

## 10 Tips for Homeschooling Beginners by @DreamBox\_Learn

So, you've decided to homeschool your children. You've talked to all types of parents, made your pros-and-cons list, and envisioned your media room transformed into a great little classroom. You've also probably awakened in a cold sweat once or twice wondering how you're going to be both parent and teacher, how you're going to socialize your kids, and what they might miss out on. It's back-to-school homeschool stress!

Even if your kids won't be headed off on the big yellow bus, you can still join in on the back-to-school fun.

### 10 tips for beginning homeschoolers

1. Write out your reasons for homeschooling. To homeschool or not to homeschool? It's a daunting decision. Write out your reasons for homeschooling and goals for your children. Ask yourself: What are the schools like where you live? What do you want your children to accomplish through their education? Why do you want to homeschool? How long will you homeschool? Homeschooling is more than a full-time job and when the schooling gets tough, a written list of reasons will help you recall why you took on the challenge. A homeschooling mission statement will help you stay focused the ultimate goals for your children.

2. Set measurable educational goals. Whether you're teaching literature, math or art, keep specific educational goals in mind. What do you want your child to learn and how will you track their progress? Divide the list into short-term and long-term goals. Short term: "I want Susie to be able to add double digits." Long term: "I want Susie to have a basic understanding of American History."

3. Make it fun. Homeschooling is never what you pictured. It's not always fun and there will be many times when you wondered why you thought you could be both their teacher and parent. But homeschooling can also be a lot of fun. Teach a French lesson and then make crepes as a family. After a unit on the Civil War, watch a reenactment. If you've always wanted to learn guitar or speak a foreign language, now is the time to learn. Homeschooling will stimulate your curiosity and you'll learn new things while teaching your kids.

4. Reach out. You might be the only one on the block who doesn't walk their child to the bus stop each morning. But you can still be a part of the homeschooling community! Try and find a good homeschooling co-op in your area. If you can't find one, start your own. Attend homeschool conferences.

5. Learn about teaching. It's not enough to be a math whiz or geography guru. You have to know how to apply your knowledge in a way that the child will understand. Read books on teaching and take teaching courses. Swap resources with your homeschooling co-op. If your specialty is in English and you struggle with math, teach the English course and have another homeschooler teach the math.

6. Prepare financially. With the rising cost of a private education, you might feel like you're making the "cheaper choice." But homeschooling is expensive. Consider the cost of keeping one parent home as the primary educator. Consider the curricula, the supplies, the expense of transforming your home office into a classroom. Budget for everything right down to the #2 pencils. Have a financial plan in place and give yourself a cushion for unforeseen expenses.

7. Set aside a time and place for academic work. Don't try and turn your T.V. room (plush couches and all) into a classroom — cartoons and serious learning don't mix. Before you begin homeschooling, set up a classroom with chairs, books, desks, and all. Get into a routine. That is, school begins at 8:00 a.m. and at that time, they must be dressed (teeth brushed, hair combed) and ready to take on the day.

8. Get organized. (The dog ate my ...worksheet) Organize your materials, time, and tasks so you don't waste precious minutes looking for worksheets or scrambling to find that storybook. Set up a filing system for all your different subjects and organize your library and homeschooling records. Consider keeping a daily journal and homeschool work portfolio.

9. Don't forget socialization and life skills. If you decide to homeschool, be prepared for the inevitable question, "What about socialization?" Involve your kids in their community. Sign them up for sports, scouts, and home-school groups. Take field trips with other children and make sure to include activities where your child has to work in a group. Be very certain your child's social needs are being met and that they will have a peer group.

10. Review local regulations. Check your local government regulations if you're thinking about homeschooling.