



# Homeschooling

A guide for parents new to teaching children at home

By Jan Hagedorn

# Welcome

This guide is designed to support parents who have found themselves unexpectedly homeschooling their children and now face the unique challenges and opportunities that are presented.

You may be experiencing uncertainty and overwhelm about how to best support your child emotionally and academically, while trying to hold down your job or navigate the many other factors happening right now in the world.

Your child may be experiencing anxiety, confusion or indeed think they have been given permission to be on permanent holiday mode.

This guide will provide you with simple steps to help you create an easy structure that works for the unique needs of your family. It will support you in staying connected and help in providing calming support to you and your child while you both navigate through a very new transition to homeschooling.

My name is Jan Hagedorn and it's a pleasure to meet you.

Before homeschooling my own children, I taught for several years as a high school and elementary classroom teacher. I was thrown into homeschooling and I learned first-hand how teaching my own kids was such a different emotional experience than teaching in the classroom. I often became frustrated and anxious, rather than experiencing the joy and excitement of learning together as a family.

This painfully resulted in defiant children who rebelled against expectations. I knew I had to do something different which led me to find a new simpler holistic approach so I could create more joy and meaningful connection while also providing an educational home setting for my children.

Below are five key tools to help you shift the homeschooling journey into a more joyful, effective, and easier experience while celebrating a deep learning for all. My hope for you is that you take what resonates for you and use it to support you in creating more meaningful relationships with your children during this homeschooling experience.

I am passionate about supporting parents and children to thrive in their learning environment and would love to hear about your homeschooling practice, what works for you and your take-aways. We are all in this together. Please don't hesitate to connect with me on Facebook or email me directly at [janbevhagedorn@gmail.com](mailto:janbevhagedorn@gmail.com)

Sincerely Jan Hagedorn B.Ed., RPC

# First, create your daily mantra.

Select a word or phrase to recite that works for you throughout the day. Post it in a place where you can return to it in those moments when you need to breathe and focus on what really matters. Some suggestions are as follows:

- Less is more
- Simplicity is brilliant
- All learning is self-learning: I am a cheerleader and my child is ultimately in control of what he/she/they chooses to learn
- I embrace my (or my children's) imperfections/mistakes with self-compassion and see them as portals for learning and growth
- I celebrate where my child is right now: Celebration raises the energy for all.
- Boredom is a sacred place and a birthplace for my child's imagination to flourish. (Don't rush into entertaining, limit screen time)
- I remember to breathe when I am frustrated or overwhelmed. This teaches my child a coping strategy when they encounter the same feelings
- I can support myself and my child in taking the next baby step in the learning process.
- My effort is enough right now, and I may wobble and that is okay as everyone is wobbling as we sort through this together.
- Being present for my children is more important than how much material is covered.
- How do I make this easy?

# Next, create your day.

Create a super simple structure that works for you and your family. Allow room for flexibility, creativity, and spontaneity to arise and avoid total rigidity. Remember less is more especially in the beginning! All times below are guidelines, follow what works best for your family.

<p><b>MORNING RITUAL</b> {30 minutes}</p>	<p>Choose one opening joyful morning ritual that works for all your children regardless of their age, to participate in. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• read one chapter from a book/poetry leaving room for discussion by all.</li> <li>• Singing/meditation</li> <li>• Physical activity i.e. Fitness routine, dance, yoga, walking.</li> </ul> <p>Check out GoNoodle in the resource section for more ideas.</p>
<p><b>MORNING LEARNINGS</b> {2.5 hours, allow for breaks}</p>	<p>Together, create a list of quiet independent activities your child can do once they are finished their morning learnings. This is particularly helpful when homeschooling several children.</p> <p>Allow your child to choose 2 subject areas using your online teacher as a resource.</p> <p>Encourage your child to be as independent as possible and when choosing books i.e. math/reading workbooks. Choose those with clear, easy directions that facilitate independence as much as possible. This allows you to stay in the supportive, curious role, keeping that loving connection with your child without burning out.</p> <p>Ensure there is room for lots of breaks for both parents and kids. Natural breaks of 10-20 mins are important for integration and reflection. Natural breaks with movement involved are preferable. (i.e. skipping, walking dog, bike riding around the block).</p>
<p><b>CLOSING MORNING RITUAL</b> {10 minutes}</p>	<p>Discuss what the afternoon will look like and if any special equipment is needed.</p> <p>High 5 or big hug just because.</p>

# Then, eat lunch!

<p><b>AFTERNOON EXPLORATION/ FUN</b> {2 hours}</p>	<p>Breathe, chill and be gentle with yourself and your children. You don't need to reinvent the wheel, simple routine things you do everyday can be turned into rich learning opportunities where exploration can pave the way for lifelong joy.</p> <p>The home environment offers opportunities, i.e. cooking, meal/picnic preparation, measuring, gardening, crafts, building, creating, painting, sculpting, to explore and learn skills that are often difficult to present in the classroom. These skills are learned by observation, experience and exploration, where natural curiosity takes the lead.</p> <p>Right outside your door is nature, a brilliant platform to encounter, experience and explore bugs, dirt, veggies, flowers, rocks, trees, streams, beaches, tidal action, and the solar systems. The wonderment of nature is a natural forum for spring boarding into endless lists, graphs, charts, sketching, photography and researching.</p> <p>Follow your child's lead and ask them what they would love to learn. Support them in finding the material, experts, or online classes needed to lean into their dream.</p>
<p><b>CLOSING AFTERNOON RITUAL</b> {15 minutes}</p>	<p>There are many things you can do together, here are some ideas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eye contact and a big hug just because you are both in this learning together.</li><li>• Journal: Share one thing I learned today, one thing I want to learn more about, one thing I could teach someone else or one way I could reach out to support another person while keeping physical distance, list 3 or more things I am grateful for.</li><li>• Connect via phone with a friend/loved one and share what you learned today.</li></ul>

# Things to remember,

## 1. GET CURIOUS, NOT FURIOUS

Curiosity is the biggest motivator. Become a supportive sleuth using curiosity questions to deepen your child's learning. For example:

- What do you know right now?
- Tell me more.
- What would be your next baby step?
- How can you use your feeling of boredom to fuel your imagination?
- What would be another way to show this?
- How can we make this simple?
- What would support look like right now?
- What else would you like to learn about?
- Write up what you know already, what do you want to research more?
- If your child has reached their threshold for confusion/anxiety, stop, take a breath/mini break then support your child to return to the security of what he/she knows already before moving on.

## 2. ENLIST SUPPORT

- Reach out to your online teachers and ask for specific resources that encourage your child to learn as independently as possible to allow you to remain in the curious, supportive cheerleader role. This provides sanity for you and alleviates burnout.
- Connect with other parents. Share ideas for learning and create a safe place for you to share what this new experience is like for you. There may be laughter, there may be tears, but physical distance does not need to limit the sharing from our hearts.
- Engage your parents, friends, and neighbours to be part of your child's learning process through the phone or computer. You don't need to do it all and the bonus is your child gets to spend one on one time with loved ones. For example: have your child read or share timetables with their grandparents or other loved ones, have grandparents read books via phone or skype.

### **3. CELEBRATE AND HAVE FUN!**

Play is one of the primary ways children learn. Having fun is a natural container for learning and is one of the best ways to prepare your child for meaningful relationships. Try these on for size:

- Playing games
- Telling jokes
- Sharing tongue twisters
- Read poetry
- Do improv
- Be silly

Research has shown how much fun kids have together with their siblings when they're young, is the best predictor for good sibling relationships later in life. Humour can also shift your child's state of mind when they become stuck in a defiant state of mind.

# Resources

**GoNoodle** is a free online resource for parents/teachers/kids that offers yoga, mindfulness, downloadable curricular activities, and off-screen home activities spanning a variety of abilities, interests, ages and subjects.

**Brene Brown** offers free downloadables for teachers.

The Brave Learner/Brave Learner Companion Guide Julie Bogart

Better Together: Strengthen Your Family, Simplify your Homeschooling Pam Barnhill

No Drama Discipline: The Whole Brain Way to Calm the Chaos and Nurture your Child's Developing Mind Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.

The Whole Brain Child:12 Revolutionary Strategies to Nurture your Child's Developing Mind-Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D. (There is also a workbook).

Hold On to Your Kids: Why Parents Matter. Gordon Neufeld, P.H.D., Gabor Mate, M.D.

10 Mindful Minutes: Giving Our Children and Ourselves the Social and Emotional Skills to Reduce Stress and Anxiety for Healthier, Happier Lives. By Goldie Hawn

Great Meditation and Calming Resource for kids:

**Child/Adolescent Anxiety Clinic Michael Garron Hospital Toronto**

National Kids Helpline 24/7: 1800-668-6868 Website: [kidshelpphone.ca](http://kidshelpphone.ca)