

Home School Tips

I am by no means an expert on Home Schooling. We decided to home-school in 2018 when our eldest was halfway through year 8. Then in 2019, we started home schooling both kids, Yr 9 & Yr 7. It can be daunting, even when you are preparing for it. It will be even more so when it is thrust upon you with the current situation around us. I haven't home schooled primary aged kids, and every kid is different. The following is just info that I've discovered on my journey; there is no rule book on home education. Keep it Simple. Sam & Eric

Hopefully, if your child's school is implementing a shut down, they will be providing you with their textbooks, work sheets or even online classes. All you should need to do is ensure they stick to the program laid out by their teachers. But it will be so different to what they are used to. Schooled kids take time to "unschool", to get used to being free range and not as social as before. Try to be patient and ask them to be patient with you – everyone is adjusting to the new normal.

Things to remember:

1. We all love our kids, BUT all of a sudden, being together 24/7 with no work, school or extracurricular activities to break up our time, to expend some of that energy, to have our own space... that will take some adjustment! For EVERYONE!
Try to schedule some down time for everyone. Time for each person (parent included!) to be in their own space doing their own thing. It will look different for each family, but I encourage the kids to take a break from each other. In the beginning it was scheduled but now it happens organically.
2. The kids are used to schedule / timetable / structure. I LOVE that home-school does away with that, but **it took my kids at least 12 months to 'unschool'!** If this is a temporary situation, I strongly encourage you to keep the same schedule they have at school.
0830 – start "class", 1000 – Recess, 1030 – resume "class" etc
It may help them adjust if they stay in a semi-routine.
3. A **LOT** of time is wasted at school (think roll call, lining up, waiting for other students, waiting for teacher, assembly's etc etc). You may find that the kids smash through their allocated work earlier than you think they should. Our normal school day at home is about 5 sessions with lots of breaks. We start at 9 (ish) and are finished by 1 (ish). The afternoon then, is their time. My kids learnt that the sooner they got stuff done, the sooner they could chill in the arvos.
4. In my opinion, (broadly speaking) the current education system is based on rote learning (kids listen then regurgitate information in set format). Home school is a great opportunity to TALK with your kids. It doesn't matter the subject matter (civics, sport, cell division, maths), talk about how what they're learning impacts / will impact their actual life.
Make it relevant: percentages = sales at Kmart
local government = the rubbish collection
history = their grandad fighting in the war
Make it interesting: Google stuff!
Watch Netflix doco on relevant subject
YouTube can be an excellent resource
Make it Deeper: Ask them WHY
Why do they think that, why did you write that? Encourage them to challenge themselves to find the reason behind it ("because my teacher says", "because you raised me to do it that way" ...). These kinds of questions encourage critical thinking, they encourage your child to explore their worldview and where they fit in it. I have learnt HEAPS from my kids and, a lot about myself in our conversations.
Make it Fun: Dust off the board games, card games, colouring in, puzzles. It is not often that we get to spend this much time with them, and we all know time goes so fast. We'll be playing with our grandkids before we know it.

5. Literally, EVERY opportunity is a learning opportunity.
 - Paying a bill? Give them the credit card and the phone and let them do it!
 - Sorting out the pantry because we all bought too much in a panic? – Get them to help sort, label, bake, donate, categorise, rotate stock into expiry date order
 - Going outside? Talk about how awesome the sun is and why vitamin D is important
 - Those board games I mentioned. Monopoly – maths central (plus applicable – investing, bills). Game of Life (ditto), Scrabble (English AND maths!), Chess (strategic thinking)
6. Don't worry!
 - They ask you something you don't know the answer to? TELL THEM "I have no idea" and find the answer together. Or get them to find the answer and tell you (then you listen and learn!)
 - You aren't teaching so much as *facilitating*, especially if the school has provided work.
 - Being at home with you for a few months will **NOT** undo years of education!! Kids are sponges and the world is theirs to be discovered. We just need to help them discover it.

Great Websites I use to help me:

Khan Academy <https://www.khanacademy.org/>

Khan Academy provides great (free) resources / courses / lessons to parents, teachers and students. Loads of content, videos, classes etc

Kids Konnect Worksheets <https://kidskonnect.com/>

HUGE amount of worksheets available on 1000's topics. There is a membership fee, but worth it for the resources you can access

TED-Ed <https://ed.ted.com/>

Heard of Ted Talks? This is Ted – Educational, hundreds of videos to browse

YouTube – "Crash Course" <https://www.youtube.com/user/crashcourse>

Crash Course offer some great educational videos (there is also a Kids channel too). Search for them on YouTube

The Bible Project - <https://bibleproject.com/>

or on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCVfwlh9XpX2Y_tQfjeln9QA

Excellent resource for bible studies. Well made, easy to understand videos on the books, themes, overviews etc. Also have free printables and other resources.

Duolingo - <https://www.duolingo.com/>

Learn a language from home for free

Mel Science <https://melscience.com>

This is a mail-order subscription to excellent Chemistry experiments. Excellent for Home School Families. If home school is a temporary thing, then check them out on Facebook or Instagram as they also provide heaps of cool, easy at home experiments.

Websites Others have recommended:

Scholastic: www.scholastic.com/learnathome

National Geographic <https://www.natgeokids.com/au/>

Google Earth <https://www.google.com/earth/>

Time for Kids <https://www.timeforkids.com/>

Brain Pop <https://www.brainpop.com/>

How Stuff Works <https://www.howstuffworks.com/>

Amazing Space <https://amazing-space.stsci.edu/>

Educational Apps:

(There are thousands educational of Apps on the App Store / Google Play – have a look and see what works for your kids)

Tinybop Collection: Interactive apps on Human Body, Simple Machines, Earth, Plants, Weather

Book Creator

Who Was? Adventure: Trivia Based Game

Boggle: The word game that we used to play with alpha dice – just online :D

Overdrive: Online Library with access to the WA State Library – all you need is a local library membership