

Winter 2011

# The Virginia Home Educator

🏠 Home Educators Association of Virginia News Magazine

*Answering your*  
HOMESCHOOL QUESTIONS



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The purpose of the *Virginia Home Educator* is to  
provide information, resources, and encouragement to  
Virginia homeschool parents. The views  
expressed in this magazine do not necessarily  
reflect those of the Home Educators Association of  
Virginia. All Scripture quotations are from the King  
James Version unless otherwise noted.

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Winter 2012 (Issue 4)—September 15

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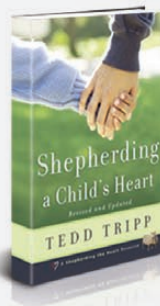
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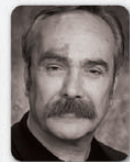
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# HOME EDUCATION: *Touching the* HEART

HEAV's 29th Annual Virginia Homeschool Convention ■ Richmond Convention Center



### DR. TEDD TRIPP



Don't miss hearing Dr. Tripp, author of the popular child-rearing book *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. His books, videos, and audio materials are used throughout the world—and after hearing him, you'll know why!



### HAL & MELANIE YOUNG RAISING REAL MEN



### DR. JASON LISLE



Wondering how to defend your faith... and how to teach your children to defend their faith? Astrophysicist Jason

Lisle of *Answers in Genesis* and *Master Books* will be part of a **Creation Apologetics Track** at this year's convention. Learn to defend your faith as you grow in awe of the Creator! Bring your teens!



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*plus...*

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## Topics include...

- Homeschool Topics (Math, Reading, Science, History, etc.)
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## FROM THE EDITOR

Mary Kay Smith

**T**his fall brought a big shock to my system as I said goodbye to all three of my children within a two-week time span. My son got married and moved, my oldest daughter graduated from college and became a professional ballerina, and my youngest graduated from high school and went to college. My kids didn't just move out either; all of them ended up in the next time zone!

This is a new life—one in which I've learned that dust accumulates more quickly in unused spaces, I have to remember to set a table just for two, the song "Ain't No Sunshine When She's/He's Gone" comes unbidden to me at inopportune times, and I no longer have enough pink clothes to do an entire load of laundry.

But like many former homeschool moms, I am still in the "homeschool world" and want to continue to encourage you to stay there too. That is what this issue is about.

After the convention this past summer, I read through the comments and concerns shared in the survey. It seemed to me that many of them could be answered by a "visit to my living room." So I gathered some friends who also have been homeschooling for a very long time and asked them to help me consider your most common homeschool questions. Just pretend you're relaxing with us over tea, and we'll answer the best we can. Remember that these are only opinions; we are sharing what has worked for us. Each family is unique, so seek the Lord for what will or won't work for your family.

Our panel of friends includes these fun, special women—women just like you:

**Laura Baldwin**, mother of six, runner, swim team mom, bookworm, co-op teacher, British literature whiz, humorist.

**Melissa Barnes**, writing teacher, swim taxi driver, Starbucks post-girl, benefactor of young musicians, book collector, mother of five, reluctant cohabitant of reptiles, daily forgiven child of the King.

**Vicki Bentley**, HSLDA Toddlers to Tweens consultant and Group Services director, owner of **EverydayHomemaking.com**, mom to many, grandma to more, cook, baker, a woman who knows no strangers—only friends she hasn't met.

**Yvonne Bunn**, homeschool conference speaker, HEAV's director of homeschool support and government affairs, researcher, counselor for new homeschoolers, traveler for HEAV, knitter, mother of five, grandmother of eleven.

**Kathy Kuhl**, writer and speaker who helps parents assist children with learning challenges (check out <http://learndifferently.com>), mother of two, new empty-nester, traveler, Wallace and Gromit fan.

**Katherine Loop**, homeschool graduate, sister, author (check out [www.christianperspective.net](http://www.christianperspective.net)), reading and learning enthusiast, tea enjoyer.

**Karen Montgomery**, support-group initiator and leader, non-profit volunteer, library friends chairperson, bookworm, uncompensated Apple product spokesperson, mother of three.

**Mary Kay Smith**, writer and editor, educational event planner, bookworm, Precepts Bible student, habitat gardener, mother of three, lover of koalas, orangutans, and frogs. ☺

## Letters

### CRISIS IN HOMESCHOOLING

Wow, HEAV! I'm impressed. Your article in the last magazine blew me away. Many of the thoughts Reb Bradley addressed have been on my mind a lot lately. I'm so thankful you published his article. I hope it is an encouraging and wise word to every homeschooling family that reads it. It certainly was to me.

Thank you,  
Donna Bruton, Fredericksburg

I'm reading Reb Bradley's great article. How wise of you to give this such prominence. Parts remind me of Paul Tripp's great book *Age of Opportunity*. Thank you for publishing this!

Kathy Kuhl, *LearnDifferently.com*

*Editor's note: Reb's article has obviously touched a chord with many Christian families. We've had many reprint requests, Josh Harris picked it up and posted it on his blog, and many people*

*have linked to the article on their Facebook pages. Reb reported to us that since the article was published, he has had many people contact him and has had requests for several radio interviews.*

### THANKS TO HEAV

With eleven years of homeschooling, our family has benefited from the fruit of your labors. I just want you to know how much I appreciate all of your hard work.

Thank you! Annette Holloway

I joined HEAV before I started homeschooling and will continue to be a member. I love the information you pass on to me and the support I know is always there when I need it. This is a necessity to me and not a frivolous expense.

Thank you for ALL you do for our homeschooling family.  
Kim Anderson

*Editor's note: Thanks from HEAV to all of our members! Your financial support is what helps us continue to act as a watchdog for homeschooling rights. We couldn't do it without you!*

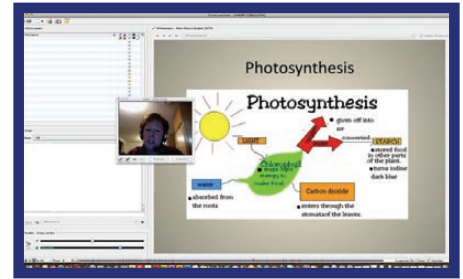




# Christ-Centered Online Classes

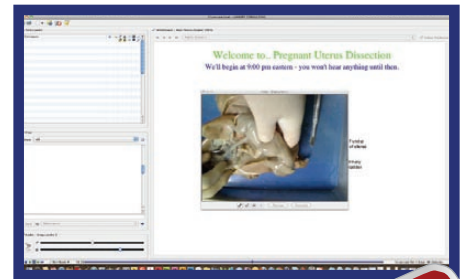
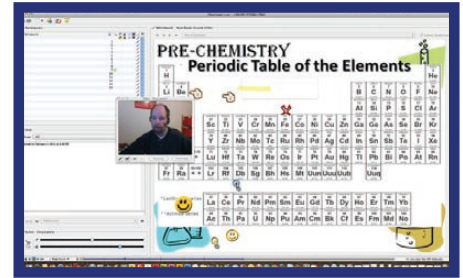
For 4th-12th Grade Homeschooled Students

- Presidential Elections
- U.S. Military Maritime History
- Biblically Based Journalism
- Crime Scene Investigation
- Intro to Radio Ministry
- Foreign Languages
- Robotics
- Web Design
- Pre-Law
- Hermeneutics
- Math
- English
- Science
- Art
- Business
- Bible
- Computer
- Geography
- Music
- And More!



*“Dear Mrs. Iverson, THANK YOU for conducting such an exciting class yesterday about dissecting the owl pallet. We are in China so the time difference make the weekly class at 10pm. Last night the excitement went out the window . . . not only Justus was so dedicated and concentrated, but his younger sister Janice also tried to find skulls and bones. When they found a fang, it's like finding gold in a treasure box. At first I was a little concern about the smell of the pellet but they both said it had a chocolate smell so that went really well too.*

*Aside from a super exciting class last night, I also want to appreciate what you have done since the beginning of the class. I see my son's interest broaden and his responsibility level also improve. This includes staying up while everyone else is already asleep for the 10pm class...all due to interesting class content and your way of engaging the students. Thank you for your LOVE and care to these students. It has made a difference in Justus' life.”* ~Clarissa



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- Sheep Trachea and Lung Dissection

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR OF HOMESCHOOL SUPPORT *Yvonne Bunn*

It's hard to homeschool more than a few months before being exposed to one of the biggest myths of homeschooling: Everyone is doing a good job homeschooling...except ME!

Just look around. You see other homeschool moms who exude confidence. They've somehow figured out their children's learning styles and made them work to their advantage. They know all about the best curricula and where to get it cheap. They are excited and filled with energy and go on a field trip every week. They have a well-honed schedule that includes time for volunteering in the support group and teaching a co-op class. Not only do they have a plan for each child, but they have a plan for the entire year! They have supportive husbands who dive in and teach a subject or two if needed. And as a homeschool friend of mine says, "They are even able to homeschool and get dinner on the table in the same day!"

"How come my family isn't like that?" we ask. The magazine articles we read, the seminars we attend, and the moms' meetings we participate in are all intended to encourage us, so why do we come away feeling guilty? The truth is other families aren't like that either. It only *seems* to us as though they have the "perfect" homeschool family. The good things are often the only things others allow us to see, and the success stories are the only ones they share. We're not seeing the whole picture.

In reality, no one person can do EVERYTHING well. The characteristics we observe and admire in other homeschooling parents are most often their areas of natural strength or God-given abilities. Without noticing what we are doing, we glean all those wonderful strengths from different homeschoolers and create an idea in our mind of the ide-

al homeschool mom. Then, without realizing it, we begin to compare ourselves to this unrealistic person we've created. What a mistake!

We can never live up to this self-imposed standard of homeschooling excellence we've created! God says in His Word, "When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding" (2 Corinthians 10:12 NET). God has created each of us with unique strengths (1 Corinthians 1:26-31). If we focus on the areas of strength that God has given *us*—our interest in and our ability to teach a particular subject, or our attention to detail, or our organizational skills—God will show us how He can work to meet the other educational needs of our children.

*Everyone* has both strengths and weaknesses. Don't compare your weakness to someone else's strength. Be thankful for your strengths and use them to do the very best job you can teaching your children. At the same time, don't let your weaknesses discourage you to the point of giving up. Instead, be realistic and ask for help in these important areas. Help can come in many different ways: learning along with your child, hiring or bartering tutoring services, trading off a subject with another parent, etc. There are many creative ways to compensate for our weaknesses without feeling guilty!

Most importantly, focus on God's plan for YOUR family. He will show you how to reach the goals He has put in your heart. It is no accident that your children are in *your* family, so work in your strengths and trust Him to show you how to work through your weaknesses. Remember that God's strength is perfected in our weaknesses—they drive us to Him. Pray with your children, too. By seeking God together, you're teaching them a priceless lesson: you can depend on Him. ☺

## *a* Special NOTE

As we near the end of 2011 and look back, we see we have had another active year. Although it's been a year filled with many economic challenges and organizational changes, we continue to move forward with the Lord's help.

There were many important things HEAV did during the past year. Among them was HEAV's consistent presence at the General Assembly, working with legislators to protect your right to homeschool. Every legislative session is filled with unknowns—unexpected legislation, unusual votes, and surprising outcomes. Being there made a difference—from supporting immunization exemptions, to carefully monitoring the development of virtual schools, to attending sports access study meetings after the session was over.

While some of us were at the General As-

sembly, our office staff and curriculum counselors were available by phone and e-mail to answer a myriad of questions from parents—some who were planning to homeschool in the future, others who were ready to begin now, and others who had homeschooled for years but still had questions. Daily, we answered questions about the law and testing, as well as about how to choose curriculum for students in kindergarten through high school.

This fall, a number of our counseling calls came from alarmed parents who received intimidating letters demanding more detailed curriculum descriptions. Descriptions that were acceptable last year were not acceptable this year. HEAV contacted local officials to discuss inconsistencies and also met with the Department of Education to request changes to their online description-of-curriculum samples.

During the year, we presented Success Seminars at the HEAV office, held a two-day retreat for support group leaders, had a

tremendously encouraging convention, spoke to local support groups, arranged and hosted discounted field trips throughout the state, published free weekly *Updates* filled with helpful news and events, maintained an extensive website, and published a quarterly magazine.

The job is big and the needs are great! **HEAV is here to serve homeschoolers and to protect and promote our homeschooling freedoms, but we can't do it without your financial help. We need you to stand with us in supporting home education and in protecting homeschool freedoms.** If you're not a member of HEAV, please join today. Your membership, together with that of others, supports the work we cannot do as individual families. If you are already a member, please think about supporting HEAV through your end-of-year giving. Know that whatever you're able to give makes a BIG difference, as do your prayers.

With much appreciation for your support,  
Yvonne Bunn



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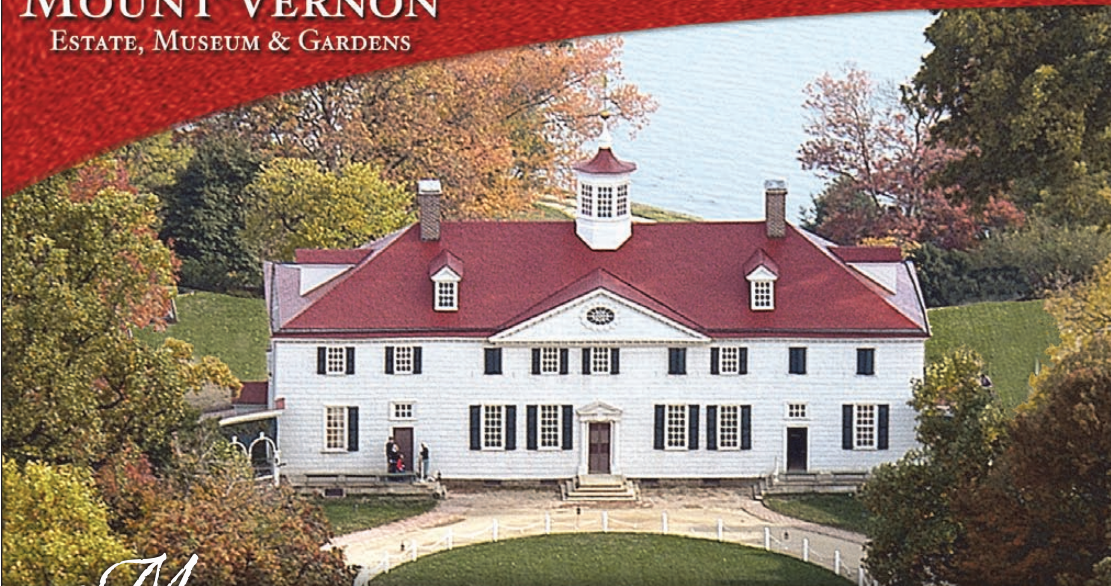
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# Freedom Watch

Several school districts in Virginia have sent invitations to homeschool families promoting enrollment in virtual schools and offering “free” educational benefits. “Freebies” are always appealing, but there’s a serious catch.

A virtual school is a public school at home, with all the government oversight, regulation, and control that regular public schools have. It is not parent-directed, individualized home instruction, but government-directed, taxpayer-funded education.

- Students must use a curriculum chosen by the government (the State Board of Education and local school boards). The curriculum is geared to the average child in a public school classroom with no consideration for the individual child’s needs or learning style.
- Students have limited time to follow their own interests and must learn what is deemed appropriate at each designated grade level.
- Students do not receive credit for any faith-based materials that are used to supplement the curriculum.
- Teacher oversight (including interviews) from a state-certified teacher is required.
- Students must be in lock-step with the public school subjects that are taught and keep up with the learning pace.
- Teaching to the SOLs is required, and SOL testing is mandated.
- The school system has full control over curriculum content, and the parent cannot opt out the student.
- Computer time replaces individualized instruction, and parents become merely overseers and record keepers.

Virtual schools, or public schools at home, do not show the same successful academic results as documented studies of independent, parent-directed homeschools reveal. Public schools at home have few of the benefits of independent homeschooling and none of the freedoms.

For two years in a row, Idaho’s students involved in virtual schools performed lower compared to traditional public school students in every grade level tested (grades three through eight and grade ten). Statistics from the Idaho Board of Education indicated that in 2005, across all grades and subjects, 79.4% of all Idaho public school students scored “proficient” or above on statewide tests, but only 71.2% of the public-school-at-home students were “proficient.”

On the other hand, independent homeschool students score on average 30 percentile points higher than the national average for public school students on nationally normed standardized tests. In 1999, Dr. Lawrence Rudner’s study of more than 20,000 homeschooled students showed that for those who were continuously homeschooled, homeschoolers were scoring one full grade level ahead of others by second grade and four grade levels ahead of others by ninth grade.

Independent, parent-directed homeschooling recognizes the right of parents to choose the proper education and training for their children.

- In an independent homeschool, parents are free to direct their child’s studies and choose curriculum that best suits his needs, interests, and learning style.
- Parents are free from the authority and oversight of govern-

ment-certified teachers and can teach what is appropriate for each individual child.

- Students and parents can delve deeply into subjects of interest, and parents decide when each subject should be taught.
- Parents can pass on their moral values and include faith-based training and instruction as part of their curriculum.
- Parents can give credit for faith-based materials taught at the high school level.
- Students are free to learn at an appropriate level and at their own pace. Remediation can take place if needed, or a child can advance if mastery is shown. There is no busywork.
- SOL tests are not required and therefore do not drive curriculum choices.
- One-on-one instruction with personal interaction between the parent and child has proven to be the most successful method of education.

**Independent, parent-directed homeschooling gives parents the opportunity to do what is best for each child.** Individualized curriculum and one-on-one instruction are the keys to academic success. No government program is better, or has better results, than independent, parent-directed home education.

For further information on this topic, go to [www.heav.org/law/virtual/index.html](http://www.heav.org/law/virtual/index.html). ☺

## VIRGINIA KIDS DID IT!



*Katie Fenneran, Trube Short, Meredith Persinger, coach Jennifer Mercer, and Mark Persinger*

Congratulations to **Team Virginia** for winning first place in the National 4H WHEP (Wildlife Habitat Education Program) contest! After winning the state contest, Team Virginia competed against 17 other state teams in the five-part 2011 National WHEP Invitational in Arkansas. Three parts of the contest are used to score the individual portion of the competition, and Team Virginia did exceedingly well in those too: Out of approximately 68 contestants, **Mark Persinger** placed third, **Katie Fenneran** placed fourth, and **Meredith Persinger** placed seventh. ☺



# Your First Stop for First Principles

from The Heritage Foundation

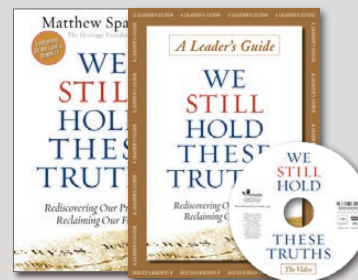


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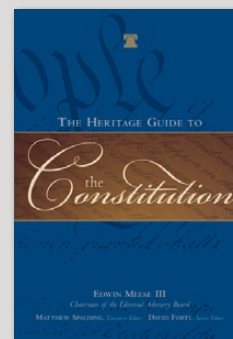
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# Answering your HOMESCHOOL QUESTIONS

In this article, a panel of homeschoolers (see “From the Editor” for their bios) have informally shared some of their thoughts and experiences on a wide variety of homeschool questions many of you submitted to us through the 2011 convention survey. We appreciated hearing your questions, and we hope this little “chat time” together will encourage you and leave you with some helpful ideas!

Keep in mind that each of our panelists is just sharing what worked for her, and sometimes even have opposite opinions! So just take the ideas that will work for you and ignore those that won't.

Now, without further ado, we invite you to grab a cup of coffee or tea and join us for a casual Q&A!

*Note: Many of the “Helpful Reading” sections reference past issues of TVHE. These can all be found at [www.heav.org/resources/home-educator.html](http://www.heav.org/resources/home-educator.html).*

## Teaching TIPS

### HOW CAN WE TEACH MULTIPLE AGES AT ONE TIME?

- I found I needed to teach the skill subjects individually, but history, science, literature, Bible, etc., can be taught together, which saves lots of time. Present the topic to everyone together, and then give different assignments based on the age, ability, skill level, and maturity of each child. After a designated time, have them return and present what they have learned—a one-page, written report from an older student, a drawing with labels from another child, and an item that the youngest child had to find related to the topic.
- Sometimes the disparity is so large that you can't lump school together, and you have to spend much more time with one child than with another. In that case, you hand the independent child an assignment and stay with the one who needs you by his side. (When I did that, though, I made an effort to spend time in some other way with the child who could study on his own.)
- It can be helpful to set up a math table or a language arts center where supplies can be readily available and parents can oversee the work of children at multiple levels even when they are not working on the same thing. Parents can also set up a central station where mom or dad stays

and children in need of individualized instruction can come to receive lessons.

- Try simplifying your homemaking and your chores, encouraging independent study, and reading aloud.
- Some subjects (such as history and literature) can be taught to multiple age levels at once if you read the books aloud. Reading aloud is a time saver and keeps everyone engaged.
- We found the Konos curriculum helpful for a period when all the children were in grade school. It required mom-intensive preparation, but, since all ages could use them at once, it actually took less time gathering supplies and books than it did to sit down separately with each child to do individual seatwork. We found two other families to do Konos with, and that helped to share the preparation. We all loved it.
- *My Father's World* allows multiple learners at the elementary and middle school level to work together with minimal adaptation by the parent. *Tapestry of Grace* accommodates learners from kindergarten through high school.

### HOW CAN WE ASSESS IF OUR CHILDREN ARE ON TRACK?

- While there are certainly basic competencies that we all need our children to achieve, realize that what is “on track” for one child may not be for another. Instead of stressing about whether your child matches someone else's ideas of “on track,” set individual goals at the beginning of the school year for each of your

## THE Law

### HOW CAN I KEEP FROM LOSING MY RIGHT TO HOMESCHOOL?

- Know and obey the law in Virginia. Know your rights. Don't give up anything to the state that you don't have to.
- Homeschool laws and regulations are created at the state level, so read and pass along HEAV's *Legislative Updates*, participate if there is a call to action, and pray!
- Join and financially support HEAV! HEAV is your state organization that actively works to protect and expand your rights. Your money and support and HEAV's monitoring of the law and local policies are a formidable combination. While you may be mostly aware of HEAV's nurturing support of us, **HEAV's first and most important benefit to us is the aggressive protection she provides.** HEAV introduces legislation to advance homeschool freedoms, watches for and responds to legislation that could affect homeschooling families, and even employs a full-time lobbyist.
- Join Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA). This organization exists to defend and advance the constitutional right of parents to direct the education of their children. As such, HSLDA members receive personal legal support in the event of a homeschooling problem, as well as consultations on a wide variety of homeschooling issues. (If you're first a member of HEAV, you get a discount on your HSLDA membership.)
- Also support **ParentalRights.org**, whose mission is to protect children by empowering parents. They are trying to get the Parental Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution adopted, and to prevent the United States' ratification of the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

Helpful Reading: HEAV's *Legislative Updates*. Sign up at [www.heav.org/law/legislative/lu/index.html](http://www.heav.org/law/legislative/lu/index.html).



children and monitor their progress toward achieving those goals. This will be much more rewarding and will help preserve the love of learning in your kids.

- If you want to see generally what's covered at an age level, go to any curriculum vendor and ask for their "Scope and Sequence."
- Annual nationally normed standardized achievement tests can be a good indicator of how your children are doing. They show how your children compare with others the same ages who took the same tests. Test examples include the Stanford, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, and the California Achievement Test. You can order them through Bob Jones University Press. Of course, some children don't score well on tests, and all children learn at different paces, so test results are only so helpful. See [www.heav.org/testing/interp/interpretationoftestresults.html](http://www.heav.org/testing/interp/interpretationoftestresults.html) for some pointers on interpreting test results.

#### WHAT ARE SOME DIFFERENT METHODS FOR TEACHING READING? WRITING?

- We used *At Last! A Teaching Method for Every Child* by Mary Pecci. This combines sight words with phonics, which is a very effective combination. The program works for children of all abilities, and related spelling and activity books are available.
- Some good resources we found are *Home Education 101*, *A Mentor's Manual* by Vicki Bentley, Ruth Beechick's *The Three R's* and *You Can Teach Your Child Successfully!*, and Common Sense Press's *Learning Language Arts Through Literature*.
- We taught reading with a phonics approach, but my children either "got" phonics or they didn't. The ones who didn't still learned to read with lots of exposure to books. Writing was the same way. Some children had LOTS of ideas for writing but didn't have the small motor skills to keep up with their thoughts. I let them dictate to me while I typed. I didn't want their physical limitations to keep them from learning to put their thoughts together.
- My daughter taught herself to read, and I still do not know how it happened. I used *Spell to Write and Read* with my son and found it to be very effective when supplemented with some easy readers. Unfortunately it also demanded a lot of structure and time that I didn't have when my next child needed to learn to read, so we just opted for lots of exposure to books. We then began working through the read-

ing lessons in *My Father's World First Grade* and loved them! They were easy to implement and very effective...just what we needed. My next challenge will be to teach a child with special needs to read. The beauty is that I now know that there are so many options out there that I will definitely be able to find a perfect fit.

HELPFUL READING: "Teaching Reading" by Jessie Wise, and "Four Deadly Errors of Teaching Writing" by Andrew Pudewa, TVHE, vol. 11, no. 2. "Literary Education" by Adam Andrews, TVHE, vol. 15, no. 2.

#### HOW DO WE ASSESS OUR CHILDREN'S LEARNING STYLES AND TEACH TO THEM?

- Cynthia Tobias is the expert here. She says to observe patterns of behavior (notice the circumstances around which your child experiences success); listen to how he communicates with you (which is generally what he needs back); keep an open mind and experiment with what works; and focus on natural strengths, not just on weaknesses.
- When your children are not getting something, pray and ask the Lord for creative ways to communicate—and don't be afraid to try them. Don't assume every child will learn the same way (or the way you do). Cherish who the Lord made them to be.

HELPFUL READING: "Back to School: How Much Is a Matter of Style?" by Cynthia Tobias, TVHE, vol. 16, no. 3. See also [www.hslda.org/elert/archive/2010/10/20101021101933.asp](http://www.hslda.org/elert/archive/2010/10/20101021101933.asp) for links to related articles.

#### HOW CAN WE BETTER JUGGLE AGE GROUPS WITHIN THE HOME DURING SCHOOL TIME?

- I had a plastic busy box for my preschooler that she used only when we were in school. I set the timer for an hour, and she had to stay on the sofa or seated at a table and keep busy with those items by herself for that period of time. Every day I changed items in the box. We used puzzles, sticker books, videos, picture books, coloring books, felt scenes, Play-Dough, toys, etc.
- Apart from doing reading and experiments together—the things that cross developmental lines—I worked with the personality of my kids. Some are sleepers, so they got the later shift. Some liked it done as soon as possible, so we got up early and did our math or writing assignments that needed more individualized attention.

HELPFUL READING: "Training Toddlers and Preschool Children" by Kerin Morgan, TVHE, vol. 16, no. 4. "Making the Most of the Preschool Years" by Valerie Bendt, TVHE, vol. 12, no. 2.



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# Scheduling & TIME MANAGEMENT

## WHAT IS A GOOD SCHEDULE TO STRUCTURE YOUR DAY, AND WHAT ARE SOME HOMESCHOOL AND HOUSEWORK TRICKS TO GET IT ALL DONE?

- We had a family breakfast time before which all personal chores had to be done. School started immediately afterward. Lunch was another “anchor” of the day, but other than that, our schedule flexed. The children all had daily and weekly chores to help around the house. And frankly, some things just didn’t get done as frequently as I would have liked!
- We figured out what was hardest and did that when we were fresh. After beginning with Bible reading, we devoted the mornings to language arts and math.
- Revisit your routine and get back to basics. Keep a schedule and stick to it. Knowing what comes next without having to make *one more decision* can be a relief.
- A friend devoted her family’s Friday afternoons to chores. Then her husband cooked dinner. They fed the boys early and had a quiet meal to themselves later.
- Incorporate home economics into your curriculum and teach your kids to do housework and cooking.
- Plan meals the night or week before. Waiting until 4 p.m. is exhausting.
- Try the once-a-month cooking approach so that your evening meals can be put together quickly. (*Once-a-Month Cooking* is by Mary Lagerborg and Mimi Wilson.)
- For housework we had games, challenges, and incentives. Also, we always had a “five-minute pick-up” at the end of the day. For a while, we threw stuff into a basket, but that proved a bad idea in the long run. Baskets never got dealt with. So then everyone had to put away—in its correct place—ten things not their own, plus their own stuff. Someone quickly vacuumed, someone tidied the entry (for first impressions!), and someone set the table...things that said the school day was over and evening was here—even if there were still assignments to finish.
- The book *Managers of Their Homes* by Steven and Teri Maxwell offers a work-

able plan for creating a family schedule. To be useful, a schedule must be functional yet flexible.

## WHAT ARE SOME TIPS FOR TIME MANAGEMENT? CAN YOU TIME MANAGE WITHOUT BEING ON A RIGID SCHEDULE?

- We needed a schedule, or my son would still be listening to me talk about novels—and he graduated five years ago. Have a schedule, but don’t be obsessed by it.
- Yes, you should have a schedule; no, it should not be rigid—just predictable. This is an area of discipline for the homeschooling mom or dad. The schedule should start around the same time each day and be as protected from “important” phone calls and e-mails as possible. Outside activities should be reasonable and not during a core period. I liked about three uninterrupted hours, which gave me time to check on each child to make sure they were tracking.
- Decide your routine and then make a daily, *visual* to-do list. Get a clock that chimes the quarter of every hour to help you keep track of time. Set an alarm to start dinner.
- Deal with stuff quickly—say yes or say no. Though there are times where we need to wait on the Lord and be still before Him, don’t let simple decisions hang over your head.

## HOW CAN WE AVOID OVEREXERTION AND BURNOUT SO THAT WE CAN KEEP OUR JOY?

- You have to pick and choose your activities. For every activity you choose, there are hundreds more you can’t choose. That’s life for all of us—we can’t do it all or pay for it all. Select the best, and ignore the merely good. (And there might be times—pregnancy, illness, etc.—when you have to drop even more.) Your kids will keep on learning after they leave home—you don’t have to provide every opportunity for them now.
- Remember the “home” part of homeschool. Stay home, get school done, and limit outside activities. Designate only one day every month for field trips.
- Show respect for your work and make

it your priority. Determine your school hours and *be unavailable to everyone else* just as if you were teaching in a classroom on the other side of town. That means not answering the phone during those hours (if it is a distraction, turn the ringer off) or allowing other people to give you or your children tasks (babysitting their kids, providing meals for all the shut-ins, etc.).

- Each winter was a struggle for me. In January I would have a hard time getting back on track after the holidays. I learned to plan some fun things out of the house to get excited about learning again, and not to make any major decisions about homeschooling during the winter blahs!
- Recognize the source of true joy. When I am spending time in God’s presence, I can choose to be joyful, to speak gently and cheerfully, and to recognize that I am blessed to have this season with my children.

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- Recognize spiritual warfare for what it is. I had to be reminded to take captive every harsh thought about my children, every selfish thought about my own entitlements in life, every self-pitying thought about being a less-than-perfect homeschool mom. I learned that the enemy really can't take away my joy, but he sure can influence me to give it up! If you are committed to raising warriors for God, your family is a target for battle, and you may want to take inventory of your Ephesians 6 armor.
- Have a vision for your family, have realistic expectations of your children, and have realistic expectations of yourself.
- Say no to some things. Think, pray, seek advice from people you respect, and cut back if you are doing too much. If your husband says you are too busy, pay attention.
- Once the children were old enough to be left home alone for twenty minutes, my husband and I took walks or jogged together most mornings. I found regular exercise classes also gave me a good mental break and more energy.
- Have a quiet time in the morning before everyone gets up. When your school day begins, work on the most important subjects first—usually the skill subjects (language arts and math)—with each child. Do history and science only two to three days a week in longer blocks of time. Focus on things you can do together and projects that will bring the subject to life. Reevaluate your outside activities. Stay home more.
- It is helpful to build moments of joy into our day. Try praying for your children as you fold their laundry. Treat yourself to a small piece of chocolate after lunch. Meet a friend for a quick cup of coffee during a piano lesson.

HELPFUL READING: "Stress to Strauss: A Symphony in No Time Flat" by Laura Baldwin, "Your Home a Haven" by Joy Hayden, and "Stress-Reduced Homes: Tips from Our Readers," TVHE vol. 9, no. 4.

## HOW CAN WE Homeschool on a TIGHT BUDGET?

- Borrow or rent books, use non-consumable books rather than workbooks, use multi-level curriculum, and buy your yearly paper supplies in August when the price is lowest.
- Some curricula provide an extensive book list, and wherever possible, I borrowed these from the library.
- We once had so little money that for two years all workbooks were done on plastic sheet protectors so multiple children could use them. What a pain, as they couldn't keep their assignments. But homeschooling on a tight budget can be done, and it is still a privilege.
- Don't look too hard at homeschooling catalogs. Get what you need, make do with what you have, and fill the gaps in with faith—God will provide everything your children need for their future.
- The Internet has a plethora of free educational resources. Scouring the Used Curriculum Sale at convention each year as well as local homeschool co-op sales can also significantly reduce the cost of curriculum.
- Subscribe to HEAV's weekly *Updates* and check out the "Cool Sites" there and in the archived versions online. You can get a LOT of free resources there.

HELPFUL READING: "Homeschooling on a Shoestring" by Vicki Bentley ([www.hslida.org/earlyyears/Shoestring.asp](http://www.hslida.org/earlyyears/Shoestring.asp)).

"Homeschooling on a Shoestring" by Terri Miller ([www.heav.org/resources/articles/stayingthecourse/homeschooling-on-a-shoestring](http://www.heav.org/resources/articles/stayingthecourse/homeschooling-on-a-shoestring)).

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# What are some tips for HOME ORGANIZATION?

- I recently heard organization expert Peter Walsh say, “Finish the cycle.” He means take every task through to its end—don’t leave chores unfinished. That includes little things such as putting recycling in the bin immediately, putting laundry away completely, putting the scissors back in the drawer. He says that if you open it, close it; if you take it out, put it back; etc. Don’t think to yourself, “I’ll do it later.” Do it now; do it completely. Train your children to do the same.
- Allow each person so much space and no more. When that space is full (and that doesn’t include messy or overflowing), they have to discard or donate before they get anything else. Don’t make the mistake of adding more storage bins—use only the space you have already allotted. This should be the rule for clothing, toys, craft supplies, decorations, books, papers, and everything else.
- Take care of the things that bother you the most. Before your school day begins, have everyone do one or two simple jobs: making their beds, loading or unloading the dishwasher, taking out the trash, feeding the pets, gathering the laundry, etc. Use charts and give stars or stamps, not only for the job but also for good attitudes! Then start your academic day.
- I have a clean-as-you-go policy. I ask my family members to look back when they leave a room and say to themselves, “Is this room/kitchen/desk as clean (or cleaner) than when I came in?” If not, they take a few minutes and do the job. It’s much easier and faster to keep something clean than to clean up a huge mess—and mess always breeds more mess!

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- Institute the “five-minute rule.” Give everyone a five-minute heads-up before dinner, and have them clean up as much as they can in that time. Even unfinished projects can at least be tidied up.
- We used our kitchen and family room for much of our homeschooling, and although we didn’t have a dedicated school room, we did have one location for all our books and school supplies. We always returned them to their “home” and knew where to find them the next day.
- Don’t buy anything until you know where you will keep it. Store materials within easy reach. Get rid of stuff you haven’t used in a few years, unless there is a younger child who may grow into it.

**HELPFUL READING:** “Stressless Organization” by Marilyn Rocket, TVHE, vol. 13, no. 2. “Housework Makes You Ugly” by Debbie Bowen, TVHE, vol. 14, no. 4. *Confessions of an Organized Homemaker* and *Confessions of a Happily Organized Family* by Deneice Schofield.

Two excellent organization articles by Vicki Bentley are available at [www.hsllda.org/courtreport/V25N6/V25N611.asp](http://www.hsllda.org/courtreport/V25N6/V25N611.asp) and [www.hsllda.org/earlyyears/Organize.asp](http://www.hsllda.org/earlyyears/Organize.asp).



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# Attitudes in HOMESCHOOLING

## HOW CAN I MOTIVATE UNCOOPERATIVE, IRRESPONSIBLE STUDENTS?

- Pray. Listen for clues about what motivates them. Remind them school is their work and their calling, and they have a duty to do their best. Discipline them for not doing their work. Privileges should be taken away if children don't complete assigned tasks. Get a good friend to help with some subjects or areas if needed.
- Sometimes an uncooperative student has a very stubborn parent. If a child learns differently or wants to try something else, discuss it. If you are too emotional to discuss it without getting upset, let the other parent or a good friend do it. One wise person told us to pick two things that the children must do (math and writing; smile and chores; go to bed by ten and clean your room—whatever pushes your buttons the most). I made a list of twenty things that were pushing my buttons and realized that picking two would bring a lot of healing. I think I picked to be pleasant and complete daily assignments by midnight. I gave up clean rooms, family morning times, and a whole lot of other things. It was better and helped us get to a real solution.
- Look for the cause of this behavior. There are times when children are uncooperative because they are in rebellion and testing you—and you HAVE to stay at it and discipline them so they learn obedience, first to you, and ultimately to God. There is a lot more at stake than just getting motivated or getting the task done.

## HOW DO WE TEACH CHILDREN TO BE INDEPENDENT LEARNERS, LOVE LEARNING, AND OWN THEIR OWN EDUCATION?

- If we are excited about learning, they will be too. If we show them how to look up the answer to a question, then next time they can do it on their own. Don't be afraid to follow a rabbit trail if there's something that piques your child's interest.
- Nurture their curiosity. Children are born wanting to learn. Ask—and welcome—

questions. Teach them to research and how to evaluate websites wisely. As they get older, give them bigger projects built around their interests.

- Make it easy for children to correct their own work in skill areas such as math.
- Consider giving them their own planners with assignments listed so they can move forward at their own pace, or try Sue Patrick's workbook system ([www.workboxsystem.com](http://www.workboxsystem.com)).
- Categorize materials into "learning stations" to make self-study more user-friendly. Some items to include might be cassettes or CDs, supplemental workbooks or coloring books, games, and books on related topics.

*Tell them if they*  
**CAN COMPLETE  
THE WORK AND  
HAVE EVERYTHING  
CHECKED AND  
CORRECTED IN  
FOUR DAYS,  
THEY CAN HAVE  
FRIDAY OFF!**

- Remember that children do what *you inspect*, not necessarily what you *expect*, so stay nearby and available.
- Let children pursue interests independently, make time for the things they are interested in, and enjoy their discoveries with them. One daughter wanted to know all the major wars of history but didn't have time. When you have a kid who needs time to learn something of interest, suspend the writing assignments for two weeks and let him have time to research, work in the woodshop, etc.
- Let middle or high school students work with you on their high school plan, deciding which subjects they want to schedule

for each year. Give them their own plan book with a five-day schedule and assignments. Tell them if they can complete the work and have everything checked and corrected in four days, they can have Friday off! Who doesn't want a three-day weekend? This is a great motivator for the student and a blessing for you, too! You can even talk to them about taking college classes as a high school homeschooler (dual enrollment) or graduating a year early if all their classes are finished. Also, encourage them to get a part-time job, volunteer, or do community service. Being with other people is often a good motivator.

## HOW DO WE TRAIN OUR CHILDREN TO HAVE A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW AND HAVE GODLY CHARACTER?

- A biblical worldview does not come from a course; it comes from Deuteronomy 6:5-7: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (NIV '84).

So, to train your children to have a biblical worldview, talk about everything, all the time, from God's perspective. And in order to know God's perspective yourself, you as parents should be in a serious Bible study.

- Talk it out! Expose them to the truth, truth, truth of the Scriptures and point out the fallacies in the worldviews that aren't accurate as you go along. As your children get older, they should be able to do that. Make the discussions difficult—those are good for the parent, too.
- Let them see and hear you applying the Word to the news, the movies you watch, the novels you read, and the songs you listen to. Read and discuss great literature. My favorite Christian author is Jane Austen, who shows her faith more than she tells it. She helped my son learn to study character. After my son discovered that one friendly, funny homeschooled boy wanted him to join in insulting people and sneaking, my son told me, "He's a Wickham," remembering the charming, self-serving character in *Pride and Prejudice*.
- I strongly recommend choosing your curriculum wisely! (Do your research, and choose programs and books written by experts who share your worldview.) Then read together, learn together, and discuss the issues together with your children.



## HOW DO I BALANCE MOM VERSUS TEACHER ROLES?

- You can't separate the two; God made you to be both. The first time teaching is mentioned in the Bible is in reference to a parent teaching his family. In Genesis 18:19, God chose Abraham because he knew he would "command" his family to keep His ways. Being a mom and a teacher means you have a high calling: a calling to "command" or teach them. There is no one who will love them more than you, be willing to correct them consistently, teach them godly values, train them in the right way, or mentor them by example. And you get to do this while you are teaching them academics!
- For me there was no dividing line between these two roles. I didn't lecture like a schoolroom teacher; our homeschool atmosphere was a natural extension of parenting.
- Don't homeschool 24-7. By that, I mean don't correct their grammar every waking hour, don't drill math all day, and don't feel obliged to make them analyze everything you read or watch together. Have some down time. Laugh. Do fun things together. But when you teach, put on your teacher face and voice. Don't let

them wiggle out of their responsibilities, no matter how cute or funny they are.

- Balancing roles is easier when children are younger. For the older ones, start stepping out of teacher into advisor and facilitator. Let children fail with consequences and not with your anger.

## HOW CAN I HAVE A LIFE OF MY OWN WHEN I'M WITH THE KIDS 24/7?

- I participated in a weekly morning ladies' Bible study in a church that had a children's program. I also belonged to a monthly evening book club. I suggest you choose one or two activities that you love, and work with your husband or friend to do child care so you can go to them. Schedule the activities on the calendar and remind everyone when they are coming up. Don't think you are too tired to go. Freshen up and leave the house—it will do wonders for you, and that means it will do wonders for your family.
- Homeschooling was my life and I loved it. But I do "re-juice" by being alone, so we had quiet afternoon times. They were usually only fifteen minutes long, but still worth it.
- Make it a point to assign work if anyone follows you to the laundry room. Very quickly, you'll be able to set up a camp chair in there and read a good book!

- Remember that your life isn't over if you can't do all the things you want to do. Children do grow up, and you will have more time.
- Make breaks. Ask your spouse to take the kids a few hours a week, preferably at a regular time you can count on. Trade babysitting with a friend. Enjoy fifteen-minute micro-breaks: on the phone, with a book, online with a support group, on short walks, etc.
- With careful planning, I had a couple of evenings a week to pursue other interests. The mobility and flexibility of our homeschooling also allowed us to travel (we often camped) during the off-season. We just packed our books and took them with us.
- There are seasons of life, some more challenging than others. Right now you're in a season of mentoring and teaching and training your children. While we're in the midst of homeschooling, diapers, crying children, and arguing siblings, it's hard to see the value of our everyday routine. But it's really one of the most important times to be there for our children. This season will soon be gone, and you will look back on it with joy or regret. Regardless, you can never get it back.

HELPFUL READING: See "The Myth of Me-Time" by Crystal Paine (2012 convention speaker!) at [www.heav.org/resources/articles/housekeeping/the-myth-of-me-time](http://www.heav.org/resources/articles/housekeeping/the-myth-of-me-time).



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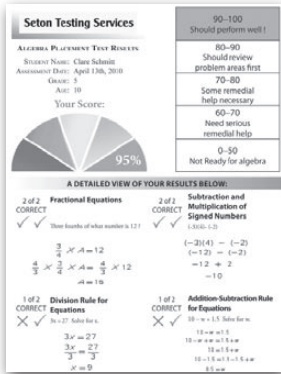


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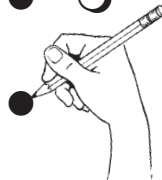
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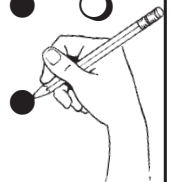
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Is the cost still only \$25? YES NO



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# High School & COLLEGE

## WHAT TYPE OF RECORDS DO WE NEED TO KEEP FOR HOMESCHOOLING?

- Each year of school (including elementary grades), put together a portfolio of your school calendar, books read, course descriptions with materials used, samples of your child's best work in different subjects (particularly math and English), grades (including your grading scale), projects and achievements, field trips, photos, annual test scores or evaluations, and volunteer hours.
- You can use HEAV's new transcript service ([www.heav.org/resources/transcript.html](http://www.heav.org/resources/transcript.html)). Print out the worksheet and fill it out as your student works through high school.

HELPFUL READING: [www.hslda.org/earlyyears/Records.asp](http://www.hslda.org/earlyyears/Records.asp)

## WHAT ARE THE HIGH SCHOOL COURSE REQUIREMENTS?

- There are no particular course requirements for homeschool graduation. However, a typical high school plan that would prepare a student for college might include some or all of the following type courses over four years (grades nine to twelve):

4 years English	4 years math
4 years science	2-4 years foreign language
1 year U.S. history	1 year world history
1 year geography	1 year government/economics
1 year art or music	1 year philosophy or religion
1 year health/PE	½ year computer science
- The most important thing to do is what God is calling you to do with your children. If He wants them to get in to college, they'll get in with the courses you are led to design for them. Someone I knew decided not to do a foreign language with her son because she felt God said no—and even though it was a requirement, the college waived it.

HELPFUL READING: "How to Create a High School Transcript" by Janice Campbell, TVHE, vol. 14, no. 2.

See [www.heav.org/basicinfo/highschool/index.html](http://www.heav.org/basicinfo/highschool/index.html) and look at the Q&A section of [www.heav.org/resources/transcript.html](http://www.heav.org/resources/transcript.html).

Homeschool driver training courses, instructions, and forms are available at [www.heav.org/law/high-school/drivered/driveredinfo\\_home.html](http://www.heav.org/law/high-school/drivered/driveredinfo_home.html).

## CAN WE DO COLLEGE FROM HOME?

- Yes. One option is to have your children enroll in community college. (They can do this dual enrolled while in high school or wait until after graduation.) A benefit of community college is that there are many ages in the class, including adults returning to school. There isn't a dorm environment, so no one hangs around. Students go to class and then come home.
- Your children can also do college credit by exam (CLEP) and online courses. Two Christian Virginia schools offering online courses are Liberty University and Regent University. Excelsior College in Albany, New York, offers flexible, non-resident degree programs.

HELPFUL READING: "Homeschooling Your College Student" by Janice Campbell, TVHE, vol. 10, no. 1.

See also [www.onlinecolleges.org](http://www.onlinecolleges.org).

## WHAT IF WE WANT OUR STUDENT TO BE ABLE TO APPLY TO A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE COLLEGE?

- Look at the college admission requirements as early as when the child is in seventh grade. Get four years of foreign language and four years of math. Too many homeschoolers think getting to Algebra 2 is "a strong math background." It is not. If you, personally, struggle in math, find someone to help you. Don't wait.
- The fastest track for children to be considered for a highly competitive school is a high PSAT score. A "semi-finalist" rating on the test will bring your high scorer letters from every Ivy League college out there. Of course, the students will also need comparable SAT scores and high grades (and they can get into a competitive school with just those, if their PSAT doesn't do it). Students may also need to take two to three subject-specific SAT II tests.

Highly competitive schools also want to see a variety of activities on the student's resume, including significant and consistent volunteer hours, leadership positions in some kinds of organizations (sports, youth group, clubs, Scouts, etc.), special skills or awards, and something unique. Two of my children went to highly competitive schools. One of the questions on my son's application was, "We pride ourselves in diversity. Our students are from all over the world and bring many different abilities to our school. What will you bring that no one else can offer?" Can your student answer that?

- Keep excellent records of high school work; create a high school diploma; take SAT practice tests more than once (at home with a book); take some Advanced Placement (AP) courses or dual enroll in a community college for a few courses; and take initiative/leadership in an area of interest (starting a business or charity, getting a job or internship, etc.).

HELPFUL READING: "Building a College Resume" by Jason M. Smith, TVHE, vol. 10, no. 1.

## WHAT OPTIONS ARE THERE BESIDES COLLEGE?

- Apprenticeships, community college, and work. Network: Who do you know who might be hiring, or who wants a young gofer?
- There are very helpful websites online: Go to [www.self-directed-search.com](http://www.self-directed-search.com) and take the test to help with career decisions. The site [www.occupationalinfo.org](http://www.occupationalinfo.org) lists every job in the United States, what the job requirements are, and what educational level is needed.

Two sites that discuss apprenticeships in Virginia are [www.doli.virginia.gov/apprenticeship/pdfs/DOLI%20Apprenticeship%20Brochure.pdf](http://www.doli.virginia.gov/apprenticeship/pdfs/DOLI%20Apprenticeship%20Brochure.pdf) and [www.doli.virginia.gov/apprenticeship/active\\_occupations.cfm](http://www.doli.virginia.gov/apprenticeship/active_occupations.cfm).

HELPFUL READING: "What if College Isn't for Me?" by Kaity Baldwin, TVHE, vol. 10, no. 1. *Careers without College* by Rick Boyer ([www.thelearningparent.com/products.asp?cat=5&product=9](http://www.thelearningparent.com/products.asp?cat=5&product=9)).

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Pages 3 & 12

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