

Welcome to **HOMESCHOOLING**

A Guide for Families



Gain a better understanding on how and where to begin homeschooling, making the right decisions, and much more...

This guide is compiled and provided by:

TIME 4 LEARNING®.com

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Introduction

Chances are, if you are just entering the world of homeschooling, you are feeling a little exhilarated, a bit unsure, and probably somewhat overwhelmed. You are not alone! Many parents who make the decision to oversee their children's education have similar feelings at the beginning.

We at Time4Learning understand your concerns, and we hope that this introduction to homeschooling will help you feel more confident about getting started on this adventure. We also hope to share some of the



things we wish someone would have shared with us as new homeschoolers. In creating this guide, we asked many homeschoolers about things that they wish they had done differently, and of course, about their thoughts on what they feel they did right.

We never heard them say that homeschooling was always easy nor that they felt that they should do it forever. But most homeschool parents expressed satisfaction with their decision to start homeschooling.

Learn Your Reasons for Homeschooling



If you are reading this, you are considering a homeschooling journey, possibly for at least one of these reasons:

- + **Religious** – Some parents feel that the value system of their family is undermined by schools, or that they need to include more of their belief systems in their children's everyday education. This has traditionally been one of the larger groups of homeschoolers.

- + **Philosophical** – Some parents believe that today's educational institutions inhibit true learning and growth. Included in this group might be parents who believe that older methods of education are more effective, as well as parents who feel that they should take advantage of advances in technology to provide a better education for their children.

- + **Problem-Solving** – This group is the least evident in most homeschooling books or websites, but it might actually represent the single largest group. These parents had their children in school at one point, but they were disappointed by the experience. In trying to solve problems and do what's best for their children, they have selected homeschooling as the best option.

“*We were upset about the school and we were already looking for other options. John came home upset and crying again carrying a less-than-professional note from his teacher who again ignored the input on how best to handle our son. His confidence was deflated. We decided that he could not go back to that environment and to try this “homeschooling” thing.*”

This third group often starts homeschooling with the least amount of preparation. In many cases, the decision to homeschool is triggered by some incidents that bring to a climax years of frustration with traditional schools. They turn to homeschooling only because they feel that the system that they had relied on has let them down; that they are homeschooling more as an accident than out of conviction. Time4Learning has coined the phrase “accidental homeschoolers” to describe these families. Some feel that since they are

homeschooling only to help out their child, this sets them apart from other homeschoolers.

Of course, these three groups do not encompass every family that chooses to homeschool. There is an idea among homeschoolers that there might be as many reasons to homeschool as there are families that take advantage of home education. Your reasons to homeschool might be one of the above reasons, a combination of these reasons, or something entirely different.

Understand Your Child Academically

When starting to homeschool, many parents’ first instinct is to go shopping. Parents often start buying expensive curriculum prior to having a good understanding of what might actually work for their child. This turns out to be one of the most common errors that parents make. When a parent begins homeschooling, they must first understand where their children are academically. Parents should also consider their child’s strengths and weaknesses.

We would recommend spending two weeks working with and observing your child across all subjects while you consider your choices in terms of curriculum and programs. Time4Learning is a simple, low-cost resource for this exploration period. You could also borrow textbooks from the library or purchase new or used books.

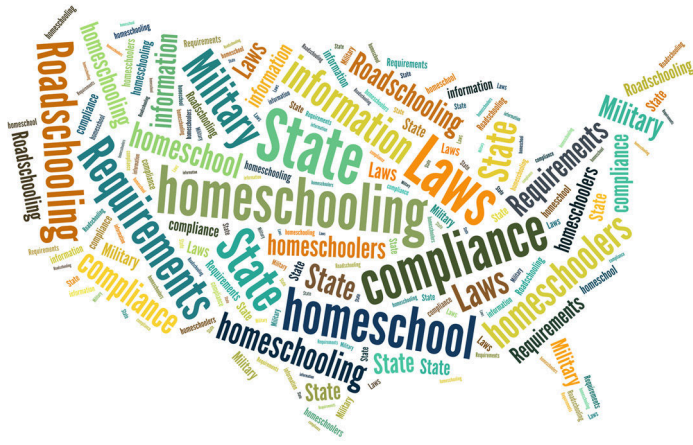
Talk to other homeschooling parents about the curriculum they use and why they chose it. This will help you to start thinking in terms of how your

child learns best and your teaching style. All of this will determine what curriculum works best for your family. See if you can discover what your child’s learning style is. There are some great books on this subject or you can also find tons of information online.

One mother summed it up perfectly:

“*We started off our homeschool journey this past June armed with a myriad of textbooks and lesson plans. I knew better. I had read thousands of stories of beginner homeschool families on the internet and no matter how different each was - what they had in common was the total over-purchase of teaching materials that first year. I couldn’t help myself though -- I have loved books and crisp clean new notebooks and sharpened pencils since I was a very small girl....”*

Learn The Laws



One concern that most people have when they begin to homeschool is whether or not homeschooling is legal where they live. Let's settle this once and for all: homeschooling is legal in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, however, each state has different requirements for compliance to the homeschooling laws.

State Requirements

Be sure to know and follow your state's legal requirements. Here are several resources to help you get started:

- + [Time4Learning's state by state forum](#)
- + [A2Z's Homeschool Laws and Legalities Page](#)
- + [Homeschool.com's "Know Your State Homeschool Regulations"](#)

Most states have Department of Education websites where you can check out the state's requirements and options regarding homeschooling. Note that each state may call home education by a different name. For instance, Florida's compulsory education requirement can be met in a number of ways, including by joining a private "homeschool cover

school" or through a "home education program". Other states might call homeschooling "umbrella schools", "charter schools", or "independent education".

Not only may states differ in the term they use for homeschooling, but they may also differ in:

- + The type and support of homeschooling options
- + Whether attendance is required
- + Which subjects must be taught, if any
- + What the qualifications of a homeschool educator must be, if any
- + What type of notice you need to give your school district, if any
- + What type of recordkeeping you need to maintain, if any
- + What type of testing is required, if any

Below are some examples which, while illustrative, are not intended as legal advice.

Florida offers three legal approaches to homeschooling. The first approach allows the parent to establish and operate a homeschool with no specific attendance, subjects, or qualifications required. The primary requirements have to do with notification to the local superintendent, maintaining of records, a portfolio, and annual assessment by an acceptable method or professional. A second approach is to participate in a private homeschool corporation otherwise known as a cover school. These students are required to be in school for 180 days but do not have any of the other requirements listed above. The third approach allows for the parents to hire a private tutor, where attendance of 180 days is required.

Texas provides only one option: the family must establish a homeschool as a private school. Texas' other mandate is that the subjects of reading, spelling, grammar, math, and good citizenship must be taught. There is no testing, recordkeeping, notice, or other qualifications required.

In California, the state funds charter schools. If you enroll in a "homeschool charter school", there is an advisor with funds to assist homeschoolers in getting their materials and resources. The other alternative in California is for a family (or group of families) to set themselves up as a private school, which is relatively simple.

New York has strict guidelines including state-administered testing and a specific list of subject matter to be taught.

To find out about your state requirements, you should first read the laws. Then, you need to find out about the interpretations of the laws. Be aware that many sources of "information" can be out of date or otherwise inaccurate. Also, in some states, there are different rules or interpretations by district. It's important to speak with local homeschoolers who can explain how it actually works. You might be interested to read how some of our members read and interpret the homeschooling laws for your particular state. You can find these write-ups in the [Time4Learning state homeschooling information pages](#).

Time4Learning can help meet state requirements by:

1. Providing a detailed lesson plan ("[scope and sequence](#)") for each grade and subject.
2. Maintaining student records that include: the time spent studying, the lessons covered, and the results of the ongoing assessments.

Military Homeschooling

It is important for military families to know that homeschooling is also legal for them. If the family is stationed within the United States, they must meet the legal requirements



for attendance and other education requirements of the state in which they reside. Military families outside the United States may also homeschool even if homeschooling is not legal in the country in which they live. Many military bases have homeschool groups that can be very helpful in understanding the local requirements for homeschooling. Additionally, the facility will have a school liaison officer who can assist in understanding the ins and outs of homeschooling.

Roadschooling



There are families who have decided to pack up and take their lives and education on the road. There is even a name for homeschoolers who travel either part-time or full-time: "road schoolers". If this defines your family, know that homeschooling is legal for you as well, though the laws are a bit more difficult to comply with. Usually, the family follows the laws of their official state of residence regarding homeschooling. However, if the family will be staying in one state for any length of time, more than a couple of weeks, they may fall under the jurisdiction of that state. Families should check with the Department of Education of any state where they may be for extended periods as they may need to adjust or adapt their homeschooling to be in compliance.

Learn About Learning



“Learning” is a broad concept that includes: learning styles, memory access, usage, metacognition (learning how to learn), as well as reading, writing, and arithmetic. Along with the aspects of learning, there are many teaching methods available to homeschool families. As you move forward, you will likely find a need to try different homeschooling methods at different steps of your journey. These include but are not limited to: literature-based, Charlotte Mason, Waldorf/Steiner, Montessori, classical, unit studies, and unschooling.

It is also common to eventually arrive at an “eclectic” approach, which mixes and matches some of those previously mentioned. Time4Learning believes that this eclectic, or mixed, approach is the most valuable in the long run since every student learns differently and therefore benefits from an education gathered from a variety of styles.



While it would be foolish to expect parents to master each of these educational methods, we do think that studying them **MUST** be on the parent’s agenda for several different reasons:

- + In learning about these ideas, you will improve your effectiveness as a homeschool educator.
- + Children evolve from year to year, so having an understanding of these ideas and methods will keep you one step ahead of your kids.
- + Each child within a family might benefit from a different method, or different combination of methods.
- + As a parent and teacher, our primary teaching role is that of a role model or mentor. Education starts with curiosity and the desire to improve. When children see that you value learning, they will respond by returning the investment.

Get Connected



Find some mentors and friends. Speak to like-minded homeschooling families and ask them what they do and recommend. Try to find local families with whom you can share ideas and activities on an ongoing basis. Joining a compatible homeschool support group is often a key to success. If you don't have personal contacts, try checking with your community library, watching the community activity listings in your local newspaper, or searching online for local groups (try Google - your city name - homeschool support groups).

Homeschooling support groups are not only important for camaraderie and advice, but also for providing outlets to group activities such as field trips. Some venues are not open for a single family to tour but eagerly open their doors for small groups.

Another way to connect with other homeschooling families is participate in a park day. Many homeschool support groups have weekly park days that offer play and socialization for both you and your children.

Diane Flynn Keith of www.homefires.com says:

“If you go to a Park Day at least three times and you still don't make a connection, then try another Park Day held by a different support group. You may have to travel out of your immediate area to find just the right one for your family. Be willing to make the investment of time and gas money to do so - because making connections with other homeschool families is critical to your long-term success in homeschooling.”

There are lots of ways to connect online with local groups. Don't be put off if some groups are a poor fit for you. Homeschool groups come in all shapes and sizes: large or small, formal or informal, religious or secular, special-needs-oriented or not, conformist or not, etc. Take time to pick the ones you are comfortable with, even if it means searching through several groups.

We recommend trying to meet as many different homeschooling groups or families as possible so that you are sure to find a few that you “click” with. Since the homeschooling world is diverse and full of strong-minded people, it is easy to run across a number of families who see the world very differently than you do. But eventually, persistent searching may connect you not only with compatible homeschooling families, but future friends for your children, as well as support for yourself. You can also link up with other homeschoolers in your state by getting involved in the [Time4Learning State Support Group Forums](#).

Go Online



Over the past 10 years, the web has exploded with information about all things homeschooling. There are fantastic websites with oodles of homeschooling articles, recommendations, and forums.

Some good starting points include:

- + [Homeschool.com](#)
- + [The Homeschool Mom](#)
- + [Ann Zeise's A2Z Home's Cool](#)
- + [Secular Homeschool](#)
- + [Let's Homeschool High School](#)

These sites provide a terrific introduction to teaching methods and materials that often include listings of support groups and cover schools. However, be warned that these mega-sites contain an overwhelming amount of information for a beginner. Don't be afraid to use these as simply a springboard for finding the specific resources and groups that will help you most.

In this social networking age, you don't have to travel far from your favorite social hangout to find homeschool support. Using the search engines

built into Facebook, Google+, Yahoo Groups, and Meetup, you can easily find other homeschoolers with common interests, locality, or even special needs. These networks are equally valuable when you have questions you need answered; homeschoolers are usually keen to offer advice, support, and resources that have helped them in their own journeys.

Time4Learning also has its own [forum](#) where you can discuss online teaching materials and how to best build a diverse or eclectic program for children.

There is a wealth of information that can be found online. Besides information on state education requirements, curriculum choices, and support forums, there are also education sites that will help supplement what your child learns. Here are a few examples that can help fill out and reinforce your child's education experience.

- + [Science4Us](#) - Quality science education online for grades K-2. It can also be used for review for older elementary students.
- + [VocabularySpellingCity](#) - Game-based vocabulary, writing, spelling, and language arts activities for K-12.
- + [LearningGamesforKids](#) - Free educational games for elementary students in math, language arts, and more.
- + [Time4Writing](#) - One-on-one, online writing courses taught by certified teachers for students from elementary through high school.

Plan Your Year

Once you've identified the courses or materials you want to cover, come up with a logical way of working through them in a school year. For instance, one grade of Time4Learning's language arts and math curriculum is comprised of 160 lessons -- just the right number for a lesson each day of the school year, while still leaving time for reviews, quizzes, additional practice, and days off for field trips or

other activities. While field trips and other activities might be time away from academic work, remember that they can count toward the accomplishments of a homeschool year. At the end of a month, parents might want to review their child's progress to see if this pace is working out. Remember to be flexible and adapt educational timelines according to your child's needs and accomplishments.

Plan Your Day

Most children do best with diverse activities, but a predictable schedule. Younger children will particularly want to know which times will be set aside for one-on-one work.

A sample morning schedule is shown below:

8:30 - 8:45: Opening of day - perhaps some rituals and a review of the day's schedule.

8:45 - 9:15: Parent and child working together in a core subject such as reading or math.

9:15 - 9:45: Child working independently - perhaps handwriting practice or memory work.

9:45 - 10:15: Break & snack.

10:15 - 10:45: Time4Learning math.

10:45 - 11:15: Time4Learning Playground.

11:15 - 12:00: Educational play with manipulatives.

Children in the intermediate grades may need a moderately expanded schedule, and some children will need more work in certain subjects or areas.

Of course, your schedule may look totally different. Each homeschool schedule can be adapted in a manner that will work best for each family



and each child within a family. There is no overall right or wrong schedule for homeschooling, rather, there is the right schedule that works for your family.

One homeschooling family with teenagers allows them to sleep until noon, with coursework being done between noon and dinner. After dinner, the students have homework, social activities, and personal time. In another family, the father is a remote contractor for a company on the other side of the world, so the entire family changed their day around so that they would be in school when he was working, and all be off at the same time to better facilitate family time together.

Use the Right Materials at the Right Time... And For the Right Child

We suggest avoiding any program which claims to be THE COMPLETE SOLUTION for your child. Each child's needs are different. NO program -- either online, video, or text-based -- should be the sole homeschool curriculum, especially for younger children. In this case, it is important that there be daily work in writing and drawing to develop fine muscle skills, hands-on work with manipulatives and fine arts, oral reading practice, social activities, and other areas that software, video or workbooks cannot address. Don't forget to include physical activities for health and fitness.

For older children, we would stress that our program provides a good core set of materials but is not a comprehensive education. And while it's tempting to select a single approach for all children

in the family, often what works best for one child, doesn't work for another... or what works for one child for one subject, might not work for that same child in another

subject. Sometimes it's just a matter of being burnt out on a particular approach -- what was once exciting and interesting feels stale and boring after a few semesters. Many families rotate curriculum and approaches so that every semester there is the thrill of a novel approach. For instance, one family uses Time4Learning every year between January and May as a supplement.



Stages of Homeschooling

The Preschool Years –



These are the years to play and have fun with your child. Remember that at this time, all play is a learning experience for them. Spend time down on the floor with little ones pointing out the letters on their stacking blocks, asking “What

color is this?”, and counting toys. Time4Learning's preschool program and Learning Games for Kids are fun sites to encourage learning through play as well. Part of learning at this stage is the development of motor skills, language skills, and memory. Your preschool child will be learning new vocabulary every day, but may not yet have the fine motor skills to hold a pencil to write with purpose. Some preschool students will be ready for short periods of formal lessons. Children in this stage generally love being read to. Reading to your preschool children broadens their horizons, increases their vocabulary, and encourages them to follow the developments of a story. It is also a lot of fun!

The Elementary School Years –

This can still be a time with plenty of hands-on learning even after you begin your child's "formal" education. This is one of the most magical times to homeschool. There will be no doubt that your elementary student is learning as you see the "light come on" as they master new concepts. Kids are learning to read, write and understand math concepts. They are learning the days of the week and the months of the year. They are also learning basic science. During this time, homeschool tends to migrate to a kitchen table, computer, or designated school room with moments of snuggling on the couch with mom or dad reading aloud, or long sessions of lego building. Don't forget to check out all the wonderful resources for homeschooling this age group:

- + Time4Learning.com
- + Learning Games for Kids
- + Science4Us
- + Vocabulary.co.il

The Middle School Years –

Middle school students begin to become more independent learners, but still require supervision to ensure that assignments are completed. They are developing interests of their own and are eager to pursue them. Some of these interests may well become a career choice later. Students at this age may spend a lot of time reading, working at the computer, playing sports, and hanging out with friends. They are developing critical thinking skills, and packing down basic math skills in preparation for the more advanced high school math. Independent reading and analysis becomes more important and language arts skills such as grammar and writing will be further developed. Many of the resources listed under the elementary section will continue to

be useful throughout middle school.

- + Time4Writing
- + Spelling City
- + Homeschool Literature

The High School Years –

Don't be daunted by the idea of teaching your high school student. It may seem like a totally different ball game from teaching your younger students,



but you'll catch on quickly. The biggest concern with homeschooling high school is keeping detailed and accurate records. Doing so will greatly simplify things when it comes time to put together a transcript and determine if your child is ready to graduate. Many of you are already doing this for your younger students. For high school, it's mostly a matter of learning how to track credits. There are great programs to help you keep records, either online or manually. Let's Homeschool High School has a great selection of templates to assist you.

When choosing courses for high school, it's important to first know the student's future goals. Whether the student is planning toward community college, a four-year institution, or plans on going directly into the workforce, their high school course load should align with those plans. There may be some courses that you do not feel comfortable with or capable of teaching your high school student. Examples might include chemistry, calculus, and physics. Don't worry, there are plenty of outside resources and instructors who can help teach the courses you feel you might need assistance with. Let's Homeschool

High School has a directory to help in your search for curriculum for your high schooler. Time4Learning.com provides an interactive, online curriculum for high school students as well.

If you've been educated in a classroom for most or all of your school life, then it is probably tough to picture what a homeschool high school day might look like.

If that's the case, meet "Sadie."

Sadie is a homeschooling 10th grader and this is her second year of homeschooling, so she is a "pro" at it by now, of course. Sadie happens to be a night owl, in a family of night owls, so homeschooling works out extremely well for her circadian rhythms. She doesn't usually touch her toes to the floor before 10:30 a.m. on weekdays. Closer to noon on weekends. But when she does get up, she has learned that she likes to get her least favorite coursework over first. As she shovels in milk-soaked wheat puffs, she studies her previous day's chemistry for her daily quiz. Her mom has

usually printed it out the night before and left it for her on the living room coffee table. Unlike many teens, she can't concentrate and listen to music at the same time, so she finishes her quiz and THEN turns on Pandora at full blast.

It doesn't take much concentration to browse her online assignment list for English and psychology, so before lunchtime, Sadie has rocked out and knocked out the better part of three subjects -- although she's decided to save today's chemistry reading for the evening, when she's expected to go to the gym to watch her younger brother's basketball game. Even chemistry is better than watching 12 sweaty middle schooler's run up and down a court.

After lunch, Sadie gives herself an hour to catch up on some TV she's saved to the DVR, and then it's time to work a while on her literature report. Plus, today is Thursday, which means she'll be headed to homeschool art class at the community center at 3:30. Sadie is passionate about art, so Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at art class are something she definitely looks forward to. Especially since her good friend Kara is also in the class.

The Perfect Homeschool



Close your eyes. Go ahead and do it. Imagine your perfect homeschool. It's different for each homeschool teacher, but usually goes something like this: your progeny sitting around the kitchen table or in a designated "homeschool room", eager

looks on their faces, books open, pencils poised, ready to take in every drop of educational nectar that you send their way. They are neatly dressed, have their chores done and are sitting respectfully still. Note that the house is perfectly clean and the smell of freshly baked bread is in the air. Can you see the picture?? It's a beautiful sight, isn't it? Almost like a Norman Rockwell painting.

Now, in your minds' eye, I want you to take that snapshot and rip it to shreds. The reality is that this image is a lie. Any veteran homeschool mom will tell you that this complete scene has never occurred in their home. So relax and do your best to go with the flow, because there will be interruptions. Your kids WILL complain and do their best to avoid school. There will probably be days when no one makes it out of their pajamas. Laundry will pile up and the house will look "lived in". But you will build relationships with your children, you will build memories, you and your kids will laugh together and cry together. And in the end, you will say that it was one of the most difficult but rewarding experiences of your life.

Don't Forget About the Teacher!



Homeschool parents can easily get burned out if they don't take time for themselves. It's important, first of all, to remember that being the homeschool teacher doesn't mean you can't learn yourself. In fact, letting your children SEE you learning new things is one of the best reminders to them that learning is fun and can be a lifelong journey. Make sure to also include recreation time for yourself, with your spouse or significant other, or with friends. Homeschooling is a lifestyle, but it doesn't have to define everything about you or your family.

Deal with Naysayers

Not everyone is going to agree with you about the idea that homeschooling might be right for your children. Remember the reasons why you came to the decision to homeschool. Have answers ready for the most common questions people may have, such as: 'Why are you homeschooling?' and 'How do you deal with socialization?' Stand fast in your

decision. Even if you have doubts in your own mind, remember that homeschooling does not have to be a life-long commitment. You might decide at some point not to continue homeschooling. As long as your decisions are the best you can make for your children, you will be making the right choice!



Here is an example of how circumstances and education can change the mind of a naysayer.

“ I was a naysayer, I thought homeschooling was a horrible choice, I spoke against my sister who homeschooled. Then circumstances changed and the traditional classroom setting was a giant fail for my daughter. She was bored, behavior was bad, sick all the time, and ahead of her class. She was miserable and so was I. Finally, my sister gently reminded me that homeschooling was an option. Amid many tears, I chose to explore the option. It was a miracle cure for what ailed my daughter. Seven years later, we are still homeschooling and I can't imagine any other way to educate!”

Homeschooling Glossary

Learn the Lingo

As you are beginning this journey, you have probably already noticed that homeschoolers have a language of their own. Here are some terms and definitions that will help you make sense of this new lingo.

Accidental Homeschooler – A term coined by Time4Learning to describe the homeschoolers who start on the homeschool path somewhat accidentally, and more through a process of elimination of educational options than a deep-seated desire to homeschool. Often, they convert from their initial skepticism to true enthusiasm.

Boxed Curriculum – There are many programs for purchase that provide homeschool families with a comprehensive scope and sequence, textbooks, assessments, projects, and timelines that are grade-leveled. These programs are prescribed and could be quite costly. However, they are helpful to a new homeschool family who would like guidance. However, what may work for one child may not work for another so a prescribed curriculum may not be the best route.

Charlotte Mason Education – Miss Mason was a 19th century educator who believed that education should be based on great literature and the arts. She believed in a leisurely, self-directed style of education based on observation and reflection, often through discussion and journaling. Charlotte Mason education is based on a lifelong quest for knowledge and skills.

Classical Curriculum – Classical households, seeking a Classical Education, generally require extremely structured schedules and lesson plans.

Classical Education – A process of teaching children to learn based on developmental phases and educational principles developed by the ancients. For the primary years, children learn fact-based information. In the middle school years, children learn logic and reasoning, and in the high school period, children develop the art of abstraction and persuasion, also referred to as “trivium-based.”

Common Core (Common Core State Standards, CCSS) – A set of standards adopted by states to bring consistency in education across the country. The standards were adopted to ensure that all students are college- and career-ready by the end of high school.

Compulsory Attendance/Education – Refers to the ages during which the state requires students to receive formal education.

Cooperative (Co-Op) – A collective group of homeschoolers working together for a common purpose. All members of the co-op must contribute in some way toward the end goal, usually this contribution is in the form of effort, not money.

Cover School – A school that enrolls homeschooling children or families and offers services supportive of home education. This type of school is also known as an “Umbrella School.” In some states, the term “Church School” may also be used.

Curriculum – The materials used for a course, which can include a textbook, a teacher and grading guide, lesson plans, tests, and worksheets. In an online curriculum, some of these elements can be integrated and automated.

Curriculum Map – A Curriculum Map (or a

concept map) clarifies how different subjects and levels of education relate in terms of sequence and dependency. For instance, it would highlight that to teach “two digit addition with carrying over” in one grade, the child must have previously mastered place value, addition, and single digit math facts.

Deschooling - Deschooling refers to the period of time, also called decompression, when a student (and family) adjusts after leaving a traditional school setting. This period can range from a few weeks to an entire year depending upon the student’s needs.

Eclectic Approach – A method of teaching that does not rely on any one approach but rather culls the best from multiple approaches.

Exclusive - A term used to describe support groups that require a religious declaration of faith or other criteria for membership.

Gifted - (see also Twice-Gifted) - A term used to describe exceptionally bright and talented children. Homeschooling offers a unique opportunity for parents to tailor their education to their children’s particular gifts and needs.

Homeschooling – Education in which the parent takes primary responsibility as opposed to an institution like a private, public, or parochial school. Homeschooling has a different legal status in each of the 50 states.

Homeschool School - A school to help support parents and to teach students in a homeschool context. See also Cover School.

Homeschool Support Group (Also known as a Homeschool Group) – A group of homeschoolers who interact on a regular basis for the purpose of networking, sharing resources and energy, providing opportunities for socialization and co-teaching. Some support groups are virtual (i.e., internet-

based), but the majority have physical locations and meetings.

Inclusive - An “inclusive” homeschool group accepts and includes all homeschoolers, irrespective of their beliefs or reasons for seeking an alternative to “traditional” education. Some religious homeschool groups require a “declaration of religious belief” in order to join.

Lapbooking (see also Notebooking) - An educational method that usually involves younger homeschoolers making “mini-books” about what they are learning. It provides space for drawings, writings, timelines, pictures, graphs, or stories on any topic of current study, and is designed to fit on a child’s lap.

Learning Methods - Learning methods focus on the way a person best takes in and processes information. There are many theories that look at the way a person learns best including:

- + Learning Styles – This includes Auditory (learning through listening and talking), Visual (learning through seeing), and Kinesthetic/Tactile (learning through movement and touch). When learning takes place through the senses, students gain a more solid understanding of the content.
- + Multiple Intelligences – According to Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences, there are eight different intelligences that shape the way a person interacts with information. These include: linguistic or word smarts, logical/mathematical or math smart, bodily/kinesthetic or movement smarts, visual/spatial or picture smarts, musical or music smarts, interpersonal or people smarts, intrapersonal or self smarts, and naturalist or nature smarts.
- + Natural Learning Systems – The five natural learning systems which were developed by

Barbara Givens include the emotional, social, cognitive, physical, and reflective learning systems.

Notebooking (see also Lapbooking) - A homeschooling activity where (usually older) homeschoolers catalog what they are learning through writing and pictures which are then inserted into binders. There are many notebooking page templates available on the internet.

Portfolio - A portfolio is an accumulation of materials that demonstrate your child's learning. Some items included are: logs (reading, attendance), assignments (samples from each subject demonstrated throughout the year), awards, certificates of participation, list of materials used (textbooks, websites, computer programs, resource books, etc), pictures of projects and field trips, writing samples (composition and penmanship), and other items that you feel represent your child's education. Portfolios can be online, in file boxes, in 3-ring binders (the most common), or otherwise. Organization is key. This is an ongoing process that your child should take part (and pride) in from the beginning.

Relaxed Homeschooling - Relaxed homeschooling is a term similar to Unschooling but takes more of a blended approach. Sometimes, their blend is required since they could reside in a state with subject and logged time requirements.

Roadschooling - An interactive, hands-on form of "home" education in which families hit the road and let the travelling lead the education and exploration. Roadschooling can be short term, such as vacationing to a battleground, or long term, where a family is on the road as a way of life.

School at Home - A common beginning method of homeschooling in which a family attempts to simply

recreate a conventional classroom education within their home. Many times, this includes a boxed curriculum and a rigid daily schedule.

Scope and Sequence - An outline of skills and information to be taught, typically organized by grade level or by course, which provides information on what will be covered.

Socialization (The "S" Word) - Many homeschoolers are criticized for not providing appropriate socialization, meaning the interaction found in a traditional school. In fact, as homeschoolers point out, traditional school's artificial grouping by age, grade, and ability-level, is a dysfunctional and unrealistic situation compared to the socialization of children within a family and more natural social groupings.

Special Needs - This usually refers to a child with any mental, physical, or learning challenges. The internet is full of support groups and information for parents who are homeschooling a "special needs" child.

Supplemental Resources - These are educational materials, field trips, and projects that are used to enhance the learning experience.

Textbooks - Textbooks are just one part of a package of resource materials that includes: a scope and sequence, an educator's manual with teaching strategies, a student book with content explanations and examples, and a practice workbook. These packages usually offer a re-teach (remediation) workbook or an enrichment workbook that focuses on higher level critical thinking skills.

Traditional Schooling - A term used by homeschoolers to refer to students who attend public or private schools.

Twice-Gifted - A term used for children who are

considered gifted and have some kind of learning disability. The term “Twice Exceptional” is also used.

Umbrella School – A school that enrolls homeschooling children or families and offers services supportive of home education. This type of school is also known as a “Cover School.”

Unschooling – Also known as student-led education or interest-led learning, this is a teaching method in which students study those topics that interest them, rather than follow a pre-defined curriculum.

Unit Study – A cross-curricular educational approach in which learning is focused around a central, common theme. For instance, a unit study on trains would teach the development and use

of early trains (history), train routes (geography), different engine types (science), train-based literature (language arts), train schedules (time and math), and so on. Unit studies allow children of different ages to study the same unit together but in different levels of detail.

Virtual Schools – A new term referring to the new online schools. These range from public schools administered as a correspondence school, to a range of highly specialized approaches offered by public, private, parochial, and charter entities. Some homeschoolers do not consider virtual schools to be homeschooling as the parents are not necessarily responsible for their child’s education. Schools generally need an additional accreditation to be specifically allowed to provide online credits and degrees.

Onward!

Homeschooling is unlike any other adventure you will embark on with your child. You are sure to have successes, failures, frustrations, and victories.

One mother summed up her experiences this way:

“ I was so happy when I finally decided to pull my kids from school and to homeschool them. We had four fantastic years together and the education that we all received was spectacular. In the fifth year, we got restless, and then, they went back to school. For us, it was a glorious time, but not a lifetime commitment. I look at both my decision to homeschool and then to put them back in school as the two best decisions that I ever made. I only wish that I had made each decision one year earlier.”



Time4Learning wishes you the best and hopes that you will find that by integrating Time4Learning’s computer-based curriculum into your day, you and your child are assured of learning that’s engaging, motivating and success-oriented. We hope that you will find us to be a “supportive shoulder” as you begin this exciting new venture you have embarked on.

Information on Time4Learning – Online Homeschool Curriculum

Time4Learning is an online educational system that provides web-based multimedia lessons, interactive

activities, printable worksheets, online assessments, answer keys, teacher guides, and progress reports for home education. Time4Learning covers preschool through high school with language arts and math. Social studies and science bonus materials are available for elementary levels while high school offers complete curricula for both of these subjects. Time4Learning’s popular modular approach (e.g. use one subject or all four) makes it ideal as a primary or supplemental curriculum. In some cases, Time4Learning is used as the core curriculum, while in others, parents are using another curriculum and supplementing with Time4Learning.