

Getting Started: The Nuts and Bolts of Homeschooling

Starting to homeschool can feel a bit daunting at first. By following the suggestions below, I hope you can embrace your concerns and enjoy the journey you and your child(ren) are about to embark on.

1. Join a support group.

Contact your local Board of Education's homeschooling office (sometimes referred to as alternative education) and inquire about support groups and consultants. Also, there exist several mailing lists as well as Facebook groups that focus on different aspects of homeschooling. Google is your friend. So I would encourage you to google homeschooling and your state to find state-specific information. For example, "homeschooling" Minnesota if you are trying to find information about homeschooling in Minnesota. From the state website, there may be additional information for your county. Use the search feature on Facebook to find a wide range of Facebook groups focused on homeschooling from special needs to twice gifted, single parents, etc. In some areas, there are Meetups for homeschoolers. Check this out at [meetup - https://www.meetup.com/](https://www.meetup.com/).

2. Attend local homeschooling workshops and seminars.

There is ALWAYS something new to learn.

I realize that not everyone who homeschools resides in a metropolitan area with easy access to art museums and classical concerts.

If you are in a rural area, you may not have as many options regarding groups in your area. If that is the case, then you may want to consider what local resources you can utilize. You may find an organization or company that is willing to take students as volunteers or allow them to shadow a couple of times during the week. (horse farm)

3. DON'T BUY EVERYTHING IN SITE. BORROW FIRST!

I wasted money at first because I felt that I had to purchase everything for my children only to find out that they despised it and could not benefit from the materials in the least. Instead, I would encourage you to borrow from a friend and see if that item works for your child. Embrace your child's learning style and not the latest trend. You will save a lot of time, headaches, and money in the long run. Also remember: the library card will be the best in your wallet. You can adapt to your child's learning style, but you want to provide evidence of work/ learning.

4. Make a plan and use it as your roadmap.

I visited the local school boards' websites and reviewed the curricula for three grades: the grade that my child was in, the grade below, and the grade above. I generated a table and put the topics in the table divided by the subject.

The headings for the columns were subject, topic, resources used. This allowed me the freedom to teach topics in the fashion that worked best for my child. If worksheets and experiments worked for understanding rocks and minerals, then I did that. If a consumable workbook filled the need for grammar, then that was the resource that I utilized. I taught multiplication of fractions to one child by having her triple a muffin recipe. I made a note of that in the chart. By having the chart, I was able to see what we were doing, what worked, and how much time it took. Use the sheet below to help you with this.

One last piece of advice: do not feel discouraged. If you have a day that does not go as you had hoped, learn from it, and know that tomorrow is another day. Your child will thrive, and the family will learn together.

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