



Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

---

Author: Jill Boone

President of Insights On Education Home School Association

---

The material published here is for informational use and not to be sold or distributed  
without the prior and expressed written consent of the author. ©2006

---



# Table of Contents

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

<u>Topics</u>	<u>Page</u>
Curriculum Choices	3 - 4
Options and Methods	5 - 6
Organization	7
When to Teach	8
What to Teach	9-10
Flexibility	11
Lesson Planning	12
Record Keeping	13
Organize your Records	14
Sample Lesson Plans	15 - 17
Ready to Start	18
Begin your Journey	19



# Curriculum Choices

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

## HOME SCHOOL PUBLISHERS

There are so many publishing companies for home schooling; it would not be hard to find one that you like. The main thing to watch for is that you find one that works for your child, your family and your beliefs. Secular as well as Christian based publishers have their main focus educating your child/family. For example, if you wish to learn history based on the bible you may try a more Christian based publisher than say one commonly used in the public school system. Not to say you can't take a public school system history book and tie in bible facts or references. That is the beauty of home school – it is your school! That seems to be the most confusing part for many first year teaching parents, the letting go of institutionalized schooling.

## TRADITIONAL TEXT BOOKS

This terminology usually means that one book is used for reading, one for grammar and both are traditionally from publishers that the public school system commonly use. Both secular and Christian based publishers use the one book per subject often and are not uncommon.

*Please visit our website ([InsightsOnEducation.org](http://InsightsOnEducation.org)) for list of publishers you may find helpful when searching for what books/tools to purchase for your home school.*

## CREATE YOUR OWN

Most first year parents lean on publishers, like those listed above. After a period of teaching you may feel like the content could be better explained or covered from more of a unit study approach or hands-on approach. Parents are in the best position to know what their child needs and how they learn. Seek help from other families that have created some or their entire curriculum for assistance.

One tool that may help is to see what your State Dept. Of Ed. typical course of study covers for the subject you wish to modify or create to ensure they are learning what they need and nothing is being left behind. Very helpful if you test at the end of the year – that is the wrong time to learn you forgot to cover key points of a subject.



# Curriculum Choices

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

## CD / DVD

This approach can be used with all different styles of homeschooling. Use quality educational titles to help your child learn Science, Physics, American History, World History, Religion, Preschool skills, Music, Art and more. This is not watching television. A powerful movie can inspire a new interest or help your child develop a solid understanding of a complicated area of learning.

Some of the CD's you'll find in educational and office stores are not a full curriculum, but rather offer additional learning assistance. A few things to consider before you purchase years worth of curriculum on CD/DVD:

1. Do you want your child to learn online or offline?
2. Are you, the teaching parent, really involved with the step-by-step teaching process?

## INTERNET / ONLINE COURSES

Harness the power of the Internet by accessing virtual tutors, virtual schools, online curriculum, and quality websites. You need never feel that you can't find the help, expert advice or resources necessary to homeschool your child. There is a wealth of cutting-edge online curriculum programs, private distance learning schools, homeschool support academies and more.

Just be cautious when deciding to teach by methods that do not directly involve the parent on a daily basis. Also, ensure your association (or option) recognizes this method of teaching before investing.



# Options and Methods

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

*With home schooling comes many different options and methods of teaching. Here are few different ones for you to ponder...*

## **School-at-Home:**

Most families who follow the school-at-home approach purchase a boxed curriculum that comes with textbooks, study schedules, grades, and record keeping. Some families use the school-at-home approach but make up their own lesson plans and find their own learning materials. The advantage of this style is that families know exactly what to teach and when to teach it. That can be a comfort when you are just starting out. The disadvantage is that this method requires much more work on the part of the teacher/parent and the lessons are not as much fun for the children.

## **Unit Studies:**

Unit studies use your child's interest and then ties that interest into subject areas like math, reading, spelling, science, art, and history. For example, if you have a child who is interested in ancient Egypt, you would learn the history of Egypt, read books about Egypt, write stories about Egypt, do art projects about pyramids, and learn about Egyptian artifacts or mapping skills to map out a catacomb.

## **Relaxed or Eclectic Home Schooling:**

Relaxed or Eclectic homeschooling is the method used most often by homeschoolers. Basically, eclectic homeschoolers use a little of this and a little of that, using workbooks for math, reading, and spelling, and taking an unschooling approach for the other subjects. The advantage of this method is that the parent feels that the subjects they believe are most important are covered thoroughly. This method also allows the family to choose textbooks, field trips, and classes that fit their needs and interests.

## **Unschooling:**

Unschooling is also known as natural, interest-led, and child-led learning. Unschoolers learn from everyday life experiences and do not use school schedules or formal lessons. Instead, unschooled children follow their interests and learn in much the same way as adults do—by pursuing an interest or curiosity. In the same way that children learn to walk and talk, unschooled children learn their math, science, reading, and history. The advantage to unschooling is that unschooled children have the time and research abilities to become experts in their areas of interest.



# Options and Methods

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

## **Classical Home Schooling:**

The "classical" method began in the Middle Ages and was the approach used by some of the greatest minds in history. The goal of the classical approach is to teach people how to learn for themselves. The five tools of learning, known as the Trivium, are reason, record, research, relate, and rhetoric. Younger children begin with the preparing stage, where they learn basic reading, writing, and arithmetic. The grammar stage is next, which emphasizes compositions and collections, and then the dialectic stage, where serious reading, study, and research take place. All the tools come together in the rhetoric stage, where communication is the primary focus. (Curriculum Example: Tapestry of Grace)

## **Charlotte Mason Method:**

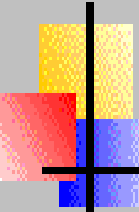
The Charlotte Mason method has at its core the belief that children deserve to be respected and that they learn best from real-life situations. According to Charlotte Mason, children should be given time to play, create, and be involved in real-life situations from which they can learn. Students of the Charlotte Mason method take nature walks, visit art museums, and learn geography, history, and literature from "living books," books that make these subjects come alive. Students also show what they know, not by taking tests, but via narration and discussion. This approach is also known as classical home schooling.

## **Waldorf Method:**

The Waldorf method is also used in some homeschools. Waldorf education is based on the work of Rudolf Steiner and early grades, there is an emphasis on arts and crafts, music and movement, and nature. Older children are taught to develop self-awareness and how to reason things out for themselves. Children in a Waldorf homeschool do not use standard textbooks; instead, the children create their own books. The Waldorf method also discourages the use of television and computers because they believe computers are bad for the child's health and creativity.

## **Montessori:**

Montessori materials are also popular in some households. The Montessori method emphasizes "errorless learning," where the children learn at their own pace and in that way develop their full potential. The Montessori homeschool emphasizes beauty and avoids things that are confusing or cluttered. Wooden tools are preferred over plastic tools, and learning materials are kept well-organized and ready to use. The Montessori method also discourages television and computers, especially for younger children. Although Montessori materials are available for high school students, most homeschoolers use the Montessori method for younger children.



# Organization

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

*Here are some helpful tips...*

## **Create Your Own Classroom**

Choose a room in your home to dedicate as your school room. If you are not able to use a full room, consider your dining room. Wherever you decide to school - be consistent! Schooling in the same area each day will reinforce to your child that school is a constant thing and expected.

## **Setting Up the Classroom**

If you are using a room you may wish to have a bookshelf with books on various subjects, like your own personal library. Maps and learning posters on the wall are great visual items. Even a poster showing the alphabet or handwriting samples are great tools for youngsters. Try to make your learning space as appealing as possible without being a distraction. As you outgrow your visual items - remove them. Dedicate space for items such as pencils, markers, paper etc. This can be as simple as an organizer on wheels or tubs on a shelf. Provide ample working space for each child. If you are using your dining table consider using a bookshelf in another room for your school 'stuff' and allow the child to bring to the table one subject at a time.

## **Establishing School Time**

Involve your child with establishing when your school day will start and end. During this time, devote yourself to be available to your child. Turn your answering machines on or turn the ringer down. This is the time of day that school comes first. You should be able to school during the time of day that works best for your family.

## **Establish School Rules**

Develop rules for your school that work for your family! The rules you set will help you keep on track with your schooling schedule. All children will, at some time, get up and go play instead of doing their school work. It happens. By establishing rules early, your children will be prepared for consequences when they do such actions.

## **Staying Organized**

Most parents will tell you that their school day is most successful when they are organized. This is very true, even for your child. Your child's books, supplies and learning space should (as best you can) stay organized.



# When to Teach

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

*Deciding what to teach is based on several things.*

*First is what is required by law and the next is what YOU the parent decide your child needs.*

*The law in each state varies... but the law in South Carolina defines clearly when a child should be enrolled in school (public, private or home school) as follows:*

## **STATE COMPULSORY LAW:**

### **SECTION 59-65-10.**

Responsibility of parent or guardian; notification by school district of availability of kindergarten; transportation for kindergarten pupils.

**A.**

All parents or guardians shall cause their children or wards to attend regularly a public or private school or kindergarten of this State which has been approved by the State Board of Education or a member school of the South Carolina Independent Schools' Association or some similar organization, or a parochial, denominational, or church-related school, or other programs which have been approved by the State Board of Education from the school year in which the child or ward is five years of age before September first until the child or ward attains his seventeenth birthday or graduates from high school. A parent or guardian whose child or ward is not six years of age on or before the first day of September of a particular school year may elect for their child or ward not to attend kindergarten. For this purpose, the parent or guardian shall sign a written document making the election with the governing body of the school district in which the parent or guardian resides. The form of this written document must be prescribed by regulation of the Department of Education. Upon the written election being executed, that child or ward may not be required to attend kindergarten..... *(continued)*



# What to Teach

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

*Next, you should be clear on what the law requires you to teach.  
Again, each state will be different; however, South Carolina requires the following:*

## **SC Home School Code of Law:**

59-65-40 (Option 1: Home schooling through School District)

59-65-45 (Option 2: Home schooling through SCAIHS)

59-65-47 (Option 3: Home schooling through an independent Home School Association of your choosing)

**Section 59-65-47** In lieu of the requirements of Section 59-65-40 or Section 59-65-45, parents or guardians may teach their children at home if the instruction is conducted under the auspices of an association for homeschools which has no fewer than fifty members and meets the requirements of this section. Bona fide membership and continuing compliance with the academic standard of the association exempts the home school from the further requirements of Section 59-65-40 or Section 59-65-45.

**The State Department of Education shall conduct annually a review of the association standards to insure that requirements of the association, at a minimum, include:**

- A. A parent must hold at least a high school diploma or the equivalent general educational development (GED) certificate;
- B. The instructional year is at least one hundred eighty days;
- C. The curriculum includes, but is not limited to, the basic instructional areas of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies, and in grades seven through twelve, composition and literature; and
- D. Educational records shall be maintained by the parent-teacher and include:
  - 1. A plan book, diary, or other record indicating subjects taught and activities in which the student and parent-teacher engage;
  - 2. A portfolio of samples of the student's academic work; and
  - 3. A semi-annual progress report including attendance records and individualized documentation of the student's academic progress in each of the basic instructional areas specified in item (c) above.

By January thirtieth of each year, all associations shall report the number and grade level of children home schooled through the association to the children's respective school districts.

Now you have the legal portion defined - you should feel confident to purchase the curriculum you have decided upon for your child. What? You are confused? Don't worry.... the next few pages will help you.

In the law it does state 'the basic instructional areas of...' but where was spelling defined or Government, PE or even a foreign language mentioned?

It is time to think **OUTSIDE THE BOX**. Yes, these are some requirements colleges will be looking for in graduating seniors and you should consider contact your college of choice to ensure all requirements were covered in the high school years. **[If you have a high school student - please read the next seminar book too.]**

If you have classes for your child NOT mentioned above in the law, that is fine. The main thing to remember is that the 'basics' are being taught.

# What to Teach (Breakdown)

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

## Elementary Students:

Math, Science / Health, Social Studies and Language Arts (Reading, Writing, Grammar, Spelling/Vocabulary) \*

## Middle School Students:

Math, Science / Health, Social Studies/History/Geography, English (Grammar, Literature, Spelling/Vocabulary) \*

## High School Students:

<b>High School Course:</b>	<b>Track I</b>	<b>Track II</b>
English	4.0	4.0
Math	4.0	4.0
Science	3.0	3.0
US History / Constitution	1.0	1.0
Economics	0.5	0.5
Government	0.5	0.5
SS	1.0	1.0
Physical Education	1.0	1.0
Computer Science	2.0	1.0
Foreign Language	2.0	1.0
Electives	5.0	7.0
<b>Total Credits Needed</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>24.0</b>

\*SC Home School Law (§59-65-47) requires the above. Parents are not held to the above as a minimum and *may* add additional courses as desired.

**High School:** Track I and Track II is based on law requirements AND compiled information from SC Dept. of Ed. state standards for curriculum and what Colleges/Tech. schools are requiring for entrance. Please check with your college of choice to ensure that you have taken their necessary prerequisites. [Please read High School Seminar]

*The key is to provide an education both with the law requirements and family needs and wants in mind.*



# Flexibility

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

*This should be one of your first spelling words. All parents while trying to start out and doing everything just so, should keep this word and its definition posted in your classroom area.*

**& Flexible:** *easily adapted to fit various conditions; easily managed.*

**There will be...**

*no two days the same*

*no two children that learn the same way*

*no one answer for everything*

*no to families that school the same way*

Having stated that - you can feel at ease knowing that whatever comes your way you will be fine. When these moments come - ***be flexible.***

***At home, there are no bells to tell you to change classes or when to have lunch. As part of your school rules you get to define your outline or schooling timeframe.***

***When one child is sick, let him/her rest and continue schooling the others (if you have more than one in home school). Why not school later in the morning or afternoon? Snow outside - go get out in it and enjoy! Your home school should be productive, but a reflection of your family. Most families will take days off that they did not intend to at that start of their school year. Or extend a vacation or holiday break. You can make this time up in the afternoons, weekends or add extra days at the end of your school year.***

***In the case of a child not wanting to do school - just not focusing for whatever reason.... take a break! Usually a walk or short break of some kind is all that is needed to regroup and start again.***

***Remember..... be FLEXIBLE!***



# Lesson Planning

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

## Prepare a Lesson Plan:

Lesson Plans are quit simple but very detailed. Lesson Plan books reflect what will be taught on any particular day/week. Some unit studies lesson plans are more extensive and reflect objectives for learning during the unit.

## Lesson Plan Books:

These are books that reflect an entire school year at your fingertips. This can be a purchased book or weekly sheets created on the computer and saved in a folder.

## Planning for the year:

There are 180 school days and 36 weeks in school year. Your objective is to plan each subject so it covers this timeframe.

Look at the index of the book you will be teaching from. If there are 36 chapters, then typically you will teach one chapter per week. If there are less than 36 chapters, you should view this as some chapters will take longer than a week to cover the content.

No matter how your curriculum of choice is designed, review it prior to teaching from it. Decide how long your child should take to review the material.

Plan out your first month of schooling and reassess after it is completed. You may need to adjust the remaining months based on actual performance in school. If you scheduled one chapter of (for example) science per week and your child struggled to get this done.... *slow it down*. Plan to start a new chapter every two weeks. If you finish before the end of the second week, then reinforce the subject with a field trip, activity or experiment.

Allow in your planning time for testing and review. If you are using a textbook you may wish to utilize the chapter tests provided. Or you may wish to create your own test based on content covered during.



# Record Keeping

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

*Each family keeps records differently and this will be an area that you find what works best for you and stick with it!*

## **This is my first year, what do records do I keep?**

Not trying to sound like a pack-rat but, all of them for now! Until you realize and become comfortable with record keeping - keep them all.

## **How do I decide what to keep?**

This first should be a directive from your state home schooling laws and your association. In South Carolina, your association should mandate all legal requirements for your option. If they don't, you may wish to consider another association as they should go hand-in-hand.

In South Carolina the law states to keep the following:

*D. Educational records shall be maintained by the parent-teacher and include:*

1. A plan book, diary, or other record indicating subjects taught and activities in which the student and parent-teacher engage;
2. A portfolio of samples of the student's academic work; and
3. A semi-annual progress report including attendance records and individualized documentation of the student's academic progress in each of the basic instructional areas specified in item (c) above.

## **Understanding the bullet points above.**

This point requires the retention of your lesson planning or whatever you are using to record students day-to-day activities and educational learning.

Portfolio samples of student's academic work (remember about being a pack-rat?) After awhile you will read the word 'samples' in a new light. Keeping highlights such as periodic daily work, all tests and quizzes, reports is fine.

Semi-annual progress report could be a simple report card style record. Insights On Education requires all members to return what they call a 'Scholastic Data Form' for each child at the end of the school year. Parents can use this form during the year to record all items mentioned in this bullet point, thus this is the semi-annual progress report as well as a year-end report. The 'Scholastic Data Form' mentioned is not however, does not satisfy bullet points 1 or 2.



# Organize

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

## Now that you know what to keep - how do you keep it organized?

If you have a large box you can throw everything in it and label it with your child's name and grade level. The problem with this method is later on down the road, how do you decipher the mess? Yes, the first week after school is out use the box method (only if you have not been keeping records organized during the year). When you have down-time you will need to organize the box, sooner rather than later.

Instead of this method, try being proactive from the start. Decide what kind of form your lesson planning will be: *book, computerized, printed weekly sheets etc.* Where you will keep student day-to-day work and how you will keep their grading on their academics.

If you are using software (purchased or created) to retain lesson planning and scores, you may find simply printing out quarterly reports easy enough.

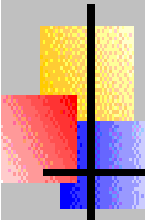
If your child is using notebooks for each subject, then you have them in stack. Just print out your reports and store with the binders.

If you have your child using notebook binder paper, you may wish to continue the binder method. Use a really wide binder with tabs for each subject for all their work (daily, tests, reports) and using your printed out teacher reports, place them in the front of each section and store your binder in the now large empty box.

Remember where it mentioned samples of work? If you are using the notebook binder method - you should not tear pages out. If you are using loose leaf notebook paper, be selective in the samples you keep. You should keep periodic work for each chapter, the chapter review/test and any other student reports on that chapter or content covered. When they get to high school you can continue this method; however, your retention of records will assist you in creating a portfolio of your student and his/her academic highlights for presentation at college admissions interviews. [Read **High School Seminar**]

*After the first year, you will become more understanding on what to keep and the importance of keeping the proper records. Will anyone demand records on your child five years from now?*

*Doubtful, but you never know.*



# Lesson Planning

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

You can purchase a teacher's Lesson Plan book from just about any teacher supply store, book store and even office supply stores. They will run anywhere from five dollars to twenty dollars - depending on the style and brand name.

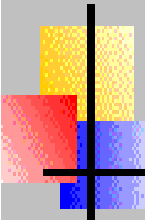
You could create your own or use a software to record the information for you electronically. Either way, they all should have a place to record the days of the week and subjects taught. Some home schooling lesson plan books will have more room for subjects.

Previously you read how to plan a lesson was covered. Now it is time to record it! Remember to be flexible and not to plan too far into the school year until you have a feel for how your child will do. Some publishers have their material planned out for you - which is a good thing and a bad thing. If your child gets for this matter?

The following are some samples of how to create or plan your school using material that has not been planned out by the publisher. If you are using your publisher's timeframe, it is best to keep to their schedule.

**Below is a typical plan for starting a chapter on a Monday and testing on a Friday.**

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Science</b>	Chapter 1 Lesson 1 & Q's	Lesson 2 & Q's	Lesson 3 & Q's	Activity p.19	Chapter 1 Test
<b>Spelling</b>	Lesson 1 A	Lesson 1 B	Lesson 1 C	Lesson 1 D	Lesson 1 Test
<b>Math</b>	Chapter 1 p. 4	p. 6	p. 7	p. 9	Chapter 1 Test



# Lesson Planning

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

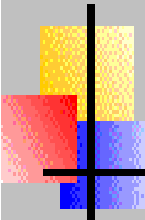
**Here is a sample that shows how to move the testing around so you don't have a full day of testing.**

Science test on Thursday and the activity on a Friday.

Spelling is completed on Thursday - Friday off.

Math test is on Friday.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Science</b>	Chapter 1 Lesson 1 & Q's	Lesson 2 & Q's	Lesson 3 & Q's	Chapter 1 Test	Activity p.19
<b>Spelling</b>	Lesson 1 A & B	Lesson 1 C & D	Writing Assignment	Lesson 1 Review	
<b>Math</b>	Chapter 1 p. 4	p. 6	p. 7	p. 9	Chapter 1 Test



# Lesson Planning

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

This sample shows how to schedule a day off during the week for a field trip or co-op, etc.

Just remember to be flexible in your schedule to allow for days like Wednesday. They will come up during the year that you did not think about when you first sat down to plan the year out.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Science</b>	Chapter 1 Lesson 1 & Q's	Lesson 2 & Q's	<b>Field Trip: ZOO Habitat Study</b>	Lesson 3 & Q's	Chapter 1 Test
<b>Spelling</b>	Lesson 1 A & B	Lesson 1 C & D		Writing Assignment	Lesson 1 Review
<b>Math</b>	Chapter 1 p. 4	p. 6		p. 7	p. 9



# Ready to Start?

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

Each child is different and therefore will learn differently. You may go through several different Reading programs before finding the right one for your child. You may use the same Math program for two of your children, but your third won't understand it like the others. It is okay to change curriculum to suit the child learning style!

Be ready for this in various areas. Some like the quiet room setting while another may wish to have music playing in the background. One child may wish to be at his or her own desk, while others may enjoy being at the same big table.

Be flexible for your child's needs. Schooling at home should be rewarding and fun for both you and your child.

Now you are ready to start! What? Not sure where to go for help with your questions? That is a myth that all home schooling parents would like to clear up. Parents that home school never have any questions!

Just kidding of course, you will. Consider having outlets for both you and your child. How many is the balance you will have to decide for your family.

Try searching online or in your local paper for a home schooling support group close to you. You should feel comfortable with this group as they will be with you during your journey. Find one that has parents with children in similar grades as yours with similar interests. You may find trying a few groups out best as you find the one that works for you.

Things to consider when deciding on a support group:

- *How often they meet for support*
- *Do they have similar teaching methods and beliefs as my family*
- *Do they have planned or scheduled activities during the year - what about summertime*
- *Is the groups true focus home schooling - or just a gossiping gathering called a support group*

You will add more criteria as you travel on your home schooling journey.

# Begin Your Journey

Getting Started: *The Home School Journey*

*You don't have to be just like the next person.*

*Find what works for your family,  
do it well and stick with it!*

