

Eddie's Guides

Home Education



Getting Started

Information on where you stand and how to take your child out of school.

Planning a Lesson

Advice on the importance of structure and creativity in your home schooling.

Teaching at Home

Basic principles for lesson focus and planning, with helpful links and guidelines.



Chapter 1

Getting Started

Taking the decision to home educate your child can be daunting and off-putting to many families who instinctively feel that school learning is not right for their children.

This guide has been written for parents considering home schooling, to help clarify where they stand and the steps they need to take to get the process started.

Legal Requirements

From the age of five upwards, education is a legal requirement for every child in the country. From the age of five upwards, education is a legal requirement for every child in the country. By law, you are required to provide your children with an education. How and when you teach them – whether you send them to school or teach them at home – is a matter for you to decide.



Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act (A document well worth reading, if you want to home school) lists parental responsibilities as follows:

“To secure education of children of compulsory school age. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

The Council

As a parent, guidelines state that you do not have to seek permission from the local authority, but that you are responsible for all costs incurred, including the cost of public examinations. The council, in turn, is meant to publish information online about the roles and responsibilities of both the parents and local authority in ensuring a home schooled child is properly educated. For example: see our Helpful Links page for a link to all of the County Council websites in England; providing the relevant information.

If your child is already attending school and you have decided that this is not for you, you must communicate clearly with the school about your intention to home school. If, for some reason, they aren't sure if your child is still enrolled or not, a school that reports a child as long term absent has a duty of care to refer the issue to the local authority, so clear communication at all times is important. →



Chapter 1

Getting Started (contd)

OFSTED



There are no OFSTED inspections for home schools, so once you have satisfied the local authority that you are homeschooling, you have an immense amount of freedom to

educate as you see fit, as we shall see in the next chapter, which is both liberating and challenging.

schooling doesn't go to plan; teachers in the classroom have days where pupils find learning difficult and homeschooling parents are no exception to the rule.

Researching about the craft of teaching is also very important, understanding the psychology and the strategy of facilitating learning doesn't mean you have to study for a PGCE, but there are some accessible books that explain clearly how effective teaching works. Geoff Petty's excellent book *Teaching Today* is a great place to start, as is Ken Robinson's latest book *Elements*.

Expertise

Parents who choose home schooling do not have to have any teaching experience, or have to employ private tutors, though those that do understand about how children learn have a much better chance of successfully educating them. For home schooling to be effective and for children to receive the kind of learning they need to successfully navigate the world, a range of options should probably be considered.

It is advisable to find other home schooling parents in your area. Being able to count on support from other families who have similar ambitions for their children will be invaluable, especially on the days that home

Being able to count on support from other families who have similar ambitions for their children will be invaluable, especially on the days that home schooling doesn't go to plan.





Chapter 2

Planning a Lesson

As a home schooling parent, you are not obliged to follow the National Curriculum and the local authority will not carry out inspections to ensure that you are teaching your child in a particular way.

However, in order to make the most of home based learning, it is best to follow some basic principles of curriculum and lesson planning because, irrespective of an individual child's learning style, all learners – children and adults – benefit from **structure.**



Learning Guidelines

If you've decided to home school but you don't feel confident enough to abandon the National Curriculum, then curriculum planning is quite straight forward.

First, decide upon the total number of hours in a week that you feel happy teaching your child in; you might wish to teach a shorter learning day than that which is taught at school. Then consider how long you want learning sessions to be. A good rule of thumb is that most learners maximum period of peak learning is about 30-40 minutes, so a 45 minute lesson might be an advisable place to start, perhaps extending after a time as learning develops.

When you have the maximum number of lesson slots you want to teach, invest in a wall chart or use one of the many free online calendars such as Outlook or Google Calendar to map in what you are going to teach and when. →

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Chapter 2

Planning a Lesson (contd)



Lesson Structure

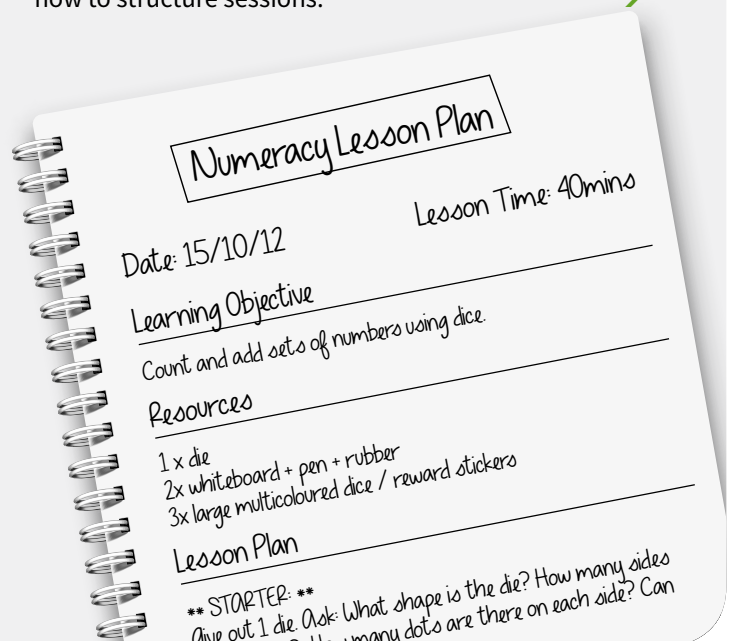
If you are teaching Key Stage 1, 2 or 3 pupils, you will need to refer directly to the National Curriculum, which can be downloaded from the Department for Education website (see our Helpful Links page); it will give you a general idea of what should ideally be taught in each subject area at each stage. If you are teaching GCSE and beyond, then you will need to choose an exam board that you feel comfortable with.

Exam boards will give you a much more detailed outline of what needs to be learned in a given topic and also what skills a learner has to have demonstrated in order to pass at a certain level. Most exam boards will send out email updates if you register with them, telling you about changes to the syllabus and informing you of the dates of exams and other assessments, so it is always a good idea to subscribe.

If you have decided not to use the National Curriculum, you will still need to work out what you want to teach and when. If you want to teach history or English, it is a good idea to create a learning module that keeps the learners focused on a particular topic; for example, the Russian Revolution 1905-1924 or Shakespeare's

comedies. In both of these examples you can take the student on a journey, exploring change over time or comparing different plays.

Once you have got a clear idea of what you want to teach and at what pace, you can start to think about how to structure sessions. →





Chapter 2

Planning a Lesson (contd)



Creativity

The lesson itself, when removed from the restrictions that schooling places on learners, can take many different forms and it is important to allow your creativity to be your guide here. Learning outside the class room has the scope to be much more imaginative, but some basic principals have to be followed in order for it to be effective.

Creating a lesson planning system (a quick form or list or a diary entry that you can refer to) is strongly advisable; if you have no structure, your children won't either. Despite fashionable arguments from the 1970s onwards against structure in learning, there is precious little evidence that unstructured teaching does anything other than confuse children and produce very weak lessons.

Start your lesson plan with a **clear learning objective**. What, by the end of the session, do you want your child to know, to understand or to have practiced that they didn't know beforehand? Try to limit it to one objective per lesson. Make sure that the objectives of lesson two follow on from the objectives of lesson one; this makes the new ideas children have in each session far easier to grasp.

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Chapter 3

Teaching at Home

Once you've mapped your curriculum for a year's home teaching and you know you can provide a seamless start-to-finish module of learning, you need to focus on how to actually deliver learning in each session.

This chapter is an overview on how to facilitate learning, focusing on just a few basic principles.

Basic Principles

As mentioned in the last chapter, learners of all ages learn through **doing**. It is essential that, for effective teaching to happen, the tasks that children are set must be **active**. This doesn't necessarily mean running around, but any lessons that centre solely on teacher activity is most likely to be a complete waste of time. Resist the urge to be the 'sage on the stage', to stand in front of your learners and read from a book, or tell them all the things you know; it won't go in, or if it does, it will be remembered in a superficial way.

Instead, think of the brain as a natural problem solving machine. The brain loves problems and actually grows as it is faced with them. If you are in any doubt, look how popular children's puzzle books, crosswords, word searches or simple games of hide and seek are.

So, all lessons should focus around pupil activity, and all lessons should present the pupil with a stimulating challenge. If you are home schooling more than one child, this is an advantage, because children can then collaborate with one another to work out an answer to the question or challenge. →





Chapter 3

Teaching at Home (contd)

Lesson Structure

A simple structure for your lesson might look something like this (here is an example of a history lesson):

1 Lesson Starter (10 Minutes)

This is a short, fun, active introduction to the lesson that is **related to the topic**. If you were teaching about the Norman Conquests to Key Stage Three learners, perhaps an appropriate type of exercise would be to give them a mixed up series of cards with key events from the historical narrative, which need to be quickly re-arranged into the right order, with the pupils arguing why their version of events is right.



2 Main Exercise (30-40 Minutes)

Now you have got your child switched on, focused and engaged, you are into your window of **peak learning**, which is about half an hour to forty minutes. This time is precious, so don't clog it up with too much talk, you need to give the learner a sufficient amount of information in a handout, book, DVD or website so they have knowledge from which to learn, but you aren't so much driving towards filling them with facts as teasing out a judgement or evaluation. Your lesson needs to have a **key question**, such as 'Why did William win at the Battle of Hastings?' or 'What were the consequences of William's victory for England?', otherwise it is just a process of chewing through facts, and if your learner doesn't find that boring, you will!

3 Plenary Session (5-10 Minutes):

A plenary session is where you assess whether the learning has been **effective**, and it's a nice conclusion to the lesson that gives the learner a sense of **resolution**. In this last ten minutes, try not to ask 'did you understand that?', as most learners will try to please their teacher by saying yes, even if they didn't. Instead, you need to coax the learner into 'teaching' you; by asking them bigger questions that ascertain what meaning or conclusions they can draw from the lesson, you'll know how much learning really happened.

Let this guide be the very beginning of your journey into teaching practice; it's a fascinating area and very rewarding to understand.





Chapter 4

Helpful Links



Lesson Ideas

For some brilliant lesson ideas, read Paul Ginnis's 'Teachers Toolkit':

www.tinyurl.com/c9dsvn9

Help and advice

Alternatively, there are many websites to help you with home education and provide any extra information that you may need; such as

Education Otherwise

www.educationotherwise.net

The Home Education Advisory Service

www.heas.org.uk

Direct Gov

www.gov.uk/home-education

Department for Education

Primary National Curriculum

www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/primary

Secondary National Curriculum

www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/secondary

EdPlace County Council page

www.edplace.com/countycouncils

Exam Boards

Here are all of the different exam boards for Key Stage 3 and 4 and above – visit their Private Candidate sections to find out how to enter your children for exams:

AQA

web.aqa.org.uk

EdExcel

www.edexcel.com

OCR

www.ocr.org.uk

CIE

www.cie.org.uk

For websites which will provide you with content to assist you in your home education, look no further than EdPlace.com! Our worksheets are used by many parents as part of their home schooling.





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