

Getting Started!

CAPE-NM Convention 2015

Your quick guide to getting started in the marvelous adventure of home education!

Facts about Home Education:

WHY HOMESCHOOL?

1. Spiritual:

What's your worldview?? Is it Man centered or God centered? What do you want your children to learn?

Man's wisdom -Teaching children is only for trained professionals

God's wisdom - Parents, train up your children in the way they should go

Man's - There are no absolute truths

God's - "I am the way, the truth and the life"

Man's - You are a product of random chance (evolution)

God's - You are the special creation of an all powerful and mighty God!

Man's - Children are a burden!

God's - Children are a blessing and a reward!

Man's- Women are wasting their talent and potential if they stay at home with children.

God's- Motherhood is a high and noble calling.

2. Social:

3. Family Relationships:

4. Flexibility:

5. Academics:

My family's personal reasons for home educating our children-

New Mexico Home School Law:

A. Parents/legal guardian must send a written (or electronic) notification to the Secretary of Education within thirty days of the home school's establishment and by August 1 of each subsequent year of operation for renewal.

B. Maintain records of student immunizations or a waiver form.

C. Provide instruction by a person possessing at least a high school diploma or its equivalent.

In New Mexico there is no mandatory testing and no need to report to your local school district. You do not have to report to anyone on your curriculum choices or show your child's work. You do not need to follow the PS calendar.

CURRICULA

SCOPE:

SEQUENCE:

1. Traditional/Textbook:

2. Literature and Classical Approach:

3. Virtual Schooling/Technology Based:

4. Unit Studies:

5. Eclectic:

"There are as many ways to become educated as there are individual fingerprints." John Taylor Gatto

10 THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A CURRICULUM

*(1-5 should be considered before you shop, consider 6-10 **as** you shop)*

1. **WORLDVIEW** - is the material written with the foundational (and doctrinal) world view that your family ascribes to?
2. **BUDGET** - How much can you afford to spend? Don't go into debt in order to homeschool. Don't be too cheap either- what is more important than your kids?
3. **FAMILY GOALS AND VISIONS** - Why are you homeschooling? Will this curriculum help you meet those goals?
4. **FAMILY LIFESTYLE** - Are you always on the go or homebodies? Do you have 2 children or 10? Is there a new baby on the way, twin toddlers or several teenagers? Does Grandma or Grandpa live with you? Your family lifestyle & make up will affect what works best for you.
5. **LEARNING STYLES** - What are the learning styles of your children? Kinesthetic, auditory, visual? How do you learn best?
6. **LEVEL OF INSTRUCTION** - This is especially important if removing kids from traditional schooling & bringing them home. What academic levels are your children at in each subject? What are their academic strengths & weaknesses? Do you need to do some testing to find out?
7. **PRESENTATION** - Is the material visually attractive? Is it too plain or chaotic? Will it appeal to your child?
8. **TEACHER MATERIALS**- Are they well laid out, are the materials easy to navigate? Are they easy to follow or overwhelming? How do they suggest you schedule your day, and will it match your time constraints? Were they intended for the homeschool mom or the Christian school teacher with 20 students?
9. **GET THE KIDS INVOLVED**- If the kids are older, talk them about your final choices & see if they have any input or preferences. You make the final choice but they may give you useful insight.
10. **ASK AROUND** - If possible talk to others who may have used the curricula you are considering. Read the online reviews. Remember there will always be someone who LOVED it and someone who HATED it. Look for reviews that give you specific pros and cons.

FINALLY: Don't impulse buy and don't feel bad if you make mistakes! Start with the 3 R's and then add in other subjects as you gain confidence. Remember, the time and love you invest in your children will have a greater impact on their lives than your choice of curricula!

STUMBLING BLOCKS TO EFFECTIVE HOME EDUCATION....

...and how to avoid them

1. **Relatives and friends** who make sure to tell you what a risky undertaking you are embarking on. They tell you all the horror tales they've ever heard about HS'ing. Even an unsupportive church can be a stumbling block

Know why you HS. Get informed about the benefits of HS'ing so you can support your decision. Make connections with other HS'ers. You may have to set up protective boundaries with those who remain critical -
"I'm afraid we are just going to have to disagree on this" (said with a smile & a hug)

2. **A lack of confidence** in yourself & your ability to educate, communicate and disciple your children. You fear that you are not being able to do this. Perhaps you fear you are not educated enough.

Build your confidence by reading helpful materials, get help from veteran HS'ers, join a support group and PRAY.
"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" Remember there is a lot of help available!

3. **Lack of a plan** - Without a plan you have no idea where you are headed or how you are going to get there.
"Without vision the people perish!" Proverbs 29:18

Devise a plan-*Without tracks the train will derail! Be flexible to change it as needed.*

4. **A lack of commitment**- "Oh I'll just quit if it gets too hard". Well, guess what? The truth is you will have days that are hard - so now you've just set yourself up to quit.

Make a decision to be committed. Walk your homeschool talk! Get support when you waiver.

5. **A lack of peace in your home**- Marriage problems, children who won't listen to you, a blaring TV, a dirty house, the phone ringing off the hook, Mom on Facebook all day, siblings fighting, etc.

Take control & turn off the TV (and computer, stereo, video games etc). Address sin issues of sibling fighting, disobedient children, and inattentiveness. Make your marriage a priority!

6. **Over commitment**- spending more time away from home than home schooling, AKA car schooling.

Prioritize & scale back. Set limits for yourselves. Learn to say NO (with a smile of course!)

7. **Keeping up with the Jones** - Comparing yourself to other home school families and feeling you're coming up short, worrying about grade levels and if you're ahead or behind everyone else.

Stop comparing! Your family is unique, you will always have some weak areas & some strong areas but you will always be growing and changing. Strive to "do all things as unto the Lord."

Frequently Asked Questions

This list contains some of the questions we have been frequently asked that we hope will answer one or two of yours!

CAN MY CHILD RECEIVE A PROPER DIPLOMA? Yes, you can issue your child a diploma. All New Mexico institutions of higher learning are required by law to accept HS diplomas. Many homeschoolers also take the GED in order to take advantage of the lottery scholarship. If a child is college bound, be sure to study your options before 9th grade. Laws are changing so be sure to keep up on them by joining CAPE.

WILL THE SCHOOLS TEST MY CHILD? New Mexico does not require homeschooled children to be tested by the public schools at any certain time. New Mexico does not prescribe any particular curriculum or course of study.

CAN MY CHILD PLAY PUBLIC SCHOOL SPORTS? Yes, homeschooled children are eligible to play on public school teams if the school deems there is room. A HS'ed child may participate in 3 sports per year. Speak to your local school district about this option.

WHAT RECORDS SHOULD I KEEP? It's a good idea to keep some records of your schooling although the law does not require us to do so. You are required to have your child's immunization record or an immunization waiver on hand in case you are ever asked for it. If you think your children may attend college they will need transcripts, so you should keep records of all courses taken after the 8th grade. There are many websites that can help you build an official looking transcript. It is not particularly important to keep records for younger children. When has anyone ever asked to see your 1st grade report card? ☺ A folder or notebook of some sample of their work, your favorite stories, drawings, is nice to have as a keepsake.

WHAT IF I WANT TO HOMESCHOOL A YEAR OR SO & THEN SEND THEM BACK. CAN I DO THIS? Public schools are under no obligation to recognize the courses your student took as a homeschooler. This is usually not a problem in elementary and middle school, as they will normally enroll your student at an age appropriate grade level. BUT when you get to high school you need to know that home school credits will most likely NOT transfer. They will only accept credits from an accredited institution or accredited correspondence home school program so they may want your child to start back at 9th grade or test out of certain courses. Home education of a high school student is an important long term commitment.

I WORK BUT WANT TO LEAVE MY CHILD AT HOME WITH BOOKS. CAN I DO THIS? Homeschooled children cannot educate themselves. An adult should be present with the students regardless of age. Older students can work independently, however they still need to be supervised. It is recommended that one adult be at home for the majority of the child's day. The relationship between parents and children is a critical part of successful homeschooling.

WHERE DO I GET MY BOOKS? There are many places to get your books/curricula, both on line, by catalog and from vendors here. There are a myriad of excellent homeschool materials available so take your time, do your research, and don't stress. Remember the relationships you build with your children are much more important than finding the perfect curricula. Don't forget to use your public library as a free resource!

MY CHILD HAS A LOT OF BEHAVIOR /SOCIAL PROBLEMS. WILL HOMESCHOOLING FIX THEM? Home schooling can remove your children from an undesirable peer group or social situation. It can build a stronger bond between parent and child. But it cannot solve all your issues. Changes require time and commitment. Counseling and additional intervention may be needed for more serious issues. A good support system will offer you additional encouragement.

CAN I HOMESCHOOL MY LEARNING CHALLENGED OR DISABLED CHILD? YES! In fact home education is great for children who have learning challenges because you can tailor their education to their needs. We can go as slow or fast as our kids need us too. Some children require additional intervention with learning disabilities. But HS parents have successfully educated children with disabilities of all kinds.

I WANT TO HS BUT MY SPOUSE DOESN'T... SHOULD I DO IT ANYWAY? As gung-ho as we are about home education we don't advise starting on this journey unless both partners are willing to give it a go. You don't have to be in exactly the same place or have exactly the same feelings about it but you both need to be willing to give it a good try. If one partner is skeptical and expecting it to fail that may set up problems in the parent's relationship which can be harmful to the marriage. If your spouse is completely opposed I suggest you wait, discuss and pray together about the idea until you come to a place of more mutual agreement.