

GETTING READY TO HOME-SCHOOL YOUR CHILD

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One of the appeals of home-schooling is being able to choose teaching styles that fit your child's learning style. It may take some trial and error before settling on a method that works for your family. And even this may change over time as your child grows and circumstances change.

Decide on a home-school model

Home-schooling styles can vary. Some families choose a mix of structured lessons and open-ended learning. Look at how your child learns best and let that be your guide. Look at how your child learns best and let that be your guide. Some home-school models are:

- **Traditional:** This is most like a classroom. Children use textbooks and workbooks for each subject.
- **Classical:** Children are taught in three stages, depending on their age. Elementary students absorb facts. Middle graders analyze arguments. High schoolers focus on expressing themselves.
- **Charlotte Mason:** This model is named for a British teacher who believed in teaching the whole child, not just the mind. The plan adds nature study, music, the arts, and handcrafts to academic subjects.
- **Unit studies:** Children use math, science, language arts, history, music, and art to learn about a single topic.
- **Unschooling:** The child is free to pursue his own interests. There is no

curriculum.

Your approach may change over time as you experiment with what works best for your family and as your children grow. If you plan to enroll your child in school at some point, follow your district's academic curriculum to make the transition easier.

Tap into local resources

As the number of home-schooling families grows, so, too do the resources available to them. You will likely find activities, groups, and special programs for home schoolers in your community. Some states even allow home-schooled children to attend public school part time. Look for the following:

- A state, regional, or local home-schooling organization to keep you informed of home education regulations in your area and to turn to for information and support.
- A home-school co-op where families trade expertise. For example, one parent may teach a group of kids about engineering while another leads art classes.
- A network of families to team up with for field trips and activities.
- Special programs for home-schoolers at museums, libraries, zoos, the YMCA, and other organizations.
- An opportunity to enroll your children in public school classes, sports, or extracurricular activities. These offer children time to socialize with kids their own age while enriching their own learning.
- A local four-year or community college where you can enroll your teenager in classes.

In addition to local support and information, you'll find many resources online. A particularly helpful site is Khan Academy, which offers free instructional videos on a wide range of academic subjects as well as tools to help parents track their child's progress.

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