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One Family's Investment in People

FALL 2019
ISSUE 2
VOLUME 3

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Lifting Our Children Up

INVEST IN OTHERS

Dear Friends,

The story is told of a mother and her baby who fell into a well. Although the water was only waist deep, it was not easy to keep the child dry. So, the mom said in her heart, "I will lift my child up, for as long as it takes, until help arrives."

Hours later, the baby was heard crying and the pair were found. The baby was fine, but the mother died in the cold water. As a rescuer reached down to get the young child, he whispered,

"Your mama sacrificed everything to lift you up."

Making the investment to lift our children up (even if it involves sacrifice) is the heartbeat of homeschooling. In this narcissistic world, it's no wonder our investment is often misunderstood. It's countercultural not to lift ourselves up. Why invest in others, especially when sacrifice is involved?

"Because sacrifice changes everything."

Not only is it the currency used when investing in people, but it also yields the biggest dividends. The best paid job could never compare with teaching our children how to read or helping them understand their value in the world. The truth is, an authentic homeschool investment doesn't just change our children; **it changes us.**

Lifting our children up becomes our greatest joy—
all part of the mysterious dividend of investing in others. ■

Tabby
Tabby Hershberger
Senior Editor

Write to me at
amazinghomeschool@abeka.com.

Dr. Phyllis Rand
has been
investing
in Abeka
for 50 years.
See p. 5.



Tabby homeschooled for two decades. She is also a former elementary school teacher and newspaper editor. She and her husband Dan have four kids and one new grandson.

FREE
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p. 27

Investment Behind the BOOKS

This dedicated trio has been investing in Abeka for over 100 years of combined service!
Their work has been more than a job; it's been an investment in people.

Steve Dean (Abeka Rep.)

For 25 years, Steve Dean traveled as an Abeka Rep. He said, "In this ministry, the Lord gave me a tremendous opportunity to do good to the household of faith. I saw the good effect homeschooling had on our family, and I wanted to help other families get the same Bible-based curriculum."

Steve and his wife Joy, who traveled with him after their children graduated, formed lasting friendships with the families who came to his meetings. "I was happy to provide encouragement and practical suggestions based on my own family's struggles and experiences," Steve said. "My wife also called customers who needed to speak to another mother about the challenges of homeschooling."



Dr. Phyllis Rand

(Teacher/Writer)

Phyllis began as an Abeka 6th-grade teacher but quickly found her calling in leadership, from elementary vice principal to college dean of education. She did these things while writing the original Abeka language series, singing in an ensemble, teaching the sophomore girls Sunday school class, and writing the story of Abeka's founders.

For five decades Dr. Phyllis Rand faithfully invested in people. She says, "The Lord has been gracious in allowing me to be a part of a great ministry. A worthwhile investment is not about what's given. It's about what you get back in return, and God has blessed me with a double portion. I've worked with wonderful students and co-laborers." Perhaps the best reflection of her investment is the steady stream of former students from all over the world who come to campus to thank her.



Mickey Pierce (Abeka Rep.)

Prior to traveling for 29 years as an Abeka Rep., Mickey Pierce invested in young people as a teacher and Christian school administrator. He saw the Abeka curriculum as a way to get Christian values into homes.

Though it was Mickey's goal to help homeschool families, he recalls, "I met many great families who were a blessing to me! Some invited me to their church, others had me over for dinner, one even gave me a birthday cake."

He continues, "My greatest satisfaction with Abeka over the past 29 years has been the freedom to share the gospel with hundreds of people."



104 years of service
+ 3 amazing people
= 1 Excellent Investment

Double the Investment

by Leah Meyer

You could say that identical twins and Abeka Academy grads Kirstie and Kristie Bronner have shared a lot in their lifetime—a close family bond, the same college major, even twin honors as Spelman College's first co-valedictorians. But probably most interesting is their matching passion for investing in people.

Investment in Education

Long before the Bronner sisters graduated from college with 4.0s, their parents began investing in their daughters' lives. "Our dad is our he-ro and our mom is our she-ro," Kirstie reveals. "[Our parents] have always been a natural inspiration. They showed us a beautiful marriage as designed by God, they both achieved higher education, our father is an author of many books, and both of our parents taught us that we could achieve anything with God on our side."

Dale and Nina Bronner chose to homeschool their young daughters using Abeka DVDs because of its Christian values. They also appreciated an official graduation ceremony to attend. "We learned good time management skills because of the rigorous academic program of Abeka throughout high school," said Kirstie. "Our self-discipline was refined because of the independence of DVD homeschool. Our best study habits were formed during this time, and we were ready for college."

for future successes for the Bronner twins. "Graduating college with 4.0s was no accident, neither was it an accomplishment of geniuses," Kirstie relayed. "We simply worked like it all depended on us, prayed like it all depended on God, and used the strategy He gave us along the way."

The heartbeat of their strategy was keeping God first. Kirstie and Kristie never missed a church service to catch up on homework. They also served others teaching Sunday school, ministering at a local nursing home, and spending time with orphans. Starting sophomore year, they even planned a youth

Investment in Work Ethic

"We took ownership of our own education back in elementary school," Kirstie said. "As far as we can remember, we've always been accountable for our own work, and our parents have never had to command us to do our homework."

These seemingly small decisions at a young age paved the way



conference that started with 500 in attendance and today has over 1,300!

The nitty-gritty of their strategy was not too popular among peers. Kirstie joked, "To-do

lists became our close friend. Hour by hour, we outlined what school work we would accomplish, our mealtimes, chores, and any errands. We even scheduled when we'd hang out with friends, as well as family time of course."



Investment in People

From a young age, the twins both knew they wanted to follow in their parents' footsteps. "We've chosen paths of full-time ministry because both of our parents are in full-time ministry, and we've always been passionate about it. To us, there's nothing more fulfilling," said Kirstie.

Today the Bronner twins still have full schedules as they continue to invest in the lives of others. Soon after college graduation, they founded a girl's mentoring program that they continue to direct today. In addition, they do quite a bit of traveling, speaking, and writing. When home in Georgia, they are deeply involved with the ministries at their father's church.

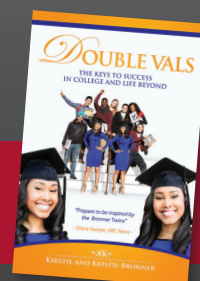
"Our lives are full of multitasking, which we couldn't do well without the skills we learned throughout school. We do our best to invest in the lives of others with excellence and love."

The wise investments of the twins and their parents are already reaping a valuable harvest.

Back-to-School Bronner Style

1. Keep God first.
2. Take ownership of your own education—don't rely on your teachers or parents to remind you to complete assignments or turn in papers.
3. Set academic goals: self-discipline and detailed to-do lists helped us remain organized and productive.
4. Don't allow short-term pleasure to overshadow the day's work. Generally, we would not hang out with friends during the week, only on the weekends.
5. And most importantly—work like it depends on you; pray like it depends on God! 🇺🇸

Check out the Bronners' book. It's available at kirstieandkristie.com and is an excellent resource on time management.



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instill both knowledge
and values.

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Investing in Your Child's Independence

by Renee Bryant



Renee Bryant taught preschool and was a nursery director for over 20 years. She has four grown children.

The workplace push for personal development is generated because the business world sees the value of investing time and money in tools that enable employees to be their best.

Why wouldn't we want to make a similar investment in tools to make our children socially successful? Helping our kids establish a skill set that will promote appropriate interaction with others, the ability to work independently, and the competence to problem solve is a wise investment. It also requires the tool of self-discipline.

How Do I Teach Self-Discipline?

Self-discipline emerges from established discipline. It is a learned habit. A child must first see where the lines are in order to practice keeping himself inside them. Unchecked innocent childish behavior not only has the potential of becoming a major behavioral issue, but also consumes self-discipline practice times.

I remember speaking with a mom whose young daughter had begun stomping her feet and saying no when asked to come or pick up toys. Because Mom didn't feel that her daughter understood, she didn't see the need to address it. I asked, "At what point will you no longer accept this behavior? By next month it will already be her consistent response to your guidance. Consider how much time and effort it will take you to break her habit and your little girl to learn an appropriate response."

“Our job isn't just telling our children what **not** to do. We should also show them what **to** do.”

Mom was concerned that telling her daughter no might reinforce the negative behavior. A valid point. Our job isn't just telling our children what **not** to do. We should also show them what **to** do.

What To Do

- **Introduce appropriate responses.** Your child will not know how to respond properly if he's never seen this option. A negative response may be the only reply your child has mastered.
- **Give your child the words.** Increase the likelihood of a positive response by providing the vocabulary. Demonstrate how to answer *yes* or *help, please*.
- **Tie your words to actions.** Say, *we pick up toys* as you demonstrate what that means.
- **Choose sooner vs. later.** Eye contact coupled with quiet, immediate, consistent verbal responses can even help an infant who arches his back as you lay him on the changing table or put him in his car seat.

Consider these tips as useful skills to be taught, rather than wrongs to be righted. It's important to remember the goal of training: walking a child through the process so he can become independently successful.

Making an investment in your child's social interaction, provides the tools necessary for self-government and independence. ■



A Grandfather's INVESTMENT *Connects* Three Generations



After pastoring a church for 20 years, Pastor Bill Nealey began to focus on missions in Haiti and ministry in his own home. When his grandson Christopher Webb was 9, Grandpa Nealey took a step of faith to homeschool Chris.

"I wasn't a schoolteacher, but it worked because Abeka had the groundwork to build off of."

He especially loved studying God's Word. "I think the best part of homeschooling Chris was learning with him," he says. "We used to enjoy certain biblical studies together."

Chris remembers how his grandfather taught by example. "My grandfather invested a lot of time teaching me the importance of family," Chris says. "He demonstrated this through the Word of God and through his marriage. My grandparents recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary."

Growing a Love for Ministry

Homeschooling fit perfectly into the family's ministry. Grandpa Nealey remembers, "Since we were

traveling a lot, homeschooling gave us more freedom. While Chris did his homeschooling, he was also involved in missions and church work."

Chris says, "I definitely had a lot of hands-on experience. I was taught at a young age to serve. By the time I graduated from high school, I had been to Haiti around 100 times."

"My grandfather helped start 15 schools and churches in Haiti," Chris says. "He always gave 110% so those children could learn to read the Word of God."

These ministry experiences influenced Chris's life. At 11, he already felt burdened to reach others for Christ—a commitment he's carried since.

Choosing the Best Man

When it was time for Chris to marry his wife Bonnie, he knew exactly who'd be his best man.

"No one stood by me closer than my

grandfather," he says. "When my wife and I were first dating, he gave me a lot of biblical and practical advice teaching me to be a devoted husband and father."

Chris says, "I'm thankful for my grandfather's dedication to homeschooling me with Abeka. His dedication helps me serve today with the same heart."

Investing in the Future

Grandpa Nealey's investment of time and love recently began reaching a new generation through his great-grandson Caeden.

"My grandfather's investment and hard work became a testimony in my life," Chris says. "He is still teaching me now that I'm a father. My prayer is that I can have the same influence on my son that my grandfather had on me. His investment still inspires me today." ■





by Anna Grace Miller

With more than 20 years of homeschooling on the mission field and a daughter with Down Syndrome, Bob and Becky Mach have learned some things about investing in people.

A STORY FROM AFRICA

"When we first arrived in Côte d'Ivoire," Becky remembers, "we attended a local church. Our oldest was just a toddler then, and I dressed him in his Sunday best. While we were greeting everyone, I realized I'd lost my toddler! I found him outside in the mud playing with the Ivorian children. The Ivorian pastor said, 'He's a real African baby now.' That precious moment really captures the most important part of our lives here—being with people!"

A "NORMAL" DAY IN AFRICA

For Bob and Becky, a normal day in Africa is about getting interrupted. "One moment we're homeschooling," Becky says "and the next our water and power are being cut off, or there's an Ivorian knocking at the gate, or a mission team is staying at the house. Those days we have to be flexible with our homeschooling."

Becky continues, "We want our kids to care more about people than about schedules, and living in Africa has definitely helped to instill that lesson in all of us."

Life doesn't always go as planned. Becky says, "We learned that when you're investing in people—whether it's homeschooling your kids or helping people God has placed near you—

things often change no matter how much you've prepared."

THE SECRET WEAPON OF OUR HOMESCHOOL DAYS

A daily to-do list is a huge part of Mach family life. It is Becky's secret weapon to a successful homeschool day.

"Every morning, the kids come downstairs at 8 a.m. and receive a list," she says. "They mark things off throughout the day. When the list is done; school is done. This not only helps track their progress but also shows us where to pick back up when Africa kicks in. Our kids loved this so much that on Saturdays they used to say, 'Mommy, where's the list; what do we do today?'"



GIVING UP PERFECTION

Becky continues, "Down Syndrome is not something I ever thought I'd have to deal with, but our daughter Morganne is a wonderful treasure. Of course, she doesn't do school quite the same as the others, but Morganne does have her own list which includes getting catheterized, doing her mouth exercises, setting the table, and brushing her teeth. She also reviews shapes, colors, basic phonics, and educational songs.

There are different dynamics in our home when switching among Morganne, her siblings, and our people who think in their own culture and language. There is no such thing

as a perfect homeschool day or a perfect mom. We shouldn't chase perfection, but we should do our best. God promises to bless that."

LUC'S STORY

Luc, the fourth and youngest Mach child, has been enrolled in Abeka Academy since K5. This May he graduated high school. He shares from his own lessons of homeschooling in Africa.

"Mom and Dad worked hard to make our homeschool in Africa special," Luc says. "Once Mom had a makeshift classroom in the African countryside. We took our books up into the trees, but we found fire ants and had to jump down!

Dad had a basketball court built for us in the backyard so we could play at home. The cool thing is, we started a basketball clinic, and I still play with that team. The coach goes to our church now, and the team runs like a ministry. It has been a great chance to be involved with guys from the community."

WHAT GOD TAUGHT US

Becky quotes Psalm 27:14, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage. . . . The patience and the flexibility we've learned here in Africa have only widened our hearts for special needs children and for the needs of the people in the Ivory Coast." ■



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Invest IN YOUR CHILD'S Future

A Parent's Guide

by Leah Meyer

Whether you're homeschooling a child just beginning high school or have a senior graduating, it's never too early (or too late!) to help prepare for the future.

Discover a Vocation

In what areas have you observed your child's strengths/weaknesses, likes/dislikes, talents, and skills? High school is the time to develop these abilities. Could your child be interested in medicine shadow a nurse? Do you have a friend with a business willing to offer an apprenticeship? How about inviting a military contact over for a meal and a discussion?

Consider This:

- Take a career aptitude test. Many free homeschool-friendly online sources are available.
- Consider a summer camp that gives your child a look into his vocational future. Check out amazing camp opportunities (YouthOutreachCamps.com).

Give Something Back

The beauty of investing in another person's world is that it can also transform your own. Volunteer experiences can reveal your child's interests and abilities while also opening doors for future employment. Best of all, your child will continue to develop soft-skills (like communication, teamwork, and problem solving) that are needed no matter which vocation he chooses.

Consider This:

- Seek opportunities to serve in your church.
- Align volunteer efforts with specific careers (volunteer fire department, hospital, nonprofit, political campaign, etc.).

Take the Right Test (ACT/SAT, CLT, or ASVAB)

Most colleges do not have a test preference. You may choose to take the CLT (Classic Learning Test), ACT, or SAT. Ideally, your college-bound child will take the ACT/SAT as a second-semester junior, allowing time to apply for scholarships. Those joining the military should take the ASVAB early to obtain the best career options.

Consider This:

- Register:
ACT at act.org
SAT at collegereadiness.collegeboard.org
CLT at cltexam.com
- Visit a local recruiter's office for more information about the ASVAB.

Choosing the Best College

College choices have never been better for homeschooled graduates. High school counselor Nick Marmalejo says colleges look at three areas: "Prior coursework, SAT/ACT scores, and extra-curricular activities. The first two categories concern the academic life of the student, while the third takes into account life outside the classroom."



Consider This:

- Visit college campuses and start the application process early.
- Research trade schools that match your child's career interests.

Finding Scholarships, Grants, and a Free Year

Does your child have a musical talent or athletic ability? Does he excel academically? Many scholarships and grants are awarded each year to qualifying students. One college in the

Panhandle of Florida has a Fourth-Year-Free Program.

Consider This:

- Pensacola Christian College has a fourth-year-free option! Check out go.pccci.edu/4thYearFree.
- Find state-based grants on the Department of Education website (www2.ed.gov/fund/grants-apply).
- Search scholarships on the U.S. Department of Labor website (careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-scholarships.aspx).



Nick Marmalejo, "The Essential Homeschooler's Guide to College Admission" Seton Magazine (accessed March 7, 2019), <http://www.setonmagazine.com/college/the-essential-homeschoolers-guide-to-college-admission>.

Alexa Mason, "How to Find College Scholarships" The College Investor (accessed March 7, 2019), <https://thecollegeinvestor.com/16573/how-to-find-college-scholarships/>.

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Invest in Creativity

by Dr. Phyllis Rand

Robert Sternberg concludes that creativity requires six distinct but interrelated skills.



Let's face it. Brilliant people are creative thinkers. It's encouraging to find, however, that brilliant homeschoolers (and their moms) are not necessarily more creative than the rest of us. The skills they possess are available to all! Remember Edison's "genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration." If you work hard and are persistent, you are on your way to having the creative potential of Thomas Edison!

Robert Sternberg's research has added much to our understanding of the nature of creativity. According to Sternberg, creativity is a conscious choice—a matter of deliberately deciding to make use of six resources better. He calls this the Investment Theory of Creativity. It seems we are really more in control of our creativity than we may have thought. We just have to make the investment.

1 Intellectual Skills

Research: These are specific intellectual skills Sternberg found present in creative people.

- The skill to see challenges in new ways

- The skill to recognize the ideas that are worth pursuing and those which are not
- The skill to convincingly articulate the value of an idea

Application: Practice meaningful conversations with your child.

- I agree/disagree with ___ because ...
- I'd like to go back to what you said about ...
- Couldn't it also be that ...
- Can you give an example of that?
- So, what you're saying is ...



2 Knowledge

Research: What and how much we know can help or hinder our creativity. We have to ask ourselves

- Are we willing to move beyond what we know and learn more?
- Are we making use of past knowledge?

Application: Challenge your child (and yourself) to learn beyond the text—encourage books, people to interview, or virtual tours.

3 Styles of Thinking

Research: In essence, our preferred styles of thinking are the decisions we make about how to use the resources available to us. Sternberg calls the style of thinking important for creativity a legislative style. He describes it as

- A preference for thinking through things
- A decision to look for new ways
- A decision to look at the big picture
- A decision to value creativity

Application: Pose short challenges for your child that encourage thinking "outside the box" such as: You have \$23, a family of six, and 3 hours. How can you make the best family memory?

4 Environment

Research: Creative ideas grow in supportive and rewarding environments.

Application:

- Keep a handle on clutter.
- Encourage your child to try new things.

- Applaud and reward his efforts.
- Change the environment; homeschool outside!

5 Motivation

Research: Sternberg found that we rarely do creative work in an area unless we really love what we're doing and focus on the work rather than on potential rewards.

Motivation is not always inherent in us, Sternberg says. If we need to work in a certain area that does not particularly interest us, we decide to find a way to make it interesting.

Application:

Vary reporting periodically to allow for interests and creativity.

- Report in costume.
- Report using original artwork.
- Tape an interview.
- Write an original poem.
- Report using technology.

6 Personality

Research: Certain personality traits support creativity.

- A willingness to overcome obstacles
- A willingness to take sensible risks

Application:

- Generate these opportunities by having your child play a sport in the next age up, practice in the adult world by making purchases and returns, and by talking with places of business on the phone and in person.

The Holy Spirit

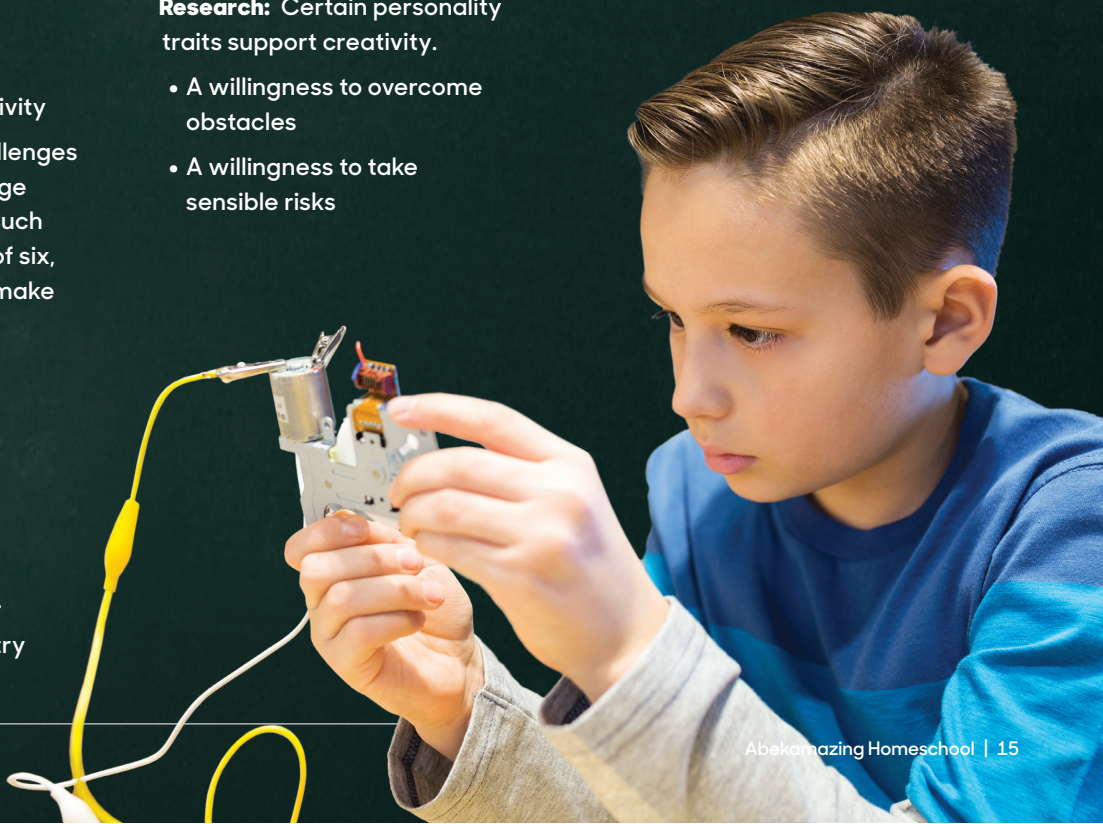
Sternberg's missing piece for creativity is the Holy Spirit.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

—Ephesians 3:20

Ask the Lord to give you ideas about how to creatively make your homeschooling better!

Robert J. Sternberg (2006) *The Nature of Creativity*. *Creative Research Journal*, 18:1, 87-98. DOI: 10.1207/s15326934crj180110



HOMESCHOOL Lunch Investment

by Bethany Russell

Last year I realized that I needed to be wiser about lunch planning. Using these tips, our lunches for a family of nine can be planned (and mostly prepared) for the entire week in under an hour!



Making the Lunches

Our lunch plan includes brown bag lunches for 3 days, baked potatoes or pizza for the fourth day, and soup for the 5th day.

Make PB&J sandwiches by buttering a piece of bread with 1 tsp. of peanut butter followed by jam on just one side. Sandwiches made this way will not get soggy and can be frozen! (Honey also freezes well.)

For ham roll ups, we use one tortilla spread with cream cheese. Top with spinach and sliced ham or turkey. We add cheddar cheese and a pickle; then roll it tightly. We cut our wraps in half before placing them in a sandwich bag.

Assembly Line

Make the lunches assembly-line style with your children's help. Label bags according to types of lunches (not with children's names). We make 7 lunches for each day, because I have seven children.

Seven bags will have a #1 written on the front corresponding to Day #1's menu. Seven bags will have #2, and seven bags will have #3. Make rows (in our case, of seven opened paper bags).

A child can easily place a sandwich in each bag in row #1. Place a wrap in each bag in row #2.

Week 1 Menu

DAY 1—PBJ DAY

Peanut butter and jelly (or honey) sandwich, bag of nuts, and a Clementine orange will please most children. Cheese and chips or veggies are easy substitutions for those with nut allergies.



DAY 2—TORTILLAS ANYONE

Make a ham roll up, applesauce cup, and carrot sticks. Ranch dressing is easily shared at home, but take a paper plate and the dressing bottle for an on-the-go condiment. If you cut the paper plate in advance, everyone can have their own dip holder.

DAY 3—NACHO KIT

Place ½ cup chips, beans, and cheese in a sandwich bag. Microwave for 30 seconds.

DAY 4—SPUDS NOT DUDS

Microwave potatoes. Add shredded cheese, sour cream, and bacon bits. Tater tots can be loaded with the same toppings.

DAY 5—HOMEMADE SOUP

Add 1 quart chicken broth, 2 cups cooked chicken, 2 cups chopped carrots, ½ cup chopped onion, ½ cup chopped celery, and 2 cups pasta. Salt and pepper to taste. After the vegetables are soft, add 1 cup heavy cream to make a creamy version.

Followed by placing a yogurt in each bag in row #3. Add remaining fruits, veggies, and dessert.

Roll down the tops of the bags tightly to conserve space. The crisper drawer in the refrigerator is a great place to store bags. If space is an issue, empty the drawer quickly by eating bag lunches Mon.-Wed.

On-the-Go Lunches

These lunches make awesome food for when you need to be on the go! Keep a separate bag of water bottles, napkins, and plastic spoons prepacked in case

they're needed. Bag lunches can also be used in place of dinner if you have to leave during supper!

Lunch Tips

- Dollar stores have prepackaged trail mix and dried fruit: 4 bags for \$1.
- The dollar store also carries individual boxes of name brand cereal which is both portable and toddler-friendly.
- Buy in bulk; give your child a measuring cup and have him bag individual portions.

- Split lunches between two toddlers. Just write a "B" for baby on their bag.
- Scrambled and fried eggs are great foods for tots, as are diced cooked potatoes.



Bethany Russell and her husband have seven children. They homeschool in Ohio.



Language Arts Grade 3 Child Kit

See abeka.com/HSLanguage3.



Week 2 Menu

DAY 1—BREAKFAST FOR LUNCH

Place a sausage patty, fried egg, and cheese on an English muffin. I fry all the eggs and sausage in advance. Microwaving for 30 seconds before lunch will heat the egg and melt the cheese.



DAY 2—LUNCH-A-FULLS

Buy containers online with compartments. Large ice cube trays with tin foil lids work great for toddlers. Compartment ideas include entree (deli meat, boiled eggs, cheese, leftovers); salty (nuts, chips, crackers); fruit (berries, watermelon, grapes); veggies (cucumbers, carrots, tomatoes, broccoli); dips (peanut butter, queso, bean dip, salsa, ranch).



DAY 3—LIGHT LUNCH

A yogurt cup, string cheese, and an apple make an easy lunch. Buy flats of yogurt which fit easily in frig and are much cheaper when purchased that way.

DAY 4—MAKE YOUR OWN PIZZA

English muffins or flour tortillas paired with pizza sauce, cheese, and pepperoni are always a hit. Microwave for 45–60 seconds.

DAY 5—TOMATO SOUP OR CHILI

Add milk instead of water to canned tomato soup. Make fast-food chili affordable by adding veggie juice, dry onion soup mix, and sugar to taste.

Homeschool

EXPANDED
EDITION



This homeschool
is in a garage

Invest IN THE Space THAT YOU HAVE

EXPANDED EDITION • Back-to-Homeschool



Before



After

On a farm in northern Florida, Amy and Erik Paul homeschool their 7 children: Grace (15), twins Haley and Hunter (13), Tanner (11), Liberty (10), Landon (7), and Koa (5). Both Erik and Amy work from home. Homeschooling seven kids and growing two businesses can be hard to balance. But Amy has learned to use what she has.

Use unique combinations.

A few years ago, the Paul family combined business with homeschooling. This combination provided some of their best memories. Amy says, "We road-schooled our kids in a bus for over a year. We saw 38 states, got Junior Ranger badges, and walked Gettysburg dressed like soldiers. That was the most fun we ever had!"

Use the space you have.

After that, Amy transformed their garage into a vintage schoolhouse. "I loved the idea of having the kids in one room. It needed to be a kid-proof place where it didn't have to be picture-perfect all the time."

Use leftovers, old items, and kid help.

"Our kids painted all the garage walls and concrete floors themselves. We painted the walls first, so it didn't matter if the kids spilled." Erik is a master at keeping the cost down and using what they have. "My husband," Amy remembers, "used leftover wood for our chalkboard. He made the shelves out of old wood and chicken wire. We bought old barn lighting and spray painted it." Their garage renovation cost under \$2,000 and took less than four months to complete.

Use "pockets" of time.

Amy uses the pockets of time she has. "If you want something enough, you'll make it work," she says. "I wake up earlier than my kids to work for my business and then school the kids from 9 to 12. After lunch, while my little ones nap, my older kids watch a video and do one or two subjects. They have quiet time in the afternoons, and I work from 12 to 2. School is done by dinner. Then, I work again at night. Since it's that way every day, the kids know what's coming. They have structure and aren't all over the place." ■



The Pauls road-schooling

Homeschool GENIUS Use the *Space* You Have

These moms are using the space God has provided to create amazing homeschool accommodations.

ONE ROOM—DUAL PURPOSE

Jennifer K. homeschools five children. She made their space work by combining the school room with their office space. There's wisdom in having everyone busy in one room. She says, "If you have little ones, you understand why I say we 'homeschool' them too." A small space can become a blessing to a mom who has to multi-task.

—Jennifer K., FL



USE YOUR HOME'S DÉCOR

Jennifer W.'s goal was to have a schoolroom that flowed with the rest of their home's décor. To do this, she looked online for inspiration, had new wood floors installed, and made an art display that fit her style beautifully.

—Jennifer W., RI





Multiple monitor viewing is easier now.



MAKE USE OF FREEBIES

Connie S. was looking for a way to use their large basement to homeschool her six children. She took advantage of nearby office renovations and received six, fabulously *free* dividers. Now each child has an individual study space.

—Connie S., KS

HOMESCHOOLING AT THE TABLE

Jessica C. says, "I purchased two magazine holders for each of my children. When it's time for school, they grab their holder and carry it to the table. I grab the teacher's manuals and a binder containing Abeka charts and games. This helps keep us organized and makes picking up the table quick and easy."

—Jessica C., VA



Magazine holders organize the books.



Wall color is Valspar aqua ocean

COMBINE NEW AND USED

Laura C. set up her school room by mixing new furniture with compatible online or garage sale pieces. She says, "My desk is the middle one; my kids sit on either side. They each get two cubbies for school supplies. I store the books in wide 3-section magazine holders that I found on Amazon. They were black so I spray painted them white to match the furniture."

—Laura C., TN

Sometimes all you need to be more organized is a really good idea. Check out the ideas of these clever homeschool moms.

STICKY NOTE BOOKMARKS

"I use sticky notes for bookmarks to mark our place." With so many colors available, moms can color-code by subject or chapter.

—Melissa C., KY



FREE-STANDING CHARTS & GAMES

"For under \$15, I made a simple free-standing hanging display for our charts and games by using a double garment rack, a foam project board, and shower curtain hooks. Using a hole-punch at the top of the foam board, I'm able to hang up the charts on an easy-to-move stand."

—Amber R., MI

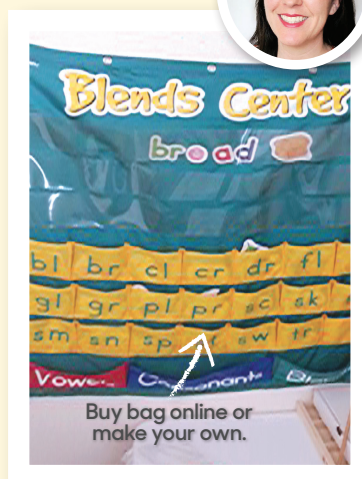


Editor's Choice
\$100 Winner

BLEND PRACTICE

"I help my kids practice blends with this blend bag." Make your own using a hanging jewelry bag with clear pockets.

—Liz M., NM



COLOR CODED BOOKS

"I add a color sticker to the bottom of the teacher keys. Vocabulary and spelling have a pink sticker, grammar has two pink stickers, and English Literature has three. For science, I use green stickers, and blue for Bible."

—Kristin L., PA



BRAIN BOOK FOR BUSY DAYS

"I put together a binder called my *Brain Book*! It's filled with assignment calendars, Bible verses, and a list of planned dinners. I use sticky notes inside the front and remove them as tasks are completed."

—Sarah G., VA



TEACH COMMUNITY SERVICE SKILLS

"I teach my children the skill of community service by taking them to nursing homes to read to the residents."

—Traci M., WV



These real homeschool moms are using the talents God gave them to brilliantly homeschool their kids.



A premade prize box helps a lot.

PRIZE BOX

We use a cute critter reward system. Once my kids accumulate 5 critters on the chart, they can pick a prize. Our prize box includes toys and "gift cards" for a special movie, board game night, or favorite meal.

—Becky C., NC



PEEK AT THE WEEK

"I post a colorful Peek at the Week Chart on the fridge." Entries include upcoming events and responsibilities.

—Connie L., WI



PRE-SORTED, COLOR-COORDINATED ASSIGNMENTS

"My wife color-coordinates and presorts each of our children's 170 lessons. When we travel, we can take the correct folders with us."

—Steve and Fayth T., WI



100TH DAY

"We break our year into 50-day milestones.

Here's how we celebrate 100 days.

—Anna E., OK



EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT

"I keep a list of fun ideas to keep my kids busy for when I need a couple extra minutes. Ideas include counting money in cupcake liners (amount written in bottom), buttons to represent scoops of ice cream, or making shapes with rubber bands and tacks.

—Kendra R., NC



Editor's Choice
\$100 Winner



Create a new back-to-homeschool tradition for your family this year!

1 HAVE A DATE WITH MOM

"I take my boys to a local breakfast spot where we evaluate the previous year and discuss our plans for the upcoming year."

—Jill D., FL



2 LATE NIGHT ICE CREAM RUN

"We put all the kids to bed on the night before school starts. A few minutes later, we march into their rooms blowing horns! Then we take everyone to get ice cream! It's our night before school tradition."

—Brooke W., TX



3 FIX IT

Fix everything that is broken: pump up the balls, fix the bikes, etc. before homeschool begins.



7 SWEET SWINGS

On the first day of school, tape candy to your children's swing set.



6 ENJOY YOUR FREEDOM

"Since we don't have to follow the local school calendar, we run to the beach and eat ice cream on the first day! It's still hot where we live."

—Elisabeth W., GA



5 GRAND ENTRANCE

Decorate the school room door with crepe paper. As each child enters say, "You are now entering the ____ grade."



4 GRIDDLE GRADES

Make pancake numbers representing new grade levels.



8 HIDE AND SEEK SUPPLIES

"While it's always exciting to shop for school supplies, we've found it's even more fun finding them hidden around the house."

—Hope K., NC



9 BREAKFAST PARTY

On the first day, decorate the breakfast table with streamers from ceiling to the four corners of the table.

10 PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Have a practice/orientation day. Each class is 10 minutes long.

11 SUNRISE EXERCISE

Exercise as part of your back-to-homeschool morning routine; everyone will work better.



20 Traditions

12 WEAR PJ'S ALL DAY

"Our sons get pajamas as a back-to-school tradition. They do their first day of school wearing them." —Jill D., FL



13 MAKE A SCHULTUTE

"When I was growing up in Germany, I always received a schultute. (It's a large poster board cone filled with treats and school supplies.) My kids love them as much as I did."

—Charleen, M., CT



17 SAVE THE DATE

Buy a calendar and a different colored marker for each person in the family. Write events in the appropriate colors.



16 WHO KNEW / NEW?

Ask your kids about the new things they learned and about what they already *knew* each evening at supper.

15 NIX OVERDUE

Staple library check-out list to calendar on the due date as part of your library return plan.



14 BACK IN THE DAY

During the first week of school, Mom and Dad tell a school story from their own childhood each night at supper.

18 HOST MEAL OF COMMITMENT

Host a meal in which each child lights a candle after being challenged to make a specific commitment such as finishing schoolwork without complaining.



19 RESET YOUR MINDSET

Every year before school starts, re-evaluate your expectations for each child and for yourself.



20 SAY CHEESE

"We decorate a small chalkboard for each child's first day of school pictures."

—Brooke W., TX



Invest in a

Whether it's your first day back or your first day ever, nothing beats a strong start! It's the secret to homeschool success.

Prepare Well

Homeschool success enjoyed on the first day only happens after careful preparation.

- ☐ When school books arrive, make each child responsible for checking inventory and noting missing items. When the kids were younger, I assisted.
- ☐ Set up a filing system for each child, labeling three files per subject. One file holds quizzes and tests to be taken. The second file contains tests and quizzes to be graded. The third file houses graded work used to create the annual portfolio.
- ☐ Carefully choose a start date that fits the family schedule. Be sure to avoid other big events.
- ☐ Start on a Wednesday. This decreases back-to-school stress.
- ☐ Two weeks before your start date, have each child clean his school space. Take a day yourself to get things organized. Visualize the "flow of operation" by rearranging children and their stuff based on current needs and physical growth spurts. This allows time to get new furniture, if needed.
- ☐ Since we use Abeka's DVD program, I have my kids do an equipment check.

- ☐ Plan a Back to School Bash. It can be as simple as a pizza party or as elaborate as a weekend getaway.

Make a Transition Schedule

Consider an abbreviated schedule to help overcome the initial transition weeks.

- ☐ **DAY ONE**
(Wednesday, half day) DVD, desk equipment setup; make a list of needed school supplies. Shop for supplies and enjoy lunch while out.
- ☐ **DAY TWO**
(Thursday, half day)
Lesson one for first half of subjects
- ☐ **DAY THREE**
(Friday, half day)
Lesson one for second half of subjects
- ☐ **DAY FOUR**
(Monday, half day)
Lesson two for first half of subjects
- ☐ **DAY FIVE**
(Tuesday, half day)
Lesson two for second half of subjects
- ☐ **DAY SIX**
(Wednesday)
Lesson three all subjects



Teresa Haughton has been homeschooling for 17 years. She has four children.

- ☐ **DAY SEVEN**
(Thursday) Lesson four all subjects
- ☐ **DAY EIGHT**
(Friday) Lesson five all subjects
- ☐ Incorporate the morning routine while transitioning: morning chores, personal devotions, hearty breakfast, and school start time.



Strong Start

- ❑ Keep things simple during the transition by deep cleaning the house in advance, making sure everyone is getting enough sleep, freezing casseroles for dinner, and providing an especially good breakfast.
- ❑ Discuss daily (usually at family supper) any issues or concerns that arise. Resolve these issues as soon as possible.

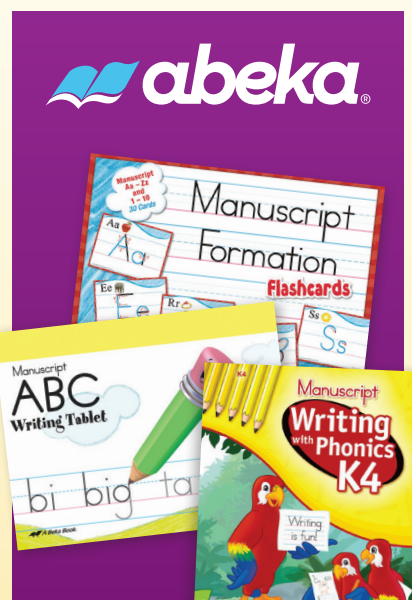
Set your children up for success with a strong start. Prepare well and provide a transition schedule with built in adjustment time. 🇺🇸

Meet the Weatherbee Family:
Alex and Kathiann with their
five boys: Benjamin (8),
Aiden (6), Ryan (4), Breton (2),
and Jackson (3 mo.)

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