

RESPONSIBLE PARENTING  
AND HOMESCHOOLING:

# HOW TO FREE YOUR FAMILY FROM THE OPPRESSION OF MISEDUCATION



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## *Chapter Four*

# **How Do We Get Started?**

*I'm not telling you it's going to be easy, I'm telling you it's going to be worth it. ~Art Williams*



## ***Homeschooling~Coolnerds Style!***

Some of the best advice I've ever received was from my gardening mentor when I began learning more about growing food. She suggested that I chose one source and stick with that teacher until I learned enough to navigate the wealth of information that existed on gardening. Of the many ways there are to homeschool, I'll share the method that allows the most freedom to design what works best for your whole family.

### **Step 1. ~~Choosing a curriculum~~ Deschooling, unschooling, and scheduling**

We strongly suggest that you do **NOT** choose nor purchase a curriculum. This is the most serious step involved in homeschooling-hometraining. Instead of choosing a curriculum, take the time...make the time to get to know your child. They are individuals with their own story who deserve to take a break from the systemic schedules, bells, and rules so that they can simply be.

This may sound strange, but it's very important so please pay close attention. Allow yourself and your child to **DESCHOOL**. Take days, maybe weeks to rest. Binge on movies, sleep, quiet time, and do not allow the guilt of what you "should" be doing to stop this process.

In her book *The Teenage Liberation Handbook*, author Grace Llewellyn puts it this way:

***When you quit school, do nothing for at least, at the absolute minimum, a week. If you wish, however, write stories or journal entries about your past and your future. Dream, dream, dream. If you crave tv, watch it. If you crave sleep, indulge. Allow yourself to go through withdrawal. Pass no judgements. If you want to "work" on anything, work on forgiving and forgetting. Forgive yourself for everything, Forgive your teachers for everything. Forgive your parents for everything. Forget the lies school taught-forget believing that learning is separate from your life, that you can't teach yourself, that you are defined by your grades, and all other such nonsense. Detoxify. Purge.***

Now, this **deschooling** process is not to be used an excuse to become lazy or unintentional. Though, it is essential to take time to process and detox the old before venturing into the new.

Teaching educational basics such as: **phonics, reading analog clocks, map reading, states and capitals, multiplication, simple addition and subtraction, writing your name, gardening, music, historical legacy, religious legacy, budgeting, international exploration, etc.** is certainly useful for filling the gaps of students transitioning from the public education sector. In addition, it lays a sure foundation of skills that your learner can use to begin exploring their own interests.

However, it is important to remember that education is not just about what is in a book. **UNSCHOOL** by using everything is your life as your guide. **Education is the journey of life.** As both you and your child are coming to yourselves, consider things that may have been important to you both as younger children. Free your imagination and allow it to guide you onto a new course of creativity and growth.

At some point a schedule will need to be implemented. **Make it a schedule that works well for your family and specific child.** Be sure to teach and model household responsibilities, cooking, ironing, budgeting, conflict management, family game nights, taking interest in their interests, healthy marriage, healthy eating, outdoor fun, driving, etc. Through this guidance you are building the trusting relationship that will make it easier for them to trust you through those “harder” days when those “not so fun” lessons have to be taught.

**Parenting** is teaching too. Done responsibly, it provides the guidance and boundaries needed for freedom to work well. Sometimes as parents we need to apologize. This is what unschooling is really about, using everything to teach. Being mindful enough to implement what is needed for optimal growth of the mind, body, and soul.

What if you try something that doesn't work? Try something else. What if what didn't work last time works next time? Great! What if nothing is working? Be patient and keep trying! That's the beauty of it all! They are **YOUR** kids and surely if you try consistently, your efforts will mean way more than not!

After doing all of this work, if you still feel you need a “set curriculum”, please refer to our resource section. Additionally, take a look at other families—locally and online—that may be similar to yours. Reach out for support and encouragement, but whatever you do TRUST that you are your child's best and **GREATEST** teacher! The world would certainly be a much better place if we had more parents who just stuck with it no matter what! **You've got this!**

### ***What tools will you need to teach?***

Books on every topic	Rubrics cubes	Art supplies	Microscopes
Dictionaries	Dry erase boards	Cooking supplies	Telescopes
Thesaurus	Blackboards	Magazines	Documentaries
Globes	Notebook paper	Record players	Real money
Maps	Handwriting tablets	Board games	Travel
Atlas	Composition journals	Card games	Prayer
Clocks	Art books	Abacus	Creativity
Puzzles		Gardening tools	A listening ear
		Internships	Etc.

## **Step 2. Check out the homeschooling laws particular to your own state.**

In Tennessee, parents must have a least a GED or HS diploma and must educate their children 4 hours a day, 5 days a week, 180 days per year. Thankfully, Tennessee has laws that allow flexibility while other states, such as NY, are very strict. For more on TN homeschooling laws, see <https://www.tn.gov/education/school-options/home-schooling-in-tn.html>.

Know what the laws state and be able to comprehend them fully so that you will always be in compliance. Don't just listen to what your lil nephew nem said...read it for yourself!

**Step 3. Withdraw your child from school and request (in some cases, you may have to demand) ALL of your child's records.** Indicate that they will be enrolling into whichever **homeschool umbrella program** that you deem necessary.

You need ALL of your child's records so that YOU can read thoroughly what has been written and said about your child, as some of this "labeling" may have to be **undone** through homeschooling.

## **Step 4. Enroll your child into a homeschool umbrella program.**

TENNESSEE UMBRELLA SCHOOLS (as stated in TN law): *By authority of the same statute, parents may also home school their own children by registering with a church-related "umbrella" school defined by Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-50-801. Parents who choose this option will be required to provide evidence to the local school district that their child is enrolled in a church-related school. An Intent to Home School form is **not** required for students who enrolled in a church-related school. The church-related school will determine record keeping and test requirements for students enrolled in an umbrella program.*

We **STRONGLY** recommend umbrella schools as they serve several KEY purposes: they keep attendance records and grades so that your child cannot be reported as truant, they "cover" your child so that state testing is NOT NECESSARY (You heard me! **NO STATE TESTS IN HOMESCHOOL!**), and finally for high school students, they provide official transcripts and diplomas. Do your own research and use discernment to find what fits your family's needs! We offer tested and trusted educational consulting to advise you through this piece if needed.

## Step 5. Educational Planning & Grade Reporting

For the state of Tennessee, you will need to list grade level resources that will be used for each course. Not every resource needs to be listed or used in its entirety. It is merely an outline that must be provided to the umbrella schools to show them that you have access to materials to teach the courses that your child needs. For elementary and middle grades, this can be very simple as there are lots of materials that can be used to teach.

### For example:

#### 1st grade educational plan

Writing~Scriptures (affirmations) for daily writing practice.  
Reading~Hooked on Phonics  
Spelling~Introduce 10 new words weekly using everyday items  
Science~hands on experiments, local zoo, 4-H  
Math~telling time, counting money, earning money for chores, grocery shopping, clothes shopping  
History~Maps, globes, travel  
PE~outdoors activities, YMCA  
Music~Aardvark music classes at the library  
Art~Coloring, freehand drawing

#### 8th grade educational plan

Writing~Scriptures (affirmations) for daily writing practice, journaling  
Reading~The Bible, The Autobiography of Malcolm X, The Teenage Liberation Handbook  
History~Maps, globes, travel  
Spelling~Introduce 10 new ACT vocab words weekly  
Science~Memphis Zoo, hands on science experiments, 4-H  
Math~ Private tutoring through The Coolnerds  
History~Kamali Academy  
PE~outdoor activities, YMCA  
Music~private piano lessons

Please note: If your child is coming directly from the public school system, the likelihood that they lack in comprehension, focus, or basic geography is real. **Do not allow this to impede your plans.** Done properly, there will be more than enough time to “catch them up”. Homeschooling limits distractions, so you will find that your child will learn more in a week than they ever learned in year.

Educational planning for high school students is different for each state but still simple when you follow the plan. I suggest that each student follow the 4 year college plan in case the students decide either now or in the future that they will attend a 4 year college. In addition, I also advise that parents begin prepping youth for the ACT as early as possible as this test will ensure that students will obtain the financing needed to attend college with the cost covered.

There are 22 high credits necessary to graduate successfully in the state of Tennessee. Check and recheck your child’s transcripts to ensure that the following courses are covered:

**Total Required Credits: 22**

- **Math:** 4 credits, including Algebra I, II, Geometry and a fourth higher level math course (Students must be enrolled in a mathematics course each school year.)
- **English:** 4 credits
- **Science:** 3 credits, including Biology, Chemistry or Physics, and a third lab course
- **Social Studies:** 3 credits, including U.S. History and Geography, World History and Geography, U.S. Government and Civics, and Economics
- **Physical Education and Wellness:** 1.5 credits
- **Personal Finance:** 0.5 credits (Three years of JROTC may be substituted for one-half unit of Personal Finance if the JROTC instructor attends the Personal Finance training.)
- **Foreign Language:** 2 credits (May be waived by the local school district for students, under certain circumstances, to expand and enhance the elective focus)
- **Fine Arts:** 1 credit (may be waived by the local school district for students, under certain circumstances, to expand and enhance the elective focus)
- **Elective Focus:** 3 credits consisting of Math and Science, Career and Technical Education, Fine Arts, Humanities, Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB)

There is a lovely checklist on every state's education web pages that can be used to keep things in check. As stated in the previous chapter, you do have the option to graduate your child when you deem that they are ready. READY= intellectually and mentally ready. Do not send your child into a world of adults knowing that you haven't "given them game". Take your time and do this right and your investment of time, resources, love, and money will surely pay off!

**Reporting Grades**

How will you gauge what grades to give your children? I am not the biggest fan of testing. Sometimes I do give short answer tests to my kids, but much of time I would rather talk with them and bring up ideas that guides them to recall big ideas from documentaries, books, or experiences to explain their views. They connect what they are learning to life in a very real way and it shows me that they are indeed learning. Of course, I take into account willingness to grow, explore, consistency, effort, and attitude. More tangible courses, such as math, I have a tutor who gives us their grades. Everything else, I decide **honestly** what they've earned.

While I was in the system, I learned that ***grades did not mean a thing***. I mean they are fake. There were students who had IEP's and showed up 170 days a year and did a minimal amount of anything except misbehave. These kids usually slide by with C's and D's. Why? Because the district will only allow you to fail a certain percentage of your students and IF they fail, you will need to justify how you failed someone who



showed up to school most of the year, AND their failure must not be a manifestation of their “learning disability”.

Then there are the well behaved, obedient students. Many of these students end up being helpers and leaders in the school. If they were doing ALL of their work, I am certain that they would easily earn A’s. Hence the reason that they miss class to assist in the office, running errands and more. Are they smart? Yes indeed. But if they didn’t do every last assignment, how is the “A” real?

Lastly, there were the kids like mine~very smart, well behaved, and in optional programs. They would miss days because even as a public school teacher, I felt the need to stay home to enjoy them and life. Upon their return, many teachers decided not to give them any makeup work since they were “so smart anyway”. I would love to shed more light on this, but the point is this: Grades in no way determines how much a child knows. ***Please deschool from that philosophy as well.*** I do not believe in reporting grades falsely so if your child “fails” at anything in homeschool, take the time to teach him/her to do it again properly.

A real life example is pulling down a dish that is not properly washed. Do you wash it yourself? Fuss and holler? Or do you call your child into the kitchen and say, “Maybe I didn’t show you how to this properly. Let me show you how to do it properly and next time you can do it right!” Next time, you may have to monitor them but over time you should have a child with an A in home economics.

Millionaire Robert Kiyosaki believes that the “C” student is the most creative student in public school. He is the one who is smart enough to pass and creative enough not to conform. Of course I am not suggesting that you allow your kids to get by, but I am stressing that you take the pressure off of yourselves so that learning in your home is always a growth process and never some competition that leaves room for only one way to win this race called life.

## **Step 5: (optional) Considerations when Using Co-ops, Tutorials, and Online programs**

*In the absence of a village, build your own.~some homeschooling guru*

Of course, I am huge advocate of **DOING IT YOURSELF** when homeschooling. For many work or health related reasons, some families need outside help. In my experiences with families, I've encountered various religious, sexual, and personal preferences. I, too, have my own and have policies where they are clearly stated. Still, there are families who want to enroll into our program despite our differences as they seem to be sold on other aspects.

However, this does not mean that I make adjustments to what I have specified as being central to our educational environment. Am I flexible and approachable? Very. But just as I encourage others to set personal boundaries in place and stick to them, I uphold these values myself. That being said, please know that every co-op or tutorial may not fit your needs. Keep seeking until you find one that does or create your own. Trust me, it's needed!

### **To clarify:**

**Co-op**~a group of homeschooling parents who pull their kids together to share the load of educating. Each parent involved usually teaches or serves in some capacity. Usually this is a free to low cost option for homeschooling families.

**Tutorial**~a small business providing an educational experience designed to help homeschooled students thrive in specific interest areas, subjects, or specific standardized exams.

**Co-ops and tutorials are designed to serve as an extension of what is done at home. Before choosing to join any groups that will be teaching your child, consider the following:**

Can you commit to another's schedule, rules, routines for homeschooling?  
What specialized hobbies, courses, or time commitment can you offer a co-op?  
Can you afford to invest financially with a tutorial?  
Do the teachers align with many of your educational and moral philosophies?  
Can you manage conflict in a healthy manner in case any disagreements arise within a co-op or tutorial?  
In what ways will this co-op or tutorial benefit your children?  
Are your children comfortable in this group?

After answering such questions honestly, seek to obtain references from other trusted families and their kids in order to help you decide.

**Online programs~**There are many free, useful online resources that help supplement education such as: Khan Academy, PBS Kids, Saylor University, MIT University, etc. In my experience though, using an online homeschooling platform to handle all of your needs such as K-12 is not what we recommend. Use the internet as a supplemental tool, because the ultimate benefit of home education is relationship building between the parents and children. I've encountered many families who are stressed out by the online course load, the students get behind, and then they bring them to me to monitor them through their online courses. I do not accept these kinds of situations because I will not enforce nor co-sign doing "school" at home.

Additionally, I tend to think that if something is adding stress to parents AND students, then it's unnecessary. Since online schools come with a cost, consider the kind of stress that you are willing to pay for.

Whatever you choose, I strongly recommend using your discernment. Know that when you are entering another's atmosphere (physical or online), you cannot micromanage their environment or demand that they shift according to your liking. However, you can find a tribe of like-minded people who can help sharpen you. To add, you can use your gifts to assist and build an intentional village of responsible adults who can help you guide your legacy into the brightest future possible.

Recently, I've worked with parents who are living deeply in poverty and care very much about their child's educational experiences. Many of these same parents are interested in homeschooling but need a community of support. I believe that communities can pull together to create the resources needed to truly support these families.

Communities can pull together retired educators or local community members who work well with students to, say, volunteer at a church to teach a course in reading, math, etc. That way, all parents can utilize the resources around them to ensure the highest level of performance from their children, no matter their social or economic status.

Whatever your strategy, we have to save our children. If we do not, we are doomed to face a future filled with ignorance and despair. We cannot spend all of our time, money and resources on the materialistic things in life without building up the most important asset that we have. Our future depends on it. Godspeed.

# How to Free Your Family From the Oppression of Miseducation

- Can the public school system be reformed?
- Are parents really equipped to teach their own children?
- What is the difference between school and education?
- How can parents homeschool their own children successfully?
- Can children learn to teach themselves?
- Can homeschooling help solve educational chaos?
- What resources can I use to teach my own children?

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