also applies toward academic learning: work toward more and more independence.

## 2. Burnout

- a. Signs of ‘burnout’ might include a sense of dread every Monday morning, frequent arguments and flares of temper over small things, a lack of interest in learning, weekly trips past the local public school ‘just to look,’ withdrawing from friends, a deep dissatisfaction with your accomplishments, a sense of fatalism and despair, and a desire to ‘get away from it all.’ If you reach this point, STOP! It is time to reevaluate! Taking a week off might help a little, but there are most likely some underlying “joy robbers” that are pulling you under. Carefully consider the ideas in this section and see if you can get to the bottom of what changes need to be made.
- b. Some causes of burnout can be: trying to recreate ‘school-at-home’ instead of learning in a home setting; pushing kids too early; not paying attention to your child’s needs, personality, and learning style; not enough time for play and exploration; not enough involvement in real life activities; and no socialization with other families.
- c. If you are experiencing burnout, please read **CHAPTER 10** Burnout: Blessing in Disguise, it was written with you in mind!

## 3. Clutter

- a. When we accumulate too much stuff, it takes over our lives. We trip over it, move it around, clean it, and dig through it to get what we want. It keeps us from being hospitable because there is no place for guests to sit. Homeschooling automatically doubles the amount of clutter in your home so you must be especially vigilant. The first step to feeling more organized and in control is to decrease the amount of ‘things’ you need to organize and control.
- b. Get the kids involved with a real life, money-making homeschool project by reducing the clutter with a yard or garage sale. Take a field trip to your local recycling center for even more profit! Next, make a donation of the unsold items to your local thrift store charity a community service project. Use the proceeds of your sale to plan a fun day or weekend vacation to gain everyone’s cooperation and enthusiastic participation.

## 4. Comparisons and Guilt

- a. Have you been judging your children’s success by unfairly comparing them to others? You probably see those other children on their best behavior. It is not fair to compare their best days to your child’s average (or worst) days. Neither is it reasonable to compare one child’s area of giftedness to your child’s area of struggle. Don’t let this tempting sin of comparison sneak into your thinking. God didn’t give you all those other children to raise. He gave you your children. And it is only your children that He will ask you about one day! Approval is a basic human need, and our children must have this most basic assurance of their worthiness. Comparisons can also lead to bad decisions about curriculum and activities. Remember to keep a vertical focus on God and not a horizontal focus on the world.
- b. What about guilt? It certainly can rob us of our joy, but is it always wrong? God gave us guilt, or conviction of sin, for a purpose: so that we would understand our need for forgiveness. If we are

convicted of sin, we must repent and move forward. If there was no such thing as guilt, we would never understand our need for His forgiveness, and we would never see a need to change our direction. However, guilt may stem from fear of man or from Satan, the great deceiver, who would be glad to falsely accuse you. Don't listen to his lies.

## 5. Discontentment

- a. Are your expectations too high? Unrealistically high expectations rob us of our joy and fulfillment. Why are we never satisfied? We want to squeeze in six more pages of math, one more foreign language tape, two more field trips, and a science project in a week that is already full. Children soon lose their love of learning under that kind of pressure. Many homeschooling mothers struggle with perfectionism. Learn to relax and enjoy the journey.
- b. Are you content with this season of your life? The house isn't really clean, the cat just ate the hamster, your car is aging, your last dinner in a nice restaurant was in another decade, your neighbor tells you weekly about the fun she has doing craft projects, and you hate to think what is growing on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator. All that may be true, but there is another side to this story. Do you really believe that God is looking after all your needs even if some of your wants seem to be a little neglected? Do you really believe He is doing a great work in your life and in the lives of your children? Discontentment is an attitude choice. Every time a nagging thought of discontentment rises up in your mind, counteract it by counting your blessings.

## 6. Disobedient or Rebellious Children

- a. Are you training your children's hearts? 1 Corinthians 8:1 indicates that training our children's hearts is much more important than 'puffing them up' with knowledge: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. Knowledge is important, but training our children to love God is more important. Our children are sinful creatures, just like us, and they need a relationship with the living God to transform their lives.
- b. Are your children obedient? If your children are not trained to obey you the first time you ask them to do something, homeschooling will be very difficult. Not only will obedience make your home life 100% easier, it is also good training for your children to submit to other authorities later in life, such as employers, government, church, and God.
- c. Do you understand what the Bible says about child training? Gone are the days when we learned child training from wise parents and grandparents and practiced our skills on many younger brothers and sisters. We are going against the grain in teaching our children at home, and now we find ourselves needing to go against the grain in our child training as well. There are many wonderful books on the market that can help you understand a biblical model for training your children. The blessings of godly child training last for generations.
- d. Seemingly compliant children can suddenly turn into rebellious teens. When sons reach about 14, their relationship with Mom can hit some big bumps. Boys start testing their boundaries and can rebel against a mother's authority. This is a critical time for Dad to take an active role in his son's life. Talk over issues he is struggling with, insist on respect for his mother, involve him in your activities

as much as possible, and start to hold him more responsible for his own learning and behavior. This bumpy spot in the road can strike girls a year or more earlier, between 11 and 13. Again, this is not a time to give up on homeschooling. Give your child lots of love and attention, work through specific concerns, stay consistent, and insist on respect. In a few short years you will have a best friend for life if you weather these rough waters.

- e. Seek your child's forgiveness when you mess up. It means a lot to your child if you will humble yourself in this way. Refusal to seek forgiveness does not make the problem go away, it just breeds a hard heart in both you and your child.

## 7. Disunity

- a. If you are married, are both parents fully committed to homeschooling? The wholehearted support of both parents is critical to home education success. Encourage your spouse to read books, attend homeschool group meetings, and attend the state conference with you. If you can win his heart, everything will be better!
- b. As long as we are on the subject of spouses, are you taking time for your marriage? The stress of homeschooling can bring tragic pressures on even the best of marriages. Don't take this relationship for granted. Nurture your love. Take time for your spouse. Have a date night. Find creative ways to keep your love alive and your marriage healthy. What a tragedy it would be to wake up one morning to find that the children have grown and you are living with a stranger!
- c. Is your child in agreement with homeschooling? Since your child has an individual mind and will, it is obviously necessary to secure as much of his cooperation as possible. However, Proverbs 22:15 states *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of correction will drive it far from him.* It is the responsibility of parents to provide guidance and leadership. A young child will adapt very quickly to homeschooling if you are attentive to his or her needs. An older child may take longer but will usually accept your decision if he is convinced it is based on fairness, love, and a deep concern for his well-being.
- d. If close relatives are not in agreement with your decision to homeschool, it can put a definite strain on relationships, but, in general, this is not a good reason to forego home education. Most of the time reluctant relatives become your most faithful cheer-leading section when, in due time, they see the fruit of your labor.

## 8. Isolation

- a. Do you have like-minded friends? Spending time with others who are committed to the same things you are can be a great source of motivation. This is not just important for moms but for the whole family. Make time to get together with other mothers and other homeschooling families.
- b. Have you joined a homeschool group? It takes some extra effort to get involved, but you need to build a network of support for your family. Remember, the best way to have a friend is to be a friend. Don't wait for someone to take you in; take the initiative.

- c. Do you have a ‘mentor’ you can call for help and advice? Many homeschool groups can pair up new parents with a veteran family.
- d. Did you attend the state conference this year? Don’t miss this time of encouragement, teaching, inspiration, and fellowship. Consider it your ‘teacher enrichment’ time for the coming year. Parents rarely stop homeschooling because they don’t have enough curriculum. They stop homeschooling because they lack vision. Don’t let this annual opportunity pass for building and maintaining a strong vision for home education.
- e. There are other subscription-based home education magazines available online or by mail. These publications will keep you informed of upcoming events, public policy changes, new resources, new ways to approach a subject, and encouragement to keep you going.

## 9. Listening to Doubters

Are you listening to Grandma or the neighbor instead of to God? Arm yourself with the truth. Ninety-nine percent of the people who are against homeschooling do not understand it. They remember school the way it was when they were children twenty or thirty years ago. Review the statistics and facts in **CHAPTER 1** A Vision for Home Education. Homeschooling works! When challenged, respond kindly with the truth, but don’t be shaken.

## 10. No Plans for Fun

Have you had any spontaneous fun lately? February especially can be a difficult month to homeschool. There are no major vacations or holidays in sight, and the weather can be cold and dreary. Surprise your kids one day with an unexpected field trip, a great video, an afternoon of baking, a trip out for ice cream, or whatever they would find FUN!

## 11. Poor Physical Health

- a. Are you getting enough sleep? Fatigue makes cowards of us all. A strong-willed toddler is a challenge for a well-rested parent, but he can be overwhelming when you are exhausted. If you are tired because you get up during the night with small children, you need to get a nap during the day — more than you need a clean house. Make getting rest a priority. Perhaps your spouse can take the children for a drive on the weekend so you can take a nap.
- b. A poor diet and not getting enough exercise and fresh air can slow you down as well. Overeating to meet emotional needs and not physical hunger can be a problem for stay-at-home moms who live and work within 20 feet of the kitchen all day long.
- c. If you are experiencing an overwhelming illness, don’t be afraid to change the focus of your child training for a time. Back off with the academics and concentrate on homemaking and character skills. God created families so individuals would have support through the trials of life. What better way for your children to learn care-giving skills than in the training ground of your own family. You can also use this opportunity to teach the children to take more responsibility for their own learning. Hopefully you have also taken the time to build a network of support around your family so that when you hit a bumpy spot in the road, there is a church behind you and caring friends and neighbors around you to notice and lend support.

## 12. Poor Spiritual Health

- a. Are you trying to do everything in your own strength? A life devoted fully to God is one of underlying peace and joy. Seek His plan and follow it in obedience, doing only what He calls you to, and no more. He is a God of wisdom, understanding, patience, love, and miraculous power.
- b. Are you taking time to sustain a love relationship with the Lord? Even if you don't have hours to spend in Bible study every day, you must find ways to spend time with the Lord and seek His direction in all things. Pray as you start your day, asking for His blessings and assistance, listen to Christian music, post a Bible verse in your kitchen window, and pray with your children. Perhaps you can listen to an audio version of the Bible together. Sermons online and Christian podcasts can be very helpful. There are many creative ways to keep close to the Lord, even in the midst of a busy schedule.

## 13. Unresolved Issues in the Parents

The best thing you can ever do for your children is to work on the problem areas in your own life. So many times we unconsciously take out our frustrations on our children. Many homeschooling parents have testified that God used the challenge of homeschooling to refine their own character. Are there pockets of your heart God is challenging you to correct? It is a humbling day when you suddenly realize exactly where your child got their bad attitude!

## 14. Wrong Materials

- a. Check out your curriculum. Does it own you? Was it designed to keep a classroom of 30 children quiet and busy? Filling out endless pages of workbooks can cause despair and eventual rebellion in your children. Make your curriculum serve your needs, not the other way around. Skip problems that are too repetitive, use 'real' books not just textbooks, and vary the learning activities to maintain interest.
- b. Have you taken the time to determine your child's learning and your own teaching styles? It is impossible to put children neatly into a box; but if you are attentive to your children, you will notice how wonderfully unique God has made each one. When you acknowledge this uniqueness and work with it instead of against it, the enormous pressure of swimming against the current will be released!
- c. Is your formal school schedule so full your children have no time to pursue hobbies and special interests? Make time for a variety of activities. You will be amazed at what your children will learn and accomplish when they have the time and the resources to pursue areas of special interest to them.

## Preventive Maintenance

Here are a few ideas to keep you going strong. The saying that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" certainly holds true in homeschooling. The prize is too valuable not to finish this race!

1. Look after your own spiritual health. Keep your relationship with God your highest priority.

2. Keep your marriage healthy. Take time for each other. Don't neglect the needs of your spouse. Do things together and maintain unity in your purpose and direction.
3. Look after your children's spiritual health. It's their eternal souls about which you are most concerned. Teach them early to follow God's plan for their lives.
4. Strive to retain a joy of learning in your children. Keep that spark alive any way you can.
5. Teach your children to be part of the team. A family needs to work together as a unit, in proper order. Mom is not the family slave, Dad is not the absentee money machine, and the kids don't rule the roost!
6. Take time off when needed. Every once in awhile, a break is in order. It might be just an afternoon trip to the park or a longer period of time away from the everyday curriculum to do a special unit study.
7. Build a strong network of support. Join a homeschool group, cultivate friendships, and be hospitable to other families. Get involved in a local church.
8. Make time for teacher enrichment. Attend the annual conference as a couple, subscribe to magazines, get a book that will encourage you at the next curriculum fair in addition to all that curriculum.

**Keep your eye on the prize!**

## B. Veteran Homeschool Parents Share Their Wisdom

### ***If I Could Homeschool All Over Again, by Teri Spray***

**SOME** days I wonder if I might be getting old. I find I like to sit in my rocking chair and ponder the past. As my own children complete another semester of college, I can't help but pause for a moment and look back on their home education experiences and wonder what if .... (Don't get me wrong; they are doing well in college and should earn their degrees on schedule.)

When I look back at their eleven years of home education, I see an amazing blur of books and projects. As I muse and ponder, I thought I would share some thoughts about what I might keep or change if I were to homeschool all over again.

The most significant thing I would change would be the amount of time we spent reading aloud together as a family. My children were prone to wiggle and often chose not to sit still to listen to reading no matter how great the story was. If I could start over, I would have given them tablets of paper and crayons and read to them anyway, every day. (However, all is not lost! Now, as young adults, they are enjoying listening to books as we travel in the car. Now I can read while they drive!)

- I would all but eliminate the television from our home. We wasted too many hours watching things which compromised our relationship with Christ and each other. I would be much braver here and disconnect the television unless we needed to watch a particular event or film.
- I would have taken more pictures of their projects, their antics, and their funny faces as we dramatized our learning.
- I would have memorized a lot more Scripture, to “hide God’s word in the heart that we might not sin.”
- I would definitely care less what others thought and would have focused more on my children’s own thoughts and ideas.
- I would work more on building relationships and less on trying to ‘fix’ my children.
- I wouldn’t change their curriculum except for a few out-dated books which no one uses anymore. (I still like concise, consecutive, basic skills, with unit studies for enrichment and application.)
- I would continue to use the unit studies every day, and I would definitely continue to have a writing day and an activity day every week.
- I would have continued to involve my children in a writing club or class to hone their writing skills for life.
- I would have continued to demand research papers throughout high school because these skills have proved invaluable in the workplace, as well as in college.
- I would laugh more and lecture less.
- I think I would expect more because I now know how capable my children really are.
- I would demand more consistent housework and chores from the children at an earlier age.
- I would teach history more from timelines and stories and less from textbooks.
- I would hug more and ‘holler’ less.
- If I could homeschool all over again, I know that I would try hard to focus more on Jesus and less on my lesson plans, because it is in Him that we live, we homeschool, and we have our being!

### **Encouragement from Other Experienced Homeschooling Parents**

The following stories and comments have been submitted by Colorado homeschool group leaders. Their faithfulness and wisdom is a wonderful source of strength and encouragement for others. Hard times come to us all, but God rewards our faithfulness. Run to Him for wisdom, strength, joy, and a long-term vision that will keep you going for one more day!

“

I want to commend you for the commitment you have made to the Lord and your family. As a mom who has been homeschooling for more than 13 years, I can say with all of my heart that the promise of Galatians 6:9 is true! *And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.* However, growing weary is an ever present danger. We have all faced busy schedules, uncooperative children, messy houses, piles of laundry, lack of patience, as well as feelings of inadequacy, fear of failure, illness, and plain ol’ fatigue! Looking a little way down the road and keeping the end of the journey in view will help you to see the bumps along the way in their proper perspective.

The toughest thing I have faced in my years of homeschooling is the continual task of dealing with character flaws and sins, first of all in my own life, and then in the lives of my children. When faced with a child who is difficult to deal with — be it academic or spiritual — it can be very tempting to put them in school and let someone else deal with the problems. Those difficult times also tend to reveal issues in our lives as parents that are painful to acknowledge and confront.

I thank God that because of living in such close contact with my family, I have been compelled to deal with many issues in my own heart that might have been ignored without the daily challenges presented by homeschooling. As for my children, seeing them surrender those difficult areas of their lives to Jesus and grow in their love and devotion to Him is the greatest blessing of all. Being involved in the daily training and discipline that has helped to bring about their growth is the highest privilege of being a parent! Two of my favorite verses are Psalm 37:23-24 and Lamentations 3:22-23. Don't give up; God is faithful!" - **Becky Abraham**, Pagosa Springs, Colorado

“**IT** is always difficult to believe that things will be all right in the end when you are in the middle of discouragement and frustration. There were days when I sent my kids to their rooms — for the day! I even called around to public schools and thought about putting my children there on several frustrating days.

Having been through seven years of ups and downs however, I am happy to report that homeschooling works. My oldest just graduated and is studying missionary aviation. He has a heart to serve the Lord. What greater reward is there? Pray for your school, for your children, and for God to receive glory from your efforts. That is a prayer He delights to answer. Our family is living proof.”  
– **Karen Thiessen**, Wheat Ridge, Colorado

“**I** am entering my seventh year of homeschooling, and it seems each year has its own set of trials. One year it was job concerns for my husband; another year extended family issues; and for almost three years it was a life-threatening health problem, in the end requiring an organ transplant for a family member. And all through these different seasons, homeschooling has been an integral part of our life, needing to continue. But this is not only my story. In listening to the hearts and concerns of homeschoolers, many have gone through much of the same trials as I have. I have tried to walk in my own strength through the trials, while still trying to maintain our household. I have tried to ‘do’ all that is the ‘right’ thing to do. And, in the end, after forbearing with white knuckles, I realized it is only in turning to our Lord that I have found, not my strength, but His strength to carry me onward. We do so much in our own enablement every day that we forget Who is our enabler.

Through these past years I have finally come to a point where I know when I am weak, my Lord is my strength. I try to make each day a point of contact in faith to my Lord, asking Him to give me what it will take for that day. Have I reached perfect communion with my Lord? Definitely not. But I have remembered my first love (Revelation 2:4). He has used all trials to show me His faithfulness and His love and His saving grace. My word of encouragement to any homeschooler is to trust our Lord in faith. Through all our days we need to remember from where our hope comes. And ‘having done all, to stand.’ For we do not stand alone. Great is the army of witnesses that surrounds us.” – **C.H.**, Arvada, Colorado

“**WHEN** our first child was born, we were not interested in homeschooling at all. In fact, I felt that ‘no way’ would I homeschool our children! Between that time, and when our son turned five, the Lord had totally turned us around, and we were headed for homeschooling 100%. We had realized that homeschooling was in the best interest of our children in many ways.

Think back to why you originally chose homeschooling. Have those reasons changed or remained the same? For us, the reasons we started with are still there, and they are still important enough for us to weather the storms. Frustrated students? Feel like you have no time for yourself? Friends and family don't

support your decision? Church members and leaders don't support your decision? If you are following the Lord's leading, be confident in your decision to continue the good work He has begun in you."

– **Anita MacQueen**, Glenwood Springs, Colorado

“**AS** I enter my ninth year of homeschooling, I'm finally beginning to feel confident in our ability to maintain this lifestyle. Through the years, our school has varied from very structured to very unstructured, to somewhere in between. If I've learned anything, it's that there's no right way (and no wrong way) to homeschool.

Each family is different, and each year is different. As we have progressed through part-time jobs, deaths in the family, and changing seasons on the family farm, we have learned to adjust our schedules accordingly. Each year presents challenges of its own and is different from any year before. "As my children get older, I believe we're beginning to reap the benefits. I can see that they are more knowledgeable not only of the world around them, but of God's presence in their lives. I also believe our family has grown closer than we ever could have been without this experience. It is well worth the sacrifice of time and money!" – **Kathy Pelton**, Cheyenne Wells, Colorado

“**WHEN** our first child was born, we had no intention of homeschooling our children. Our church had a Christian day school we planned to use. I had plans to finish all kinds of projects as my little ones attended a good school. God had other plans for us. Through reading *Home Grown Kids*, by Raymond and Dorothy Moore, we became convinced the best education was to be found in our own home. God gave me my first big attitude adjustment — it would be a long, long time before I would be doing much with those projects. I am so glad He taught me this lesson. I had to learn to put God's desires before my own.

So we began the task of homeschooling .... During the early years God began to deal with my perfectionism. I thought I had to have a spotless house and perfect children. God had to work in my heart to show me what was truly important. I began to ask myself, "In 100 years, what will really matter?" The children God has given us have souls that will last for eternity. The work and effort I put into them has an eternal effect. The dust in my house can go for a week or a month but talks with my kids about spiritual things cannot. These children God has given me are so precious; they need my time.

We changed curriculum several times over the years as we became more comfortable with homeschooling. Our children excelled as we picked curriculum that challenged and interested them. My perfectionism became a big hindrance for a time as I demanded more and more. A friend of ours, observing our homeschool situation, showed me I was driving us all crazy. With my husband's help, we pared down school demands and made things better for us all. I continue to struggle in this area as God patiently teaches me.

Homeschooling has continued over the years. God continues to teach me so much. I'm thankful that He continues to teach my children especially. We have had two graduate from homeschooling, and they are now in college. I still have two in homeschool and cherish the time God has given me with them. I still struggle with perfectionism and many other things, but what a rich time these years have been. What a blessing to have children who are some of our best friends and a God who is daily with us as we work together for His glory." – **Elly Johnson**, Aurora, Colorado

“**WHEN** our daughters were young and we were in our first two or three years of homeschooling, our family went through quite a period of hard times. Two of my grandparents and an aunt and uncle all suffered for prolonged periods with cancer and then passed away. My other grandma and another uncle also died. And then my mother fought a battle with cancer and lived. (To God be the glory!) These family members all lived within about a ten-mile radius and were vital parts of our very close, extended family. Talk about tough times!

We found out that our strength is only in the Lord. We certainly did not find it in ourselves. There were times when we certainly did not have a set school time, and we relied on a lot of ‘real life lessons’ to get us through. But all of the hard times increased the closeness of our family and made us cherish the time we had together even more. At that time, we were homeschooling with an independent school that had us test every year, and even with all the ‘hit and miss’ schooling our daughter scored very well. Homeschooling is more than just books and curriculum, it is certainly about real life.”

– **Debbie Janski**, Conifer, Colorado

## C. Resources

### Encouragement

- *Encouragement Along the Way: Devotions for Home Schooling Parents.* Bobbi Howard.
- *Homeschool Burnout: What It Is, What Causes It, and How to Overcome It.* Raymond Moore.
- *Teaching from Rest: A Homeschooler’s Guide to Unshakable Peace.* Sarah Mackenzie and Dr. Christopher Perrin.

### Humorous

- *Pajama School.* Natalie Wickham.
- *The Peanut Butter Family HomeSchool.* Bill Butterworth.
- *Survivor’s Guide to Homeschooling.* Luanne Shackelford and Susan White.

### Organization

- *Clutter’s Last Stand.* Don Aslett.
- *Finally Organized.* Inge Cannon.
- *Where to Focus When Your Life’s a Blur.* Cheryl Biehl.

### Parenting and Family Life

- *Family Life, A Simple Guide to the Biblical Family.* Kevin Swanson.
- *Intentional Parenting.* Linda Stahnke.
- *Shepherding a Child’s Heart.* Ted Tripp.

## Time Management

- *The Busy Mom's Guide to Simple Living.* Jackie Wellwood.
- *The Homeschool Planbook, Family Edition.* Sarah Crain.
- *Managers of Their Homes.* Steven and Teri Maxwell.



*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD,  
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.  
Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."  
(Jeremiah 29:11-12)*

*And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.  
(Philippians 4:7)*

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# CHAPTER 10



## Burnout: Blessing in Disguise

### CONTENTS:

- A. Do You Suffer with Burnout?
- B. Practical Tips to Combat Burnout
- C. Resources

*- Written by Patti Dotten -*

## A. Do You Suffer with Burnout?

Do you longingly reflect on your early days of homeschooling when you were bursting with energy and motivation? It was all a new and exciting adventure! You had your detailed day planner and your schedule nailed down in 15 minute increments. You had one baby napping, one on your hip (positioned carefully around your pregnant belly), a toddler pounding playdough in the high chair, another toddler playing with toys in the playpen, while you taught your kindergartner penmanship, your second grader math and supervised your fourth grader's science project in the kitchen — all at the same time! And dinner was simmering in the crock pot!



*We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure .... But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves, but on God who raises the dead.*

*(1 Corinthians 1:8b, 9)*

*Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*  
*(Matthew 11:28-30)*

*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.*  
*(Isaiah 42:18-19)*

You seemingly had the capacity to do it all. And you thought it was fun! You had all your balls in the air, and you could keep them up there. But you are no longer the multi-tasking, bread-making, exercising, baby-making, do-it-all homeschooling mom. You're tired. You're weary. You're getting older. And you wonder how you're going to finish well and continue homeschooling the remaining children you have at home.

Can you really keep going? Should you quit? Let online teachers take over? Fill your schedule with co-ops and tutors? Ask your friend to take over teaching duties for you? Go back to the public schools? Many are choosing these options, and they are not necessarily wrong. But before you decide to delegate the majority of your child's education to someone else, please consider a few thoughts from a fellow homeschool mom who has struggled with burnout herself, an older mom of 50 who is still in the trenches.

### **Burnout is a good thing!**

What? How can that be right? God is bringing us to a place where we are at the end of ourselves so that we will rely more heavily on Him. God is shaking our cups to show us what's really inside. God wants to take us and our families to a deeper level with Him.

The problem is not the circumstances — our health, our low energy levels, our hormones, our aging parents, our marriage challenges, our church conflicts, our impossibly complicated homeschool schedules. God is using these things to show us our deeper need: our need for more of Christ. As **Martin Lloyd Jones** asks in his book, *Spiritual Depression*, “Do you know God? Are you enjoying God? Is God the center of your life, the soul of your being, the source of your greatest joy?” Ask yourself, “Are you living entirely for the glory of God? Are you homeschooling for the glory of God?”

Consider finding a copy of **Paul David Tripp's** book, *Lost in the Middle*. In it, he encourages us to see our mid-life struggles as springboards to examine our deeper motivations and as catalysts to launch us into true intimacy and joy in our walk with God. As my dear friend said in the midst of a difficult life trial, “This is an opportunity for an upgrade!”

## Examine your motivations

How many of us, if we are honest, have been homeschooling, even in part, out of shame, fear, insecurity, or pride? Deep down do we really desire to just please God? Are we at all concerned with impressing others? Wrong motivations can only fuel us for so long, and then we're destined for burnout.

Until we, like Jesus, can empty ourselves before the cross and wholeheartedly say, "Not your will but thine," we will eventually lose heart. Isn't it interesting that Jesus was never stressed or overwhelmed, and He was homeless, despised, mocked, and overworked? He healed the sick, taught, preached, fought off Satan, calmed storms, and cast out demons. Likewise, we won't get burned out if we are doing only what God wants us to be doing. It is when we become double-minded, trying to please the world and the Lord, that we become overwhelmed.

Go back to the drawing board. Get some time alone with Jesus and ask Him what He wants your homeschool to look like. What does Jesus want you to be doing? Be a Mary and not a Martha. Sit at Jesus' feet, teach your children to sit at Jesus' feet, and He will carry your burden.

**“HOW** to ascertain the will of God: I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state as to have no will of my own in regard to a given matter.”<sup>10</sup> – **George Muller**

## Confess Your Sins Daily

*Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other that you may be healed* (James 5:16). Sin takes up more energy and time in our lives than anything else. Let's confess our sins each day, allow the Holy Spirit to cleanse and heal our hearts, and then watch our homeschools be transformed!

## Forgive Daily

If there is any unforgiveness in our hearts, it will sap our energy, occupy our minds, and eventually render us incapable of running a healthy home and homeschooling our children effectively. As wives and moms, we are the emotional centers of our homes. If we allow bitterness to grow in our hearts, we will undermine our own physical and spiritual health and that of our families. We must release it. Give it to God. God has mercifully forgiven you, so forgive your husband, your church, your parents, your friends, your children, your in-laws. Release the past to God, trusting that He sees all things, and then live in freedom.

## Do Family Worship

The last thing we need is one more thing on our to-do list. But this **one thing** cannot be overlooked. It is more important than academics. In fact, if you do this one thing, God will begin to transform your family's minds and hearts and fill your home with peace. It doesn't have to be fancy. Read the Bible. Discuss what you read. Sing a song or two and pray for the concerns of the day. Ask your husband if he'd be willing to lead. If he can't, then ask him if you can do it with the children during school time. **C.H. Spurgeon** said, "If you want to bring up a godly family who shall be a seed to serve God when our heads are under the clods of the valley, let us seek to train them up in the fear of God by meeting together as a family for worship."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> George Muller, *Answers to Prayer*, from *George Muller's Narratives*

<sup>11</sup> C.H. Spurgeon, "A Pastoral Visit," sermon published July 30, 1908, [spurgeongems.org, http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols52-54/chs3103.pdf](http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols52-54/chs3103.pdf).

## Choose Joy

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, Rejoice!* (Philippians 4:4). Recently I experienced a difficult month — emotionally, physically, and spiritually. I found myself bitter and unable to even receive from God’s Word when I tried to read it. I was walking around in a sad state of mind when my husband reminded me of something he read in **John Piper’s** book, *Desiring God*. “Joy is not just a blessing and privilege for the Christian, but also a command.” My husband encouraged me to just be joyful, act joyful, smile out of obedience to God, and then my feelings would eventually follow. Wow! What a simple concept this is. I was waiting for my feelings to kick in first, and they just weren’t. I am learning to choose joy, and it is making a big difference in my day and my homeschool.

## Go to Church

And don’t just go — be a card-carrying member! We need to be a part of a body of believers. We cannot run this race alone. We all need other Christians, even imperfect ones, to cheer us on, rebuke, teach, encourage, support, and keep us accountable. Our children need to see more than just our family. God never called us to isolate. We cannot wait to find the ‘perfect’ church before joining, because we’ll never find it!

I’d encourage you to find the best one you can in your community and then get involved. Be a part of what God is doing beyond the walls of your home. Apart from the local church, we will not be able to go the distance homeschooling, and our families will not grow. As Pastor George Grant says, “The church is God’s plan A and there is no plan B.”<sup>12</sup>

## Revisit Your Initial Reasons for Homeschooling

Why did you embark on this homeschool journey in the first place? What led you here? Were the public schools dangerous? Too many bad influences? Not enough academic rigor? Maybe your child was bullied, or you didn’t want him to be bored with learning like you were growing up. Did you want your child to have an education centered on God’s Word? Did you desire your children to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and you didn’t think the public schools were going to get them there?

Whatever your reasons were, revisit them. Has anything changed? Do your younger children need the same benefits of homeschooling as your older ones have had? If so, get excited about it again. Regaining your purpose will impress you once again with the important role of a homeschool mom in training up the next generation.

## Don’t Listen to Satan’s Lies

After homeschooling for 18 years and successfully graduating my oldest two children from homeschool high school and launching them into college, all of a sudden I began to be bombarded with discouraging thoughts. I would wake up in the middle of the night overwhelmed with thoughts of failure, of incompetence, of fear. I felt incapable to go on and finish homeschooling my other children — incapable of successfully managing my home and life.

My pastor encouraged me to ask my husband whenever I had these thoughts if they were true and realistic or if they were from Satan. Remember we have an enemy. He tries to accuse us day and night, and he shoots his

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<sup>12</sup> George Grant, “The Church Is Plan A -- Acts 2:42-47” sermon preached April 14, 2013, Parish Presbyterian Church, parishpres.libsyn.com/pastor-george-grant-the-church-is-plan-a-acts-242-47.

lying, discouraging arrows at us when we are weakest. When you have these discouraging thoughts and are having trouble discerning whether they are truthful or not, ask your spouse or a trusted friend for wisdom. If they are false, then reject these thoughts through the power of the Holy Spirit and replace them with the truth of God's Word.

If you have trouble sleeping during this season of life, open the Word in the middle of the night and fill your mind with it. The Psalms have been a lifeline for me during these times. I find Satan attacks me most in the night hours. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 2:11, *We are not unaware of his (Satan's) schemes.* And Ephesians 6 gives a detailed account of the armor we must put on to fight this formidable foe. I have found speaking the truth out loud to myself and forcing myself to think on God's promises and who I am in Christ have helped me tremendously. We really are nothing without Christ and in reality, we can't even homeschool without Him. But in Christ we can do all things.

Ask your husband to pray with you or find a friend to be a prayer partner. Consider reading **D. Martin Lloyd Jones'** amazing book called *Spiritual Depression*. Other than the Bible, this one book has helped me more than anything else to continue on in my homeschool journey.

### **Read The Word Daily**

Proverbs 13:20 says, "*He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm.*" Our children are walking with us. What are they learning? We need to make sure we are continually growing in wisdom. Once in awhile, do an XTAWG time: Extended Time Alone With God. Get away for a half day or whole day and spend the time just with Jesus. Your soul will be refreshed!

### **Pray! Pray! Pray!**

I've found it crucial to continually ask God for healing, for strength, for renewed motivation, for ideas, for solutions. Ask Him if **He** wants you to continue homeschooling. And if so, ask what **He** wants your homeschool to look like. Pray. Pray. Pray. We cannot do it enough. We must cry out to the Lord, unload all our burdens on our friend, Jesus. Talk to Him about everything. He desires us to be specific in our requests to Him, giving us the opportunity to watch Him delight in answering us abundantly in ways we never thought possible. Instead of thinking our options are limited to what we see others doing, or what we've researched on the internet, or the supplemental programs offered in our communities, let's ask God to bring opportunities for our children or to fill in the gaps where we don't have energy. Then we can wait in anticipation to see God delight in meeting our needs and our children's needs in ways we never could have thought up ourselves.

## B. Practical Tips to Combat Burnout

Certain temperaments tend to struggle more with anxiety, stress, worry, burnout, and depression. If you are in this category, I urge you to read **D. Martin Lloyd Jones'** book *Spiritual Depression*. And some of the following tips may be of help to you as well:

## **Nurture Your Marriage**

Get help if need be. If there is dissension in the leadership of any organization, it is doomed to ineffectiveness at best and failure at worst. Our families are no exception. If your marriage is struggling, it will sap the life out of your home and drain your energy. Everyone has marital challenges from time to time and in different seasons of life. Don't be afraid to get help. Don't allow the problems to go unaddressed for long. Seeking unity, forgiving daily, learning to communicate in love, praying for your spouse, and praying together are key links in the chain of unity.

We must take specific problems to the Lord in prayer and wait in faith for Him to give us solutions and wisdom. We can't expect our husbands to be perfect and meet all our needs. And we must not compare our husbands or marriages to anyone else's. Whatever the struggles are, the best resource we have are the elders of our churches. Let's not overlook God's plan of protection and guidance for us provided in our elders. Homeschooling takes a lot of time and commitment and sacrifice for our children — but let's not make the mistake of putting our children ahead of our husbands.

## **Give Thanks!**

*In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God* (1 Thessalonians 5:18). If you are an introvert like me, you may tend to wake up in the mornings, and as soon as your mind begins to function, you are bombarded with negative thoughts. So I have begun to make it a habit first thing when I wake up to intentionally rehearse in my mind (sometimes out loud) every single thing I can think of that I have to be thankful for: “Thank you that I have a husband, thank you for my house, for my bed, for my neighborhood, my children, for food to eat”, and on and on. Then I make sure and read God's Word, usually starting with a Psalm. Why do this? Well, how important is gratitude to God?

Listen to what Psalm 20:23 has to say, *He who sacrifices thank offerings honors me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God.* Gratitude actually prepares the way for God to show us His salvation. Wow! And earlier in this Psalm, God says He would rather have sacrifices of thanksgiving than sacrifices of a bull on the altar. So give thanks!

## **Learn to Say “NO”**

*Be very careful then how you live, not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil* (Ephesians 5:15). Busyness can be our worst enemy. And it can be the very tool Satan uses to keep us from being effective and productive in our homes and schooling. Learn to say “No.” I am learning to never say, “Yes”, to anyone until I have first looked carefully at my schedule, prayed about it, and asked my husband. I'm having to weed out unnecessary activities from this season of my life and determine to focus completely on my husband, home, and shepherding/teaching my children. There will be a season for other things. I have to tell myself: “If I'm going to teach my children, then I must teach them!” Set aside time for it and say, “No”, to other things.

If I had a job teaching in a school, I would have to say, “No”, to things that conflicted. Why should it be any different teaching our children? Turn off the phone/email/texts for a few hours a day so you can focus on your priorities. Figure out how much time you need to stay at home without running around in order to be an effective teacher and home manager. If you are an introvert, figure out how much alone/quiet time you need away from people and, if possible, schedule those times into your week.

I have found that for every day that I'm outside my home, I need at least a day at home. And once I reach

four hours interacting with people (other than my family), I do best to call it a day and have some quiet time or I become drained. Most importantly, if our daily time alone with God is crowded out by our activities, we need to say, “No.” We must make sure we fill our cups with the Living Water every day so we are giving to our families and others out of a heart of abundance. If time does not permit us to do this, it’s time to take out some activities. Our souls, our health, our families, and our homeschools will all benefit if we learn to say that simple two letter word, “No.”

### **Don’t Use the Word “Burnout”**

Our words shape our thinking, so don’t use the words “burnout”, “depressed”, “overwhelmed” to describe your feelings. Instead take your weariness to Jesus and, like Elijah, allow God to replenish you (1 Kings 19).

### **Get Sufficient Sleep and Eat Wisely**

When I was in high school, I was so driven that I only got four hours of sleep a night. My schedule was chock full of productive, positive activities, but I soon began to experience depression. I mistakenly thought that my problem was a spiritual one and so added an extended prayer time onto my already overloaded schedule. Eventually I learned some common sense principles. I basically just needed sleep. As Martin Lloyd Jones said, “You cannot isolate the spiritual from the physical for we are body, mind and spirit.” Learning to go to sleep at a decent hour is one habit that will bring emotional, physical, and spiritual health to you and peace and productivity to your home. Figure out how much sleep your body needs and make it a priority to get it. Maybe your family can help you turn off the computer, put the book down, or say no to evening activities in order for you to get to bed earlier. Remember that when Elijah was discouraged, God refreshed him through plenty of sleep and food (1 Kings 19)!

### **Live Simply**

Debt causes a huge strain on a marriage and a family. Live simply. Make a budget with your spouse and stick to it. The bottom line is this: don’t spend more than you bring in. We don’t need a fancy curriculum to homeschool. As we live within our means, we can then trust God to provide the opportunities and resources our children need.

### **Get Out of Bed as Soon as You Wake Up**

*This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it* (Psalm 118:24). Or better yet, set an alarm and get out of bed as soon as it goes off. Remind yourself that you have a significant purpose. What a privilege to homeschool your own children! This is our calling in life, at least for this season. Isn’t this better than having to get up and trudge off to work somewhere to build someone else’s corporation or business?

We get to use our time and energy to invest into our own children for eternity! Sometimes after we have been homeschooling for a number of years, we lose sight of the tremendous significance of what it is that we are doing. It’s time to get excited about it again! Let’s remind ourselves and expect God to do great things each day!

### **Make a God Box**

My mentor, a dear godly woman in her 80s, shared this with me. She has a little box on her desk that she wrote the word “God” on. Every day she writes down all of her problems and concerns — both big and small. She prays over them, and then she gives them to God, symbolically placing the paper in the little box. Throughout the day, when she begins to worry about one of her problems, she reminds herself that she gave that problem to God, and He is taking care of it! There will be many problems in teaching and shepherding

our children. Let's give each of these to God to take care of.

### **Enlist the Help of Your Older Children**

As I write, I am preparing for my 19th year of homeschooling. I have about six more years to go with a daughter in middle school and a daughter just entering high school. Each of these daughters is significantly different in the giftings and strengths that the Lord has given them. This is wonderful, but in this season it has made it a challenge for me to homeschool them by myself. So I have enlisted my 19-year-old daughter to teach one of my daughters full-time while I will focus on the other. Some subjects we will all do together.

Your older children are blessings from God. Pray for how God would have you include them more in your life and school. If they can't help full-time, could they teach just one subject to a younger sibling or tutor them weekly? Not only is it a blessing to you, but it strengthens sibling relationships and is an opportunity packed full of lessons for the older child.

### **Enlist the Grandparents' Help**

Most elderly people have accumulated a lifetime of experience and learning that no one cares to access. How sad! The older generation is our greatest untapped resource. And they are a valuable asset for you as a homeschool mom. Consider enlisting the grandparents' help. Tap into their wisdom. It will encourage them, it will enrich your children, and it will lighten your load.

My father, over the course of the years, has taught my children geometry, art, and driver's ed. He read through Calvin's Institutes with one of my daughters, and this year will be teaching the Summit worldview curriculum to all my children. What a blessing! When my parents lived out of state, they taught subjects over the phone. Now we can do it in person. If your parents are not into academics, could they teach practical life skills like sewing, cooking, knitting, or woodworking? The possibilities are endless. Be creative! If your parents are unable to help, seek out an elderly person in your church. This is a vast resource for you, and I believe it is God's plan for the older generation to teach the younger.

### **Regain the Joy of Learning**

After all, isn't that what we want our children to walk away with, a lifelong love of learning? Do they see that same love of learning in me? Am I continually learning? The best way to do this is to be always reading a book. It is amazing how many books you can get through by just reading a little here and there. Why not keep a book with you in the car and a book in the bathroom? Or read a few paragraphs while waiting in line at the grocery store or while waiting at the doctor's office? Reading good books will enrich our lives. Let's turn off the computer and read a book!

Make homeschooling about life again. School and life can't be separate. Are our kids burned out on school? Then it's time to step back. Take a break from the textbooks and start loving learning again. Garden together, cook, sew, go on field trips, read aloud. Figure out their interests and let them pursue it full-time. When you see that they have that twinkle back in their eyes, then you can slip a textbook or two back in.

Consider watching the YouTube video about **Francis Collins**, a scientist who was homeschooled and later headed up the human genome project. Here he speaks of his love for learning that was ignited by his father and mother's untraditional homeschooling methods. (Internet engine search: *Francis Collins' Personal Story — Learning to Love Learning*.)

## Enjoy Your Children

They won't be with us forever. They are the crown of our old age, our blessings. In the midst of the mundane routines and challenges and trials of daily life, have we forgotten this? Now is the opportunity to have fun with our kids — to laugh, to play games together. Try to find things you enjoy doing together especially as they get older. Sit and listen to them. Build relationships.

## Cover Your Children in Prayer

Surround your children with constant prayers of protection. Have we forgotten that as we homeschool each day, we enter into battle? We can't afford to underestimate the attacks of Satan and his demons, who don't want our children educated in the fear of the Lord. Don't be deceived or lulled into apathy. Just because our children are home with us does not mean they are safe. Satan wants our children's hearts. Homeschooling without prayer and the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit will in the end prove to be an unfruitful pursuit.

## Be Focused

*Because the Sovereign Lord helps me, I will not be disgraced. Therefore, I have set my face like flint and I will not be put to shame* (Isaiah 50:7). This passage speaks of Christ's 'setting his face like flint.' This is the ultimate in determination. We must follow in our Master's footsteps and, once we know the will of God, set our face like flint. Be determined to follow through with all your might. So set your face like flint as you seek each day to educate your children knowing that, despite the obstacles, Christ has gone before us and through Him we will overcome. With His example, we can focus on the task God has given us to do and not be distracted.

You are a homeschooling parent. Don't allow yourself to be wooed into dozens of extraneous activities. Even a text or phone call can distract our minds from the priority of training our children. Be determined to homeschool the best you can and finish well. Embrace this season. As **Jim Elliott**, a missionary and martyr, said, "Wherever you are, be all there. Live to the hilt every situation you believe to be the will of God."<sup>13</sup>

## Read Aloud

We've all had days where we wake up and a dark cloud is hanging over us. Whether it's hormones, illness, or the Mexican food we ate the night before, there's no shaking it off. Get up, pray for strength, grab a good book, sit in a sunny window, and read all day to your children. When my sister was homeschooling her high school son, they once spent the entire day reading aloud the book *Johnny Tremain*. Yes, six hours of reading! At the end of the day, they finished the book. My sister had lost her voice, and her son had been infused once again with the delight of books and learning.

So grab a book and start to read. I'm not talking about *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*! Grab a great story! Your children will be delighted that they don't have to do math for the day, and no one will even know how down you felt all morning. Becoming absorbed together in an engaging story will lift all of your spirits. This is the joy of flexible homeschooling!

## Play Uplifting Music in the Home

Music has a significant impact on our emotions. Play calm instrumental praise music or hymns in the background of your home all day. It will lift your spirits. While your children do subjects requiring intense

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<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Elliott, *Through Gates of Splendor*, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers)

focus, try softly playing Bach or Handel in the background. There has been research that shows that some genres of orchestral music actually enhance learning.

### **Remember What True Education Is**

What does it mean to educate our children? Academics, textbooks, SAT scores, sitting at a desk, getting into college ...? In **Kevin Swanson's** book, *Family Life*, he defines education as “preparation of a child intellectually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually for life and eternity.” It is shepherding the whole child, integrating all of life. I think that much burnout could be avoided if we ditched the public school paradigm and embraced God's plan for education instead.

### **Shepherd Your Children Through the Teen and Young Adult Years**

*My son, observe the commandment of your Father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother* (Proverbs 6:20). Many parents mistakenly think that their ‘job’ is done once their child hits the teen and young adult years. They think that because their child looks like an adult, they no longer need shepherding.

The opposite is true. Yes, they will have more freedom and privileges in this season. But young adults need more shepherding, mentoring, and prayer as they launch out into the world and are faced with a myriad of new temptations and influences. They will be faced with intense spiritual battles and choices, the consequences of which will impact them for the rest of their lives. You may feel burned out, but your children need you now more than ever.

### **Allow God to Work Through Your Physical Ailments**

Our weakness is the perfect opportunity for God to make His strength known. Our infirmity is not a limit for God, but an avenue through which His power can flow. Isaiah 40:29 says, *He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.*

In conclusion, homeschool burnout is simply God bringing us to a place where He wants us to examine ourselves — what our motives are, what our hope is in, where our treasure really lies. As we age, we get tired, and we can lack the energy, drive, and optimism we had in our younger years. Often we experience disappointment. We have placed our hopes and dreams in the wrong things, and they haven't delivered. So God shakes our cup. God reveals the true condition of our hearts.

Burnout is an opportunity, a microscope revealing the misdirected goals and motives of our hearts and a much needed occasion for realignment. We have trusted in “broken cisterns” (Jeremiah 2:13); now we can turn to the “Living Water” and drink deeply.

So don't view burnout as a reason to quit, as a sad day to end your homeschool journey. See it as a sweet companion pointing you toward more freedom in Christ! Push through the trial, weary friend, and seek God's strength to enable you to keep plodding down this significant homeschooling path. Pray for eyes of faith to grasp that the power of God can work through your feeble mind and frame, and drink of the refreshing, satisfying, inexhaustible well of Jesus Christ!

## C. Resources

- ***Family Life, A Simple Guide to the Biblical Family.*** Kevin Swanson.
- ***Lord, I Want to be Whole.*** Stormie O'Martian.
- ***Lost in the Middle.*** Paul David Tripp.
- ***Running On Empty.*** Fil Anderson.
- ***Spiritual Depression.*** D. Martin Lloyd Jones.
- ***The Joyful Homeschooler.*** Mary Hood.



*My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in weakness.  
Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses  
so that Christ's power may rest on me.  
(2 Corinthians 12:9)*

*Be alert and of sober mind.  
Your enemy, the devil,  
prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.  
(1 Peter 5:8)*

*Morning by morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.  
(Psalm 5:3)*



# APPENDIX



## Glossary of Homeschooling Terms

*- Revised by Shari Howard McMinn -*

# Glossary of Homeschooling Terms

**Academic Achievement Test:**

A test that measures your child's academic progress in comparison with other children of similar ages from across the country.

**ACT:**

An abbreviation of American College Testing, this college readiness assessment is a standardized test for college admissions in the United States produced by ACT, a nonprofit of the same name.

(See **CHAPTER 6** High School.)

**All-in-one provider:**

Publisher or other business that provides everything related to home education as a complete package including the full spectrum of curricula, grading, scope and sequence, testing, etc.

**Apprenticeship:**

An apprenticeship is a viable option for a young person to be trained to practice a trade or profession with on-the-job training. Often, additional study is expected via classroom work or independent study. Apprenticeship under a licensed industry professional enables practitioners to gain their own license to practice in a regulated profession. Most of the training is done while working for an employer who helps the apprentice learn their trade or profession, in exchange for their continued labor for an agreed period after they have achieved measurable competencies. Apprenticeships typically last three to six years.

(See **CHAPTER 6** High School.)

**Assessment:**

In education, the process of documenting knowledge and skills against a standard determined by the professional conducting the evaluation or the test publisher.

**Auditory Learning:**

A learning style in which a person learns best through listening. An auditory learner depends on hearing and speaking as a main way of gaining and retaining information.

**Auditory-Sequential Learner:**

The majority of all students are this type: they learn best by hearing and speaking, with the subject being taught with increasing difficulty in a sequential or logical order.

**Burnout:**

The state of emotional and physical exhaustion that is reached when a person is overcommitted, too busy, stretched too thin, or pulled in too many directions.

**Classical Approach (to teaching):**

This three-step approach focuses on giving students the tools they need to learn everything else.

**Step 1:** Facts to master.

**Step 2:** Logic.

**Step 3:** The expressive or creative use of language.

This approach is also called The Trivium, and homeschool groups going by the name of Classical Conversations use it as well. (See **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum.)

**CLEP Test:**

The College Level Examination Program (CLEP) is a series of standardized tests created and administered by College Board covering a student's knowledge in thirty-six subject areas. If passed, a student can earn college credits without the courses. More than 1,700 sites (colleges, universities, and military installations) across the United States administer the tests, and nearly 2,900 colleges grant CLEP credit. Though it varies by site and exam, each institution awards credit to students who meet the college's minimum qualifying score for that exam, typically 50 to 60 out of a possible 80. The tests are useful for students who have obtained knowledge outside the classroom, such as through homeschooling and on-the-job experience. Often, students take CLEP exams because of their convenience and lower cost compared to a semester of coursework at an institution of higher learning for comparable credit. (See **CHAPTER 6** High School.)

**Common Core:**

The Common Core State Standards Initiative details what K–12 students should know in English language arts and mathematics at the end of each grade. Sponsored by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), it seeks to establish consistent educational standards across the states. Common Core often determines the content of the secular textbook publishing and standardized test industries, including college entrance exams. Proponents argue that all US students should be taught the same exact basic body of knowledge to graduate high school with competency. Opponents argue that individual states have the right to determine what is best for their students, and classroom teachers need flexibility in how they teach subjects such as math without being forced to deliver information with a specific method. Christian critics tend to believe it reinvents history and teaches an anti-Christian bias as it teaches language arts and mathematics.

**Composite Score:**

In regard to standardized testing, the score which is based on several subject test areas combined. A low test score in one area may be brought up by higher test scores in other areas for the overall composite.

**Compulsory Age:**

Each state sets a maximum age at which time a child must begin school, and a minimum age that must be reached before a child may legally stop attending school.

**Consumables:**

Products which are used up by a consumer and therefore need to be replaced regularly. In regard to home education, consumables would include paper, pencils, workbooks, etc. as opposed to non-consumables such as textbooks and manipulatives.

**Co-op:**

A group of homeschooled students studying a subject together, usually taught by one of the parents, for a predetermined period of time.

**Core Curriculum:**

The basic set of subjects which form the foundation of an education.

**Curriculum:**

A collection of books and resources used to teach. These may be obtained from one publisher or several. Plural: Curricula or Curriculums. (See **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum.)

**Curriculum Fair:**

An event sponsored by a homeschool organization where new and/or used curricula and resource items are available for purchase.

**Deschooling:**

When a family begins to homeschool, if their children were previously attending an institutional school, this is the period of time and adjustment when parents and students alike learn to live without the reinforcement of grading, regimented learning, and rigid daily schedules.

**Discipleship:**

Discipleship is viewed by many Christian homeschoolers as the total lifestyle which grows out of home education, including the training and mentoring of children by their parents in the Christian faith as vital to all other academic instruction.

**DSST:**

DANTES Subject Standardized Tests are credit-by-examination tests originated by the United States Department of Defense and are defined as Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES). The program is a series of 30+ examinations in college subject areas that are comparable to the final, end-of-course examinations in undergraduate college courses. These tests are often used in conjunction with CLEP tests by students pursuing college degrees in non-traditional formats. Whereas CLEP tests are used primarily for lower level credit at regionally accredited institutions, DSST's are available for both upper and lower level credit. (See **CHAPTER 6** High School.)

**Eclectic Approach (to teaching):**

The use of a combination of teaching styles and methods (textbooks, worktexts, unit studies, etc.).

**Enrichment School:**

A program offering supplemental classes in a variety of areas such as writing, art, physical education, or science.

**Entrepreneurship:**

Traditionally defined as the process of designing, launching, and running a new business. Typically a small business, such as a startup company, offers a product, process or service for sale or hire, and the people who do so are called 'entrepreneurs'. (See **CHAPTER 6** High School.)

**Evaluation:**

A systematic determination of a subject's academic ability and merit using criteria governed by a set of standards. In regard to home education, this is a type of assessment and is not typically standardized test-based.

**Friday School:**

A Friday morning, afternoon, or all day regularly scheduled event wherein parents provide group teaching and fun activities for homeschooled students.

**Homeschool Group:**

A group of homeschooling families joining together to provide support for the parents and students. These groups provide learning opportunities and social experiences for the children, and/or academic or enrichment-type classes for students. Field trips, monthly parent meetings, moms' meetings, co-ops, spelling bees, and other large group activities often characterize these groups. (See **CHAPTER 8 - PART I** Joining a Homeschool Group.)

**Homeschooling:**

Also known as home-based education, or home education. Parent-directed education based in the home, free of government control, operating within the law. However, public school online programs, public charter school programs based in homes via online access, and commercial K-12 online programs are not considered homeschooling as they are neither parent directed, nor free from government control.

**HSLDA:**

Home School Legal Defense Association is a non-profit advocacy organization established to defend and advance the constitutional right of parents to direct the education of their children and to protect family freedoms. Homeschoolers may join for a fee.

**IEP:**

The Individualized Education Program, also known as an IEP, is a legal document that is federally mandated to be developed for each public school child who needs special education assistance.

**Independent Learning:**

The education style wherein the student at first learns basic knowledge from the teacher such as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Then the teacher guides the student to become a self-directed learner who gains information with increasing independence from the teacher. The student then relies on the teacher for mentoring, tutoring, or extra assistance when needed. Finally, the student no longer needs a teacher because he has gained the necessary skills to direct his own education and has become a lifelong learner.

**Inquiry-Based Learning:**

Instead of simply presenting facts as a path to knowledge, this teaching style starts by posing questions, problems, or scenarios. The teacher becomes a facilitator, encouraging the students to become inquirers who will identify and research issues and questions to develop their knowledge or solutions. Includes problem-based learning, and is generally used in small scale investigations and projects, as well as research. Inquiry-based instruction allows for the development and practice of thinking skills.

**IOWA Test:**

The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills — also known informally as the Iowa Tests or colloquially as ITBS tests — are nationally normed standardized tests. The tests are administered to students across the United States. The ITBS is considered a nationally recognized standardized test.

**Kinesthetic Learning:**

Is a learning style wherein students use a tactile or hands-on approach to carry out physical activities as a means to understand and retain information, rather than simply listening to a lecture, watching demonstrations, or reading material.

**Learning Style:**

The way in which a student learns best. The closer his core curriculum is matched to his learning style, the easier the student will learn. For example, one student may learn best by reading the material himself, another by hearing it read out loud.

**Lesson Plan:**

A homeschool teacher's detailed description of the course of instruction, or the plan to accomplish teaching lessons. The plan can be drawn up on an annual basis, broken down into months, weeks, and even days. Details will vary depending on the preference of the teacher, subjects being covered, and the needs of the individual or group of students.

**Literature-Based Learning:**

A style of learning wherein the student reads high quality (classic) literature as the basis for art, discussion, field trips, history, memorization, math, recitation, research into related topics, science, and writing.

**Living Books (or Real Books):**

An approach to teaching that emphasizes the use of topical books (as opposed to typical textbooks) not only as reading tools, but also as the source of facts and information about any given subject. For instance, instead of using a science curriculum for studying biology, a student would check out books from the library on animals, humans, and plants to study their biology, as well as books on dissection and preparing displays for a science fair in order to share what was learned.

**Manipulatives:**

Concrete learning objects and tools used with various math programs to help students learn math concepts. For example: flash cards, dice, dominoes, Cuisenaire Rods, Unifix cubes, Math-U-See blocks.

**Mentorship:**

A relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person guides a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. It is a learning and development partnership between someone with valuable experience and someone who wants to learn. (See **CHAPTER 6** High School.)

**Multi-level Teaching:**

Teaching several students who are at different grade levels at the same time, sometimes using the same curriculum but with adaptations for each grade level.

**Online School:**

Schools which use internet resources, such as online lessons, teacher support online, or online homework systems to deliver teaching. Also called a virtual or cyber school. Physical interaction by students and teachers is unnecessary, or only supplementary. This is a legal option in some states.

**Phonics:**

The method of teaching reading by learning the phonetic sounds of individual letters and learning to blend the sounds together, in-order to decode and pronounce words rather than memorize them by sight.

**SAT:**

The Scholastic Aptitude Test is used for college admissions in the United States. The SAT is owned and published by the College Board, a private, not-for-profit corporation in the United States, and assesses a student's readiness for college. Originally designed to not be aligned to high school curricula, several adjustments have been made for the version of the SAT introduced in 2016 to align with Common Core. (See **CHAPTER 6** High School.)

**Scope & Sequence:**

A detailed list of what a child typically learns at each grade level. These lists may vary according to different experts in the field of education and child development, curriculum providers, and test publishers. (See **CHAPTER 5** Testing and Evaluations.)

**Socialization:**

In regard to home education, the process of parents guiding their children so as to achieve desirable outcomes in their behavior and interaction with family, church, community, and larger society. For Christian parents, socialization of our children is about protection as well as preparation for navigating the world away from home. Character development based on the Bible is foundational to socialization and other learning. Society's preconceived norms regarding classroom learning and large group socialization are often incompatible with home education. Christian parents are accountable to God for the upbringing of our children; therefore, man's opinion and expectations of how we do so is of less importance.

**Special Needs:**

A label given to children who have unique needs when it comes to development, health, learning, living, etc. Common special needs include learning disabilities, communication disorders, emotional and behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, and developmental disabilities. Students with these kinds of special needs typically benefit from individualized, unique educational services including different approaches to teaching. (See **CHAPTER 7** Different Learners.)

**Stanford Test:**

The Stanford Achievement Test (sometimes abbreviated SAT but should not be confused with the SAT college entrance exam) is used to measure academic knowledge of elementary and secondary school students. The series reports include narrative summaries, process and cluster summaries, and graphic displays to clarify the student's performance and guide planning and analysis.

**Teaching Method:**

Comprises the principles and applications used for instruction to achieve the desired learning and retention of information by students. These strategies are determined partly on subject matter to be taught and partly by the learning nature of the student. For a particular teaching method to be appropriate and efficient it has to be compatible with the student's learning style.

**Teaching Textbooks:**

A textbook manual of instruction in any branch of study wherein the student can learn in a self-guided manner, not requiring a teacher to lead each lesson. Also, the name of a commercially available curriculum. (See **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum.)

**Testing:**

An assessment which is intended to measure the student's knowledge and abilities, usually administered in a written format that the student can read for himself while answering the multiple choice, true/false, or essay questions, or can have read to him by an authorized administrator. (See **CHAPTER 5** Testing and Evaluations.)

**Textbooks:**

Books which are designed to lead a student systematically through a subject area. Textbooks are often accompanied by workbooks. Originally, textbooks were published for use in institutional schools for classroom groups but now many Christian publishers create texts specifically for homeschool settings.

**Transcript:**

A school generated transcript is an inventory of the courses taken, credits earned, and the accompanying grades awarded — including an overall Grade Point Average (GPA) — to a student in high school and college. In regard to homeschooling, graduates planning on higher education or certain careers right out of high school should have transcripts for proof of coursework. (See **CHAPTER 6** High School.)

**Truancy:**

Truancy is any intentional, unauthorized, or illegal absence from compulsory education. Usually this does not refer to legitimate “excused” absences, such as ones related to medical conditions. Home educators who properly document their schooling in accordance with the law should be able to prove their student is not truant if questioned or falsely accused.

**Unit Study:**

The style of teaching that incorporates many subject areas into the study of one overall topic. Example: Using the topic of “beavers,” you could study history (beaver hunting in American history), science (mammals), geography (where beavers are found), math (beaver populations), writing (reports), and reading (books about beavers). (See **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum.)

**Unschooling Approach:**

The style of schooling that encourages students to learn about the world more through exploration and investigation than through a structured learning environment.

**Virtual School:**

(See Online School.)

**Visual Learning:**

Is a style in which a learner utilizes 2D and 3D visual methods such as charts, diagrams, graphs, maps, models, and videos to understand and retain information

**Visual-Spatial Learner:**

This type of learner is very right brained focused, often remembering what is seen, not what is heard. They have vivid imaginations, out-of-the-box creativity, and gifted intelligence, yet can be disorganized, unfocused, poor at spelling and rote learning. They have many strengths and weaknesses. Non-traditional learning strategies may work best for them. (See **CHAPTER 7** Different Learners.)

**Woodcock-Johnson Test:**

Formally known as the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Cognitive Abilities. These include both the Standard Battery and the Extended Battery. There is also a Woodcock-Johnson III Diagnostic Supplement to the Tests of Cognitive Abilities with an additional 11 cognitive tests. All of which combined allows for a considerably detailed analysis of cognitive abilities: Comprehension-Knowledge, Long-Term Retrieval, Visual-Spatial Thinking, Auditory Processing, Fluid Reasoning, Processing Speed, Short-Term Memory, Quantitative Knowledge and Reading-Writing. A General Intellectual Ability (GIA) or Brief Intellectual Ability (BIA) may be obtained. This test may be useful for students who are “different learners” in lieu of other standardized testing. Professionally qualified evaluators frequently use the Woodcock-Johnson. (See **CHAPTER 5** Testing and Evaluations.)

**Workbook:**

A consumable book, usually accompanying a textbook, designed to be written in by the student to reinforce material read in the textbook.

**Worktext:**

A consumable book containing both text (information to be read) and instructional activities (questions to answer or essays to write). Designed mainly for independent study. (See **CHAPTER 4** Choosing Curriculum.)

**Worldview:**

How a person perceives and understands life. One’s worldview will answer questions such as “How did I come to exist?” “Why do I exist?” “What am I to be doing with my life?” “What will happen to me when I die?” etc. One might have a biblical worldview in which all questions are answered according to the Bible. Other worldviews include Atheistic, Marxist, New Age, Secular Humanism, etc.

