

Welcome to
Homeschooling



"Education is not the filling of a bucket but
the lighting of a fire."

—*W.B. Yeats*

"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative
expression and knowledge."

—*Albert Einstein*

FIRST STEPS TO HOMESCHOOLING

Homeschooling is not a decision to be made lightly and creating a plan is critical. Why do you want to homeschool? Know why you are making this choice. If you aren't sure where to start, this section will help you begin to focus on your decision and to visualize its impact on your life.



HAVE A VISION

In the words of Benjamin Franklin, “Fail to plan, plan to fail.” Start by drawing up a plan for your homeschool journey. Will you homeschool up to a certain grade level or until graduation? [Read more about homeschooling high school and beyond.](#)

Will you have set times or a more flexible schedule? Ask the important questions and make sure your vision contains definite answers. Once you start, it's important to [remain consistent](#) for the schedule to work.

Some homeschooling parents choose to have a mapped-out day by time and some prefer to have subjects planned out by the week. For example, you might choose to have a list of subjects that the kids need to finish by Friday or any given week to allot for variations in the schedule that might happen (like appointments).

[Here is a wonderful tool](#) by Timberdoodle that you can customize to make schedule checklists for each student. Keep in mind that you might want to [schedule holiday breaks](#), too.

[Here is another customizable schedule](#) in table form (put together by a homeschool mom), plus lots of other scheduling resources, like a podcast.

A third option would be to integrate [loop scheduling](#) into your homeschool day. Some families like how starting with morning time seems to get the day off on the right foot, helping other subjects to run smoothly thereafter.





DON'T EXPECT PERFECTION

Never be afraid to ask for help as you begin homeschooling. Guidance for new homeschooling families is invaluable. It can be as simple as attending a homeschooling conference or two (such as [THSC's Called to Teach Conventions](#)), finding a co-op, or even just asking other families about their own homeschooling routines.

There's also no shame in hiring a tutor or house cleaner if you can't do it all yourself while keeping higher priorities intact. Not everyone will have the budget or the need to do this, but it's a perfectly acceptable choice.

Moreover, don't let yourself fall into the trap of perfection. One of the most freeing things a homeschool parent can do is to realize that even the most perfect of plans will have some flaws.

Pressing yourselves to be something you aren't gets exhausting, so recognize your own insecurities and those of your family. Keep communication open and [make sure your kids have healthy outlets to express frustration](#).

Most importantly, be flexible. Many parents can testify that if the defined plan falls apart or not all the chores get done, the whole family can get irritable.

Homeschooling gives you the freedom to change your schedule whenever you want, however you want, to accommodate any surprises or challenges that may arise. Focus more on the experience of learning than on completing everything on a chart and try to focus on the positive to get through the hard times.

LET YOURSELF HAVE FUN

Of course, how much fun you or your family has while homeschooling isn't the standard of success. But a bland, uninteresting school environment doesn't lend itself well to learning.

There are a variety of ways to make the school day more interesting for you and your students. Instead of only reading about different animal species, also take everyone to the zoo or aquarium for a close-up, real-life experience.

Redo the time-honored experiment of the baking soda volcano to discuss chemical reactions. You'll be learning and reviewing these concepts along with your kids, so make them interesting for you, too!



KEEP THINGS CHEERFUL

Try playing a relaxing [classical music](#) or [uplifting acoustic music](#) playlist to help keep the mood light and keep everyone focused on their schoolwork. It is amazing how much music can change the entire vibe of your home and redirect the day.

Slowing the pace down a bit or skipping a day of school work is sometimes far better than pushing through with a bad attitude that can easily rub off on your family. Maintaining a healthy relationship with your children matters more than ensuring they learn Newton's third law in the midst of a crisis-filled day.

[Take our learning styles quiz](#) to find the learning style that best matches the way your child learns and make sure you're creating the most positive learning environment for them.

REMEMBER YOU ARE NOT ALONE

There will inevitably be days when you feel overwhelmed. You might be looking at everything that's gone wrong and desperately trying to scrape the pieces together. Whatever the circumstance, just remember not to give up.

Even if you can't see immediate results in the lessons you're teaching your child today, they are still learning! Keep toward the goal of creating a happy home environment and educating your child in the best way possible.

Don't forget your homeschool "tribe" either! There will always be fellow homeschooling parents who will come alongside you to help you and lift you up. Don't be afraid to reach out for help when you need it.

PROPERLY WITHDRAW FROM PUBLIC SCHOOL

Make sure that you follow all the [laws in your state](#) to make sure you're following all the necessary requirements and keeping all the records you should be keeping. Different states have varying requirements for attendance, record keeping, curriculum, and the proper withdrawal route for students.





TEACH YOURSELF ABOUT HOMESCHOOLING

If a friend or family member got you into homeschooling, ask them why they made that choice for their own family. Learn from their experiences and see which of their ideas will work for your own family.

For further research, [Home Educator](#) offers an abundance of ebooks, articles, audio presentations and other resources that your homeschooling friend may not have. If you prefer a paper book, a few popular choices include:

- [Being Together](#) by Pam Barnhill. The indispensable guide to creating a time in your day to focus on the things that matter most in your homeschool.
- [Plan Your Year: Homeschool Planning for Purpose and Peace](#) by Pam Barnhill. A practical approach to homeschool planning that breaks free of grids and unrealistic expectations, focusing instead on the needs of the students, the teacher (yes, you!), and the busy life you lead.
- [The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education at Home \(Fourth Edition\)](#) by Susan Wise Bauer and Jessie Wise. This book will instruct you, step by step, on how to give your child an academically rigorous, comprehensive education from preschool through high school – one that will train him or her to read, to think, to understand, to be well-rounded and curious about learning.
- [The Read-Aloud Family: Making Meaningful and Lasting Connections with Your Kids](#) by Sarah Makenzie. This book helps create a passionate culture of learning in your homeschool and helps you bring down divides and distractions that can rob families of developing good relationships together.

FIND THE RIGHT CURRICULUM

There are a couple of important things to keep in mind while searching for the best curriculum for your homeschool.

First, don't be afraid to use different curriculums for different kids. Maybe your fourth-grader is a visual learner and prefers books with lots of pictures, and your third grader learns better by memorizing educational songs. In that case, don't try to force songs on your fourth-grader or picture books on your third-grader. Learn what curriculum and programs work for each student and [explore the different types of curriculum styles](#).

Regardless of which system you choose, home-schooling law requires you to use a curriculum of some type. You will inevitably spend a decent amount of money to find a curriculum that covers the five required subjects.

Become an expert on the different curriculum styles and learn about the different kinds available in [this article](#).





TIME-WASTERS

Cell phones, video games, computers, TV, or even your house phone disrupt your school day. Are any of these devices evil or negative by themselves? Absolutely not. Can they be abused and detract from learning? Absolutely.

While outright banning any of these devices is not necessarily a good idea, learning to keep them under control is. Only allow educational movies or games during school hours and make sure to set time limits. Set phones to “do not disturb” until lessons are over.

If using a computer-based curriculum, consider blocking unnecessary websites or programs during school hours. Also make sure to have content blockers on any web browsers to make sure that your children don’t accidentally stumble upon something you don’t want them to be exposed to. Ensure that your students’ focus remains solely on their work.

Check out the books [12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You](#) by Tony Reinke or [Glow Kids](#) by Dr. Nicholas Kardaras for practical ideas on managing digital distractions and helping your children to respect limits on electronic gadgets while still seeing the beauty and usefulness that technology can offer.

FURTHER RESOURCES

For more information on homeschooling from preschool to graduation and beyond, check out more resources from [Home Educator](#) and [THSC](#)! We have everything from [milestone curriculum guides](#) to how to integrate [dual credit](#) into your homeschool.

Feel free to [reach out](#) if we can help you in any way on your homeschooling journey.

