How to Start Homeschooling Your Gifted Child

Suki Wessling

Polls: Who are you?

Your homeschool status
- Just interested
- Thinking about starting soon
- Recently started
- Veteran homeschooler (1+ years)

Your children’s ages
- 0-4
- 5-10
- 10-13
- 14-up

Who am I?
- World’s Most Reluctant Homeschooler*
- Homeschooled one child K-5
- Other child 6th-present (16 years old)
- Professional writer, teacher
- Amateur singer, cook, gardener…

*former title, now passed on to someone else

What is Homeschooling?
- This is not your grandmother’s homeschool!
What is Homeschooling?

- Homeschooling is a flexible alternative education option
- Cooperative learning
- Community classes
- Independent study
- Distance education
- Service work
- Entrepreneurship
- Mentoring
- Tutoring

What is Homeschooling?

- Homeschool legalities vary widely from state to state
- Consult your state homeschooling association (note flavor of homeschooling)
- Possibly consult state/local department of education

What is homeschooling?

- Most schools are more alike than different
- Each homeschool is as unique as each child

Advantages

- Great for asynchronous learners
- HSing environment tailored to child’s needs
- Students follow their passions
- Flexible lifestyle
- Create positive social atmosphere
- Private school education at low(er) cost
Disadvantages
- Steep learning curve for parents
- One spouse may have to quit/cut down work
- Parents may not feel qualified to teach
- Social opportunities have to be sought out
- Disapproval from family, friends, neighbors
- HSing can be done cheaply, but probably costs more than public school

How to start: Just start!
- School will always be there
- You can’t predict what HSing will be like
- Don’t stick too long with a bad situation

Polls
Are you moving from school to homeschool?
- Yes
- No

Are you afraid you will fail as a homeschooler?
- Yes, quite afraid
- A bit concerned
- Not concerned

How to start: Deschool
- Be aware that you and your child may need some adjustment time
- “Deschooling” is the process of changing from a school-based mindset to a homeschool-based mindset
- You both may need to deschool and it may take a while!
How to start: Leaving school

- Include your child in decision-making process
- You don’t owe anything to the school
- Best not to burn bridges if possible
- Be open and honest with teachers if possible
- Think of it as a step toward success, not a step away from failure

How to start: The first day

- School is separate from everyday life; homeschool is integrated into everyday life
- “How do homeschoolers get their laundry done?”
- Relax!
- Have fun!*
- Don’t buy anything!**

* Research shows that fun learning is the most effective!
** Except a museum membership!

How to start: Typical concerns

- Should I use a homeschooling method?
- What curriculum should I use?
- What should our schedule be?
- How can I make sure that we are “keeping up”?
- What about socialization?

How to start: Socialization

- Be aware that homeschoolers generally laugh when someone asks this question!
- You may have to work at creating a new community that works for your child
- Some children benefit from having less socialization, or rather, more appropriate socialization
- Your child’s social needs will change constantly
Homeschool wisdom

- Focus on child-led learning
- Make lifelong learning your goal

Homeschool wisdom

- You may feel like you are not doing enough—this is OK
- You may wonder whether school would be better—this is OK
- You may take a long time to adjust (deschool)—this is OK
- You will experience joy and wonder at what your child can do—this is wonderful!

More information and support

Parent Support Group @ Athena’s
www.AthenasAcademy.com

Favorite resources

Gifted
- A Parent’s Guide to Gifted Children
- Living with Intensity
- The Explosive Child
- Hoagies’ Gifted: hoagiesgifted.org
- SENG: sengifted.org
- Gifted support on TAGMAX, Yahoo Groups, Google Groups

Homeschooling
- Creative Homeschooling
- A to Z Homeschooling: a2zhomeschooling.com
- Hoagies’ Homeschooling: hoagiesgifted.org/home_school.htm
- Sandra Dodd’s “Deschooling for Parents”:
  sandradodd.com/deschooling

My gifted info page: sukiwessling.com/gifted-links/

ENJOY YOUR HOMESCHOOL JOURNEY!