

Curriculum Planning



Homeschool Curriculum Planning

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Compiled and published by: iHomeschool Network Publishing

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Shop your shelves



Before browsing that big stack of homeschool catalogs, shop your shelves! There are probably a lot of forgotten gems in your own home library. Using what you have saves money and saves time. I love to research and shop for curriculum as much as the next mom, but weighing the pros and cons of all the different options can paralyze you with indecision. Know that most anything you choose (within some basic parameters) is going to work for your child. You aren't going to ruin your child's education by choosing the wrong math program or writing curriculum. So study and choose wisely, but don't obsess.

Jimmie Lanley, [Jimmie's Collage](#)

Look at the real thing



When you're looking at your new curriculum for the year talk to homeschool friends to see if they like it, and then if you can look at an actual physical copy. I've had some curriculum I was sure was a good match until I saw the actual curriculum. Then curriculum I'd discounted became my favorite once I got my hands on the actual book.

Ticia Messing, [Adventures in Mommydom](#)

Is the curriculum working



An important thing to consider is your workload. Is your curriculum really working for you? If it leaves you feeling behind, you may need to cut back or completely change what you're doing. You do not have to finish what you're doing. You can make changes as you go, even mid-year. Also, don't feel pressured to finish something because your end-of-year is approaching. You don't have to finish.

Michelle Cannon, [Heart of Michelle](#)



Don't fret about time

“ A reader shared this genius tip with me last year: Don't feel like you have all of your curriculum choices made by a certain date or else. If you need extra time to choose a science curriculum, take it! It won't hurt anything to start one subject a month or two later than everything else. That's a much better option than purchasing curriculum that's a bad fit only because you feel like time is running out.

Emily Copeland, [Life at the Table](#)

Plan weekly

“ During the summer I sit down with all of my curriculum and get a general idea of what is going on for the year, times we'll take a break, and browse Pinterest for any ideas to keep in mind. Then each week on Sunday night I sit down with my notes, Pinterest, and my Illuminations planner and fill out specifics for the week.

Ticia Messing, [Adventures in Mommydom](#)

Delegate and then plan some fun

“ I often feel like if I am not teaching our homeschool lessons then I am planning our homeschool lessons. Two things I try to keep in mind: 1. Delegate as much of the printing, hole punching, and copying to your kids. 2. In the midst of all the academic choices...don't forget to plan some fun! After the major curriculum choices are done I focus on Fun Homeschooling.

Stacey Lane, [Layered Soul](#)

There is no perfect curriculum

“ What works for one child may not work for another and what works for one family isn't guaranteed to work for yours. This means that at some point you will probably buy something that doesn't work for your family. That is okay! It also means you may buy something and love it! But, your kids may not, or it may not fit your child's needs a year or two down the road. When this happens, remember that it is okay. You can ditch it, and move on to something that better fits your family's needs.

Misty Bailey, [Joy in the Journey](#)

Use flexible curriculum

“ When it comes to choosing curriculum for a new school year, take the time to consider what worked and didn't work last year. As your children grow and their interests and learning styles change, it is important to take this into consideration, when choosing what to study. I also like to make sure the curriculum can be flexible enough to fit our crazy schedule. For me, it is important that I shop around, don't rush, do my research and don't be afraid to chuck it if it doesn't work for me!

Jen, [Practical, By Default](#)



Curriculum that gives you confidence

“ You should consider your child’s learning style when choosing curriculum, but if you find a program that you are comfortable using, it will be easier to adapt it for your child. Once in a while, I find the program that just resonates with me, as a teacher, and it gives me the confidence to do my job well.

Tonia Lyons, [The Sunny Patch](#)

Rotate subjects

“ You don’t have to do every subject every day. We start with reading, language arts, and math every day. Then we work in and rotate the other subjects throughout the week. This makes the load much more bearable. Realizing that you don’t have to do every subject every day will also build some margin in your schedule for fun activities like field trips and nature walks that everyone will enjoy.

Jennifer Janes, [Jennifer A. Janes](#)

Icing on the cake



Whatever you decide to include or exclude in your homeschool day, remember this – as a parent, fully involved in your children’s teaching, training and instruction in righteousness, you are already doing the absolute best in the way of educating your children and ministering to their hearts that you can. Everything else is just icing on the cake. So let go of the expectations and pressure you’re placing on yourself, and stop comparing with others. Get a bit creative, let the kids choose what to learn about, drop everything and read, and above all, have fun!

Lauren Mirecki, [Serving From Home](#)

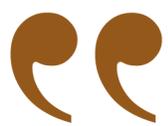
Yearly marathon



I try to get as much done as possible during my yearly planning marathon. I clean our homeschool place, toss papers from the previous year, organize supplies, sell old books, print reviews, quizzes, tests, project lists, and extra work pages. It does take time, and you will be using a lot of ink and paper as well, but you will save hours and headaches through the school year having done it this way.

Sam Kelley, [Sam's Noggin](#)

No shortage of choices



Many new homeschooling parents wonder what they’re supposed to teach their children. Luckily, there is plenty of help available. No matter the subject, there is no shortage of choices. You can purchase lessons already planned and ready to go, you can design your own, or do something in between. You can even follow the traditional school plan if you’d like. You also have the freedom to use your child’s interests as a basis for your lesson plans.

Megan Zechman, [Education Possible](#)



Develop your own plan

“ Homeschooling can look very different for every family. I am a firm believer in adjusting to seasons of life and not comparing yourself with another family. What works for one would be absolute chaos for another. Deciding on a plan for your school is a decision only you can make. Sure, you can gather ideas from blogs and books, but ultimately you must figure out what will work for you and your family.

Carisa Hinson, [1+1+1=1](#)

Grab a calendar

“ Don't pull out that planner just yet. Grab a pencil and a simple calendar. Mark any days you are sure you want to take off for the year, like holidays, birthdays, etc. Now do the same with any planned breaks. At this point, you can grab your books and see how many weeks each of your subjects require, or if there are only lesson numbers, decide how many weeks you plan to complete those.

Sam Kelley, [Sam's Noggin](#)

What is your budget?



As stinky as that word can be, it can also help you reign in any crazy spending. Sit down and set a budget and know your spending limits. Homeschooling isn't always free, although there are ways to save money. It's always helpful to know the retail cost of a curriculum or book and have it handy. That way if you find a great deal on something you need, you know to snatch it up {and if you have the money to do so!}. Also consider purchasing pieces of curriculum that can be re-used with future children and ones that have a great resale value.

Jolanthe Erb, [Homeschool Creations](#)

Schedule around appointments



I need to plan our school days or I can't get anything done! I set aside a block of time once a month on a Saturday when my husband can corral the kids and I plan out the next 4 weeks of our homeschool. I look at our calendar and so I can schedule around any appointments that have been made, and I make sure to have at least 1 field trip planned - even if it's an outing to the park. I use a folder system with a [daily planning page](#) that allows me to have everything I need at my fingertips for each school day.

Aurie Good, [Our Good Life](#)

Put Pinterest to work



Think of Pinterest as a gathering place for countless ideas and resources for your homeschool because lots of parents, publishers, and teachers share free resources there. The key is to know what you're looking for before you get started. That way you don't get lost in the sea of new recipes and home decorating tips while you're trying to plan for your homeschool.

Emily Copeland, [Life at the Table](#)



Don't search for the elusive

“ I have a little secret I want to share with you. There is no such thing as the perfect curriculum. Let go of that notion and take a deep breath. Finding the one that is good enough and doing a little bit every day will be more successful than constantly searching for that elusive perfect curriculum. Set goals, find things that will help you teach to those goals, and let the rest go.

Tonia Lyons, [The Sunny Patch](#)

One-on-one scheduling

“ Schedule time to work one-on-one with each child every day. It doesn't have to be long, but even the most independent learners have questions, need your input, and want to know that you're as engaged in their learning as you are in their struggling sibling's. When possible, combine classes like science and social studies to cut down on your prep time and having to teach the same subject twice.

Jennifer Janes, [Jennifer A. Janes](#)

Encourage independence



We all want to inspire self confidence and independence in our children, so guiding our little homeschoolers into taking charge of their own work is a great goal to have in your homeschool day. It also can bring moments of hope for the mom juggling multiple kids' schoolwork. When your early learner is reading and ready to start following simple assignment tasks, [these printable curriculum bookmark guides](#) can help them self direct their school day. Cut and laminate for continual use, then use a wet erase marker to let them know what to do for each subject and slip them into their books. They'll love reading their assignments and seeing what they can do without mom!

Christy Lynn, [PK1HomeschoolFUN](#)

Tackle one subject at a time



I sit down with all of my curriculum and starting with one student and one subject, I write down which days we'll do that subject and how long each one will take. Then I fill out a sample calendar week so that I can have an overall view of what it will look like. That helps when creating a daily schedule that is realistic and not too overwhelming for both myself and my student. I usually start by listing which subjects I'm planning to teach, then tackle one at a time. I will research curriculum for each subject and list my top 2-3 picks. Then I review them with my husband and we choose what we think will work best based on our families needs that year. It's really helped take some of the pressure off of me in choosing our curriculum.

Erica Arndt, [Confessions of a Homeschooler](#)



Budgetary woes

“ In times of financial crises, your budget simply may not allow for new curriculum, shiny new school supplies, and all of the fun things that come along with homeschooling. The good news is that homeschooling is absolutely possible even when new purchases aren't. It may take some time and research, but you might be surprised by just how many options there are for low-cost homeschooling!

Emily Copeland, [Life at the Table](#)

Choose a focus subject

“ I choose a focus subject for each new homeschool year. We might concentrate on history, tackle grammar rules, or work on nailing down math facts. We still do all of our other subjects, but I make that one subject a priority – the one we do no matter what! Use this method to focus on something that has been falling through the cracks, like music or art, and give it a high priority for a year.

Amy Toombs, [Amy's Wandering](#)

Set a balance



One of my biggest tips for choosing curriculum is to make sure to get a well balance between teacher led curriculum and student independent work. Especially if you have multiple students! If you choose too many teacher intensive things you'll be burnt out by the end of the first week of school! Adding in some independent subjects will teach your students the valuable lesson of taking ownership in their education, improve their self-motivation, and teach them the independence they'll need for higher grades.

Erica Arndt, [Confessions of a Homeschooler](#)

Don't forget extracurriculars



I spend more on my children's sports and enrichment programs than I do on our homeschooling curriculum. Extracurricular activities can offer homeschool students a way to meet new friends, explore their passions, try something new, or simply blow off steam. I'm looking at it as an investment into our children's lives. Once you've given some thought to what type of extras you want to explore and how you'll fit the extras into your schedule, the next hurdle is cost.

Dianna Kennedy, [The Kennedy Adventures](#)

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