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How to Home School 101

*Teaching and getting organised
in the primary years.*



Michelle Morrow

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Teaching and getting organised in the primary years.

By Michelle Morrow

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Homeschooling Downunder

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About the Author

I learnt about homeschooling in 1996 when my first child was only a babe in arms. My initial reaction was — *too weird for me!* My friend, with a smile, gave me a homeschooling book and after reading it both my husband and I became homeschooling converts.

From that initial decision to homeschool I began reading all that I could about homeschooling, still having never actually met a *real life homeschooling family*. In 2001 we travelled to Canberra to buy some homeschooling resources (which were actually school resources marketed to homeschooling families.) We came home with all their recommendations and then in 2001 we faithfully started my five year old boy's lessons. I was pregnant with my fourth child at the time.

My past experience of being a school student and nurse educator helped shape how I would set up my own little school. I bought a child's desk, a blackboard and some tiny chairs so my son's pencil grip would be right. I set my routine up and we began lessons. I quickly found out that homeschooling was much harder than I thought.

After a few years I was burnt out and I didn't think home school was working out very well. I had curriculum aplenty but, I realise now, that I didn't know how to teach at home! So, feeling defeated, I put my son in school when he was eight. After a term I was ready to try again. I recommenced homeschooling, changing little of my technique, and within one year had two children in the local public school.

During that time I did a lot of praying about what direction I should go. I still felt passionate about homeschooling but I knew sticking to the old method was not going to work. I was determined to do things differently and make it work, and after one term the kids were more than happy to come home to try again. This time I changed my homeschool teaching style. As I look back on those years I know that this was the turning point in my homeschool journey for I learnt more about how to home educate rather than what to teach.

This is my eleventh year homeschooling and we are still fully convinced of its benefits. My homeschool looks very different to how I initially set it up. All of my kids have been homeschooled through their primary years and early high school years. My two oldest are now in private high schools. They both adjusted well. My other two, aged 10 and 12 at the time of writing this ebook, are still home educated.

A Christian education is important and for me I can't divorce my Christian beliefs from my desire to homeschool. Throughout this ebook you will find that conviction peppering the pages but if you are not a Christian don't be offended by my beliefs. Rather I ask you when you read something that doesn't apply to your beliefs please consider your own heart in what you value in the education of your child.

Introduction

Homeschooling is attracting parents from all walks of life, those with religious motivations and those with a secular ideology. The reasons often vary as to why they are homeschooling but for all who choose to homeschool there is an opportunity to impart your family values into the lives of your children.

Some parents have chosen to homeschool even before they had children and others have tried regular school and are now homeschooling. A growing group of parents are homeschooling because of individual problems encountered with their child, such as learning difficulties, bullying or negative peer influence.

Making a decision to homeschool can be a heart-wrenching one. It is a big commitment! And although I can tell you how wonderful it is, I can't homeschool your children—for the strength of homeschooling is in the parent/child relationship. As a new zealot to homeschooling I used to believe that anyone could homeschool, but after years of seeing people begin and then stop shortly after, I can see that it does require certain elements in order to homeschool successfully.

One of the key elements needed is *a desire to homeschool*. There is a homeschooling book with the title *For the Children's Sake*, and I think that this encompasses for many the ideology of homeschooling. We are making a choice to homeschool based on what we think is best **for our children**. We are not making a decision for other parents' children, just our own.

The next element that needs to be considered when home educating is, are you able and willing to make the sacrifice to educate your children at home? Educating children is a serious undertaking and schools are there for a reason. Education is important! I think many schoolteachers misunderstand that when parents decide to homeschool it is not because they are against teachers, rather they are validating the importance of a teacher's influence and as parents they want to retain this teaching role in the lives of their children. (I think that homeschooling has made me respect the work of teachers even more.)

The decision to homeschool does not mean that school is bad or that teachers are bad. A traditional school education is what most parents choose and there are many dedicated teachers in that system working hard to give children a quality education. I found that there came a time when I reached my limitations with my own children's education and for that reason I have sent two of my children to local high schools. I could see that they needed

more than I was able to give them at home. Again my decision was based on the belief that I was sending my children to school *for their sake*.

The last key element for successful homeschooling is that parents need to be willing to become learners themselves. Not only do you need to learn about what to teach but you also have to learn how to teach it. Generally new homeschoolers have limited knowledge as to how they will actually make homeschooling happen and this is what this ebook is about.

Traditional school can offer children opportunities and learning experiences that are not usually available to the homeschool family. However, for many homeschooling parents the motivating factors that are leading them towards homeschooling often have nothing to do with academics or opportunity – as homeschooling can provide a good academic base and opportunities, albeit different to school. **Parents are choosing to homeschool because of the hearts of their children and the influence that they want to maintain in the lives of their children in their formative years.**

Over the next few pages I want to share ideas that will help you home educate successfully in the primary school years. These ideas are not just my own. They are gathered from my own experience, a range of authors including Charlotte Mason, and the most realistic and practical resource of all – experienced homeschool mothers.

Homeschool Teacher Training 101

Learning how to home educate is more important than finding out what to teach. It's my experience that many new homeschooling parents spend a great deal of time focusing on the curriculums and completely missing the fact that they have to teach them.

Homeschooling is a goldmine. Hollowing out the mine, making the goldmine secure, setting up the framework so that the mine doesn't collapse on top of you is essential before you can extract the nuggets. *Homeschool Teacher Training 101* is the information you need before you start the digging. It will help you to avoid the homeschool collapsing, help you identify educational Fool's Gold and show you how to find treasure in your children. It's not about specific curriculums or how to teach specific subjects. Rather it's your induction training package.

It's not that we need school teacher training but rather that we need *homeschool teacher training*. We need to learn how to make the homeschool happen and not exhaust ourselves in the process. We need to learn how to make homeschooling a lifestyle, how to tailor the homeschool to our children's needs, how to set up a good routine, how to teach character and critical thinking. We need to learn what holistic education looks like and how we can achieve that. All these things form the foundation of home education. You can buy the best curriculums available but if you don't work out how best to facilitate learning for your child the curriculums won't be utilized properly, if at all.

Experience, research, excellent mentors, success and failure, are my qualifications for writing this guide. My desire is to set you on the right path and open your eyes to your role as a teacher to your children. This I believe will find gold in your children and your own life.