

Helpful Tips to Begin Homeschooling or a New School Year

Taking on the education of your children at home is life changing. The task can seem overwhelming at first! Here are some tips to help ease frustration, and bring balance and enjoyment to the process.

1. Keep your home a home! Instead of trying to recreate school at home, create a learning environment that encourages a lifestyle of learning within your home and family.
2. Ease into homeschooling or a new school year slowly. Start with just one subject for the first week. Add a second subject the next week, then another subject or two the third week.
3. Establish a routine, not a schedule. Regular routines help to build good habits. They are predictable, but flexible. Schedules are tyrants.
4. You are the master of your curriculum. The curriculum must not master you! Feel free to alter, postpone, rearrange, skip ahead, etc. to meet your needs. If the curriculum is just not working, put it aside and consider other options!
5. Use technology resources wisely. Do not become dependent. Technology is unreliable, and can set you back when there are maintenance and repair issues, or when there is no power!
6. Homeschooling builds strong relationships within families. Think of your role as one of facilitator and mentor, rather than “teacher” in the traditional sense. Often you will find yourself learning right alongside your child.
7. Minimize any distractions to your learning environment. Phones, televisions, computers and technology can really use up precious time and take us away from the important tasks at hand.
8. Don’t take on too much or too many extras at home or outside of your home. You do not need to tackle every subject every day. You do not need to go on every field trip. You do not need to serve on every committee.
9. Know when to depressurize! If you want to spend an entire day playing math games, do it! Flexibility and spontaneity make homeschooling fun.
10. Ignore the claim that homeschooled children are not properly socialized. Consider the true aim of socialization, which is to prepare children for responsible living and adulthood.
11. Connect regularly with other homeschooling families and the homeschool community at large. You need it, and your children need it.
12. Don’t assume that you will always use the same curriculum or method. You will be surprised at how your educational philosophy will change and evolve over time as the needs of your children and family change.
13. Make plans to attend the HOME Convention and/or HOME Used Curriculum Sale. You will have the opportunity to review a multitude of curriculum options, listen to inspiring speakers, and network with others.
14. Join HSLDA and maintain a current yearly membership. If school officials, the Department of Health and Human Services or any other individual or agency ever contact you regarding your homeschooling, you will be grateful that you are a member.