



HOW TO START HOMESCHOOLING

Guide

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Know Your State's Homeschooling Laws

Each state handles homeschooling differently.

A few states require no notice.

Other states require that you simply notify your state and/or local school authority (school board, county superintendent, etc.) that you'll be homeschooling.

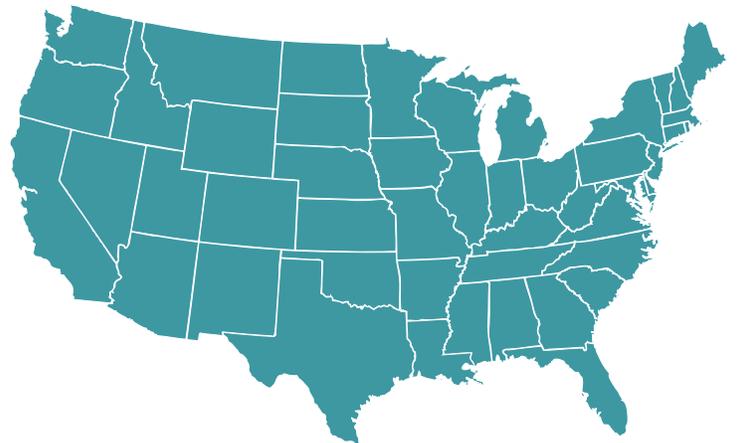
Other states have more regulations or requirements through the state board of education.

To research the laws in your state, you can go to [HSLDA.org](https://www.hsllda.org). The Home School Legal Defense Association advocates for homeschoolers and has free online resources, including a summary of [homeschooling laws for each state](#).

Requirements

Your state may ask for

- notification when you begin homeschooling
- a scope and sequence of what your child will be learning that year
- a copy of your child's test and quiz scores
- samples of your child's work
- standardized testing results
- a portfolio of records, materials used, and samples of your child's work to be submitted at the end of the year
- evaluation of your child's portfolio by a certified teacher



Regardless of your state's requirements, know that almost two million homeschoolers are meeting them every day—and you can too!

Some homeschoolers choose to keep a transcript of their child's progress or participate in standardized testing even if it's not required by their state. This makes for an easier transition if you move to a state with more homeschooling requirements.



General Portfolio Guidelines

Portfolio requirements vary from state to state, but these guidelines will give you somewhere to start.

- List all textbooks used. Don't include library books, reference books, etc. Simply list textbooks.
- Include samples of your child's work. Let's take Florida as an example state. This is how Florida law describes the type of work to include: "commensurate with his or her ability." Another detail about Florida requirements is that it's important to show progression of work/learning. To show progression, save tests and date them. Keep them in a file ready for portfolio assembly at the end of the year.
- Include samples of extracurricular field trips, projects, artwork, etc.
- Purchase a large three-ring binder and create three divisions. Include your list of textbooks used. Arrange sample work from the oldest date to the most recent. And include pictures and samples of extracurricular work and activities.



While it's easy to store portfolio examples of academic work, samples of artwork and projects take up more space. To help solve that problem, group project samples in an attractive display and photograph it. Then discard the projects and save your picture!

Choose Your Curriculum

Learning Preferences/Styles

You've probably heard a lot about learning preferences or learning styles—sensory, visual, auditory, etc. But here's a tip: you don't have to figure out your child's favored learning preference before you choose a curriculum.

Even if you already know your child's learning preference, it's important that you *don't* look for a curriculum that tailors only to that one learning style.

Instead, look for a curriculum that incorporates ***all*** the learning styles.

Why? Think of it this way: if you just say a new concept out loud, you may not understand it or remember it. But if you say the concept, hear the concept, see the concept, ***and do*** an action or activity involving the concept, you'll be much more likely to understand and remember it.

If you need to, you can always supplement with more activities that favor your child's learning preference.



When you're choosing a curriculum, consider one written by educators who've had experience communicating with your child's age group. It's one thing to understand a concept. It's another to communicate it well to a particular age group.



The Right Fit

Picking your curriculum provider can seem overwhelming. There's choice after choice, and they all promise results.

So how do you choose?

Start with these two key ideas to make your decision easier:

- Look for a curriculum that supports your family's values and goals.
- Decide whether you want to use several curriculum providers (an eclectic approach) or one curriculum provider for all subjects (a unified approach).

Your Values and Goals

First, answer these two questions:

- “What viewpoint do I want my child to learn from?”
- “What information and skills do I want him to know?”

Then, as you evaluate curriculum, look for the values important to each publisher. Do those values match yours? Are they the ones you want to be important in your child’s life and education?

Keeping your values constantly in mind will help you narrow down your choices. (For example, if you want to teach your child a Christian worldview, look for a curriculum that helps you do that.)

Next, consider your goals.

Because you’re homeschooling, you have the flexibility to reach goals you may not have been able to otherwise. You can...

- Be more involved in what your child learns.
- Introduce more life skills.
- Give your child the opportunity to work in a family business or at a job.
- Go on field trips often.
- Have more time for extracurricular pursuits.
- Encourage your family’s closeness.
- Know your child is getting an excellent education at a price much lower than a private school’s.

Figure out which general and specific goals you want to reach, then keep them in mind while you evaluate curriculum.



Develop a homeschool mission statement for your family. That way, you’ll always have your “why” for homeschooling right at your fingertips, whether you’re making decisions or you just need encouragement.

Your Approach

While the eclectic approach works for some families, the unified approach works better for others. Choosing which approach you'll use just comes down to what your goals are and what works best for you.

Eclectic

With an eclectic approach, you use curriculum from several publishers.

Some families choose this option because they want to tailor the learning for each subject to each child individually.

Because each publisher's curriculum will be organized differently, you'll have the additional responsibility of taking extra care to make sure your child learns what he needs to learn in every subject area. (Many publishers cover the same topics at different times—often with different approaches.)

To avoid accidentally skipping an important academic skill or concept and to make sure the teaching order makes sense, examine and compare each curriculum's scope and sequence (learning objectives or outcomes by grade). You'll find more details on how to do this in the next chapter.

Unified

With the unified approach, you choose just one publisher.

The unified approach is a simpler, more economical way to homeschool—especially if you're new to homeschooling, school multiple children, or have a tight educational budget.

You won't have to figure out how different publishers work or how to make everything work together. Your child will be familiar with the way things are taught in each subject, and you'll both be able to quickly get into a routine.

Using one publisher also makes it possible for the content in one subject to reinforce content in others. This reinforcement helps your child to see parallels between subjects and grasp concepts more fully.

Even if you choose a unified approach, feel free to supplement learning with outside reading, projects, field trips, etc. Those "extras" are part of what makes homeschooling so flexible no matter what curriculum you're using.

If you have a tight educational budget that must meet the academic needs of multiple children, the unified approach is by far the more cost effective because you can reuse materials year after year.



Your Materials

To ensure a great homeschooling experience, don't just think about what your child needs. Think about what *you* need, too!

You shouldn't have to figure everything out on your own or have to wonder if you're doing things right. That's why the best publishers don't offer just textbooks; they provide resources and materials that help you homeschool successfully.

Look for publishers that offer lesson plans, teaching support materials, and instructions for how to use these materials effectively.

Since homeschooling is an investment—an investment in your child and in your family—taking the extra care to make sure you have what you need is worth it.

Most homeschooling families have found it helpful to have at least the materials below:

- Lesson plans from the publisher
- Lesson planner (if it doesn't come in the lesson plans)
- Test/quiz keys for the subject/grade
- Answer keys for student books
- Teaching aids to illustrate concepts



As you're deciding, it's helpful to look at the curriculum in person and talk to those using the curriculum you're interested in.

Determine Grade Placement

This phase will remind you what your child has done, show you what he's ready for, and help you decide which materials to purchase.

(If you're already confident that your child can start homeschooling in the grade level common for his age or that follows the last completed grade, skip this step.)

First, get a good understanding of what your child learned the previous year. The easiest way to do this is to look at a scope and sequence, which shows how children should be developing academically—what they should be learning and when.

Then look at the publisher's curriculum for the next grade to determine if your child is ready to enter that grade. Many publishers produce a list of grade-level objectives. If this isn't available, you can use the table of contents for each student book.

If you plan to use several publishers for different subjects, pay extra attention to your child's progress and analyze the scope and sequence for each subject and each publisher. Don't skip this step because missing foundational concepts will be difficult for your child.



Grade placement is one of the greatest options in homeschooling. Children who begin behind their grade can catch up! And both those who like the challenge of extra work and those who need more time find success.



Scope and Sequence Comparison

If a publisher doesn't have a scope and sequence, you can also use something similar, like learning objectives with a table of contents.

First find the publisher's scope and sequence for the grade just completed.

Then find the publisher's scope and sequence for the upcoming grade.

Next review the learning objectives, concepts, and table of contents for the last grade—one subject at a time—to get familiar with what your child has learned and what he can do.

Then look at the publishers' scope and sequence for the next grade. Compare the scope and sequences for these two grades side by side.

Use this side-by-side comparison to assess whether your child has the knowledge and skills he needs to be ready for the next grade.

How can you tell? The new grade should build on concepts he has already learned. For instance, if the new grade incorporates composition, your child probably wouldn't be ready for it if he hasn't learned yet how to read and write with comprehension.

Everything doesn't have to be perfectly matched, but you want the basics. There should be some review of concepts from the previous year, and everything new should be a logical next step in learning.



Here's an easy way to determine a curriculum's success with sequencing: preview the books from any three sequential grades (e.g., third, fourth, and fifth). Look at the last six weeks of third grade. Are they preparatory to the first six weeks of fourth? Look at the first six weeks of fourth. Do they review and re-establish the last six weeks of third? Is this also true of fifth grade? If so, you've chosen a well-sequenced curriculum.

Previous Grade/Subject

Contents	
Lessons 1–30	pages 1–52
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Telling time Measures of time Adding whole numbers with carrying Place value to thousands Money Measuring to nearest half inch Multiplication Tables 0–4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subtracting whole numbers with borrowing Roman numerals 1–12 Multiplying whole numbers with carrying English linear and liquid measures Division Tables 1–3
Lessons 31–60	pages 53–100
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five-step division Checking addition and subtraction problems Multiplication Tables 5–6 Six ways to prove multiplication Checking division problems Division Tables 4–6 Division with a remainder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money problems Story problems Symbols for greater than, less than, and equals Finding the unknown number in an equation Multiplying and dividing money
Lessons 61–90	pages 101–148
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measuring to the nearest centimeter English dry measures of capacity Dozens Multiplication Tables 7–8 Calendar time English measures of weight Miles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liters Grams and kilograms Converting measures Division Table 7 Measurement equations Roman numerals 13–30

Arithmetic 3
10th Edition
Staff Credits
Author: Scott
Editor: Susan Thompson
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Cover Design: Michelle Johnson
Illustrations: Mike Minko, Greg Granger, Emma Nelson
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The purpose of this publishing program is to help Christian schools teach children and teenagers for the Lord and from His Word in the Christian way.

Detailed Scope and Sequence

Fourth Grade	
Spelling, Vocabulary, & Poetry cont.	RED indicates first introduction of content.
<p>Spelling & Vocabulary Skills Development cont.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn when to change <i>y</i> to <i>i</i> when adding suffixes Learn some exceptions to a rule <p>Poetry Skills Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memorize 3 typical poems and a portion of 1 epic poem Develop appreciation of poetry Perform in front of an audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recite in unison Develop appropriate expression and volume Learn definitions and use of unfamiliar words Improve comprehension of emotion and content Develop mental visualization of the poem Discuss meaning and purpose of each poem Use proper observation of punctuation Learn the term stanza
Arithmetic	RED indicates first introduction of content.
<p>The colorful daily worksheets in Arithmetic 4 provide practice over familiar concepts and new material. The four basic processes are taught and reviewed, as well as multiplying and dividing by two-digit numbers, estimation, square measures, writing decimals as fractions, and angle geometry. A major emphasis is on working with proper and improper fractions, adding, subtracting, and multiplying fractions, and finding the least common denominator. Students will continue to solve multi-step word problems which encourage the application of concepts being learned.</p>	<p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly quizzes (16) Biweekly tests (2) Daily skills development worksheets (26)
<p>Numbers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place value Whole numbers to the 100 million place Decimals to the thousandths place Writing numbers from dictation to the 100 million place Roman numerals Value of I, V, X, L, C, D, M Basic rules for Roman numerals More complex rules for forming Roman numerals Number sentences With unknowns Order of operations (parentheses) Even/odd numbers Estimating product, quotient, divisor <p>Addition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addition families 1–18 mixed order Times mastery Terms: addend, sum Missing sign Word problems Money Mental arithmetic: problems combining addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division up to 7 numbers Carrying in any position Checking by addition Additive column addition Averaging Fractions With common denominators With uncommon denominators Measures Denominals 	<p>Subtraction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subtraction families 1–18 mixed order Times mastery Making sign Mental arithmetic: problems combining addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division to 7 numbers Word problems Some mental, subtrahend, difference Borrowing from a whole number or zero in any position Money and measures Number sentences with unknowns, order of operations Checking by addition Fractions With common denominators With uncommon denominators Denominals <p>Multiplication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiplication facts 0–12 tables Word problems Times mastery Some: factor, product, partial product Making sign Mental arithmetic: problems combining multiplication, division, addition and subtraction up to 7 numbers Multiplying with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 or 2 digits 3 digits Carrying Checking by reasoning factors Number sentences with unknowns, order of operations (parentheses) Money

Plan How Your Homeschooling Will Work

Determine at the start who'll be responsible for what.

Whether you decide that one person will handle all the homeschooling or that a combined effort works better, take time to plan.

Here's what your plan will do for you—save you time, set expectations, and keep you and your children from feeling lost about what to do next.

These are the main things to think about:

1. Who will do the teaching? (You can break this up by subject.)
2. Who will do the grading?
3. Who will keep the records?

You can use the progress reports that may be included with your curriculum, find homeschool record-keeping templates for free online, or keep your records in a spreadsheet.

4. How will you organize the day?

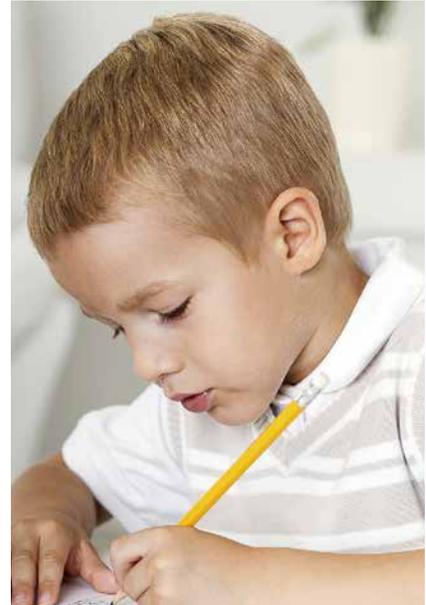
When you create a routine and consistently follow it, something happens—it gets easier.

As you plan, keep this in mind: you'll be able to accomplish more if you homeschool during those times of the day that your children are most attentive and focused.

Start by creating a schedule you think will work, then change it as needed throughout the year. If you're not sure where to start, take a look at your curriculum's lesson plans/schedule.

Ask yourself, "How do I want our homeschool days to go?" Here are some preferences:

- Some families like to get it all done by noon.
- Some like to do a few subjects, then do a game, then finish up the subjects.
- Some structure the day like a school day (with lunch and P.E. times, etc.).
- Some do school in the afternoons or evenings.
- Some spend more time homeschooling each day so they can have a longer weekend.



Incorporate planning not only for school work, but also for church activities, sports, volunteer opportunities, etc.

After you've decided how you want your homeschooling day to go, make sure your vision is realistic and then plan around it. For example, it may sound great to fit five days of lessons into two days, but it wouldn't be realistic for most families.

5. How will you keep on track each day?

Here are a few options:

- Create daily work plans for your child and simplified lesson plans for you. (See the next section for tips.)
- Make colorful charts showing when to do each subject and when to take breaks. For more flexibility, laminate them and write on them with dry-erase markers.
- Decorate a bin for your child, then add folders for each subject.
- Use dry-erase markers to write the day's work on laminated bookmarks for each subject.

You could use a spreadsheet, a big calendar, a dry-erase board, or really anything that works for you. But however you do it, having a clear plan will help doing school go smoothly (and drastically reduce the number of times you hear "What do I do now?").



Homeschooling is, at its foundation, a lifestyle choice. Successful homeschooling families incorporate not only school work, but also church activities, sports, music, volunteer opportunities, and family fun into their overall schedule.

Make The Best Use Of Your Lesson Plans

The love/hate relationship parents have with lesson plans has much to do with how parents view the purpose of them. Are they a taskmaster—or are they a tool?

To make the best use of your publisher's lesson plans, treat them as a tool.

How do you do that?

1. Read the professional's view of the lesson, realizing the authors have experience communicating these ideas successfully to many children the same age as your child.
2. While this input is valuable, it is meant to *serve* you, not to overwhelm you. With that in mind, read everything, but learn to extract only what you need. The extracted part is what you write down in your own lesson plans.

Read through the lesson plans one month (20 lessons) in advance. This way you can note potential field trips, etc.

Make your own simplified written lesson plans one week (5 lessons) in advance to keep them fresh in your mind. Many parents make planning a part of their routine, setting aside the same block of time every week (e.g., Saturday morning).

3. In your own lesson plans, use one-word keys like those below to help keep things simple and consistent.
 - **Review:**
List key review words in phrases such as "check p. 28," "flash cards," or "list of helping verbs."
 - **New:**
List new material in a word or two. For example, "Teach adjectives."
 - **Do:**
Today's work, for example: "p.29 #1-5 together" (working with your child), "# 6-8 watching" (watching your child work).
 - **Glue:**
This is your child's independent work that "glues" it all together. For example, "p. 29-30."



Use the expertise of professionals, but make your publisher's lesson plans work for you. To do this, simply extract what you need and then use it to fashion the best homeschool tool for your family.



Set Up For Success

Why are some homeschooling families consistently more successful than others? Everyone has bad days—maybe even bad weeks—but how do some families seem to have so few of them?

The common denominator isn't genius or a certain type of personality. It's effort and consistency in a few key things:

1. Have everyone's daily work and the tools necessary to do it laid out the night before. Designate a place for these things and keep them there.

This step will keep the day from being interrupted by looking for a quiz, particular flash cards, etc. If you need help, it's a great job for older siblings or other responsible helpers.

Much of the day's momentum can be tracked to how the day began.

2. On top of the file(s) for the day or daily work list/pile, have a colored notecard that lists just one thing—the first item of work. When you do this, each child can sit down in the morning and know exactly where to start.

Begin with your child's worst subject or any time-sensitive elements. It's amazing how accomplishing the worst subject or most time-sensitive element *first* can color thinking throughout the entire day. *Success breeds success.*

3. Plan for interruptions in advance. Beyond setting up a voicemail message for the phone and putting a "do not interrupt" note on the door, plan for success in spite of inevitable interruptions.

On your daily list of work, start by using different colors or fonts/highlighters to mark things your child can do without your help (writing spelling words, doing seatwork, etc.). Make sure your child understands that these items must be completed whether you're available or not.



Consider developing a "worst-first" philosophy. During the first individual academic time of the day, have your child complete his worst (or least favorite) subject.

This simple idea can keep one unsuccessful day from spilling into two or three. *It's also amazing how quickly everyone will recover the day after if some/most of the work is already finished.*

4. Recognize every success! This includes *your* success.

We're all human, and it's more difficult on some days than others to accomplish what we set out to do. And unfortunately, it's often more natural to dwell on what went wrong than to focus on what went right.

Devise a way to recognize daily success, and reward success periodically. We all respond to incentives.

Sometimes just knowing how we're doing will push us to try to continue our success. (Think of the classic construction-site scenario of "___ days without incident.")

Some homeschoolers choose to keep a transcript of their child's progress or participate in standardized testing even if it's not required by their state. This makes for an easier transition if you move to a state with more homeschooling requirements.



Successfully Homeschooling More Than One Child

In many ways, successful homeschooling is a balancing act. Sacrifices are made here to meet certain needs there. Yet most homeschooling parents today school multiple children. How do they do it?

You already have a head start on that answer!

You can use everything you read about planning how your homeschooling will work, making your lesson plans work for you, and setting up for success.

What other steps can you take to balance homeschooling several children?

1. Consider the variables. Will babies and/or toddlers be part of the mix? Does the primary teacher (probably mom) have any additional outside work/personal responsibilities?
2. Calculate the costs. Each family has a certain amount of money and time to spend on this endeavor; know these parameters from the start.
3. Decide whether you want to use resources like video homeschooling for any subjects or grades.

If teaching every subject in every grade is too overwhelming or time-consuming to fit your schedule, there are several options that allow your children to learn more independently. For example, Abeka Academy offers video homeschooling for K4–grade 12.

Even if you will be teaching each core subject, you could add more independent learning with an online or DVD program for electives like typing or foreign languages.

4. Look for “extra time” in your day.

While your children are reciting the Gettysburg Address or saying their spelling words, look over your lesson plan. That quick review of your notes will help your teaching rounds go more smoothly.

5. Don’t do everything yourself or take on too much.

Teach your children to do all those little things, like tearing out their work papers each day. Show them how to be organized so you don’t waste time searching for a lost spelling book or the eraser that fell between the couch cushions yesterday.

And when you’re planning enrichment and extracurricular activities, don’t take on too much. Just because other parents you know may have their kids in two different sports each (plus music lessons) doesn’t mean you have to.

6. Find out what best encourages each of your children.

Some children respond best to gifts, even tiny ones. For others, words make the most difference—a note on their paper would mean the world.

Some just want a hug or pat on the back! And others respond to time spent with them or having something done for them.

Knowing what kind of incentives each child looks forward to the most will help you to make each one feel special even on crazy days.

7. Set up your “master schedule.”

Before you start your year, plan out how your days will go.

One easy way to do this is with sticky notes (or even electronic sticky notes)!

Why use sticky notes? They’re easy to separate by color, and just as easily rearranged. If you forgot about a baseball practice or decide to add in another break, all you have to do is move around your notes.



- Divide the day into one-hour increments written on individual sticky notes.
- Clear your table. (If you prefer, you can use a wall or large chart instead.) Place sticky notes for each hour in a chronological line across the long side of your table. Choose a different-colored sticky note for every person involved (including potential helpers, like a grandparent who can come over every day from 2 to 4). Write the name of the person on a sticky note.
Line these up on the left side of the table from top to bottom, beginning with yourself. Follow with notes for each child, oldest to youngest. Make one sticky note for each potential helper and leave those at the bottom of the table.
- Follow the “worst-first” rule. Choose your oldest child’s worst (or least favorite) subject and write it on a sticky note in his/her first hour. Continue with the least-favorite subject for all the kids. Then do the second-worst, etc. If two subjects/events can fit into one hour, write both on the same-colored note.
- Depending on your start time, make a 30-minute sticky note (in white) around 10 a.m or 10:30 a.m. for snack and play. Alternate putting helpers/older siblings in charge of this time. You may want to join in sometimes, but this time slot is a *golden* opportunity for prep.

8. Plan your circuit.

- Your goal is to review and teach new material for each child in each of his subjects. To do this, children have to learn to be independent workers, and you need to know what the review and new material is for each child.
- Generally, two or more of your child's worst subjects will be completed before the first snack/play break. Typically, school resumes around 10:30, and two additional academic hours (planned with sticky notes in the same way) are completed before lunch.

Kindergarten through 6th grade are often finished for the day after lunch, though upper elementary may need an hour or so to study for upcoming tests, work on projects, etc.

- Many parents also include additional family goals in the overall plan so they have just one place to find everything going on. You could include music lessons, church activities, family ministries, sports, chores, life skills, grading/prep time, etc.



Once you've developed your "master plan" using sticky notes, write it down in a planner, on a spreadsheet, on an easy-to-follow chart, etc. If you feel it needs changes throughout the year, change it! For example, watch your kids when they don't realize you're watching to see if the times you've given them for each subject seem too long or too short.

9. Once you've gotten some homeschool experience under your belt, try the idea of teaching compatible grade groups.

If you're using the same curriculum for several grades, you may have compatible grade groups. With a spiral-approach curriculum (review within each grade and from grade to grade), compatible grades cover similar material.

Because of that, you can teach two or more children in the same grade group at one time instead of needing a separate teaching time for each.

- Divide your children into grade groups grades like so:

K4 & K5 together

1st & 2nd grade together

4th, 5th, & 6th grade together

7th & 8th grade together

That means if you had four children in grades 1–6, you'd have only two grade groups. That seems a lot more manageable, doesn't it?

- Teach *each grade's content* within a grade group. If you have a child in 1st grade and a child in 2nd grade, this is how it would work: you would teach your 1st grader while your 2nd grader does independent work. Then your 1st grader would do independent work while you teach your 2nd grader.

- Teach the higher grade's review. Your 1st grader may get review questions he won't know the answer to yet, but that will help him be excited for what he'll learn next year.

You won't *always* be able to combine reviews, but it works well for most lessons. You may want to start by doing each grade's review separately until you get a feel for how they overlap.

- High school is in a separate category because it's divided by course. If you have two or more high schoolers taking the same course at the same time, you can group teaching.

One key to this method is preparation. If you take the time to plan ahead for your teaching and review, you'll be able to start the day and keep it going. Even if you're interrupted, you'll know where to pick back up.

Create a Conducive Learning Environment

Having a specific area for homeschooling encourages a child to be ready to learn and helps him stay focused.

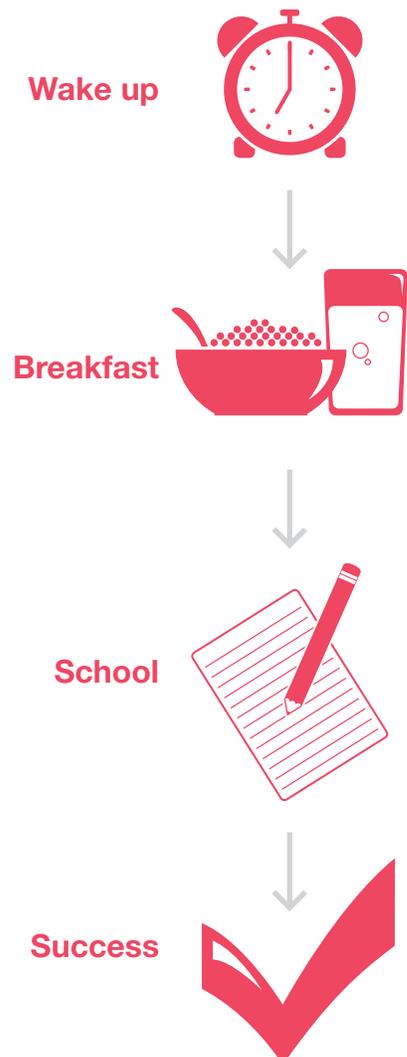
You can use a special table or desk where your child can store his books, papers, and pens.

Some families make their kitchen table the go-to place for homeschooling.

Others make a room (or part of one) their homeschool area, and they use it just for homeschooling.

Whatever place works for you, eliminate distractions as much as you can.

Then use the area as often as possible for teaching, testing, and any other related activities. This consistency encourages your child to develop a habit of focusing on learning when it's time for his lessons.



Even if you have a special homeschool space, don't be afraid to do school outside, in a library, at the park, at Grandma's house, etc. That's part of what makes homeschooling fun!

Get Ready To Start

Now you're almost ready to jump into homeschooling. There are just a couple of final elements to consider first.

Your Curriculum and Materials

One of the best things about homeschooling is that you can customize it to what's best for you and your child. Getting to know your curriculum is the first step.

Spend some time learning how your curriculum works and how you'll teach from it.

Becoming familiar with your curriculum's content and layout will help you be more prepared to teach—saving you time (and avoiding frustration) during the year.

You'll want to be familiar with a few things in particular:

- How your curriculum presents lessons
- What methods are used to teach each lesson
- How the different subjects coordinate together each day
- Key terms your curriculum uses
- When enrichment activities should be completed
- The normal routine (a typical day) for your curriculum

If you start this preparation early, you'll have time to make changes or additions.

Don't forget to schedule planning time as part of each day and an extended prep time once a week.



Customizing Your Teaching

You might be wondering, "How much do I teach?" or "Do I have to do everything the curriculum says?"

Publishers include lessons, activities, and reinforcements in the curriculum to make sure children fully understand a concept.

Find Your Support Network

But because you're homeschooling, you'll be able to tell when your child understands a concept or needs more help to understand it. You'll be able to tell whether you need to do more or less than a curriculum recommends.

Following closely to the schedule and routine keeps you on track, but exercise your freedom to add additional activities to your lessons, move through sections faster or slower, or tailor the amount of review.

Get support from your friends, family members, or even other parents who are writing about their homeschooling journey online.

Find others who are homeschooling—whether at work, in your church, in your neighborhood, or in your professional or hobby organizations—and let them know you are, too. They'll be able to share their experience, encouragement, and advice.

When you have a homeschooling group or friends who are homeschooling, you can get together for fun, field trips, or even brainstorming for new ideas.



Get Started

After you've done your research and laid your groundwork, there's only one thing left to do: start.

It's exciting, isn't it? But it can also be overwhelming if you let it.

Don't expect perfection or compare yourself to others. Your family is unique, and your homeschooling will be, too!

If you ever feel like you can't do it, just take a step back and take one step at a time.

If you have questions about homeschooling, choosing a curriculum, grade placement, etc., we're happy to help! Please don't hesitate to contact an Abeka homeschool consultant at 1-877-223-5226, [live chat](#) with us during business hours, talk to an Abeka expert in person at a [Materials Display](#), or [e-mail](#) us at information@abeka.com.

There is nothing quite as fulfilling as shaping a young life... especially when that young life is your child's!

