

## Basics For Beginning Homeschoolers

When thinking about starting to homeschool keep in mind one important thing: there is not just one right way. One of the great advantages of home education is its extreme flexibility. Each family is free to choose from among many excellent options the educational philosophies, methods, materials, and schedules that best suit its needs. A rudimentary understanding of these and other issues basic to home education will empower parents to make choices that will lead to their success.

Consideration can be given to preferences in teaching and learning styles; students' developmental levels, strengths, and weaknesses; the teacher's knowledge, experience, and confidence; the family's resources of time and money; and the number of children.

There truly is not just one right way to home school or one best curriculum for everyone. Whatever your individual situation, there are multiple solutions that can make home schooling a blessing to your family.

One of the more important things to do when beginning homeschooling is to set goals and work towards accomplishing those goals.

Write out and post general long-range goals, making them more specific as individual strengths or callings appear.

Make a flexible plan for reaching these goals, for example, high school courses by age 17 or 18; college degree, trade proficiency, and/or professional certification in 20s. Break down goals into objectives to be reached each year, quarter, month, or week, leaving details to be planned close to the time for implementation.

Prioritize goals and make your schedule reflect your priorities. Set an example by working toward your own goals and welcoming evaluation.

Carefully teach skills, allowing time for supervised and then independent practice. Hold children responsible for diligence during allotted work times. Frequently evaluate progress and update goals.

Here are some areas to focus on when setting goals:

### 1. Academics

Basic skills, such as reading, writing, math, logic, must be mastered so children can acquire and communicate knowledge in other subjects. Meet and exceed legal requirements, using the efficiency of home education to achieve excellence.

### 2. Social

Social skills include understanding others, communication, cooperation, managing conflict, leadership, and lovingly meeting the needs of others. There are many opportunities to practice social skills in the context of normal family life within the home, church, and community.

### 3. Practical

Life skills that should be acquired include the ability and willingness to work cheerfully and efficiently without supervision, following instructions and discharging responsibilities. Many practical skills can be learned over the years.

### 4. Physical

Good stewardship of our bodies includes establishing habits of nutrition, hygiene, and exercise that maintain health and fitness for all family members.

Homeschooling is a wonderful family focus and a successful and fulfilling endeavor with just a little planning.

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## About the Author

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