



*most common*  
HOMESCHOOL  
METHODS  
*explained*



## Relaxed/Eclectic Homeschooling

“Relaxed” or “Eclectic” homeschooling method is used most often by homeschoolers. Basically, eclectic homeschoolers use a little of this and a little of that, using workbooks for math, reading, and spelling, and taking an unschooling approach for the other subjects. For the family who practices “relaxed” or eclectic homeschooling, mornings are often used for more formal, “have to” work, and afternoons are used for hobbies and other special projects. There are no specific times set up for each subject, but instead, the child is expected to meet certain educational goals.

The advantage of the Eclectic method is that the parent feels that the “important” subjects are being covered thoroughly. This method also allows the family to choose textbooks, field trips and classes that fit their needs and interests.

## School-at-Home/ Traditional

School-at-Home or Traditional homeschooling is the style most often portrayed in the media because it is so easy to understand and can be accompanied by a photo of children studying around the kitchen table. You may wonder what is traditional homeschooling? This is it! **This is also the most expensive and the type of homeschooling method with the highest burnout rate.** Most families who follow the school-at-home approach purchase boxed curriculum that comes with textbooks, study schedules, grades and record keeping. Some families use the school-at-home approach, but make up their own lesson plans and find their own learning materials.

The **advantage** of this style is that families know exactly what to teach and when to teach it. That can be a comfort when you are just starting out.

The **disadvantage** is that this method requires much more work on the part of the teacher/parent and the lessons are not as much fun for the children.



## Unschooling Method

The Unschooling homeschool style is also known as natural, interest-led, and child-led learning. Unschoolers learn from everyday life experiences and do not use school schedules or formal lessons. Instead, unschooled children follow their interests and learn in much the same way as adults do-by pursuing an interest or curiosity. In the same way that children learn to walk and talk, unschooled children, learn their math, science, reading, and history. The **advantage** of using the unschooling homeschool method is that unschooled children have the time and research abilities to become experts in their areas of interest.

The **disadvantage** is that because unschoolers do not follow the typical school schedule, they may not do as well on grade level assessments and may have a difficult time if they re-enter the school system.

## Classical Homeschooling

The goal of the classical homeschool technique is to teach people how to learn for themselves. The five tools of learning, known as the **Trivium, are Reason, Record, Research, Relate and Rhetoric.** Younger children begin with the preparing stage, where they learn the three R's. The grammar stage is next, which emphasizes compositions and collections, and then the dialectic stage, where serious reading, study, and research take place. All the tools come together in the **Rhetoric stage** where communication is the primary focus. For help, homeschoolers following the classical homeschool technique will read books about this method, find websites about classical homeschooling, and possibly join a classical homeschooling support group.





## Charlotte Mason Homeschooling

Charlotte Mason Homeschooling method has at its core the belief that children are not mere containers waiting to be filled with knowledge, but persons in their own right deserving of respect. According to Charlotte Mason, children should be given time to play, create, and be involved in real-life situations from which they can learn. Students of the Charlotte Mason method take nature walks, visit art museums, and learn geography, history, and literature from "living books." (*Books that make these subjects come alive*).

## Waldorf Homeschooling

The Waldorf Homeschooling method is a popular homeschooling technique. Waldorf education is based on the work of Rudolf Steiner and stresses the importance of educating the whole child: body, mind, and spirit. In the early grades, there is an emphasis on arts and crafts, music and movement, and nature. Older children are taught to develop self-awareness and how to reason things out for themselves. Children in a Waldorf homeschool do not use standard textbooks; instead, the children create their own books. The Waldorf homeschooling method also discourages the use of televisions and computers because they believe that computers are bad for the child's health and creativity. Books about the Waldorf method are available from the Rudolf Steiner Bookstore (916-961-8727). Waldorf curriculum and support is available from Oak Meadow. It's so important to align your homeschool curriculum by learning style.



## Montessori Homeschooling

The Montessori homeschooling method is another popular homeschooling style. The Montessori method emphasizes "errorless learning" where the children learn at their own pace and in that way develop their full potential. This approach emphasizes beauty and quality and avoids things that are confusing or cluttered. Wooden tools are preferred over plastic tools and learning materials are kept well organized and ready to use. For help, the Montessori homeschooling family would turn to their library to read books about the Montessori method. They might also contact a Montessori school in their neighborhood for suggestions and guidance. This method also discourages televisions and computers, especially for younger children. Although Montessori materials are available for high school students, most homeschoolers use the Montessori method for younger children. Books and curriculum on the Montessori method are available from American Montessori Consulting (562-598-2321).

## Multiple Intelligences Method

The Multiple Intelligences Homeschooling Method is an idea developed by Howard Gardner and Harvard University's "Project Zero." The belief is that everyone is intelligent in his or her own way and that learning is easiest and most effective when it uses a person's strengths instead of their weaknesses. Most successful homeschoolers naturally emphasize their children's strengths and automatically tailor their teaching to match the child's learning style. Successful homeschoolers also adjust their learning environment and schedule so that it brings out the child's best.





## Unit Study Homeschooling

The Unit Study Method of Homeschooling is a somewhat eclectic method of homeschooling that allows students to take a deep dive into topics that interest them or as an organized way to thematically cover assigned grade-level concepts. Unit studies incorporate the basic subjects into a thematic unit. Any unit can cover reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and fine arts. Lessons are adaptable to different skill levels, various learning styles, and multiple intelligences. Thematic unit studies start with a primary subject area, such as Literature or History. This primary subject progresses in sequential order from topic to topic. Each chapter ties in other subject areas with practical hands-on activities. The students make meaningful connections between the various subjects.

The daily schedule is streamlined so the parent does not have to juggle separate textbooks for each child. There's not enough time in the school day to cover everything anyway. Each student can explore the topic at their own ability level.

## Deschooling Method (to Begin the Homeschool Process)

When it comes time to homeschool, parents of children who've been in school may feel the need to imitate the regular school mindset. I'm here to tell you that exactly the opposite of what they've been doing is in order! Deschooling involves pulling away from all of the things we've come to expect from traditional schooling. It involves taking time to, well, deschool and undo all of the learned attitudes and behaviors that result from being in school all day every day.

Deschooling works with the child's natural rhythms of wake and sleep, interests and motivation, and play! Taking the time to deschool can work wonders for a good start to your homeschooling adventure.

You might find that one, two, or even three of these methods really speak to you. Dig deeper and discover more about how they can work for you!

Although every homeschool is unique, certain homeschooling styles and approaches exist to help us teach. Most homeschoolers do not follow one style or method exactly especially since there are so many different types of homeschooling styles. Instead, they select the ideas and suggestions that fit their family and eventually end up with a method all their own.

It may take some time to develop your own routine and you may discover that you start out more structured in the beginning and become more flexible and relaxed as time goes on. Every family is unique, so find the type of homeschooling that works best for you and your children.



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*for additional resources*

This compilation of information is from my 16 years of experience as well as the help from:

[www.homeschool.com](http://www.homeschool.com)

Please visit their website for additional resources.



[www.alisabethchristian.com](http://www.alisabethchristian.com)

# Notes

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