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SUMMER 2018
ISSUE 2
VOLUME 2

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One mom's clever homeschool room p. 16

WILL YOU BE FEATURED IN OUR NEXT *Homeschool Family Spotlight?*



If you're a homeschool parent, you've got an amazing story to tell. We're making it easy to do just that. Visit [Abeka.com/HomeschoolTeacher](https://www.abeka.com/HomeschoolTeacher) to share your experience and encourage other homeschool families. You may even be the focus of our next Homeschool Family Spotlight on both our website and social media channels and in an upcoming issue of *Abekamazing*.

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Meet the Melvin family and
PREPARE TO BE AMAZED

Abekamazing is a service of Abeka, Pensacola, Florida. Our mission is to support and equip students, teachers, and parents by providing amazing Pre-K through Grade 12 academic resources based upon biblical values.

Senior Editor: Tabby Hershberger | **Editor:** Dr. Phyllis Rand

Contributing Writers: Renee Bryant, Jill Dewhurst, Charleen McNally, Dr. John Reese, Kim Smith, Linda Wasser, Katie Wiggett

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Letter from Abeka

TRUSTING GOD *and Letting Go*

Dear Friends,

In 1995, my little boy was old enough to attend an overnight church camp. My husband thought it would be good for him. My little boy really wanted to go. The camp had a two-acre pond. A little boy could drown in a pond like that. My husband said ***we should trust God since we'd have to let him go sometime.***

But I won. My little boy did not go to camp that summer. The next summer, they tried again. My husband and my little boy said it was time. Didn't they know about the pond? This time, I lost.

My little boy went to overnight camp when he was 9 years old. That was the longest week of my life. *I prayed for him. I cried for him. I kept imagining him near the edge of the pond. I knew he could swim and that God was with him, but he was still my little boy.* Saturday seemed a year away.

When we went to pick him up, I searched the crowds and finally saw his curly, blond head. He was alive! He ran to us breathless and grinning. "I LOVED it," he said. "The big kids picked ME... to throw in the pond!"

Tabby homeschooled for two decades. She is also a former elementary school teacher and newspaper editor. She has four kids and has been married to her husband, Dan, for over 30 years.

Tabby and her son, Taylor, before he deployed.



In this issue of *Abekamazing* we focus on ***letting go.*** Our high school page is about *letting your teen go* to get a driver's license. A homeschool dad/college professor gives advice about *letting your child go to college.* Our cover story is about a military family who've had to *let Dad go to be deployed.*

My little boy grew up to be a strong first lieutenant in the Marine Corps. Last month I had to let him go with his men to the Middle East. *I'm praying for him. Sometimes I'm crying for him. I keep imagining him near the edge of something dangerous. I know he is capable and that God is with him, but he's still my little boy.*

Start this homeschool year with a fresh zeal to make the most of the time God gives you—because homeschooling doesn't last forever. ***We have to trust God and let our children go sometime.*** ■

Tabby

Tabby Hershberger

Senior Editor

amazinghomeschool@abeka.com

Homeschool ideas with high resolution photos (> 1.5Mb) always welcome.

Look on pages 16-21 to find all the amazing Abeka products displayed in the homes of our readers!

They are marked with this icon:



God is the ultimate reason we homeschool our children. It was placed in my heart very heavy four years ago, but I couldn't understand why. Now in our fourth year, I truly see that this was not about me at all! My children have excelled at so much, are now young entrepreneurs, and living to please God!
— Tonya C.

Time goes by too quickly.
Tell us how you're
holding on
to your kiddos by
homeschooling!

Here's what moms
like you are saying—

The reason we homeschool is because we like being able to shape our children ourselves to grow in Jesus, knowing exactly what they are being taught, having more family time and time for outside activities, and also flexibility. We also love the structure of Abeka!

— Jamie H.

My husband's job requires him to travel all over the U.S.A. and abroad. We homeschool so we can have the freedom to travel with my husband. The world is one big classroom and home is where Daddy is!
— Rachel S.

I taught school for 11 years, and I loved it! It was fulfilling to see the excitement on my students' faces as they grasped new concepts. I now have the privilege to train our children and watch them grow mentally and spiritually. It is hard, but rewarding work. I love being with my kids daily!
— Jennifer P.

I decided to homeschool because I felt it was God's calling for our family. I never imagined how much closer it would bring us as a family. I was worried at first, since I was unfamiliar with homeschooling & thought I wouldn't be good enough, but as faith would foresee it, it's truly a wonderful blessing.
— Sarah H.



TRUSTING GOD *and Holding On*

If you're a homeschool parent, you've got an amazing story to tell. We're making it easy to do just that. Visit abeka.com/HomeschoolTeacher to tell us about your homeschool experience and encourage other homeschool families. You may even be featured in our Homeschool Family Spotlight.

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Preschoolers and Self-reliance

by Renee Bryant



The developing independence of a budding preschooler can fill a parent with both excitement and apprehension.



Renee Bryant taught 4-year-olds for 11 years. She has been a nursery director for the past 10 years and has four children of her own.

Preschoolers need to progress in at least 5 areas in order to facilitate appropriate self-reliance.

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION ABILITIES

In addition to the 50-75 words your 2-year-old already knows, a new school year is a great time to teach him to say, "Help, please." This gives your preschooler words to use when needing assistance.

Encourage the use of sentences, such as: "I do it myself" or "Let's go play." A 3-year-old who expresses himself in this way has communication abilities and is on track developmentally.

PHYSICAL AND MOTOR SKILLS

Preschoolers can participate in self-care. Rolling hands round and round can facilitate hand washing. Add a towel to Patty Cake and your child has the motor skills needed for drying his hands. Preschoolers should have the balance and muscle tone to push arms into sleeves and legs into pants to help with dressing.

COGNITIVE APTITUDE

Engage your preschooler's mind while reading. Ask simple questions or fill-in-the blank sentences to develop his attention span and short-term focus.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL READINESS

Build a foundation of security with your child by giving clear expectations, responding consistently, and praising each achievement. Provide opportunities to establish secure relationships with other adults and peers.



IMAGINATIVE PLAY

A great place for preschool imaginative play is under the kitchen table. It not only anchors the related clutter, but also helps you know exactly where your preschooler is! If your big kids occupy the kitchen table, a folding table works just as well.

Car Wash

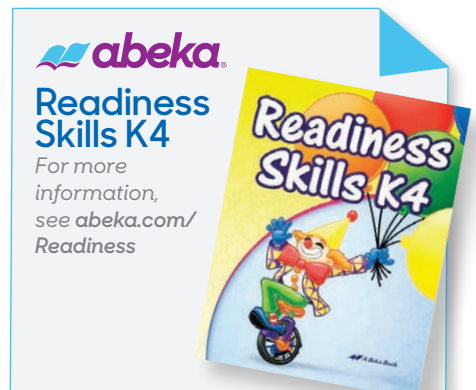
- Crepe paper strips for exit/entrance curtain
- Laundry basket "car"
- Wash rags and bubbles

Restaurant

- Preschool friendly food: yarn spaghetti noodles and pom-pom meatballs
- Cotton ball ice cream scoops, brown pom-pom chocolate chips with red pom-pom cherries

Camping

- Sheet makes a tent
- Cooler filled with snacks
- Pillowcase sleeping bag for naptime



Skillful Independence

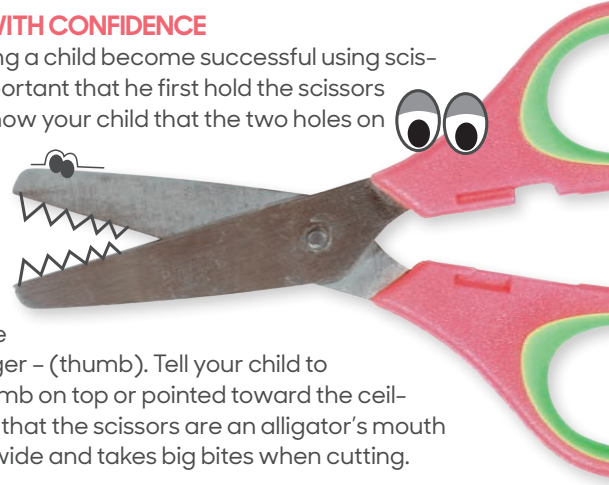
by Linda Wasser

The kindergarten years are a time of tremendous motor skill advancement. Pair the right instruction with a kindergartner's growing abilities, and the result is amazing.

your
KINDERGARTNER

CUTTING WITH CONFIDENCE

When helping a child become successful using scissors, it is important that he first hold the scissors correctly. Show your child that the two holes on a pair of scissors are different. Match the smaller hole with the smallest finger - (thumb). Tell your child to keep his thumb on top or pointed toward the ceiling. Pretend that the scissors are an alligator's mouth that opens wide and takes big bites when cutting.



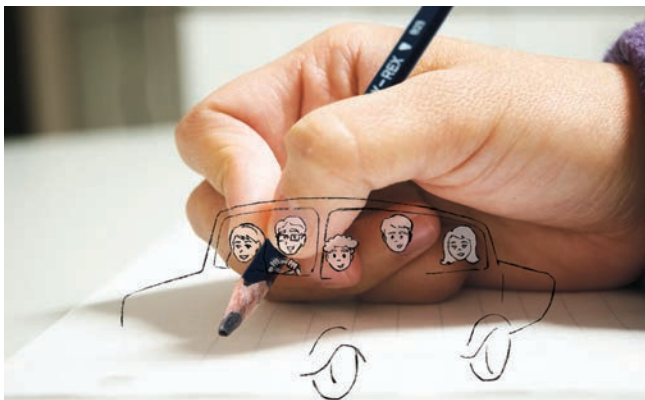
Help your child strengthen the fine motor skills needed for cutting by popping bubble wrap between his thumb and pointer finger or by making a long clay snake to cut. Use number cards to suggest the number of cut pieces. Or, draw thick, squiggly or zig-zag lines on craft foam in different colors of marker. Have your child cut these lines for practice. ■

Here are a couple ideas I used in my classroom.

HOLDING A PENCIL

Practice long before your child is ready to handle a pencil by showing him the correct way to hold tableware. When he's ready, suggest scribbling up, down, to the left or the right very rapidly until a shape you've drawn is filled. Responding to different directions is fun for a child, but it also teaches what coloring inside the line means.

Holding a pencil correctly can be difficult. I told my students to pretend they were driving in a car with their family. Mommy is the pointer finger and Daddy is the thumb; the car is the pencil. Only Mommy and Daddy may sit in the front seat. All the children (the rest of the fingers) must sit in the backseat behind the thumb and pointer. With this in mind, I could ask, "Are all the children in the backseat?" If their fingers were too close to the point I could say, "Daddy needs to see where he's driving; don't hide the point of the pencil."



I Can Open My Own Snacks

Pinch the "secret" flap on many snacks with one hand while pulling the opposite side with the other hand. ▶



◀ Place thumb over straw before inserting into juice drink.

Peel back a bit of fruit cup's clear covering. Drink the juice with your drink straw; now peel the rest of the way. ▶



Linda Wasser served in the ministry of Pensacola Christian Academy for 32 years as a K-4 teacher, Assistant Kindergarten Director, and speaker at seminars and school conventions.



your HIGH SCHOOLER

PARENT-TAUGHT DRIVERS ED

Adapted with permission from Homeschool Legal Defense Association

In the 1940s and 50s, it was usually parents who taught their children how to drive. In the 1960s and 70s, however, the responsibility of driver education shifted to the public school system in the hope that formal instruction would assist teenagers in developing important driving skills.

In fact, the fatal crash rate per mile driven for 16-19 year-olds is nearly 3 times the rate for drivers ages 20 and over.¹ Risk is highest at ages 16-17. In fact, the fatal crash rate per mile driven is nearly twice as high for 16-17 year-olds as it is for 18-19 year-olds.²



WHAT IS PARENT-TAUGHT DRIVERS EDUCATION?

Parent-Taught Drivers Education is an alternative to formal classes through the public school or a private driving school. This plan allows parents to instruct their teenagers in

Today, all 50 states require some type of driver education for minors—classroom training, behind-the-wheel training, or some combination of both—as a requirement for obtaining a driver's license.

Despite many measures to keep teenagers safe on the road, motor vehicle crashes are still one of the leading causes of teenage deaths.

some or all portions of the required courses. Several states have formally approved such programs.

ARE PARENTS EQUIPPED TO TEACH DRIVERS EDUCATION?

The Homeschool Legal Defense Association states, "Parents are well-equipped to teach their children how to drive. They are also the best judge of when their teenagers are

mature and knowledgeable enough to be granted driving privileges, and because they are parents, also have the most motivation for ensuring their teenagers' safety."³

Parent-Taught Drivers Education is a recognized, safe approach to teenage driving competence. It likely also aids in parental peace of mind. ■

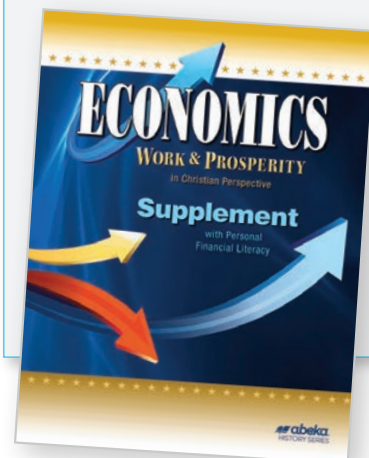
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see abeka.com/Economics12



¹Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. (2013). Fatality Facts 2017: Teenagers. Retrieved from <http://www.iihs.org/iihs/topics/t/teenagers/fatalityfacts/teenagers>.² Ibid.

³ https://hsllda.org/docs/nche/Issues/P/Parental_Rights_Driver_Ed.asp

YOUR COLLEGE-BOUND CHILD

5 Things Professors Wish Homeschool Moms Knew

by Dr. John Reese

I had the privilege of being both a college professor and a homeschool dad of three sons (all of whom have graduated from college). Here are thoughts from my heart to yours about how to prepare your young person.



Dr. John Reese holds a Ph.D. in history and has taught at PCC since 1985. He and his wife homeschooled three sons.

1 Dedicate Prayer

First, bathe your homeschooler in prayer; it changes things. One of our sons had a strong will. Through prayer and by God's grace, today he is a happily married attorney and father of three.

2 Set Deadlines



Academically, you will do your college-bound child a big favor if you set fixed academic deadlines and hold to them. That is one of the biggest adjustments I see homeschooled students struggling to make. Let your young person know that a due date is just that.

3 Build Character

There's more to a successful college transition than academics. Look for ways to give your children character-building responsibilities. Provide opportunities to work and to play organized sports. Teach your homeschooler how to save money. A homeschooler who can handle money will be far ahead of their self-absorbed counterparts. Teach your kids how to serve others. Pray about opportunities to involve your children in church/missions-related outreaches.



If my wife and I had it to do again, we would not change the basic concepts which I have shared. God helped us successfully prepare our college-bound, homeschooled sons! 🇺🇸

Give your homeschooler plenty of writing opportunities. A substantial portion of college academic work revolves around writing skills. The homeschooler who is equipped to write well will thrive in college.

Abeka students have over 100 writing opportunities each elementary year.

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4 Get Help

5 Promote Writing



When high school rolled around, my wife and I realized we needed outside expertise with upper-level math, science, and language courses. We took advantage of online resources such as those offered by Abeka. This caused our youngest son to fall in love with science and major in biology. He is now a fourth-year medical student.



Prepare to be

AMAZED

Letting Go In Deployment

Meet the Melvin Family— Lt. Commander Eric Melvin, his wife, Lisa, and their five children: Zachary (23), Joshua (21), Nathaniel (20), Samuel (16), and Abigail (13).

Can a family homeschool, respond to a child's special needs, run a business, build a career, get a master's degree, and let Dad go to be deployed? The answer is yes, when it's all in God's timing.

HOW OUR STORY BEGAN

"Timing is everything," says military wife and homeschool mom Lisa Melvin. "We're always ready to jump right in, and sometimes God says, 'not quite yet.'"

Eric began his career as a nuclear machinist in the military. "He wanted to get his master's degree and become a chaplain," Lisa recalls. "After he got his master's, God shut the chaplain door, leading us back to Indiana where we spent the next 15 years building houses."

In 2010, the housing market bottomed out, leaving Eric unsure of what would happen to his business. At the same time, Joshua, their special needs son, became seriously ill and was hospitalized.



"It was then, that God's timing became evident,"

Lisa remembers.



As Eric began googling job opportunities, military chaplain popped up. He and Lisa proceeded with caution. Miraculously their house sold and the other details

fell seamlessly into place. "The Lord opened all the doors," Lisa relates. "My husband became a chaplain."

HOW WE LET GO

Although the family was excited for this new adventure, they knew it would be challenging. "Homeschooling while your husband is in the military means getting good at single parenting," Lisa said. "Suddenly, Mom controls the bills, all the discipline—everything. I have found that routine, structure, and a plan really help."

In the weeks before Eric deploys, the couple begins to go over the bills together. They also try to anticipate any problems or major decisions. "Get a plan before he leaves," Lisa advises. "Learn about the lawn mower and when to service the car. Find out where all the important papers are."



“When a spouse leaves on deployment,” Lisa says, “he is in a danger zone, not just out of town.”



“The first week he’s deployed, I go into mourning,” she admits. “We only do the necessities.” Once the routine is established, Lisa’s goal is to keep her husband in the family’s conversations. She and the children pray for him, call and skype when possible, and talk about his return. “Create that hole so they know, Daddy’s coming back,” Lisa advises. “That hole also gives Dad a place to step back into; he knows he’s not just wanted, he’s needed.” When her kids were younger, they also kept a uniformed Flat Stanley (based on the childhood book of adventure with the same name). Lisa says, “It helps parent and child feel connected.”

HOW WE HOMESCHOOL

Homeschooling has kept the Melvin kids’ education on track even with many relocations. Abeka Academy DVDs have ensured a quality education and saved Lisa the difficulty of finding help with advanced subjects each time they move. “My kids all pull B’s or above,” Lisa said. “I’m so thankful they have ownership over their own schoolwork.” With son Joshua who has Down Syndrome, Lisa also used Abeka. By repeating K4 and K5 multiple times, he has learned to recognize letters and numbers and can write his name.

HOW WE BEGIN AGAIN

Once in a new city, the Melvins immediately find a home church. “Establishing a good church is the number one thing for us,” says Lisa. “When you’re military

and you move somewhere, you have to dive right in because you’re out of there two years later.”

At church, the family becomes acquainted with other families who can connect them with homeschool opportunities in the area. “It’s kind of like every homeschool—you take advantage of what’s available,” she says.

Recently the family returned to California. Eric is currently serving as

Command Chaplain onboard ship. “We can look back and see God’s hand on our lives,” Lisa says. “We originally decided to homeschool because of our special needs son. However, God knew we’d also need homeschooling as a military family.” **God’s perfect plan done in His perfect time** is the overriding secret to the Melvin’s homeschool success. ■



LISA’S HOMESCHOOL DEPLOYMENT FORMULA

- 1. Take Time to Transition**
Do only the necessities while you transition; eat PB&Js!
- 2. Create a “Hole”**
Pray; skype. Keep a photo book and make a Flat Stanley.
- 3. Stick with a Schedule**
Make your kids’ education a priority.
- 4. Avoid Isolation**
Find a good church and homeschool co-op.
- 5. Take Time for Yourself**
Swap childcare with another homeschooling mom.

KNOW AN INSPIRING HOMESCHOOL FAMILY?

Tell us about them at amazinghomeschool@abeka.com. Include high resolution photos (>1.5Mb) if you have them.



MELISSA TROUTMAN
FLEMINGTON, NEW JERSEY

Melissa is a 2014 homeschool grad. At seventeen, she had her first book published!

Tell me about your book.

Shortly after I finished the rough draft, my mom returned from a homeschool convention with a business card of a Christian book distributor. The owner asked to read my rough draft. I quickly formatted my book like a proper manuscript. Four days later, I found out they'd publish it!

How did homeschooling help prepare you for the future?

The Abeka program allowed me to nurture the writing gift God has given me. Abeka provided a solid understanding

What was the best part of homeschooling?

My favorite thing was learning at my own pace. The speed in a classroom setting is the median of the class. By myself I could work as fast as I wanted.

How did homeschooling prepare you for your law career?

The education I got was well-rounded. For instance, grammar is very important in legal work. Abeka gave me a grammar foundation that is solid and broad. That was very useful to me in law school.

Share a life lesson that your parents taught you.

They taught us hard work from a young age. I grew up on a



STEVE REESE
Columbus, Ohio

After graduating with a history degree from Pensacola Christian College, Steve Reese earned his law degree at Liberty University School of Law. He just started his own law firm in Columbus, Ohio. He and his wife Sheryl have three kids.



RACHEL DEWITT
Oak Hill, Virginia

Rachel DeWitt was homeschooled from nursery through high school. In 2017, she graduated from Abeka Academy. This September, she began an online college degree through the Berklee College of Music.

What instruments do you play?

My main instruments are piano and cello, but I also sing and play guitar, ukulele, and ocarina. I started playing piano at five and began cello in my first year of high school. I just picked the others up along the way.

Did homeschooling give you more time to practice your instruments?

Yes, absolutely! Homeschooling allowed me the freedom to have private instrument lessons during the week and to

practice between schoolwork. This flexibility also gave me the opportunity to hold many neighborhood jobs, which helped me buy every instrument I own!



of grammar, punctuation, spelling, and word choice—the invaluable tools of a writer’s trade.

What did you find most helpful about homeschooling?

I loved the flexibility. With my teacher-mom’s approval, I doubled lessons for a few weeks so I could take off the month of March. That month I revised my manuscript and took a marketing course. I still finished my school year on time!

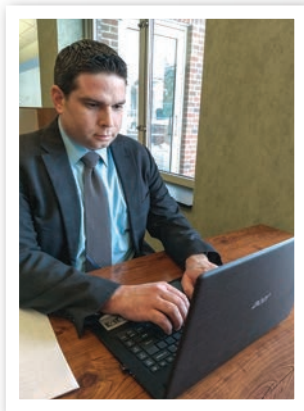
Any advice for homeschoolers interested in writing?

Don’t be afraid to write beyond what you know—that’s what research and the imagination are for—but do include as much of yourself and your experience as you can. This will give strength to your writing; it will be more personal to you and more authentic to others.



Now that you’ve graduated from high school, what are you doing?

I am a senior at Maranatha Baptist University with an English major and a Spanish minor. My long-term goal is to return to Spain for full-time ministry.



farm. On the weekends, Dad always had work lined up for my brothers and me. With homeschooling, we had more opportunity for things like that.

Do you think you’ll homeschool your kids one day?

Yes, I think so. The oldest right now is 4, so he’s just doing some pre-K work. I don’t think you can beat Abeka when it comes to phonics and math.

Any advice for other homeschoolers?

Enjoy your childhood and teenage years, but also spend some time figuring out what you want to do. Get a head-start, whether it be through schooling or internships. It will set you up for future success.

Tell us about any special opportunities you had to use your music.

At twelve, I began playing at my church. I have been performing in this manner ever since. I have learned so much through this opportunity, both about music and about life.

Because of the amazing flexibility of homeschooling, during high school I got to perform at the Kennedy Center, the Grand Ole Opry, and Carnegie Hall!

What program did you use?

I took the Jaffé Strings class as an elective in my first two years of high school. I enjoyed the program and my new instrument so much that I started taking private cello lessons.

What are your plans after you graduate from college?

I feel that God has called me to give my musical gifts back to Him through worship.

Share your advice for current homeschoolers.

Stay disciplined, self-motivated, and rely on God’s direction each day. These were the fundamentals that helped me to persevere and finish strong! 🇺🇸



Jaffé Strings

For more information, see abeka.com/Music

WOULD YOUR STORY ENCOURAGE OTHERS?

Send your story to amazinghomeschool@abeka.com. Be sure to attach a high resolution photo (>1.5Mb).



SECRETS of Successful Teachers

by Kim Smith

The definition of success differs from teacher to teacher and from mom to mom, but veteran teachers know that success takes time. The acronym **TEACH** highlights five secrets to success.

Techniques

Want the secret to teaching success? Don't open the textbook or give the worksheet at the beginning of the lesson. Worksheets don't teach. You do! Excite your child about new material by asking questions over previous concepts. This connects the known with the unknown and invites higher retention and mastery. Visualize new concepts with a quick illustration or demonstration. Communicate why this learning is important in life. Ask thinking questions about what your child is hearing or reading. Practice the new concept with a worksheet.

Expectations

Determine your expectations in advance. Research shows that high teacher expectations repeatedly overcome child limitations. The reverse is also true. The abilities of exceptional

children are limited or lost altogether when the teacher's expectations are low. Start before the school day begins by expecting your child to be dressed, teeth brushed, and chores done by a certain time. Engage your child during the school day by expecting good answers to your questions of *why do you think* or *how did you know*. See our sister magazine, *Abekamazing for Christian Schools* (Vol.2, Issue 1 at abeka.com/expectations) for more ideas.

Actions

When the body is moving during a lesson in appropriate activity, the brain becomes more engaged. Attention spans often lengthen, and academic performance generally improves. Encourage your child to clap his hands between syllables as he recites spelling words, use hand motions when reciting poems, stomp his feet as he practices multiplication facts, or simply have him stand to read or respond. Homeschoolers can take an action break any time. Have your child skip rope for a minute or run outside.

Techniques

Expectations

Actions

Conditions

Hopes

C onditions

Protect your learning environment by organizing it. An organized work space is conducive to learning. It also communicates your preparation, an essential condition to overall success. Further enhance learning conditions by teaching difficult subjects first thing in the morning. Finally, don't allow frustration to show in your voice. Frustration from either child or parent undermines optimal learning conditions.

H opes

Set your children up for success by teaching them good time management and independent work skills. This teaches your children that you want them to succeed, not just now, but in life. Praise everything you can; make biblical connections when possible. Incorporate character words such as faithful and honest into your daily conversation. Now, you're ready to **TEACH!** ■

Kim Smith is a former teacher and Abeka consultant. She has two children.



The **SECRET** Between Better and Best

by Jill Dewhurst

Starting the school year can be overwhelming. There are extra-curricular programs galore. The tricky part is choosing between better and best.

Two years ago, I thought I'd created an organized schedule with a good balance of academics and extras. What I'd actually created was a jam-packed agenda with no flexibility. By the end of the semester, I was physically and emotionally drained. I was frustrated and ready to quit.

The Lord used a friend to remind me that tailoring my child's education was why we chose homeschooling in the first place! This friend challenged me to compose a homeschool mission statement. It became our family's secret for choosing between better and best.

To my surprise, many of our activities did not fulfill our mission statement. They were not the best for developing our goals. When we tweaked our calendar to match our mission, an amazing thing happened. We gained focus, flexibility, and time for fun!

5 STEPS TO THE BEST MISSION STATEMENT

- 1 Pray. Ask God to show you goals for your children.
- 2 Write them down and prioritize them.
- 3 Use your goals to compose the mission statement.
- 4 Explain the mission statement to your kids.
- 5 Use your mission statement to choose which activities are best.



A musician, nurse, and author, Jill Dewhurst lives with her husband and two sons in Florida.

Hang a card stock banner to enhance the overall look

Spread the theme throughout the room

Add adhesive chalkboard or pretty paper to personalize space

Tuck daily subject matter within easy reach

Anchor this desk with included hardware or use other mounts specific to your wall material

Spray paint chairs with a fresh pop of color

Cut vinyl or use stickers to apply child's name



Tucked Away Homeschool ROOM *on a budget*

by Charleen McNally

Your
Adventure
Awaits!



Fold desk
up at the
end of the
day

S

pace became an issue when our college daughter returned home and needed the schoolroom for her bedroom. How do you take a small space (9'x9') and a small budget and create a functional homeschool room? First, determine your needs; then *tuck away* everything you can.

Determine Your Needs

I currently have four children being homeschooled. My two high schoolers school in their own rooms using Abeka DVDs. Since my fourth and seventh grade children are taught traditionally, I need them close by.

Store Only the Essentials

Since I no longer had the wall space for a bookcase, unnecessary books and materials were removed. The essentials are stored in baskets and can be tucked away at the end of the day. Our answer keys have separate storage in Ikea magazine files.

Brainstorm about Desks

We needed small desks that could be tucked away at the end of the day. I found convertible desks to buy on Amazon and Murphy desks to build on Pinterest. My contractor (aka husband) decided that buying the desks would be

the least expensive option. Big on functionality, these desks are a dream come true! My favorite part is the desk front. When covered in chalkboard contact paper, it's perfect for writing daily assignments and board work.

Get Creative with Seating

My children love their chairs! Staying with the tucked-away theme, I spray painted old folding chairs. The chairs were then customized with my children's names using my Cricut and white vinyl. Their names can easily be removed.

Decorate with a Theme

Your Adventure Awaits is our theme for the year. I used school-themed scrapbook paper and a balloon idea from Pinterest. I made banners using my Cricut and hung them with twine. I also personalized each of their cubbies making their

desks a fun place to learn.

Cole

Turn this
part of the
desk into a
chalkboard
with paint or
vinyl



Charleen McNally and her husband have 7 children. The family lives in East Windsor, Connecticut, where they have been homeschooling for 18 years.

Back to SCHOOL:

By Katie Wiggett

Whether your back-to-school setup means homeschooling around the dining room table, around the house, or around the world, you can create an amazing back-to-school space!

Katie Wiggett homeschools her two rambunctious boys in their Arizona home.



RAINING BOOKS

Dawna Hite transformed plastic rain gutters into inviting, outward-facing bookshelves for about \$5 per 10 feet. She had them cut to size before she left the store. Installation was fast and easy and done in less than an hour!

—Dawna Hite, WA

Editor's Choice
\$1.00 Winner



DIVIDE AND CONQUER

With \$4 and 15 minutes, Kathiann Weatherbee crafted an awesome table-top divider for her kids! All it takes is three craft boards and same-color electrical tape from the dollar store. Tape boards together on two sides. One side left untaped means this divider can be folded up and put away.

—Kathiann Weatherbee, FL





Homeschool Space



DECORATE AROUND A PIECE YOU LOVE

You don't have to completely revamp your decorating or entirely surrender a room to create a great homeschool space. Darianne Whitt designed her schoolroom around an antique desk that she loves. The result: a beautiful and functional school space that blends perfectly with her home office.

-Darianne Whitt, CO



CHALKBOARD BY DAY; DECORATION BY NIGHT

Because Jackie Smith's schoolroom and dining room are one and the same, Jackie wanted a chalkboard that could double as a dining room decoration. She made her own with cut-to-order plywood, trim, and chalkboard paint.

-Jackie Smith, WA



BUCKET SEATS

Joy Alexander upscales feed buckets from their dairy farm into clever seating. (Buckets can also be purchased from home improvement stores for under \$5.) Cut plywood to fit bucket mouth; staple decorative fabric over foam seat top. For sturdier version,

Joy buys a GAMMA Seal™ lid and tops with ready-made stool cover.

-Joy Alexander, VA

Back to SCHOOL

MY Homeschool Space

CEREAL ORGANIZATION

Rebekah Hodge organizes a mountain of construction paper without spending any money. All it takes is five cereal boxes, a box cutter, hot glue, and duct tape. Since cereal boxes are pretty flimsy, duct tape is needed to make them stable enough to stand alone.

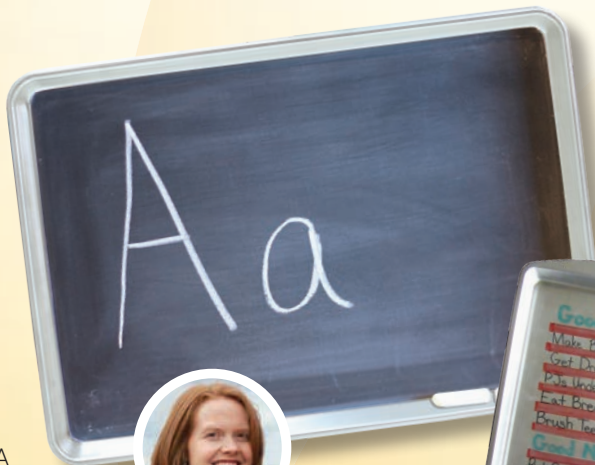
-Rebekah Hodge, MD



PANFUL OF SMART IDEAS

Jessica Thomas found an inexpensive way to make a large magnetic board using an oil drip pan! She hangs hers at kid-level using heavy duty Velcro 3M strips.

-Jessica Thomas, WA



Klarysha Goncharenko created her own magnetic, interactive To Do board using permanent markers, round magnets, and a \$1 cookie sheet. Either pan becomes a magnetized chalkboard with a coat of chalkboard paint!

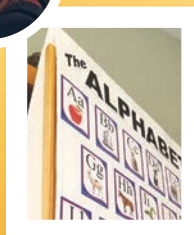
-Klarysha Goncharenko, TX



HANGING CHART/EASEL

Kathleen Giralt came up with these hanging chart/easels. Each of her children has his own set with 4 useable sides. To make: tape two foam boards together at the top leaving a small gap between the boards. Hang over cabinet doors, on a thin bar, or stand up like an easel.

-Kathleen Giralt, MT





GARAGE-SIZE HOMESCHOOL SPACE

Need a really big homeschool space? The Paul family moved their vehicles and turned the garage into a huge schoolroom. Amy has enough room for wide book shelves filled with creative organization such as wire baskets and glass jars. There's even enough room for an antique telephone!

-Amy Paul, FL



MASTERPIECE WALL

Kendra Russell displays her children's artwork on an Ikea adjustable tension wire which costs about \$5 and can be set to a desired length.

-Kendra Russell, NC



SECRET COMMAND CENTER

At the Wiggett homeschool, we have a secret command center using the inside of a closet door. We use ours the same way you'd use a bulletin board. When we shut the door, it creates a hassle-free hiding place!

-Katie Wiggett, AZ



PICTURE PERFECT

Jackie Smith maintains an organized school space by snapping a picture of the room when it's perfectly organized. She has her kids use the image to help them know where to put things back.

-Jackie Smith, WA

Back to SCHOOL

MY Homeschool Locker

Think Inside the Box

Homeschool moms know that riding a school bus and using a locker are overrated, but if you're a kid who's never done it, you might feel as if you're missing something. Think inside the box with this locker project made from Abeka boxes.

It's three projects in one. Each project can stand alone, but they become amazing when placed together. Plans can be downloaded and printed at abeka.com/LockerProjects.

Beginner Project CD Holder

With minimal adult help, this project can be completed in no time. It's the perfect size for any Abeka phonics, music, or Bible CD, but can also double as a sturdy school supply holder. If a Velcro circle is applied to the back, this CD holder fits nicely on the locker's side panel.



Download this instructional project sheet to make these projects. Visit abeka.com/LockerProjects.

Intermediate Project Core Drawer

Named after the core subjects of phonics, language, and arithmetic, these stand-alone drawers are sized to corral and organize your Abeka flashcards and are amazing when placed inside the advanced project.

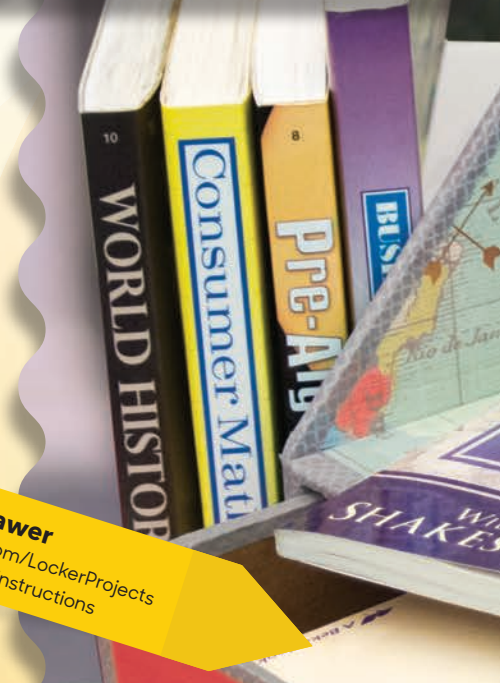
Advanced Project Locker Door/Desk Organizer

The advanced project with a locker on one side and a desk-top organizer on the other was designed as a family project. While the beginner and intermediate projects enhance the advanced project, they are not necessary components.



CD Holder

See abeka.com/LockerProjects for complete instructions



Core Drawer

See abeka.com/LockerProjects for complete instructions



Locker Door

See abeka.com/LockerProjects for complete instructions



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