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## **A Parents Guide to Home Schooling**

**This is an informational resource which is somewhat secular  
but is information on this topic.**

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## **Why should I home school my child?**

### Important Aspects of Home Schooling

Some 26% of parents in each of the American states consider home schooling for their children over normal public school classes. This is because of the benefits both the parents and the children get. Home schooling gives them the chance to interact on a personal level as no other system currently available.

There are four important reasons why parents opt for home studying for their children:

- a) social reasons
- b) academic reasons
- c) family reasons
- d) religious reasons.

### Social Reasons

By joining the home school community, parents feel that their children are more comfortable in dealing with different kinds of people. They

feel that their kids have a lesser tendency of becoming dependent with their peers. By introducing the kids to church and community programs, these home-schooled kids do not feel self conscious and have the opportunity to meet all types of kids and adults.

In the catalogue, *Growing Without Schooling*, publisher Pat Farenga wrote: "Group experiences are a big part of education, and home schoolers have plenty of them. They write to us about how they form or join writing clubs, book discussion groups and local home-schooling groups. Home schoolers also take part in school sports teams and music groups (in nearby public schools), as well as in the many public and private group activities our communities provide. These young people can and do experience other people and cultures without going to school."

The home-school setting redirects the child's attention from alcohol, premarital sex, drugs, violence and gangs that could destroy his future. And, since home schooled children are free from peer pressure, they are more likely to have more friends from church and community activities. Some communities create a special group for home-schooled children where field trips, social recreations and team building games are organized. This builds respect and opens channels

for communication.

## Academic Reasons

Some parents believe that the less students are handled by the teacher, the more focus provided each of the students. They thought that the personal tutoring of teachers is the most fruitful way of helping the kids learn successfully.

The most famous home-schooled personalities of all time are:

Thomas Edison

Charles Dickens

Winston Churchill

Agatha Christie

Florence Nightingale

Woodrow Wilson

Woodrow Brothers

Benjamin Franklin

One parent got more of his children's academic training in home schooling through the process of exchanging skills with other home schooled children. Being an English degree holder, he teaches three of

his colleague's sons, while his colleague teaches his kids math.

Although home schooling is, as derived from its own name "home," this special education also developed into a more organized and planned instrument of teaching.

One example is the High Plains Christian Home Educators that was established in Colorado Springs. This group has its own administrator who sees to it that all 200 of their home-schooled children are given enough classes. Unlike a normal school setting, home based studying allows each of the subject areas to be taught separately making the approach cross disciplined.

Each of the students is given their own set of action plans so they can have the freedom to continue their passion. Quality time is provided for each so that more focus can be attributed to their learning success.

### Family Reasons

Parents of home-schooled children feel their presence impacts their kids positively. Family relationship is strengthened and ties are intact. A child's self esteem is boosted because of the parents' full support.

Based on the American League of Research Studies, kids that are home schooled are more loving and confident.

### Religious Reasons

Schools in the US have kept away from any religious and political issues for fear of influence from the two; this is because many organized civil liberties even brought the issue of religious illegality into the courts.

For that same reason, parents find teaching their children at home a worry free place for spiritual and religious growth. Religion can be inculcated as much as the parents would want to bring the whole belief system to their kids in home schooling and they believe that impact can greatly affect the spirituality of their developing children.

### **Is state approval necessary?**

Home School Approval: Doing Home Schooling the Right Way

Home schooling, despite its popularity, is yet to have one singular standard for acceptability or validity. This means that as you go

around the country, different states have different levels of requirements for home schooling to be duly recognized.

There is more or less a general consensus on the inherent value of education. However, people may often disagree about the right method toward achieving that education. The majority of the population would rather opt for institutionalized formal education, referring to education offered in public or private education institutions like primary and secondary schools. However, as has been the recent trend, many parents in particular have begun considering or even going on ahead with home schooling their children. Home schooling, prevalent prior the inception of formalized school systems, is making a return to the mainstream because some parents either do not approve of the curriculum of school systems or are even against the idea of formalized school systems, or find themselves better qualified to educate their children in the best possible manner.

Perhaps you are interested in home schooling your child, and conceded, you have your own reasons for doing it. But just like picking a school for your child, the decision to home school is a very big one. This would most obviously translate to you taking your child out of a previous social learning environment and into the home to educate

him or her; moreover this also means that from then on, you are going to be fully responsible for the intellectual rearing of your child.

The decision to home school your child isn't the simplest one in the books. However, once you've made your decision, it may be a good time to begin intensive research and inquiry into state requirements and other guidelines you have to take into consideration once you've made the decision.

It is perhaps for this reason that certain guidelines are set by the state or local education offices before you can actually home school your child. It is best to consider these guidelines first because your state can help you through the process, and moreover, may enlighten you on relevant issues on home schooling. We'll expound further.

The majority of states in the United States would require a legal minimum of state notification of your intention to home school your child. In a rare few (including Texas, Alaska, Missouri, Illinois, and Oklahoma, among others), you may go on ahead with home schooling your child without informing the state.

Other states, however, would require you first to notify the state and

afterwards acquire your child's grade records should he or she have attended a public school. After this, some states may require you to create a curriculum you intend to follow for your home schooling program, be accredited as a parent-teacher, and to host a home visit by your local education officials. Later on, during the period when your child is already being home schooled, some states may require you to submit evaluation scores to them, attendance records (states may require a minimum number of 'school' days for home school too) and even test scores.

It is very important for you to find out about the different requirements for home schooling in your state.

First, it is only in this way that the state can accredit your child's grade level standing. Alongside this expression of intent and plan is the requirement of the state for you to submit exam scores, progress evaluation grades, and even your child's attendance record. The state may also specify an amount of time that should be spent in this informal school studying the various subjects you intend to teach your child.

Second, the states with tightest home school regulations set

requirements of informing the state of your intent to home school your child. Alongside this expression of intent is the submission of the curriculum you intend to teach while home schooling. You may also be tested if you qualify as a parent-teacher when you home school your child. State-appointed officers may also visit your home to check if it is suitable for home schooling. Aside from these requirements, submission of periodic documents like exam scores, progress evaluation grades, and attendance records may be required of you as well.

Third, by finding out these requirements, you will be able to submit to the state all the required documents that you must submit periodically. In this way, you are also assured that your child is at par level with any other child enrolled in a regular school setting. In the same manner, by approaching your local education authority you may actually inquire about the college application process of home schoolers.

Home schooled children may be required a marginal number of steps that regular applicants are not required to take in order to qualify for their chosen university. Some universities may require your child to take the G.E.D., an exam that will help test the proficiency of their

knowledge from home schooling to be considered as qualified college applicants, while others may require state accreditation. Moreover, by visiting your local education authority you will also find out the various state and local government scholarships for which your child may or may not qualify.

Given this volume of information that you must be familiar with when you decide that you want to give home schooling a try, where will you find the necessary information?

Basically, your first and most primary source of information should always be your state or local government unit's education office or authority. You can approach these agencies in two ways—either through the agency's website or by visiting the physical location of the said government office. In order to save time and money, you should perhaps visit the website first. This is also most recommended as the primary course of action because of the fact that some of these educational agencies actually upload the necessary forms you have to fill out in relation to home schooling. Some of them even prefer your getting in touch with them and submitting your requirements online!

Next, you may want to check home schooling support groups and legal

specialists who have put up various websites on the subject. This way, you will be able to read of firsthand experiences of people who've tried home schooling before, and in the long run, learn valuable tips and tricks in order to make it work for you. They even provide various suggestions on activities and teaching strategies you may want to try as you home school your child.

Much of home schooling is very much feel-your-way-through, so don't be afraid to visit these support groups and forums and ask questions. By doing so, you would be able to make sure that you are giving your child the best sort of home schooling you can provide for him or her. Moreover, you can even find out more about the post-home schooling period, which is the time when your child begins applying for university or college, from home schooled applicants who've gone through the usually much longer process.

Home schooling, as it is, is yet to be standardized across the country. Various legislative and administrative changes are underway each day. This is where online home schooling websites may help. They can give you news updates, briefings, and summaries of various state and federal legislation on home schooling. These timely bits of information may guide you better in home schooling your child, and keep you up

to date with trends and changes in rules on home schooling across your state.

While home schooling may pose some added burden once you are ready to return your child to a regular school system, it has proven beneficial to many in the past. Visit your state or local government education office in order to make an educated decision and in order to get the approval you'd need to push through with home schooling your child.

### **What are the compulsory ages for educating my children?**

Age in Home Schooling: An Obstacle?

Home schooling is a trend that few people can ignore. There has been a consistent increase in the number of children who have left the formal education system in exchange for home schooling. If you're interested in home schooling your child, you must be wondering what it takes to begin.

Many parents like you often wonder if there's a particular age range that is most viable for home schooling, or if most local education agencies impose a compulsory age at which you can take your child out of the formal system for home schooling. More generally, perhaps you are simply wondering how age factors into home schooling.

You will be pleased to know that when it comes to the question of age viability or minimum age for home schooling, there is actually no such requirement. When you find it appropriate to home school your child, his or her age will determine what you have to do in order to complete the transition into home schooling. Moreover, age matters very little when it comes to home schooling. This has perhaps been one of its most esteemed and valued characteristics.

Most parents who opt for home schooling are those parents who have children already enrolled in an educational institution of sorts. Regardless of what educational level or age your child is, he or she is good to go. However, because of the fact that your child has gone through some sort of schooling, you have to first consult with the educational institution. Once there, you must get your child's records assessing clearly the educational level and subsequent attainment achieved while in the school.

If your child is not yet within schooling age but you're already planning on home schooling him or her, then there's no other consultation you have to go through. All you have to do is follow the required procedure in your state for home schooling. That is, if your state requires being informed of the intention to home school your child, you must follow this and whatever other requirements they have set before you can go about home schooling. Otherwise, you're free to start home schooling your child anytime.

The fact that home schooling your child is not reliant on age surprises many individuals, and this may include you. While some parents move their children out of the formal learning environment to give them a

more age-appropriate curriculum, home schooling in fact (and at times unknowingly) steps away from age-appropriateness to intellectual-appropriateness. While children in schools may be required to follow one standardized curriculum, you may opt to either give your child more time on the required materials you wish to teach, or advance to more complex materials if your child is more than qualified to take on harder materials.

As such, the system is based more on merit than on age. Moreover, it allows you to create a curriculum designed to address your child as a growing individual, instead of a statistical age group recommended to take a particular group of lessons from a generalized spectrum of disciplines.

Another issue that home schooling addresses in a far more effective way is socialization. In schools, students are more or less encouraged to be in the company of peers within the same age group, give or take a year or two. This has resulted in age-based socialization. Some parents contend that this sort of limit on the social environment most accessible to their children actually hampers a more enriched interpersonal growth. While this sort of socialization is greatly emphasized with the various year levels in schools, the fact that age-based socialization is something seemingly arbitrary is quite evident.

Comparing this to the home school environment with a child able to interact freely with people in his or her community without the pressures of a formal educational system, you can already see an inherent comparative advantage. It gives children greater experience and opportunities to grow at a pace dictated only by their intellectual

and emotional maturity.

Home schooling is perhaps not the easiest decision you ever have to make, but it's certainly one worth considering. After all, a little work in the beginning can go a long way, especially if you want your child to learn of values and other pertinent academic matter that you wish the school discussed but didn't. The best part is that age is no obstacle.

### **How much time do I need to commit?**

Factors that Affect the Amount of Time Parents Need to Commit in Home Schooling

You just spent eight hours making reports, filing papers, fielding phone calls, and placating your boss at the office.

When you get home, do you rest? Not really. There's a dinner to prepare, stories to share with your husband, and doing homework with the kids.

Such a scenario is — and will still be — typical among working mothers, who balance the countless demands of career and home 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The problem with this is that the children are the ones who are always at the losing end.

Why?

Parents, especially mothers, who are always busy with their work, tend to take their children for granted especially on the aspect of education. They have this propensity to submit their children to school and believe that the institution could provide the best education for their children. This should not be considered as a “judgment” merely a state of fact.

However, in today’s changing world, some parents realize that sending their children to school is no longer the best way in providing them the education that their children need. That’s why they have opted for home schooling in order to give their children the kind of learning that they want for their children.

In home schooling, most parents devote their time and try to provide their children the best education at home. They know that they are the ones who can provide the appropriate teaching approach for their children because they know their children best.

However, it does not necessarily mean that parents should devote more time to home schooling than they would do with their other chores at home.

It is true that home schooling needs time in order to come up with the best teaching approach that your children need. It is also through a committed schedule that you can identify the appropriate tactics that you need to employ in order to teach your children well. But it does not mean that you have to give your whole time to teaching your children through home schooling programs.

On its basic concept, home schooling uses the “one-to-one” teaching method; hence, it needs lesser time compared to the typical classroom setting. This is because with a more individualistic approach in teaching, most children would be able to grasp the concept easier and faster.

Then again, the amount of time to be allotted in home schooling will still vary depending on the many factors that may affect the progress of the teaching process.

Here is a list of some factors that should be considered in order to devise the proper amount of time needed in home schooling:

1. Learning style of the children

There are instances wherein the children’s learning style might affect the time requirement in home schooling. For instance, if your child can learn things at a much faster rate, then you only have to devote lesser time. However, if your child needs more time to grasp things that are being taught you have to devote more time in explaining the concept of the subject matter you are teaching.

2. The type of methods used

There are various teaching methods available for home schooling. Each has its own teaching approach; hence, they may vary on the time needed for the parents to devote on each program.

3. The number of children within the family

Just like in a typical classroom setting where the number of students is generally larger, having many children in the family would mean longer hours of teaching. This is because you have to teach your student(s) what the subject matter is all about. If one of them does not understand the idea, then you really have to explain the concept all over again.

#### 4. The age of the child

The younger the child the more time that is needed in home schooling. This is because younger children have the tendency to grasp the things being taught at a much slower pace compared to those who are already at higher levels.

On its total view, the time needed to commit in home schooling may be affected with these factors but the important thing is to have quality time for your children or students. It is not a matter of how much time you can devote in home schooling but more on how you have provided the time in teaching your children.

### **What kind of record keeping is required?**

Home schooling FAQ: 6 Kinds of Record Keeping

Home schooling, for those who are asking, is legal. As of now, fifty states have allowed home schooling and have provided laws for its

implementation. They have different laws though and some of the states require that you can show some kind of records to show that you're home schooling your children. There are several ways you can keep record of your children's progress and here are some of them.

### 1. Daily Lesson Plans

Daily lesson plans show what subjects you have taught to your children. They will also show the way your children's lessons are progressing from basic to intermediate to advanced.

These lesson plans could be important for school officials to learn what could be lacking from your schooling and in what area they could help you with. Teachers could also help you with lessons that could be a good primer for the next and more advanced level of any subject.

### 2. Time Spent For Each Subject

Time spent for each subject is an indication of what subjects you have focused on and what subject your children might be having some problem absorbing. Although this is not an accurate basis, this could be used to understand problem areas and reasons why your children are having an easy (or tough) time on their subjects.

### 3. Diaries and Journals Updated Regularly

Regular diary and journal entries of your children's achievements (or failures) are a good way to keep a record of your home schooling. This can prove helpful in two ways. The first is you can keep track of what

areas your children have already studied. This will prove beneficial in monitoring your children's progress with their lessons.

The second way it can help is that it will help you in knowing where your children are having an easy time and where they need more time and attention. This is important so you could focus on one subject if you think your children need it.

#### 4. Grades

It is simple to create or copy a test or exercise from one of the books your children use. Results from these exams can be compiled and recorded. These, just like any other records, can be proof of your children's achievements. Grades are more concrete records of your children's progress and concrete proof if someone wants to look at your children's records.

Grades also give your children a sense of achievement. This will help in building their characters and giving a boost in their egos. Failures can also help, too. You just have to handle their feelings carefully and make sure that they realize that they can make their failures as stepping stones to success.

#### 5. Portfolios

Portfolios are a collection of your children's works, from their exercises to their tests and anything that they have done while schooling. For your younger children, these could include the first time they write a letter or the whole alphabet. Included in their portfolio are their

mathematical computations and other exams. For your older children, this could include pictures from recent field trips to museums and other historical trips. Other things that could be included are science tests and experiments and, if possible, a picture of your children's science projects.

## 6. Standardized Tests

A standardized test performed by an authorized school official could be a good way to let the government know if you've been schooling your child at home. These tests will show what subjects your children are having any problems with. Results from these exams (even if your children fail) will not really be a gauge of the success of your home schooling. These tests would let school officials know how to help you with regards to subjects your children are having difficulty with.

There are several reasons why you would want your children to take a standardized test. The first reason is given above. These tests will let you know what subjects your children are having some difficulty with.

Another reason is to gauge your children's abilities and knowledge compared with people their age. These will help in knowing whether your children are advanced, late or at just the right level in respect to other children. This could help you in deciding what your next approach to your children's lessons you will take.

## **What about cost?**

### Managing Home School Costs

Home schooling is now, more than ever, being considered as a viable alternative to traditional schooling. The reasons for which we explored in the first chapter and are diverse ranging from cultural/religious beliefs to economic matters.

The notion that home schooling is much less expensive than sending your child to an educational institution is prevalent, but not necessarily true. Pound for pound, while a home school education is less costly than a private school, it will likely be more expensive than a public school.

### Starting out

For one thing, if you're just beginning with home schooling (and if you don't have a teaching background), it is recommended that you subscribe to an independent study program or buy a boxed curriculum suited to your child's skill level. While these may cost, these will guide your first few attempts at home schooling and help eliminate the trial-and-error process in finding out how to run your home school just right. These services and products range from a low of \$300 to a high of \$1,500 depending on the program.

### Direct costs

However, the costs do not end there. You will need to supplement the program with textbooks as well as workbooks. Up-to-date reference materials are also needed such as an encyclopedia CD-ROM and Internet access. These will require purchases and subscriptions as well.

It will do your child much good to provide proper furniture and fixtures for studying. Getting them a proper study table, a comfortable chair and adequate lighting will show positive results in the child's attitude towards learning. A computer to aid in their research and homework is also essential.

It is also possible that you may have to hire out tutorial services to cover subjects that you may have difficulty in teaching yourself. These services can usually be done on the basis of per course or per subject basis which may help reduce costs, but not by much. For example, a one-on-one advanced history class for high school students can cost about \$300.

To provide a well-rounded education for your child, you will also need to include non-academic activities as well. This may mean music, sport or art lessons and perhaps even planned educational trips to museums and galleries, theaters, and nature parks.

### Opportunity costs

These are the direct costs of running a home school program but in calculating the total cost for running a home school, you may also need to consider certain indirect costs.

A study on families on home study programs noted that on average, the parent conducting the home school is the mother, who holds a college degree. It has been calculated that her staying at home, instead of working, costs the family an estimated \$38,000 every year - money that could have possibly been used to address the family's other pending needs.

Helping defray the costs

But before you get fully discouraged with the idea of home schooling, there are ways to reduce the expenses. One way is to participate in support groups for home schooling families.

This affords you a great opportunity to share resources with similar families saving you the need to buy an entire set of materials for your child. Joining groups like these allow you to borrow or swap things like textbooks, boxed curricula or reference materials. An added plus to joining home school family groups in your area is giving your child the opportunity to interact with kids just like him/her who are home schooled as well.

Depending on where you live, some states allow home-schooled children access to public school resources and some local virtual charter schools provide teaching materials for little to no cost. Some will even offer annual stipends to pay for activities like piano lessons. Taking the time to know what assistance you can avail of to help subsidize the costs will more than pay for the effort you made to do so.

## Some money-saving tips

It helps to know that if you have other children, the costs of home schooling can be reduced with each child since the materials may be reused or renewed for a much lower cost.

Take the time to explore your public library and use what they have to offer. They'll be more than happy to see you visit as frequently as every week. This greatly reduces the need to buy books every time and on occasion allows you access to newly published ones that would otherwise be expensive.

Visit yard sales, book sales or swap meets whenever you can. You may just find that perfect study table, teaching aids or that hard-to-find textbook for a fraction of the cost of buying it from a store.

When considering the costs of something as important as your child's education, it is best to think of them as investments rather than as mere expenses. When managed properly, what money you have can go so much farther than the actual costs as you give him/her a memorable childhood of learning and discovering – with you at their side.

### **Do certain subjects require specific hours of teaching?**

Do Certain Subjects Require Specific Hours of Teaching for Home schooling My Child?

Home school parents benefit from technology to enhance and complement traditional ways of teaching on school campus. There are several educational softwares and teaching packages that can help develop a curriculum. The internet is a very useful means that is full of educational resources; online dictionaries, libraries, encyclopedias and museums.

Depending on your State's home schooling law, the following may apply:

1. School officials can inquire about the parents' qualifications to instruct or teach their child; however instructing parents do not necessarily need to have a particular educational qualification. A high school graduate or less can instruct the child, provided that she has the capability and a sound mind.
2. Children in the elementary level should be taught the following: English, which includes reading, spelling and writing; math, geography, science, civics, history, physiology and health, music, physical education and art.
3. Children in the high school level should be taught the following: English, which includes speech, language, literature and composition, science which will include chemistry and biology; social studies, geography, economics, history of the U.S.A, world history, mathematics which will include algebra, geometry and statistics; music, art, physiology and health, physical and safety education.

4. School officials can inquire regarding subjects that the child should study, demand the length of home school year, and allocate instruction hours for every subject.

While they can determine instruction hours for every subject, they should not control the method in which these subjects are to be taught.

This means that home schooling parents can determine and evaluate instruction hours based on their method of home school, not necessarily to be able to imitate the public school, rather equal and match it according to efficiency and systematic approach.

In home schooling, it is up to the parent to determine the child's intellectual needs. Subjects to be taught do not require specific hours of teaching, although each subject needs an allotted time, in order for the child to absorb fully what is taught.

Moreover, schedule keeping is not a significant factor in home schooling where usage and understanding of time are so much different.

5. School officials can recognize and classify instructional materials, only for the reason of determining the subject and the child's grade or level. They should not utilize this right to demand the way or style of teaching, with which subjects are to be taught.

When the child is having difficulty in a certain subject, for instance in reading, then the parent should allow longer hours for reading allowing

the child enough time to learn that particular subject.

On the subject that the child willingly and easily learns and grasps, the parent may shorten the time spent on that subject and allocate the extra hours for subjects which the child finds hard to comprehend, to subjects that the child poorly progresses on.

At home schooling, the child can take the time to learn and explore each subject at his/her own speed, in his or her own capacity. And the parent can find creative ways to make learning and teaching fun.

A few efficient and helpful teaching materials that are not tangible, such as community service, travel, visits to parks and museums, etc., will definitely grant significant learning skills and knowledge aside from those learned from books.

6. Parents and school officials must reach an agreement on a system of evaluation or assessment for the child; either standardized testing, periodic reports on the child's progress or dated samples of work.

Determine your child's learning ability and style so that:

1. You'll know what approach to use or be well equipped in teaching them. It is a wrong notion that some parents have, to presume that their kids learn the way they do. For example, when parents are visual learners, they also expect their children to be visual learners. Just remember that children are different individuals; usually having distinct learning styles compared to their parents and even

their siblings. The sooner that you learn and comprehend each child's learning style the sooner that you can effectively teach them.

2. You'll be prepared to decide on a curriculum for home schooling. If you are not familiar with your child's learning styles, there is the possibility that you will select a curriculum that can not be an effective tool for your child's learning.

3. You can better identify and understand your child's educational needs. When children fail to effectively communicate, they, much like everyone else, get upset and discouraged. However, if you understand your child's learning styles, you can be able to assist your child to understand themselves better, enabling them to interact and correspond better with their peers.

Understanding their learning styles and their capabilities will enable you to determine how many hours they need for each subject; home schooling does not require strict hours of teaching your child in any subject. It all depends on how well your child progresses; if he can do his math in less time in regard to the curriculum set for him, this is a good thing. If you feel he needs to spend more time in reading, then he should.

### **How do I prepare an overall plan to structure my teaching?**

Tips on How to Prepare an Overall Plan to Structure Your Teaching  
Approach for Your Child for Home Schooling

Home schooling can be a lot of fun, especially for parents and children who are sick and tired of the traditional way of educating a person in a typical public or private school.

However, it does not necessarily mean that when you opt to home school your children, you can do whatever you want to do and teach your child whatever you want to teach.

Just like the typical method of teaching in schools, home schooling is also a process that parents should learn to understand in order to provide their children the best education that they could give.

Therefore, for parents who have decided to home school their children and do not know how to prepare an overall plan in order to come up with the best structure in teaching their children, here is a list of some tips that you need to know:

1. Know your benefits

It is important to know the benefits and the reasons why you opted to home school.

If you know that you and your child can get more benefits in home schooling than the usual type of schooling, then it would be easier for you to pattern your teaching to the things that you and your child will both enjoy.

## 2. Create a goal and devise some motivations

It would be better if you create your goals first. Try to identify what you want to achieve for your children and for yourself as well. In this way, you will be kept focused and inspired throughout the process. You have your goals as your guide in creating the necessary teaching approach that your children need.

## 3. Make a budget

Most parents tend to think that since home schooling provides a cheaper means of educating their children, it's okay for them to buy the best books available even if it would cost them a lot.

Indeed, home schooling materials are important in order to come up with the best teaching approach. However, it does not necessarily

mean that you have to overindulge with the items.

Try to set a budget for your home schooling program. There are many items on the Internet that could help you come up with the best strategies and methods without having to spend a lot of money.

#### 4. Identify your child's capacity to learn and the way he learns things

Although there are many home schooling programs and methods available on the market today, nothing can come close to perfection in providing your child the best education if you do not know how to employ the method to your child. You can only do this easily if you know the learning style of your child.

It's best to identify the level of curiosity and interest of your child in order to come up with the best teaching approach that would motivate him or her to learn things.

One of the reasons why most children do not excel in school is because the approach to their interest and level of curiosity is sometimes inappropriate. Hence, it's best to focus on this aspect.

## 5. Have constant communication with your children

In this way, you will be able to identify the things that bother them most and the areas that need improvement. The problem with most parents is that they are so focused on providing their children the best education when in fact; the best education that they could give is when they learn to listen to their children's wants and from there provide them all the things that they need.

Most parents tend to forget that the very essence of learning is based on what their children needs to know. Most parents have the propensity to push the things that they think would provide the best education for their children.

In turn, the children end up miserable because there are things that they need, but were not provided simply because their parents failed to identify those things.

The difference of teaching approach in home schooling compared to the usual method used in the typical school is that teaching should focus more on the child's individual interest, learning style, and the ability to understand everything he or she has to learn. It is only

through this way that they can best master the things they need to learn in this world.

### **How do I determine the length of the home school year?**

Home schooling is a practical alternative or replacement to schooling institutions. In conformity with your state laws concerning this kind of education, children study and learn under the parents' supervision.

Parents have several explanations and justifications why they need or want education at home and we have covered many of them. They have concerns regarding the safety of their children, the quality of education that is offered in public schools, the expensive cost of private schooling and the struggle of the child to keep up with the entire class.

Parents usually feel defenseless when their kids come home from school with accounts of emotional cruelty from peers, labeling them as "slow learners".

With a large class, teachers usually have little options and remedy to act on these children who are so called "slow learners". This is why parents are often advised that their child be tutored, so that they will be given the attention that they need, and can learn at "their own pace", not competing with others as well as not having the teacher's undivided attention.

Also, a student who is very enthusiastic in learning and who generally does well in class is a good candidate for home schooling, as he can successfully struggle against the absence of interaction with his peers and encouragement for excellent work that are components of a regular classroom.

The home schooling teacher must be someone suitably eligible, which means that he or she at least finished a "high school education" to educate children of lower elementary.

The teacher or parent must be well inspired and encouraged to educate the students, as home schooling entails a lot of hard work as well as rewards; it is, nonetheless, a fulfilling job, when you achieve effective results.

The parent or teacher should be available each day of schooling, should not be interrupted by any chore and be reliable and dedicated to the homeschool program.

Planning what your child needs:

Your child will need a certain study area that is quiet, with few or no distractions at all. Study time should be scheduled well for each day.

Display a focused attitude towards your child; this is essential, as your child needs to realize that you are committed and enjoying your time together rather than irritable or unsatisfied with your child's shortcomings.

You must reward, stimulate and encourage your child to create an affirmative emotional and informative experience. You must provide your child with basic school materials such as textbooks, globe, encyclopedia and dictionary. Consider also the resources the internet can deliver as an addition to your home schooling program; the net offers information that continues to grow.

Have a supply of educational games of different varieties, art materials

and supplies and reading books, in an accessible place. After your homeschool hours your kids can play games, do crafts, and read books independently.

How to define your "homeschool year"

In order to begin the lesson planning process, you have to determine your timetable or what is the "school year for your homeschool"

First of all, know the total number of "school days" in the school year.

When determining this there are two main factors that you should consider. One is the certain number of teaching or tutoring days as obliged by the State you are residing in. Generally, 180 days are required, although some States do require more and some less.

Consequently, this is the number of minimum or lowest recommended days for that you should plan.

The other factor is the total number of days which are necessary to move throughout the longest type of curriculum which you planned for the forthcoming school year. When that curriculum necessitates less than the lowest number of teaching days, then it won't be a reason in

outlining your homeschool school year.

If it should need more than the lowest or minimum days, its duration will conclude the duration of your homeschool year. For instance, your State requirement is 180 minimum days of teaching. Upon examining your curriculum, you discovered that one such curriculum, for example algebra, will necessitate 200 days of teaching to finish. Then your homeschool year must be 200 days in length.

When you have already resolved and finalized which days is more, that of the lowest number of your State's or your longest duration of curriculum, then you should determine the "total number of days" in your homeschool year. This now will be the total amount of days that you should base your lesson plans upon.

### **Where to find teaching materials?**

Where Can I find Teaching Materials for Home schooling?

How do you successfully determine what method of teaching, what lessons to teach and at what speed? Having decided to educate your kids at home for the purpose of giving your children the needed

attention they require, do you still follow the school's standards of what subjects to cover and take up and when? Has keeping with the rules and standards of the school meant hurrying your children through anything by driving them to memorizing certain areas of the subject matter so to progress?

If you are, keep in mind that you are not doing your children any favors at all. For kids to really be equipped for life you should exploit the benefits of what home schooling will permit you to accomplish and that is choosing your objectives and goals and setting the pace in relation to your children's specific needs.

By far, the biggest challenge that a home schooling parent encounters is making a home schooling schedule. While some make use of software programs, some parents write their notes in notebooks or in computer programs such as Microsoft Word; some plan the activities as the day goes and others do the planning ahead; there are some who do not make plans at all. It would really depend on the type of person that you are, on where are you comfortable with.

However, making a yearly plan of objectives consisting of goals which you have established for your child is the best, convenient and

effective way to go. Basing from the goals you have set, the choices you make when gathering the home schooling materials needed will be much easier and ensure that they will be put into productive use.

Since you are well familiar with your child's learning abilities, it is wise that the goals you set will be based from his/her capabilities. At such time that your child is old or mature enough, he can and must help in the goals that you make, ultimately setting his own goals, making you his advisor.

You can acquire home schooling teaching materials on the internet, and it is important that you become well acquainted with the teaching materials in order that you can manage, organize and take control so that you understand and see everything in an orderly manner. Here are suggestions to help you achieve this task:

1. Group materials for the whole school year by topic.
2. Sort out the teaching materials that will be used by you from the materials that will be used by your child.
3. Place the materials in such a way that it is accessible to the kids

when they need to refer to it.

4. When organizing the educational materials for every subject, keep the primary alongside the supplemental materials, as well as make certain that extra materials, like additional readings and tools, are readily available when needed.

6. Take into account making a listing of educational materials that you have. This is useful especially when you are teaching two or more children as the list can keep track and organize the materials that you have through the years.

7. After obtaining the materials for a certain subject's curriculum, study and spend a lot of time becoming familiar and well acquainted with everything. You can inspect the materials through answering the following guidelines:

How are these materials constructed to be carried out?

What is the expected time frame for each session?

What type of performance is expected for the child?

Do I have all supplemental materials that I need, such as the teacher's guide or student workbooks? If not, you will need to get them before the school year starts.

Do supplemental materials, like the answer key and teacher's guide fit in and conform to it?

Do the materials actually match your expectations? At times when you were not able to directly examine the materials, when you receive them, they are not what you really have expected. Return and replace the materials with what really matches your needs.

The technology of today, especially the internet has exposed a lot of home schooling materials and supplies readily available to all individuals. With a lot of research one can surely find home schooling educational software, lesson plans, curriculums, programs, educational games, activities, and a lot more!

The internet is overflowing with information so searching for and looking for resources is not a problem at all. Also, there are a number of support groups and forums to ensure an effective home schooling experience for you.

## **Do I need to "grade" my child's work?**

### Home schooling 101: Grading Your Child's Work

Thus far we have discussed home schooling in depth and the fact that it is slowly becoming a trend for some families. We've explored the many advantages, from the academic, social, moral to the religious point of view while several parents cite other child-centered reasons (like their children's health or safety). These reasons (or a combination of them) have been what most home schooling families are giving out when asked why homeschool.

Perhaps most home schooling families enjoy the flexible time home schooling gives them and the interaction they can have with their children. There are, of course, certain difficulties and questions regarding home schooling. One of them is regarding grading your children and keeping them up to par with most colleges' standards.

The real question most parents want answered is why they need to

bother grading their children's home schooling. The answer is simply because you may want to know if your children are learning something and if they are at par with children their age.

There are several ways you could find out if your child is learning or progressing in his or her lessons. One is through simple tests or exercises you can find in books. Another is through standardized exams you can find online or with the help of school officials that you know. Standardized tests help you find out if your children are doing fine and are at par with their peers. Standardized tests come as subject-specific tests and testing your children with these exams will help you determine what subjects they need to give more attention to, if there are any at all.

Grading your children's progress includes giving exams or tests and most, if not all, children find tests as a waste of time. This is a very important factor to look into. Most parents find other alternatives or how to make an exam more enjoyable for children. Some of the alternatives include mixing playing with testing. Another alternative is to give rewards (such as seeing that new movie) whenever a child gets a perfect score in an exam. There are several alternatives and it is up to you to use what you think will make your child happier.

Another factor that could help you decide if your children need to take these tests is if you think they need to experience them. Most colleges require a rigorous standard type of exam (meaning college aspirants are pressured with regards to time) and children who haven't experienced being pressed for time might have some difficulties passing these kinds of tests.

Another factor to be looked at is how the test results will be used. Tests are designed mainly to find out if your children need more help with one area of one subject and where they excel the most. That is not the sole reason though. Other reasons include knowing how your children react to pressure and failure or success. These are important things to evaluate as they influence your children, especially their values.

Another reason is to find out if your children learn from their mistakes. This can be a good gauge of your children's progress and be a proof that they are indeed learning with home schooling.

Another factor for your decision is how teachers and school officials view testing. They will definitely have different ideas and different

sides with regards to the need to test your children. Other school officials will probably cite the need to monitor the progress of your children and knowing where they need help and where they can excel. Other officials will have a different opinion stating that testing should not be done as tests and exams are not the only gauge and way to monitor one's growth. Both sides will have strong arguments and listening to their sides might help you on deciding which side is right.

Of course, there are parents who do one-on-one home schooling (meaning they personally teach their own children) that find testing their children is unnecessary. It is because most of them are seeing the progress of their children up close. They can see where their children are having an easy time and what subjects they need more time with. It is one of the advantages of teaching your own child rather than hiring paid help but you should also realize that there are other things you can't teach your children that they may need to know.

### **Resources to help prepare lesson plans**

7 Places to Go for Your Home schooling Needs

Home schooling is slowly becoming a trend nowadays and most parents are having fun with the interaction they are having with their child. Some parents are still having second thoughts regarding home schooling though. Their main concern is that they might be having some problems finding resources to use for home schooling. This section will further help you find resources from different places.

The first stop is a ride to your nearest bookstores. Armed with a list of possible books to buy from a curriculum of a school, you can buy the books at any convenient bookstore. This will save you a lot of time and give you flexibility with regards to your child's studies as bookstores have more choices and references for your child to use.

An alternative stop would be a trip to your closest magazine stores. Magazines provide you a lot of catalogs where you can choose from a lot of advertisers listed in it. This will help you from spending lots of time searching through bookstores and will give you a sense of what your child's going to get.

Of course, with all the technology available on the internet, you should not be really surprised that you can find websites offering help in your child's studies. Some of them can be easily found when searching at

Google and some of them can be given to you by other people who are also having their child home schooled.

The simplest place to look for resources is by going to a public library. Public libraries have books and references for you child to take home and use. To help with that, libraries have different instructional materials such as videos (like those from National Geographic) and cassette tapes (like tapes that will help you learn another language). These instructional materials not only help with the books in teaching but they also help in easing out the boring quality and the monotony of books given out to children.

Libraries also offer a lot of computer software which will not only help with your child's learning but will also help understand different computer technologies and how they work. Often computer software is easy and fun to use, therefore attracting a lot of young people to use it.

Libraries also give book discussions. Book discussions not only train your child to read but also to think and criticize every thing that he/she reads. This will not only develop reading comprehension, it will also help your child in critical thinking.

Another place to look at is at the house of another parent who decided to homeschool their children. You might find it interesting that they are willing to share both their experiences and their used materials (books, references and other activity materials). You could save a lot of money and at the same time learn from these people who have already experienced the joys and the pains of home schooling a child.

The most neglected place and probably one of the most informational, next only to a library, is the museum. A trip to a museum will not only help your child appreciate art and history but your child will also learn a lot from observing and listening to the history of all the museum displays. The best way to conduct this is by joining a group museum tour where there will be an instructor to guide and give you bits of information that will help your child.

The last place, but definitely not the least in this list, is inside your home. Search your cupboard and teach your child some simple baking lessons. This will not only help your relationship with your child but it will also promote your child to learn patience and of course will teach your child how to bake.

You could also do outdoor activities such as planting seeds. This will help your child be interested in plant life but if coupled with other activities (such as mathematics), this has a potential to be both fun and instructional. You basically just have to find out where your child's attention is focused. Upon learning this, you can try to join your child's playtime and turn it into something educational. Be creative!

### **Socializing for home schooled children**

Your Child and Home Schooling: The Socialization Issue

If you are considering home schooling your children (or at least asking around about it), then you've most likely run into the issue of whether the children will be properly socialized if he/she is separated from his/her own peers who go to a traditional school.

This criticism stems from the idea that your child's ability to relate with others is hampered, if not disabled when he/she is absent from a regular class setup. A related (and rather alarmist) issue is that the child may grow up to have anti-social behavior that could threaten the community.

Unfortunately, when people throw around terms like "socialization" without fully understanding what the concept means, a lot of truth can be misinterpreted and therefore lead people into thinking things that are not necessarily true.

Socialization is the process of introducing an uninitiated member of society to the norms and habits of the society he is to be part of. For example, if you were to go to a foreign country with a culture different from your own and if you wish to be accepted, you would need to be socialized and taught how to behave in that society.

In this case, your child is a young member of the greater society you, as a parent, are already part of. It is your responsibility, as the child's first and immediate contact with the world, to afford him/her the ways to learn how to behave properly.

Given this viewpoint, consider the kind of "socialization" that takes place in a traditional school environment. Children are grouped by age and are cooped up in a room for 6 to 7 hours. Time spent away from the classroom is usually only an hour long. The kind of contact they have with adults is confined to the kind of teachers that surround them. More often than not, performance is driven by trying to keep up

or outdoing the other kid or team.

Of course, the above picture does sound extreme. But then again, you must also ask yourself: does that description truly reflect the society you are part of? Would you consider that environment suitable in teaching your child how to function as a member of society?

On the flipside, consider the home school environment. Children are in constant interaction with people of and outside their age groups. They have greater freedom to go outside and explore. Their performance is based on discovering their own capabilities and achieving their personal best.

These factors, among others, have been cited by studies stating that on average, home-schooled children not only perform as well (if not better) as traditionally-schooled children, but also that they show a greater tendency and ease in relating not only to children their age group, but to adults and younger children as well.

The latter should be enough to allay the concerns regarding children not being able to function normally in society. But there are more reasons to support the assertion that home-schooled children are not

disadvantaged as far as social interactions are concerned.

In fact, home-schooled children are more inclined to learn exactly that since they are being given more time and opportunity to relate to people around them. This applies all the more to time between a child and his/her parents.

It has been observed that children undergoing home-school programs are able to relate to adults better, not only in exhibiting respect towards them, but also in demonstrating a greater capacity to engage in meaningful relationships with people not their own peers. The same can be said for these children's ability to relate with those younger than themselves, demonstrating a more responsible attitude.

Another advantage is that home-schooled children have more free time to pursue interests in music, arts or sports or simply to enjoy activities such as reading, craft making or simple play. These activities are not motivated by "fattening up" a résumé, which a traditional school environment may cause some students to do.

Given these facts, a parent's concern over their child's socialization can be partially put to rest. But as with anything, the success of a method

relies on the person and his/her attitudes put into executing a plan.

Home schooling is far from being a fix-it-all, foolproof solution. Social skills can be hampered in a home school environment if the guardian fails to give the child the opportunities to learn how to relate with others.

Such opportunities don't have to be complex. Simply allowing the child to be with other children and adults will be enough. On the other hand, much supervision is required on the guardian's part, both to instruct and to protect the child from possible harm.

Being able to relate successfully with others is a much-admired and coveted skill, and yet one that is commonly overlooked in educational systems. Ensuring that your child attains and develops this important ability early on equips him or her far better than any school diploma can, regardless of what kind of school that is.

### **How do I get started?**

Tips on How You Can Get Started with Home Schooling Your Child

We've covered the majority of what you need to do or know about home schooling. Let's take this opportunity to review the salient points.

Education is a very important aspect in a human being's existence. He needs education to nurture his craft, hone his talents, and provide him with all the possible answers to all of the wonders in this world.

Parents know this fact, that's why they would always want the best for their children. In this manner, when the concept of home schooling was introduced into the society, they have been astonished with the fact that there are still other ways in educating their children.

At first, opting for home schooling is such an overwhelming matter. Most parents thought that it is impossible to teach a child through a home schooling method.

On its basic concept, home schooling refers to the alternative way of educating children. It differs from the usual type of schooling because the learning process is done at home and the teachers are usually the parents themselves. They only use a particular type of teaching method that can be obtained in different institutions that provide home

schooling programs.

Home schooling provides many advantages and benefits to both parents and children. That's why many parents have opted for home schooling in providing their child the indispensable education that their children need.

However, some parents find home schooling a daunting task. So, for parents who find home schooling a bit of an overwhelming task, here is a list of some tips on how to get you started in home schooling your child:

1. Arrive at a decision

The problem that most parents encounter when opting for home schooling is the fact that they find it hard to finally decide whether to home school their child or not. This is because deciding on this kind of thing is relatively important especially because the future of the child is dependent on it.

However, the choice should be based on the capacity of the parents to conform to the requirements in home schooling their child. They

should be able to wholly participate with whatever items that were entailed in the program in order to provide the best education for their children.

## 2. Keep in mind that home schooling is a process

Since home schooling is a process, parents who want to home school their children should take things one at a time. For instance, if they have a pre-school child, they should focus more on what pre-school students should learn. They should not delve more on how to teach higher levels of education that are fit for students in higher levels.

## 3. Know your state laws regarding home schooling

In the United States, each state has its own laws regarding home schooling. Hence, it is best to know what your state asserts about home schooling so that you can provide the best education for your children in conformity with the law.

## 4. Look for a "support group"

Home schooling should not be the sole responsibility of the parents.

That is why it is important for the parents to find a local “support group” wherein they can mingle with other Home schoolers who can provide them with additional pointers regarding the process.

Each member in the “support group” can help each other regarding the best technique in teaching their children.

#### 5. Do your homework

Nothing can get you started on the right track than doing your homework first. In this way, you will be able to know the important details you need to be familiar with in order to provide the best education for your children.

Knowing what you have to do will give you the best guidance in home schooling.

#### 6. Identify your child’s learning manner

It is best to assess your child’s learning manner first before you choose on a particular home schooling method. Conforming to your child’s learning manner will provide the best way on how to home

school your child.

There are many choices available when teaching your child through a home school program. Though it is still best to always pattern the program that you will choose on your child's learning style.

#### 7. Organize the things needed in home schooling

Just like a typical school, home schooling your children would also need different materials and a proper place where they can easily and comfortable learn new things each day.

Hence, it's best to organize the place first by providing them with an adequate space for their learning. Most children would respond to the process easily if they were comfortable with the place where their classes are held.

#### 8. Have a budget for home schooling

Some parents tend to over indulge with the materials needed in home schooling. It does not necessarily mean that because you have lowered your expenses because you have opted to home school, as

compared to sending your children into a typical public or private school, you can spend more.

It is still a must that you have to set a budget for home schooling.

There are many books and other materials that can be found on the Internet which are definitely priced cheaper.

Indeed, home schooling is not just a process but also a lifestyle. It's something that parents should be best acquainted with in order to give their children with the best education they need.

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