

Managing Time

- Spend a half hour after the kids go to bed in the evening, or before they wake up in the morning, reviewing what they will be learning in the coming day.
- Set up a daily schedule that works with your family, while embracing the leisure that this situation allows.
- Take breaks when needed: play outside, color, watch an educational video.
- If a child is extremely frustrated over a subject, feel free to end the lesson early, or switch to another subject for a while. Just make sure you've given the problem all of your patience and persistence first.
- Do what is required of you from the school district, but then allow children to pursue individual interests, outside play, etc.
- Don't feel pressured to spend an hour on every subject. By nature, a traditional classroom setting will require a longer period of instruction for each lesson. In homeschooling, you're able to complete each subject in a much shorter period of time.

Keeping Things Under Control

- Set up a system so your child knows what you expect each day.
- If you have multiple children, consider using table dividers to keep them in their own space.
- Break it up: snacks, dance parties, walk outside, board game, whatever motivates them.
- Make it fun! Sing, dance, incentivize.
- Don't be afraid to offer both negative and positive incentives. Lose a privilege if they complete schoolwork, receive a reward if they do. Rewards/treats should be small enough to use on a daily basis, and it's nice if you vary them.
- As with any discipline, you must stick to what you say, or it won't work! Be consistent and don't give in; you're the teacher and they must learn to respect you!

Figuring Out What to Prioritize

- Use tools and lesson plans provided by your school.
- If you haven't received anything from the school, focus on math and language arts, long with plenty of family read aloud time. (Free curriculum & resources are listed below!)
- Don't feel pressured to give a long lesson/lecture for each subject. Children can learn well by receiving a short summary and then engaging with the material through homework. If they encounter something they don't understand, go back and review in more detail.
- Supplement with time spent outdoors, nature study, physical exercise.
- Use this unstructured time to allow your students to pursue individual interests: writing a book, a unit study on bears, science experiments, etc.
- Children thrive on extra responsibility. This doesn't mean extra chores. This means trusting them with things that go slightly beyond the capabilities they have. For a six-year-old, try responsibilities like reading to younger siblings, setting the table, making breakfast, or planting seeds.

What About Screen Time

- If you allow screen time, try to make it profitable, and limit daytime TV.
- Our two favorite television shows for children are 1) *The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That* (available through Netflix): entertaining, well-made episodes that teach about animals and habitats in a captivating way; 2) *Stella and Sam* (available through Amazon Prime): beautiful stories about a big sister and her little brother with lovely animation and imaginative play.
- If you have Amazon Fire TV, there are a bunch of great phonics and early reading apps made by DeZol. “Sight Word Search” and “Learn Beginning Sounds” are two that we’ve found very effective and nonsense free.
- There are a plethora of gorgeous animal and nature documentaries available through most streaming services.
- Don’t feel guilty. If these days get super tough, don’t feel bad about letting the kids watch an evening movie to calm them down and give yourself a little time to recover.

Sample Daily Schedule

- 6:00 - 8:00 – Kids in bed, mom works
- 8:00 – Everyone up, dressed, beds & rooms tidied
- 8:30 – Breakfast, cleanup
- 9:15 – Morning walk, or exercise indoors
- 10:00 - Morning school (no screen time)
- 11:30 – Outside break, or indoor play
- 12:00 – Lunch, cleanup
- 1:00 – Chores
- 1:30 – Afternoon school (educational screen time)
- 3:00 – Quiet/creative time, mom works
- 4:30 – Outside time, or indoor play
- 5:30 – Dinner prep, dinner, cleanup
- 7:00 – Tidy house/catch up/showers/free time
- 8:30 – Bedtime
- 9:00 – Mom works, prep for tomorrow