

The Ultimate Guide **to Choosing Your** **Homeschool** **Curriculum**

You know you want to homeschool, but you're terrified to pick a curriculum. There are SO many options, and everyone you meet has a totally different opinion! How do you choose when there are so many choices? Below we will give you the breakdown of how to choose a curriculum that best fits you. After reading this guide, you will feel much more capable and empowered to choose the best one for you and your family.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Consider Your Time	1
How Many Students	2
Learning Style	3
Your Teaching Style	9
What is Your Homeschooling Approach?	10
Get Your Priorities Straight	14
Your Child's Interests Matter	15
Do You Have a Special Needs Child?	16
Understand Your State's Requirements	17
It's OK to Quit	18
What Now?	19
Resources	20

Consider Your Time



Your time is valuable, and some curriculums are more time intensive than others. You may have big ambitions at the beginning of the year for what you want to teach your students, but it's good to have realistic expectations. You don't want to burn yourself, or your kids, out at the beginning of the school year by overloading them with subjects and tasks.

In addition, most parents are not able to devote all of their time to homeschooling. There's always household chores to look after and possibly younger siblings. You may volunteer in the community, or hold full or part-time jobs in addition to educating children at home. Because of this, it is important to consider how involved you'll need to be in each assignment. Is independent work built into the curriculum? Does the curriculum require a very involved educator in order for the students to succeed?

Consider how much time you and your student truly have, and pick curriculum that works for you. Your curriculum should not feel like a burden to you, but rather a tool that helps create the best learning atmosphere for you and your child.

How Many Students



When considering homeschool curriculum it's important to take into account how many students you will be teaching. While some families may only be educating one student, many families are teaching [multiple students at multiple grade levels](#).

Here are some things to factor into your curriculum when you're choosing for more than one student:

- ▶ Do you want to teach the same basic information to all of your children, but at different grade points?
- ▶ Do you need an entirely different curriculum for all your students?
- ▶ Do you want to do units and tailor them to your children?
- ▶ Are you able to reuse curriculum for younger siblings?

Just as you considered independent learning for time management, it's also important to think about it when you're working with more than one student. Since it may not be possible to incorporate all of your students into every subject, it's important that the other students can have times when they self-educate.

Not only does this make your job easier, it also teaches your children a valuable life skill that they can use in their day-to-day as well as in future work situations. Self-motivated and self-directed people are highly valuable at any level of work or education.

Learning Style

As a parent, it won't come as any surprise to you that all children are different. Some families have multiple kids with not one of them sharing a similar personality or approach to life. It should also come as no surprise that no two kids learn exactly the same way, either!



Educators recognize that kids learn differently, and have created a list of different types of learning styles. Currently, there are at least 8 identified learning styles. Below is a list to help you identify what best fits your student.

VISUAL

Visual learners make up the biggest portion of all the learning styles. People who are visual learners do well with images, colors, graphs, pictures, maps, etc.

Visual learners have many strengths including being good with spatial thinking and recalling images or places in their minds. Visual learners excel at being detail oriented because they notice very small changes in their surroundings.

Visual learners do better when long speeches or texts are mixed with something they can see. If they're watching a presentation they learn better graphs or images are included, and they retain information from textbooks better if there are images included to break up long texts.

AUDITORY (AURAL)



Auditory learners love music, interesting sounds, rhymes, rhythms, and the spoken word. Aural learners learn best through hearing information as opposed to seeing it.

Auditory learners are very good at repeating information back once they've heard it. They tend to be good at picking up on people's inflection and tone, or subtle changes in their language. They're also good at picking up language, verbal communication, and can remember information from long lectures. They can also be really good storytellers.

They would be the type of person who could learn from a podcast and put what they've learned into action. They also benefit from taking an oral exam as opposed to a written one. To help an auditory learner remember what they've learned, it's a good strategy to have them repeat back something that you've just taught them.

VERBAL

Unlike visual learners, people who are verbal learners are not discouraged by long texts. In fact, that's their primary way of learning new information. Verbal learners love language, whether written and spoken.

People who are Verbal learners are very good at absorbing information through the written word. They can take in vast amounts of complex information through reading and then be able to re-explain it more simply.

Verbal learners do very well with lectures and taking notes and they also do well with writing assignments and written tests. A good strategy for verbal learners is to have them re-write information in their own words. They do very well at research writing projects and writing projects in general.

KINESTHETIC



A Kinesthetic learner is a person who learns through physical action. They often learn best when they're making something. Unlike visual or auditory learners, Kinesthetic learners do best through tactile learning and hands-on experience.

Kinesthetic learners tend to be coordinated and do well at activities like [building, sports, art, or drama](#). One of their strengths is the ability to learn and mimic by watching someone else do something. In addition, they often have great motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

Sometimes Kinesthetic learners can appear to be antsy or inattentive in a typical learning environment that includes a lot of sitting and not a lot of doing. They're likely to struggle to pay attention to long lectures or to read long texts. However, give them something they can get their hands-on like science experiments or building projects, and they will be happy.

Of course, even Kinesthetic learners will have to take time to sit, listen, and learn, but by mixing their education with periods of physical activity, they will be much more ready and able to take in new information.

LOGICAL

Logical learners are problem solvers. They view life in a stream of cause and effect scenarios. They like to know if A is true, then B must follow. Logical learners tend to enjoy mathematical equations and logical math problems. They enjoy looking for patterns and solving logic problems.



Logical learners are very good at seeing how things are interconnected and recognizing complex patterns. They are capable of understanding complicated math problems and are often interested in strategy games like chess. They tend to thrive in math, science, and technology fields.

When teaching a logical learner, it's important to give them statistics, data, and other hard facts so they can absorb what you are teaching. They like science and math because those subjects offer clear definitive answers. Logical learners often struggle with open-ended questions and assignments, and don't enjoy an unstructured schedule.

To help them connect to subjects that are less concrete, try to incorporate things that they can connect with. For history and geography, including statistics and graphs can be very helpful. Explaining how countries interact with one another, and the reasons that there are conflicts, may help them understand history better.

Art, music, and literature may not be the subjects that logical learners feel most comfortable exploring, but you can approach them from a more logical angle. For instance, logical learners might connect with diagramming sentences in grammar, or identifying rules of poetry like the meter or rhyming patterns.

SOCIAL (INTERPERSONAL)



In some ways, the term “social learner” is a filter you could overlay on top of other learning types. For instance, a person could be both a social and an auditory learner. However, what defines them is that they thrive best in social settings.

Social learners often have strong communication skills and are quick to pick up on verbal and nonverbal communication. They’re good at noticing other people’s feelings, and tend to have a high emotional IQ. Social learners like activities that give them energy like team sports, or other group events. They also enjoy bouncing their ideas off of other people.

Social learners can struggle to sit and pay attention during long lectures or quiet study time, and will want to break those periods up with discussion or group activities. In a homeschool environment, it would be helpful to include social activities as part of your social learners every week.

If you have multiple children in the home, you could have your kids work on group projects together, even if they are not on the same grade level. Reading a book together and then discussing it with the whole family would also help your social learner.

SOLITARY (INTRAPERSONAL)

Solitary learners are similar to Social learners in the sense that they can be connected to other learning types as well. However, solitary learners are opposite of social learners because they learn best doing things by themselves.

Fortunately, homeschooling can be a good fit for kids that are solitary learners. They're often self-directed, quiet, and independent. They're usually in tune with their own feelings, and like to work in quiet environments.

Solitary learners benefit from activities like keeping a journal, reading books on their own and writing about them, and allowing them time to be introspective. When it comes to curriculum, they would do well with materials that allow them to work through things on their own.

NATURALISTIC



[A Naturalistic learner is similar to a Kinesthetic learner](#) in the sense that they like hands-on experience, and would rather do something physical than read from a textbook or listen to a long lecture. The main difference between the two is that the Naturalistic learner prefers to do their learning primarily in things related to the outdoors.

Naturalistic learners are very curious about the world they live in. They like to learn about things like plants, animals, and the environment. They're very observant and are comfortable handling and being around animals.

Naturalistic learners do well when they can be outside exploring nature. They love gardening, nature walks, farms, zoos, and trips to the park. will do very well if they can have some time outside actually exploring nature.

When you're not able to get your kids outside, you can bring nature indoors. Your family can get a pet, grow plants, or even create tiny ecosystems. You can study geology and include rock samples for your naturalistic learner to touch.

WHAT CURRICULUM WORKS BEST FOR LEARNING STYLES

When choosing your curriculum for a kinesthetic learner, consider whether or not certain programs offer too much time sitting and reading, and not enough time getting their hands messy? Some curricula are geared primarily towards visual learners, so how does that translate to your verbal learner?

It's also important to note that some curriculums already take these learning styles into consideration and these different styles are naturally built into the lessons. You as the educator can focus more heavily on one style or another within the curriculum.

Your Teaching Style

While it is very important to consider how your student learns, it's equally important to understand [your teaching style](#). It's easy to become burned out and run down when you're using a teaching style that just doesn't fit you or your personality.



Imagine for a minute that it's your first year homeschooling. You may be a little nervous to start, a little unsure of your strengths, and a little concerned you may not succeed. (This happens to all educators at one time or another, so don't fret!) In response to your concerns, you may try to emulate public school in your home. You may try to stick to a very strict schedule, feeling like you need to fill every hour with intense educating and hands-on support.

You may find that this style of teaching just doesn't fit your personality. You're more of a type B person and a [strict schedule just doesn't work for you](#). You may find that you're an extrovert and need a lot more interaction with other homeschoolers and people in the community. You may find that you thrive better under a looser schedule with more flexibility for spontaneous learning opportunities.

On the flip side, you may have other homeschooler friends who are always running to activities and who have a freer schedule, but that makes you crazy! You like to have complete order, and a very planned schedule in order to feel comfortable in your educating. You may prefer to cover most of the core subjects in the home, with less time running to extra activities.

Neither one of these types of teaching are wrong, and both are absolutely able to succeed! The biggest problem is trying to force a teaching style that just isn't you. When it comes to choosing curriculum, it's important to keep your teaching style in mind.

What is Your Homeschooling Approach?

Understanding your child's learning style, and your teaching style, go hand in hand with picking your [homeschooling approach](#). There are lots of different ways to approach homeschooling. It's all about what fits you and your students best!

Below is a list of some of the types of homeschooling approaches that people today are using. Identifying your homeschooling style will help you identify what type of curriculum you would like to use.

CLASSICAL HOMESCHOOLING



Classical homeschooling is supposed to mimic the educational style of ancient societies like Greece and Rome.

Those who use this method rely on a technique known as “Trivium.” The idea is that the child’s education will be broken down into three parts. Grade school is for memorization and the development of concrete thinking. Middle school is when abstract thinking is introduced, because the belief is that this is when children are able to begin to analyze information and grow beyond black and white ideas. High school is for abstract thinking and articulation.

Classical homeschooling teaches typical subjects that private and public school do, but there is a unique emphasis on grammar, logic, and rhetoric. The languages of Latin in Greek are also included in this education, as well as the study of Greek and Latin philosophy and literature.

UNIT STUDIES



Unit Studies are popular with many homeschooling families. People who use unit studies will focus on one main theme and incorporate most or all of their children's subjects within the unit. For example, a unit might be about China. Within that unit, they could learn Chinese history, read Chinese literature, learn about China's ecosystems for science, imitate Chinese art for art class, and so on.

Unit Studies are helpful when teaching multiple children because it can be altered to fit different grade levels while still focusing on the same theme.

CHARLOTTE MASON METHOD

Charlotte Mason was a 19th-century educator who had some very big ideas about education. She wrote six large volumes about her views of education, so it's difficult to brief about her methods. However, here are [a few things](#) which stand out to people who like this homeschooling approach.

Charlotte Mason believed that children have inherent value, and that they are capable of a great deal more than many adults may think. She believed in bringing education to life and to create a world through education that made children be a part of it.

Charlotte Mason's Method includes developing good habits, keeping lessons short (especially for younger children), and using narration as opposed to writing (again with younger children.) Her method says to use what she describes as "living books", which are the opposite of textbooks, and are meant to be inspiring stories that focus deeply on one interest. Charlotte Mason's method also values art, music, and nature studies. In all of Charlotte Mason's method, there is an emphasis on a hands-on experience, not just reading, writing, and taking tests.

UNSCHOOLING



Unschooling is counter to traditional schooling and education. John Holt created the ideology of unschooling in the late 70's and the early 80's. He believed that children learn through life experiences, rather than through authoritative adult-led education. The idea is that children can be the ones to lead their own education by exploring their interests.

Unschooling still promotes learning, but by the child's direction based on their interests in life. For instance, a child will learn to read in order to pursue topics that they want to learn more about. The idea is that human beings have an innate drive to learn, but traditional school educations force children to learn in a specific way designated by adults, as opposed to letting them do what they would naturally do -- explore and learn about the world that they live in.

John Holt [came to this conclusion](#) after working as an educator in a private school setting and noting that most of his students weren't excited about learning, and would quickly lose information in their minds after studying for a test. He contrasted this to his sister's preschool children who naturally explored, learned, and developed mentally and physically -- and they did so joyfully.

In unschooling there is an emphasis on children teaching themselves, as opposed to being made to learn something. Parents who adhere to this philosophy will help a child who wants to learn about something, but they will also encourage the child to learn independently. A parent will also inform the child HOW to get the answers that they are searching for.

ECLECTIC HOMESCHOOLING

Parents who use the eclectic style take many of the different teaching approaches and use a little bit of everything. It's really a combination of many techniques in which the family uses what works for them, and rejects the parts that don't work. People who use this method are also comfortable using the parts of a premade curriculum that they like, but not following them strictly in the areas where they don't perform well for the child or family.

CHRISTIAN/RELIGIOUS

Many people who choose to homeschool do so for religious reasons. For those individuals, they would pick curriculum that would support their belief system and encourage the morals and character development that would be attributed to that faith. Many of the other homeschooling styles can be used in conjunction with this approach, but they would all be done through a religious lens.



Get Your Priorities Straight

Determining your priorities will affect how you look at a curriculum from year to year. For example, this year you may have a child who is exceeding expectations for reading, but is lagging behind in science or math. You may want a program that focuses more closely on the areas in which they need help, while still developing their strengths.

One way to assess your child's strengths or weaknesses is by looking at standardized tests. This can give you a game plan of what areas your child is doing very well in, and what areas they may need extra work.

Another consideration that often comes up is preparing your child for higher grades and bigger expectations. You may be getting your grade school student ready for high school, or your high school student prepared for college. Whatever the case may be, you'll want to choose a curriculum that supports your priorities.

Your Child's Interests Matter



One of the advantages of homeschooling is that you can pursue your child's interests. If you have a kid who really loves dinosaurs, you can do an entire unit study on dinosaurs. If your child suddenly won't stop asking questions about the revolutionary war, include that in your school year.

This is just a totally fun thing about homeschooling! You have the opportunity to choose a curriculum that your student is actually interested in! Choosing information that your child wants to learn will help them retain that knowledge and make your day much easier.

Do You Have a Special Needs Child?

There are many reasons why parents may choose to homeschool their children, but one reason is to give support to a child who has special needs. Perhaps public school was not a good fit for their child, or perhaps there are physical reasons that a child is not able to attend public school. Whatever the reason, special learning needs are an important aspect of [choosing a homeschool curriculum](#).

When choosing a curriculum for your special needs child, it's important to remember their strengths, not just their weaknesses. Sometimes with kids that have special needs, it's easy to worry about their struggles. This is a very normal response, but it's also important to remember to nurture their strengths as well.

As stated above, it's important to find a curriculum that fits their interests. Using their natural interests as a guide to choosing will help things go more smoothly for you and your child.

Depending on your kids' needs, it may be helpful to choose an eclectic approach to education. That way you can tailor their education to exactly what they need.

Understand Your State's Requirements



One very important consideration when picking a curriculum is to know your state's requirements. Not [every state has the same expectations](#) with education as every other state.

For instance, Pennsylvania has fairly strict regulations, while California's regulations are fairly loose. When picking a curriculum, you'll want to make sure that yours is holding up to the standard of the state and that you're not missing important requirements.

It's OK to Quit

One of the biggest fears people have when choosing a curriculum is that they will be locked into that one single curriculum for the foreseeable future. This could not be further from the truth.

Sometimes a curriculum looks great on paper, but in reality, just doesn't work for you, your student, or your family. If this is the case, it's totally acceptable to drop a curriculum and exchange it for something that works for you. Just because a certain curriculum gets great reviews doesn't mean it works for you, and that's OK!

Also, remember that you don't have to rigidly follow a curriculum. You can always tweak certain assignments, omit, or substitute if something doesn't fit.

It's important to understand that choosing a certain curriculum for this year doesn't mean you're married to it for the entire length of your student's homeschool years. What works for this year may not necessarily work for next year, and you have the complete freedom to change as needed.

What Now?



Choosing a curriculum doesn't have to be scary at all, and you don't have to do it alone. [Homeschool-Curriculum.org](https://www.Homeschool-Curriculum.org) offers incredible curriculum choices that fit many different needs and styles. They also have tons of free resources, reviews, and information to help you not only choose the curriculum program that works best for your family, but also take on the day-to-day challenges of homeschooling.

Resources

- ▶ <https://www.theintentionalmom.com/5-steps-to-follow-when-choosing-homeschool-curriculum/>
- ▶ <https://autisticmama.com/how-to-choose-the-right-homeschool-curriculum/>
- ▶ <https://workingathomeschool.com/2014/03/12/five-steps-to-choosing-the-curriculum-thats-right-for-you>
- ▶ <https://www.homeschoolacademy.com/blog/best-homeschooling-curriculum/>
- ▶ <https://www.blessedsimplicity.com/how-to-choose-homeschool-curriculum-large-family/>
- ▶ <https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/homeschooling-styles/>
- ▶ <https://homeschool-curriculum.org/choosing-homeschool-curriculum/> (in site)
- ▶ <http://www.sheknows.com/parenting/articles/990497/how-to-choose-a-homeschool-curriculum>
- ▶ <https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/how-to-choose-homeschool-curriculum/>
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- ▶ <https://www.livinglifeandlearning.com/how-to-choose-homeschool-curriculum-for-a-special-needs-child.html>
- ▶ <https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/homeschooling-styles/>