

SPRING 2024  
Volume 42 | Issue 2

# GREENHOUSE

Nurturing Home Education in North Carolina and Beyond



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- Every Day Writing Made Easy!
- The Competitive Edge
- Science and God
- A Plan for Career Exploration



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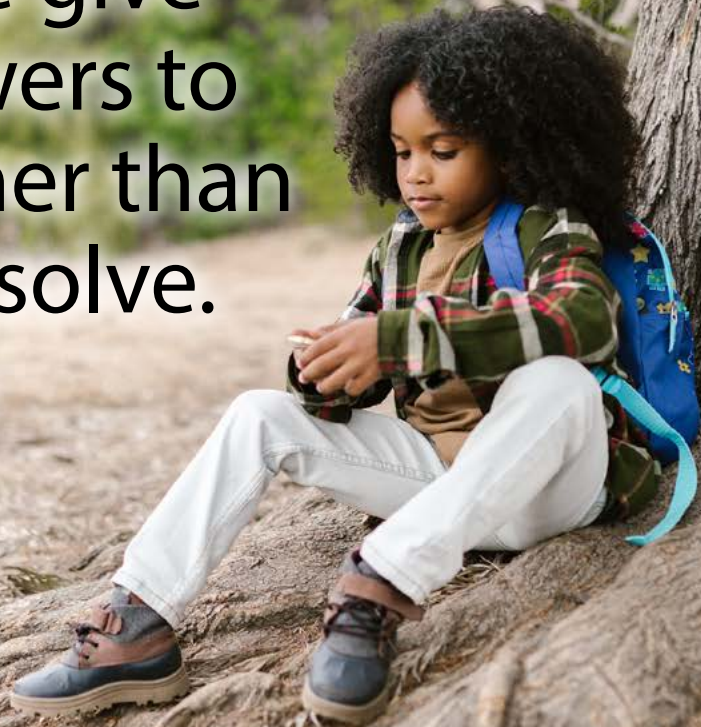


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# Too often we give children answers to remember rather than problems to solve.

Roger Lewin



## DEADLINES

ISSUE DATE	ARTICLES	ADS
Fall – <i>September</i>	July 20	July 31
Spring – <i>March</i>	January 20	January 31
Graduate – <i>May</i>	March 20	March 31

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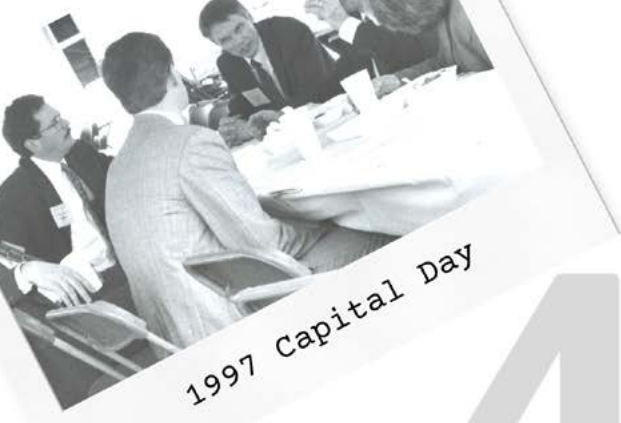
**nche.com**

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1997 Capital Day



1998 Conference

# 40<sup>th</sup> nche

NORTH CAROLINIANS FOR HOME EDUCATION  
ANNIVERSARY

## Greenhouse Report

ISSUE # 2

N.C. SUPREME COURT DECISION

MARCH/APRIL 1985

On May 7, 1985, the N.C. Supreme Court rendered a unanimous, landmark decision in favor of parental choice in education. Now North Carolinians, along with families of 38 other states, may choose home education as well as the public or private school alternatives. The Supreme Court ruled that parents may register home instructional programs as private schools. The ruling is based on the case of Larry and Michelle Delconte from Harnett County. The court said that the Delcontes complied with the law by educating their children at home. The court stated that the "Delcontes' home instruction" as a non-public standards for Article 39, Chapter 115C, § 101.

We are grateful for the Delcontes' pioneering spirit, which they have displayed during their costly four-year ordeal. We are also indebted to the North Carolina Association of Christian Schools (NCACS), which spent about \$45,000 in defending the Delcontes. NCACS made a sacrificial stand for all of us who hold educational freedom as a priceless heritage. We encourage all of you to write to Dr. Ulrich, President of NCACS, and express your appreciation in a tangible way. Make your appreciation a donation.



The Moores and the Masons

# NCHE Celebrates Forty Years—the Beginning

by Matthew McDill

North Carolinians for Home Education is celebrating our fortieth anniversary this year! So many families over these years have been blessed by the hard work of NCHE leaders to support homeschool parents and to make NC a wonderful place to homeschool. It is time to remember, celebrate, and be grateful.

Spencer and Debbie Mason, currently on the NCHE board, have been serving as leaders with NCHE since the 80s. Spencer is our law and policy director and office administrator. Debbie is our events director and media director. Last year, Debbie wrote a series of posts on Facebook that outlined the history of NCHE and homeschooling in NC (mainly taken from Spencer's NC Homeschool History on the NCHE website). I'd like to share some of the very early history explained in those posts.

## The Early Days of Homeschooling in NC—Early 1980s

Homeschooling is now widely accepted in North Carolina. It was a much different climate for home education in the early 1980s. Stories were told of homeschoolers living in rural areas who were able to stay in the shadows and exist without interference. However, those living in more urban areas did not have that advantage.

During this time, George Quick of Stanly County, Bob Groves of Ashe County, and Larry Cockerham of Harnett County were arrested and booked for homeschooling, and many more were threatened. (Larry Cockerham was a biology professor at Campbell University. Larry and George ended up being on the NCHE board.) Others recollected that fear was rampant among home educators. During school hours, they drew the drapes and kept their children hidden indoors. At the same time, homeschoolers realized that if they were going to have the freedom to educate their children, they needed to learn how to influence their legislators.

Personal Note: *We moved to NC early in 1985, knowing this was happening to homeschoolers. Our oldest was four, and*

*we were concerned but figured that we had over two years for things to change before the compulsory attendance age of seven. We had a plan. If the truancy officer knocked on our door, I would flee out the back door and take the kids to my mom's in Tennessee, and Spencer would go to jail. We laugh at this now.* ~Debbie Mason

### **The Formation of NCHE—1984**

News of Larry Cockerham's arrest for homeschooling his children ended up in newspapers statewide. Homeschoolers read about it in their local newspapers, and this caused homeschoolers statewide to come together. At that time, three groups of homeschoolers were organizing and lobbying for homeschool rights: the High Point/Winston-Salem group, a group in the greater Charlotte area, and another group in Hendersonville.

Concerns about the arrests and court rulings against homeschoolers prompted families in the Charlotte group to form North Carolinians for Home Education (NCHE) to encourage and organize homeschoolers across the state. They began with organizational meetings in public libraries in early 1984.

About that same time, a couple of ladies from the Winston-Salem group were planning a meeting in Jamestown and working hard to locate as many homeschoolers as possible. They contacted *Focus on the Family* and the Moores to get the names and addresses of people from North Carolina who had corresponded with questions about homeschooling. (Many homeschool pioneers learned about homeschooling in the late 1970s and early 1980s when they heard Raymond and Dorothy Moore being interviewed by James Dobson on the *Focus on the Family* radio program.) They sent out invitations, and that meeting—held at Solomon's Porch on March 31, 1984—brought together groups of homeschoolers from all over the state under the banner of NCHE. This was the first statewide meeting under the NCHE name. The meeting was conducted by Mary McLaurin, a graduate education student at UNCG and a strong homeschooling advocate. (She later worked at DNPE.)

Three mailing lists were developed based on geography. The families at the meeting didn't want a list with all their names that could fall into the hands of the authorities. There was a panic when, during the meeting, it was learned that a reporter from the *Charlotte Observer* was present. People thought they would be reported to the authorities. It turns out that this reporter was only interested in homeschooling his family.

At that meeting, a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary, along with four regional coordinators, were elected. The *Greenhouse Report* was created as the newsletter, and the first editors were designated. The first issue was dated May 1984 and was sent to the 100

home educators who were brave enough to add their names to the NCHE mailing list. The *Greenhouse Report* was created to inform readers about legal actions against homeschoolers, strategies to reduce the chances of being arrested, parents' legal rights, information on curriculum, and legislation. Additionally, homeschoolers were encouraged to be politically involved, and NCHE printed brochures and educational packets for parents to use in explaining home education to a largely ignorant public.

### **The Delconte Case—Homeschools Are Private Schools—1981-1985**

In August of 1981, Larry Delconte of Harnett County was denied the right to homeschool his children, so he sued the state for that right. The court agreed that his homeschool met the requirements of the compulsory attendance laws, but the state appealed the decision. This action began a protracted battle in the courts. While this court fight was proceeding, NCHE was lobbying the NC General Assembly for a change in legislation to make homeschooling clearly legal.

In December 1983, the NC Court of Appeals overturned the lower court's favorable ruling in the Delconte case. The Delcontes then appealed to the NC Supreme Court. On May 7, 1985, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Delcontes, saying that under the current private school law, Chapter 115C, Article 39 of the North Carolina Code, homeschooling would be allowed. This decision was a huge event for homeschool freedom and would go down in NC homeschool history as the beginning of homeschooling being clearly legal. From then on, a homeschool was a private school and under DNPE.

NCHE went on to fight important legislative battles and worked to create laws that gave homeschoolers more freedom. As we continue to celebrate forty years of ministry to homeschool families, we will include some of these other chapters of our history in future issues this year. We are so thankful for the courageous homeschool pioneers who blazed the trail so that we can enjoy homeschooling in freedom today!



*Matthew McDill and his wife, Dana, homeschool their nine children in Clemmons. Matthew is the executive director for North Carolinians for Home Education and continues to serve as president of the board. Through his ministry, Truth to Freedom ([truthtofreedom.org](http://truthtofreedom.org)), he teaches and writes about discipleship, marriage, family, parenting, home education, and church.*

*Matthew holds a bachelor's degree in communication, along with two master's degrees and a doctorate in biblical studies. Matthew and Dana will be speakers at the 2024 Thrive! Conference.*



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— Jean-Marie —



Teen and Alumni Activities

For details about the conference, go to [nche.com/thrive](https://nche.com/thrive). Preregistration prices end May 16.

# Conference Speakers and Workshops

## Featured Speakers



**Wil and Meeke Addison** are the founders of Straight Edge Ministries and Culture Proof, a movement to equip followers of Christ to resist wicked cultural trends by applying God's Word—the straight edge. As the co-hosts of the Culture Proof podcast, you'll hear Wil, Meeke, and their hand-picked guests discuss the cultural issues of the day filtered through a biblical lens. The Addisons are conference speakers with a specific focus on culture and its impact on Christian families. Married nineteen years, they are raising six incredible children—equipping them to live for the glory of God. They disciple and educate their children at home—around the kitchen table and on the sofa.

- **Bridging the Racial Divide: The Realistic Solution to America's Ethnic and Cultural Problems (Will & Meeke)**
- **For His Glory Alone (Meeke)**
- **The Heart of the Homeschool (Will & Meeke)**
- **Psalm 78: The Route to an Awakening (Will)**
- **Culture-Proof: How to Grow the Resistance (Meeke)**
- **Critical Race Theory: A Different Gospel (Meeke)**
- **Point Guard Parenting (Will)**



**Vicki Bentley** is the mother of eight daughters, foster mom of over fifty, grandma to twenty-three grandbabies, and great-grandma to ten (so far). Vicki has homeschooled seventeen children alongside her husband, Jim, and has been a support group leader since 1991. She has served on the executive board and convention committee of Home Educators Association of Virginia and has addressed state and national conventions. She can be found at [EverydayHomemaking.com](http://EverydayHomemaking.com) and is the author of *My Homeschool Planner*, *Everyday Cooking*, *The Everyday Family Chore System*, *Home Education 101: A Mentoring Program for New Homeschoolers*, *High School 101: Blueprint for Success*, the *Homeschool with Confidence* series, and other homeschool and homemaking helps. She currently serves as an educational consultant for HSLDA. Vicki has a heart for parents, with practical wisdom and encouraging words.

- **Organizing Your Home—Creating a Lifestyle Learning Environment**
- **L.E.A.D. with JOY**
- **Homeschooling on a Shoestring Budget**
- **Exploring Curriculum Options**
- **Juggling Life and Lesson Plans**
- **When Life Broadships Your Homeschool**
- **Getting Kids to Help at Home: Training in Diligence and Thoroughness**



**Kristi Clover** is a home organization and #momlife expert. She's the author of *M.O.M.—Master Organizer of Mayhem* and *Homeschool Basics* as well as a popular conference speaker. Her passion is to help Christian women find sanity and joy in the throes of mom life. She loves to share about her adventures in motherhood and home life through a variety of media that you can find at [KristiClover.com](http://KristiClover.com). Kristi lives in San Diego with her husband, Steve, and their five children. Be sure to connect with Kristi online for an extra dose of encouragement. She's [@KristiClover](https://www.instagram.com/KristiClover) on most social media networks.

- **Finding the Balance between Your Life and Your Homeschool**
- **Homeschooling with Multiple Ages in the House**
- **Sanity Savers for a Homeschool Mom**
- **Homeschool Organization Made Easy**
- **Quitting the Comparison Game**
- **Stop Trying to Do Too Much! Simplify What & How You're Teaching!**



# Conference Speakers and Workshops

## Featured Speakers



**Kathryn (Bell) Gomes** is Apologia's esteemed math author, nationwide speaker, and a homeschooled student herself (daughter of Debra Bell). Kathryn holds an M. Ed. in mathematics from the University of Pennsylvania and a B.S. in mathematics from the University of Pittsburgh. She has taught math to homeschooled students for thirteen years and is very familiar with the challenges of learning math at home. Kathryn spent three years teaching mathematics in inner-city Philadelphia through Teach for America. She then taught in the most ethnically diverse high school in Pennsylvania. During this time, Kathryn designed algebra 1 and algebra 2 curricula for English language learners. Now one of her great passions is improving mathematics education for homeschoolers by increasing rigor while maintaining the creativity and free-thinking that she enjoyed in her schooling.

- **Living Math: Teaching Off the Page in the Charlotte Mason Style**
- **What My Mom Did Right, What My Mom Did Wrong (Thoughts from a 2nd Generation Homeschooler)**
- **Toddlers in Tow: What to Do with Your Littlest Ones While You Homeschool**
- **Learning How to Learn: How Neuroscience Can Help You Homeschool More Effectively**
- **5 Ways God Used Homeschooling to Strengthen My Faith and Prepare Me to Engage the World**



**Steve Noble** is a follower of Jesus Christ, husband, father, talk radio show host, teacher, activist, and speaker. Steve is the host of The Steve Noble Show, a syndicated Christian talk radio show that launched in 2007. Today, the show is heard on 31 stations across North Carolina along with Facebook Live, YouTube Live, and via podcast. Steve has taught over 1,000 high school homeschoolers since 2011 and recently launched NOBLE U to offer his classes online, as well! He teaches civics, US history, Christian ethics, and world history. Steve earned a master's degree in ethics, theology, and culture from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 2018. He has partnered with major ministries across America like Pastor Greg Laurie/Harvest Crusades, David Jeremiah, Family Research Council, and Focus on the Family. The Nobles have homeschooled for 17 years. Steve is our primary teen speaker.

- **Politics—Nasty but Necessary**
- **Living Out Your Faith in a Culture that (Sometimes) Hates You**
- **Identity—Where Are You Rooted?**
- **Dealing with Doubt**
- **Christian Ethics: Is Your Student Ready for the Culture War?**
- **I Hated History Too**



**Todd Wilson** is a dad, granddad, writer, conference speaker, and former pastor. Todd's humor and down-to-earth realness have made him a favorite speaker at homeschool conventions, retreats, and churches across the country. As founder of Familyman Ministries and the Smiling Homeschooler, his passion and mission are to remind dads and moms of what's most important through weekly emails, podcasts (*The Familyman Show & The Smiling Homeschooler*), seminars, and books and products that encourage parents. Todd and his wife, Debbie, homeschool two of their eight children (six have graduated from their homeschool with four married) in northern Indiana and travel America in the Familyman Mobile. You can read more at [www.familymanweb.com](http://www.familymanweb.com).

- **Raising Politically Incorrect Pink and Blue Kids in a Purple World**
- **The Gift**
- **Get REAL!**
- **Common Mistakes Homeschool Parents Make**
- **Every Dad a Homeschooling Dad!**
- **The *Four* Homeschool Temperaments**
- **Choose the Hard Things or How to Keep Going When You Feel Like Giving Up**

# Additional Conference Speakers

## Rachel Anderson

Mom, Don't Make Me Think—Just Tell Me the Answer

Learning Challenges in Math? Challenge *No More!*



## Francie Black

How to Keep Your Kids Safe Online—Tech Tools & Tips



## Dr. Janice Broyles

Powerful and Profound: Find Student's Voice through Writing

Writing for the Struggling Learner



## Paul Cwik, Ph.D.

Is Capitalism Moral? Countering Socialist Arguments



## Bobby Dixon

Getting to Know the NC Division of Non-Public Education



## Jared Dodd

16 Essentials for Your Child's Success

7 Mistakes that Many Parents Make



## Katie Dugdale

Getting Started with Preschool and Kindergarten

Delight Directed High School



## Jeff Ertzberger

The ABCs of AI

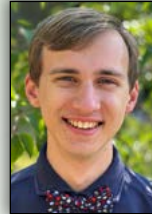
Reflection of a Homeschool Graduate on College Application Process



## Luke Ertzberger

The ABCs of AI

Reflection of a Homeschool Graduate on College Application Process



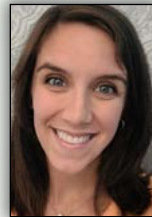
## Jessica Frierson

Five Needs of the Homeschool Child



## Michelle Gano

Playful Mind, Powerful Future: Practical Tips for Hands-on Learning



## Kwan Graham

Financial Resources for Homeschooling Struggling Learners



## Takeila Hall

Better FAFSA: The First Step in the Financial Aid Process



## Natalie Mack

You Can Graduate Children to College

The Value of Extracurriculars  
Military Homeschooling 101



## Mike and Ronda Marshall

Getting Off to a Great Start

I'm Worn-Out, Going Crazy, & Making My Kids Stupid, Please Help



## Inga Masek

Mindset Makeover: Embrace Imperfection in Homeschooling

The Art of Celebration: Why It Matters in Homeschooling



## Debbie Mason

A Homeschool Veteran's Top Advice to Pass Along



## Dana McDill

Loving Your Children (Harder Than We Think)



## Matthew McDill

Raising Life-Long Learners

Ten Essential Topics for Discipling Your Children



## Marji McIlvaine

Homeschooling, Foreign Languages, and Me—Can We Make This Work?

Online Instruction: How to Succeed!



## Justin Nale

The Aim of Education



**Julia Nalle**

When Your Struggling Learner Hates, Struggles, or Refuses to Read

Multi-Age, Multi-Grade? All Together without Mom Losing Her Mind!



**Laura Zifer Powell**

Is God Really Good: Violence in the Scriptures & Church History



**Renton Rathbun**

LGBTQ+ Ideology: What Our Children Are Facing and How to Respond

How We Are Getting Biblical Worldview Wrong



**Mandie Rose**

Teaching the Trades



**Marcus Ross**

Dinosaurs: Fuzzy, with a Chance of Feathers

Creation and Evolution: Where We Stand Today



**Sandy Smith**

The Importance of Movement in Early Brain Development



**Casey Samuel Townsend**

You Can Start a Co-op!



**Ann Troast**

Applying the Principles of Minimalism to Homeschooling



The Art of Joyful History Lessons

How to Explore Nature when You'd Rather Be Inside

**Cheryl Vandegrift**

Helping Your Neurodiverse Child Thrive



**Amanda Wares**

Homeschooling High School How-Tos



The Girlfriend's Guide to Homeschooling

**Susannah, Killian, Katrielle, & Deacon Wares**

Homeschooling from a Homeschoolee's Perspective



**Deb Weakly**

Homeschooling by Faith

How Do I Reach My Teen's (and Young Adult's) Heart?



**Pat Wesolowski**

Gifts, Talents and Entrepreneurship



**Jeff Zenger**

Kingdom Politics, Homeschooling and Public Service



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- College Scholarships



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# Homeschooling the Young Learner

by Vicki Bentley

Do you sometimes second-guess your “credentials” to educate your child at home? Parents, you come into homeschooling with the greatest qualifications: a deep love for your child and a vested interest in his success!

## **You *can* homeschool!**

You’ve already been homeschooling your young child—you’ve taught him to talk, and you’ve taught him a variety of basic skills and character lessons. If no one told you that your child had to go off to school, what would you be doing with him? What are you already doing to motivate, stimulate, and teach him? Explore ways to simply expand what you are already doing in the context of that natural relationship, sort of a “learning lifestyle.”

Most young learners (especially preschoolers) want to play with toys and pretend, so let them! This play is their work—their early learning; it may look easy to us, but it’s not all easy to them, and it is developing their thinking skills and providing life experiences to give them a frame of reference—sort of like hooks on which to hang their future learning. But *you* pick the toys, so *you* shape the play.

Provide your child with stimulating, age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate toys such as Duplos, Legos, or building blocks, thinking skills puzzles, art supplies, and life-skills playthings.

Everyday activities are helpful for your child’s brain and skills development. For example, working puzzles is a pre-reading skill. Having him help put away his things in an orderly fashion is classification and organization—basic science, math, and English skills.

For basic academics, foundational math encourages everyday mathematical thinking: counting and sorting objects,

cooking—measuring and pouring, dividing the pizza, counting out the M&Ms. Even setting the table is one-to-one correspondence!

Everyday language practice includes alphabet puzzles, notes to Grandma, telling you about his latest adventure, or cuddling up for read-aloud time. Don't be afraid to select reading material that slightly stretches your child's attention and reading levels. His receptive—or listening—vocabulary is generally higher than his reading ability. Choose a variety of books, from classic children's fiction to biographies to poetry to exploration of the wonderful world around us. And if that's not structured enough, there are guides to help you plan a few activities based on some of those library books you are reading together or on other interests your child has.

Because these are all things that happen in the context of everyday living and his everyday play, it's much easier to move at the child's natural pace and in his learning style. Visit HSLDA's Toddlers to Tweens curriculum section for more everyday activities to create an intellectually stimulating environment on a shoestring budget.

Studies show that developmentally, young children benefit from physical and creative play—building, pretending, exploring, discovering, and trying out their ideas. While an outlined, structured plan is not a necessity, many parents feel more comfortable having some specific goals, so I encourage you to have age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate expectations. An hour of one-on-one instruction is about the equivalent of three hours in a conventional setting. So, for preschool through kindergarten or even possibly first grade, an hour of one-on-one, structured learning time is usually plenty, supplemented with educational play and exploration.

### What about extracurricular activities for young learners?

What does your child *enjoy* doing? An art or music or creative movement class might be a great outlet and inspiration. How much of a time commitment is it? Start with a short-term activity such as library craft day or the monthly kid's project day at the home improvement store—activities your child can enjoy if it's a good day, but if today hasn't been such a great day, you can skip it and just go next time.

Also, what's the focus of the class? At this age, you're looking for low-pressure activities to let kids explore their options, get out some energy, learn some new basic skills, and develop godly character.

Don't overcommit or overstimulate your early learner. Keep your family's schedule in mind. Is that class at a convenient time, or will it disrupt nap routine or mealtime or bedtime? Not all kids are ready for this level of outside commitment, so just use your judgment and don't feel pressured. Waiting a few years generally won't stunt her progress if she is truly gifted in, say, music or dance. But if your child is ready

to step out, then with the right focus, a well-chosen, low-pressure extracurricular activity can complement her cognitive learning.

Remember—you *can* homeschool!

Visit [www.hslda.org](http://www.hslda.org) for more information about educating your young learner. Adapted from March 2012 Toddlers to Tweens e-newsletter.



Vicki Bentley is the mother of eight daughters, foster mom of over fifty, grandma to twenty-three grandbabies, and great grandma to ten (so far). Vicki has homeschooled seventeen children alongside her husband, Jim. She can be found at [EverydayHomemaking.com](http://EverydayHomemaking.com) and is the author of *My Homeschool Planner*, *Everyday Cooking*, *The Everyday Family Chore System*, *Home Education 101: A Mentoring Program for New Homeschoolers*, *High School 101: Blueprint for Success*, and the *Homeschool with Confidence* series. She currently serves as a toddlers to tweens educational consultant for HSLDA. Vicki is a speaker at the 2024 Thrive! Conference.

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# Add Homeschooling to Military Life, and It's a Wild Combo

by *Natalie Mack*

Welcome to my niche of homeschooling—the military!

In my job at Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA), I help military homeschoolers keep going as they navigate some of the same kinds of challenges my own family faced.

I constantly hear, “I just don’t know how you did it, always moving around every few years.” Truthfully, I often don’t have to provide much of an answer. (Though, as a retired Navy chaplain’s wife, I can truthfully say our family relied on a sweet balance of prayer, resiliency, and dedication.)

Military families are strong and committed. Sometimes, all they need is a reminder of why they chose to serve—and why they chose to homeschool. A quick review of the benefits of military service also helps.

As my husband’s assistant would say, military spouses just “get ‘er done.” Add homeschooling to military life, and it’s a wild combo.

## Adjusting to Change

Our family moved sixteen times. Although some of those relocations were over a very short distance, they were still military moves, resplendent with the familiar moving truck, cardboard boxes, and those colorful but annoying stickers placed on every box or piece of furniture.

We knew that we would only stay in one house for two to three years on average, so as the time approached for new orders, the process of “hurry up and wait” began. I often prayed for particular duty stations, knowing the military detailer didn’t care about where I wanted to go next but that God did.

One such example is when we desired orders to Naples, Italy. The military detailer informed us that with five kids and a child with an EFMP Category 4, we shouldn’t hold our breath. So, we didn’t, but we did pray. We soon received orders to southern Italy and excitedly began preparing for the move. Many important questions surfaced in my mind: What should I pack in my express shipment? Should we travel with our homeschooling curriculum for the year (we had orders to move in mid-October)? Was there a support group on base? Would homeschooling high school overseas be more challenging? And the most crucial question of all: how many Trader Joe’s boxes of “Joe Joe” cookies should I stock up?

## New Home

As October approached, our family of seven, plus our beloved rescue Irish setter-Brittany spaniel mix made our way from Norfolk, Virginia, to Dulles International Airport, to Munich, Germany, finally landing in chaotic-but-beautiful Naples, Italy.

What did our wondrous eyes behold? Drivers who followed no traffic rules, the most delicious margherita pizza, incredible history, and mounds of trash controlled by the Italian mafia.

As you can see from this tale of a single move, military life is not for the faint of heart. The name of the game is resiliency. With each relocation, each deployment, and each lost household good, military spouses square their shoulders and march on. But as I mentioned, there are benefits, too. Homeschooling in the military offers amazing opportunities to combine real-life learning in incredible locales around the globe. During our amazing three years in Italy, our children learned about volcanoes firsthand, climbing what I called Big Daddy—Mount Vesuvius—and the Fiery Lady—Mount Etna—on the beautiful island of Sicily.

## Exciting Excursions

We visited the Colosseum in Rome and the amphitheater in Verona, took pictures in front of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and rode a gondola in the flooding waters of Venice. Not only did we explore Italy, but our family toured Greece, France, England, Switzerland, Germany, and Spain (with a side trip for momma to scoop up Polish pottery in the charming town of Bolesławiec, fondly known as “Bole” by military spouses.)

While most of military life is an adventure, we serve alongside our spouses because we believe in the USA. We dedicate our time and energy to our country and our homeschooling journey.

We choose to homeschool because we believe it provides stability to our family. While homeschooling is a sacrifice, being a military homeschooler seems to require even more. It means continuing the homeschooling journey amid lots of pack-ups and pack-outs, lots of deployments, and lots of time away from our extended family. Through it all, I am proud to call myself a military homeschooler.

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*Natalie Mack is an experienced twenty-three years military home educator with over twenty-two years of service to military homeschooling families. Natalie is a mom of five: three college graduates, one college senior, and an eleventh grader. She owns Natalie Mack, LLC, which provides educational consultation, mentorship to military homeschool leaders, and advocacy for military homeschooling. She is the military community outreach coordinator for HSLDA. Natalie's published works include the book 101 Tips for Homeschoolers, available on Amazon, and several articles in Military Families Magazine, The Old Schoolhouse Magazine, and the HSLDA Military Families website. Natalie is a speaker at the 2024 Thrive! Conference.*

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# Homeschooling: Shared Life, Shared Memories, Shared Bond

*by Dava Banner*

As a homeschooling mom, I feel that children raised in homeschooling families have so many benefits, including the opportunity to share life with their siblings.

I grew up with one sibling of the opposite gender. We lived in the same house, attended the same church, and enjoyed the same family vacations, but we didn't actually share many of the same memories. We were involved in separate activities, even at church. We were never in the same school. We didn't play any of the same sports. We didn't have many friends in common. I think this situation is very typical, especially for families with one boy and one girl who attend traditional schools.

So, how is homeschooling different? We choose to spend all of our time together. We do schoolwork together. We do chores together. We eat meals together. We do activities together. We are friends with whole families! Our friends are of all ages! Most of what we do is family-integrated—even at church. We do not often split up for separate activities. We share life. We share memories. The result is a deep and shared bond.

We learn from each other in all situations—how to meet people, join in, show kindness, and get along. God puts children in a family in a particular order for a reason. Often, the oldest child breaks the ice and leads the way for the younger siblings. What a blessing this is! And the younger kids love and admire their oldest sibling. The siblings observe and learn about everyone's special interests and talents. They participate in each other's life.



Siblings do not grow close by accident. It takes constant attention to fairness, justice, and character building from the parent. You want to prevent bullying and bitterness in the home. It can be hard work, yet what a wonderful reward for your efforts! You end up with young adults who love and support each other, keep in touch, and share special events. They have a lifelong bond partly because they have so many shared memories and friends. They often share the same faith in God, which is a special and precious fellowship. They truly enjoy each other's company. All of that time we have spent together has really paid off!

Of course, families can achieve this closeness without homeschooling,

but I see it as a huge contributing factor. I see it as a gift! I'm so very thankful for it. And I think my children are too!



*Dava Banner has been married for thirty-seven years and has three fine sons. She and her family live on a small farm in Crouse.*

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# Every Day Writing Made Easy!

by Dr. Janice Broyles

“I don’t know what to write!” This is an often occurring lament in our homeschooling household. Although my son is now a teen, he still struggles to come up with topics and ideas when it’s time to write. Sometimes, I want to take the easy way out and skip the writing lesson. There is plenty to do, and there are other subjects he prefers. That said, I try not to skip writing. Why?

- Students who write in their daily lessons are better communicators when they graduate high school.
- Students who write in response to a prompt become better at articulating their thoughts and opinions as they age.
- Students who write in their daily learning activities have a better grasp of grammar and syntax rules and can apply them to other subjects as they continue their education.
- Research shows that there are distinct differences in college freshmen between those who had a daily writing curriculum and those who did not.
- Students who are stronger writers do better across all subject areas.

Writing well matters. Strong writing doesn’t just happen. It takes time and consistency. This means we must find ways to incorporate it into our daily homeschool lessons. Before you throw in the towel or stop reading this article, there are tried-and-true ways to easily incorporate writing into your lessons.

1. **Start small.** Writing doesn’t have to be grandiose. Writing is like Legos. It builds off itself. When students start small, it helps build the skill, which then leads to growing the skill. Start with answering questions out loud, then begin with writing those answers onto paper. Let the sentences build into a paragraph.
2. **Stay consistent.** Even if writing doesn’t happen every day, it should happen at least every week. For example, on Monday mornings, my son writes in his journal (*Journaling Through Scripture for Teens*, by Late November

Learning Tree). At first, he complained, but now it's a habit. He likes that on Monday mornings when he's tired from a busy weekend, he can sit down and have quiet time with his writing journal. We also have a literature response journal so that when he completes a reading section, he writes three main points he just read. These are consistent, and he knows to expect them.

- 3. Connect writing to different subjects.** Do you have a cool history lesson? Have your student write a paragraph about three interesting facts he learned. Are you working on a science project? Your student can write out step-by-step directions for it and then walk you through it. Did you just finish a great book? Have your student write a starred review of it. What did they like about the book? What didn't they like? How many stars would the book earn and why?
- 4. Not all writing should be graded.** It's important that students have writing outlets that aren't always graded or critiqued. My son's journal responses are not graded or marked up. They are used to start conversations and to get his brain moving in the right direction. Some writing should be more formal and

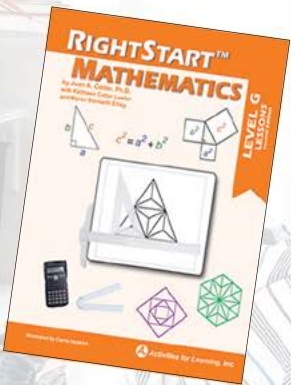
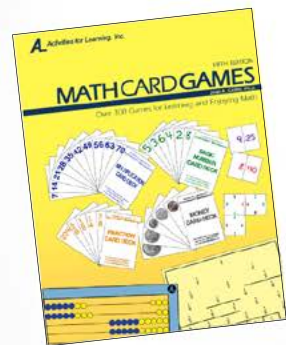
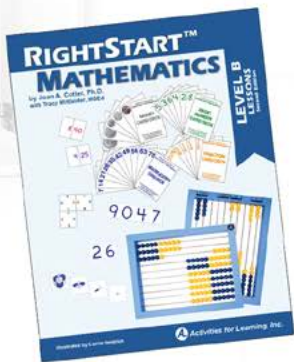
critiqued, but if your student struggles with writing, make sure to incorporate some fun ways to write that won't get marked up by a red pen.

Don't let writing cause stress for you or your student! There are fun, easy ways to bring it into your homeschool lessons that will eventually lead to the daily or weekly habit of writing. Remember that habits take time, so be patient and consistent. As your student gets older, their writing will improve, and you will be glad you took the time for them to strengthen this important skill.



*Dr. Janice Broyles is an author of more than seven award-winning books and the owner of Late November Literary, a small publisher located in Winston Salem, NC. She is the proud mother of two sons. Janice and her husband, John, decided that providing the best education for their sons starts at home. Janice will be a speaker at the 2024 Thrive! Conference.*

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# The Competitive Edge

by Diane Helfrich

Like many, I was lost when we began homeschooling, and I focused on recreating that brick-and-mortar school in our house. We were up at 7:30 for breakfast and began school between 8:00 and 8:30 with a prayer and a pledge. After that, we dutifully marched through every subject. That sufficed for about a year when we discovered science fairs—which significantly changed our thinking about what school could be at our home.

Our co-op was starting a science fair class as part of the classroom day, and we joined it. The first-year project was meager, but we learned much as we attended the district competition and perused the sea of project presentations. We now had an understanding that the sky was the limit.

A big fan of *Myth Busters* on the Discovery Channel, my son came up with a notion that he wanted to make a stink gun to send bad smells out toward his sister. In a similar timeframe, we were challenged by another homeschooling family to a potato gun competition. Our potato wimped out of the gun—rather anticlimactic! But we were learning. When it came time to decide on a science fair project, the ideas formed, and before we knew what we were doing, my son had launched into vortex physics. We had Plexiglas tubes of varying lengths, and we put balloons over one end. My son developed what he called a marble hammer (a marble attached to a stand with string) that could be consistently dropped against the balloon end of the tube. He loaded the tube with incense (the bad smell from the stink gun idea). He then raised the marble and released it to tap the balloon membrane. Finally, he measured how far the smoke ring (vortex) traveled based on the tube length. It was an exciting project not found in any textbook. I learned that you start catching on if you read enough physics journals. Some engineer friends advised us to help make sure we weren't just "blowing smoke!" After the smoky adventures, my son turned to vortices in varying temperatures of water to simulate oceanic thermal layers. Long story short, he won the state science fair for two years and placed nationally in one of those years.

What changed in our schooling? This project was all-consuming for several weeks. He had to research, design, test, research some more, and adjust, over and over, until he was ready for the final runs before the fair. What did he learn? He learned to do deep research and ask questions when he didn't understand a concept. He had to write an extensive paper with a bibliography. He had to do a statistical analysis of the data he collected and analyze what it meant to

come up with a conclusion. He had to practice presenting his project to communicate complex concepts clearly. He had to use his art sense to create an attractive, eye-grabbing display that clearly showed what he did. Everything else in schooling fell by the wayside during that time, but he was immersed in science, math, writing, and art. Was schooling by the wayside? Not at all! He was a fifth-grader! What he learned was profound because it's what he wanted to learn. He went on for two more years with this kind of study and won the state science fair a second time. It was original research in an emerging field.

That wasn't the only competition we did. There were spelling bees, geography bees, math competitions, Envirothon (under the Soil and Water Conservation department), Latin competitions, chess competitions, speech and team policy debate competitions, volleyball programs (through NCHEAC!), and martial arts tournaments. Each one required deep digging to prepare. With Envirothon and debate, the preparation was highly time-consuming because of the depth and breadth of the information covered. In all cases, the amount of learning was significant.

In hindsight, the best things that came out of the competitions were:

- An understanding of how to prepare well with hard work
- Research skills
- Writing skills
- Critical thinking skills
- Public speaking skills
- Thinking-on-your-feet skills
- Teamwork skills
- An ability to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences.

These skills are all things that benefit a person throughout life. I know many homeschoolers don't embrace competition, and that's fine. There can be significant anxiety as students start a competition journey. However, if it becomes part of their regular education process over the years, the anxiety diminishes; the focus is on preparing for excellence.

One caveat to think about is how young is too young to begin competitions. You have to discern your child's maturity level, how they will respond to winning and losing, and how they will respond to the work of preparation. Some kids will thrive competitively earlier than others. We didn't start competitions until around fourth grade. Even that might be too young for some. Think about your child and make sure they won't have emotional harm from starting too early.

Finally, the further we went into competition mode, the less our schooling looked like anything public. Some days, we opted for beach time. Days leading up to a competition may have been ten to twelve hours of researching, writing, practicing, etc., to ensure readiness. No

more were the days of 8:00 to noon, going over each subject and having play outside each day. Much like a work world, our days were consumed with what needed to be done, and we pursued until the necessary work for the day was finished. I didn't have to push my kids to do these things. The topics were things they wanted to do, so they pushed me! As adults now, they are both very successful and thriving.

Most of these competitions came through our co-op. I encourage you to join one if you aren't part of one. Co-ops are great for group activities that create different kinds of learning. If your co-op doesn't have competitions, and you want one, I encourage you to do the work to coordinate the event so it's there for your kids and others. The efforts I put in to coordinate some of these were time well spent on my learning and organizational skills. The beauty of homeschooling is that it isn't just the kids that learn. Let's all learn and enjoy the journey!



*Diane Helfrich is a retired fourteen-year veteran of homeschooling. She is married to David, and they have two children who have flown the nest. In addition to her passion for helping homeschoolers and volunteering as the development director for NCHE, she enjoys reading, card-making, and being part of a ukulele club.*



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# Science and God

by Jessica Frierson

*A scientific discovery is also a religious discovery. There is no conflict between science and religion. Our knowledge of God is made larger with every discovery we make about the world.*

~Joseph H. Taylor, Jr., astrophysicist and Nobel Prize laureate in physics

A commonly held belief by Christians and non-believers alike is that the study of science and faith in God are incompatible concepts. However, for many of the world's greatest scientists, the pursuit of scientific understanding was the doorway to a deeper understanding of God. In fact, when we compile a listing of those considered to be the fathers of the major scientific disciplines, we find that a majority of them were professing Christians, as noted by bestselling author and former cold-case homicide detective J. Warner Wallace in his book *Person of Interest*. This list includes fields such as atomic physics, hydrodynamics, galactic astronomy, embryology, microbiology, modern chemistry, physiology, botany, paleontology, analytic geometry, and quantum electrodynamics, just to name a few. Furthermore, 65.4% of Nobel Prize winners are Christ followers.

*"It is humbling for me and awe inspiring to realize that we have caught the first glimpse of our own instruction book, previously known only to God."*

~Dr. Francis Collins, director of the Human Genome Project

Not only did these men and women of science grow stronger in their faith as they researched and experimented in their fields, they also impacted the world through their discoveries and intellectual contributions. As homeschooling parents, we should understand that these are two compelling reasons to incorporate a thorough and engaging science curriculum into our education plan. As we do so, we may question how science and the Bible relate to each other. We have long been told that they contradict each other and that they cannot both hold the truth. At the core of true scientific pursuit is the quest for truth, and

that truth is embodied in the person of Jesus Christ.

God reveals truth to us by two means: direct revelation and indirect revelation. Direct revelation of truth comes through the study of the Bible and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we do so. It generally concerns spiritual matters and spiritual laws. The study of science falls under indirect revelation; truth is uncovered through the exploration of the laws of nature established by God but left for man to observe, record, and contemplate. The marriage of these two concepts brings enlightenment of both the natural and spiritual world. Jesus often used illustrations from the word of nature to explain spiritual concepts to His followers. I have found this an effective means of teaching my children about the matters of God in many instances.

The Oxford Dictionary defines science as “the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation, experimentation, and the testing of theories against the evidence obtained.” For these pioneers of science who found God or were strengthened in their faith, the study of the physical and natural world also held revelations of a supernatural, spiritual world, as we read in Romans 1:20, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead. . . .”

The physical world is discovered through the senses and the mind. The Bible tells us that the spiritual world is “a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. . . what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived—the things God has prepared for those who love him—these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 2:7, 9-10) Our Creator wants us to search out these mysteries, finding the Creator Himself as we do so.

Science tells us more about God and what He created. Why doesn't the Bible tell us much about science? As my son's biology book (*Biology for Christian Schools*, BJU Press) points out, it was not intended to serve as a scientific textbook but as a spiritual handbook. It could not begin to contain all there is to know about the physical world. That was left for humankind to search out and discover, thus discovering more about the Creator in the process.

One could even make the argument that it is our duty as Christians to study science. The first commandment given to humans in the Bible was to subdue the earth and have dominion over it. The earth is teeming with life—animals, birds, trees, flowers, insects—and it was all placed under mankind's dominion and stewardship. The study of this world and the principles that govern it (such as the laws of gravity, thermodynamics, motion, and so on) give us the opportunity to carry out this command while also learning many spiritual principles. Just look at how many of Jesus' teachings referenced agriculture or weather!

*“If [Man] ignores what science can teach, he will have wasted two God-given gifts; the earth and his intelligence.”*

*~ Biology for Christian Schools, BJU Press, 2nd Edition*

As we break down the definition of science, we find its limitations. According to Oxford Languages, science is limited to what man can observe by “the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment.” Britannica defines science as “any system of knowledge that is concerned with the physical world and its phenomena and that entails unbiased observations and systematic experimentation.”

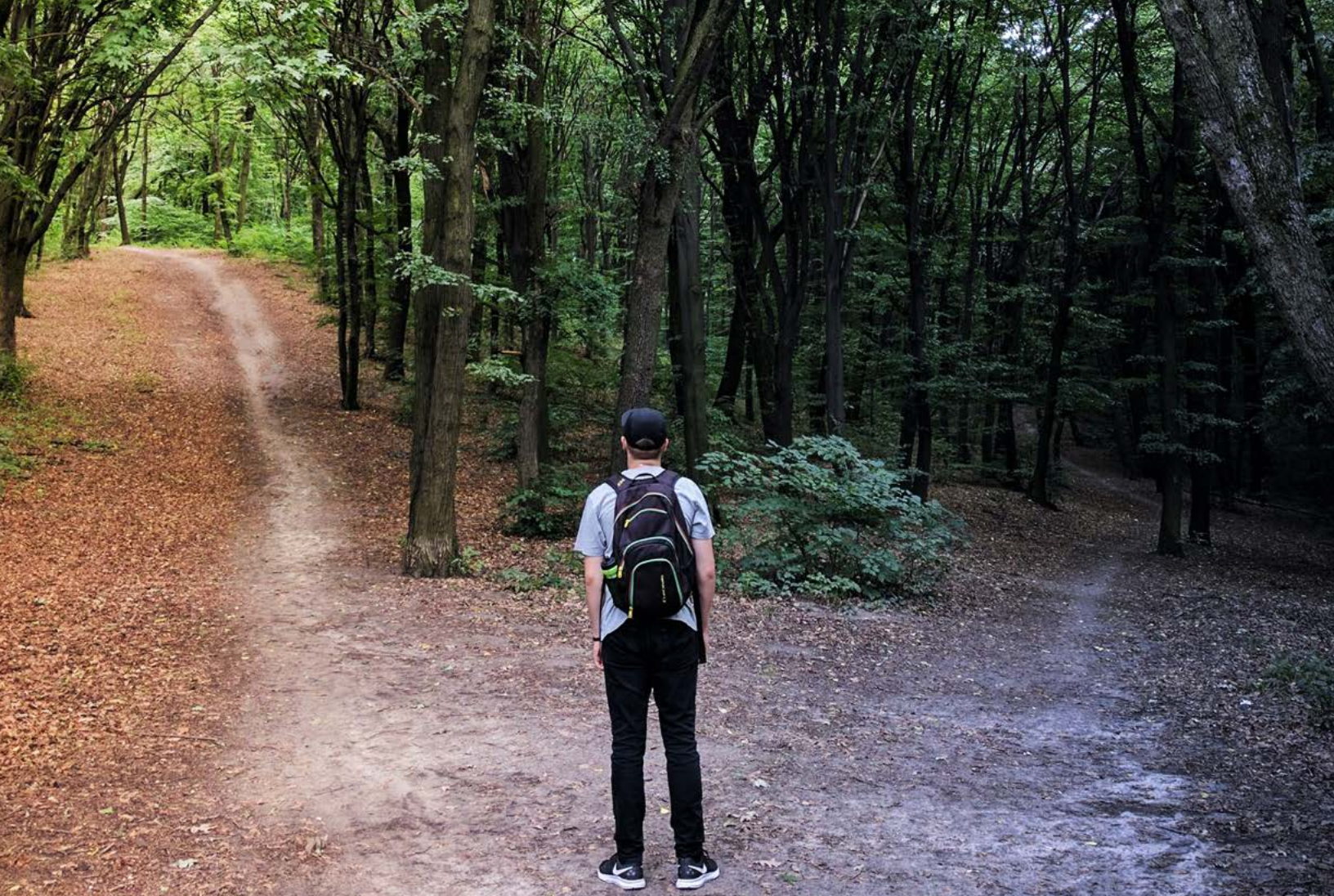
Therefore, by its very definition, science is limited to what can be observed and studied. Much is left to interpretation, and this interpretation must be unbiased. Obviously, this leaves a great deal that mankind can observe or to experiment upon even in our age of technology. If we can learn anything from history, it is that truth cannot be established from science. A hypothesis may be supported by data or experimentation, but according to the scientific method, the keyword is *supported* not *proven*. From the beginning of the scientific revolution to the present day, the scientific community has repeatedly adapted and altered their conclusions about everything from spontaneous generation to Pluto's planetary status. We can conclude that, unlike the infinite, infallible God of the universe, science is finite and fallible.

Those things that cannot be observed, studied, or experimented upon fall outside the realms of science, requiring interpretation by some source other than science. The creation and purpose of man lie in this category. The theory of evolution precludes any scientific method of giving an account of the beginnings of humankind. In fact, the creation account in the Bible fits the scientific guidelines of observation and recording of data: God gives a record of the process by which He created the earth and all that it contains, including the first humans.

The study of science and our study of God's word can—and should—go hand in hand. Both have the power to reveal more about the nature of God, His handiwork, and our place in the universe. God designed our bodies and minds with the capabilities to search Him out through scientific exploration. Perhaps the names of some of our children will be added to the list of pioneers in their field of study one day!



*Jessica Frierson is a second-generation homeschooler. She is married to Ernie, a retired minister. They have been homeschooling their seven sons and three daughters since 2000. She is a speaker and writer. She serves as the secretary for NCHC and writes for the GREENHOUSE and the NCHC blog. Jessica will be a speaker at the 2024 Thrive! Conference.*



# A Plan for Career Exploration

by Whitney Cranford  
Crowell

Most teens have two criteria when it comes to thinking about a future career: 1. Will it be fun? and 2. Will it make me a lot of money? And truthfully, these are often the top criteria for parents as well. While we may not frame it as crassly as that, most of us as parents want, above all, to see our kids happy and well provided for. There's nothing wrong with that, of course, but happiness and material provision take different forms for every individual, and our children are no exception. Helping them to define those terms for themselves as they take baby steps toward adulthood can be one of the most challenging aspects of parenting. I developed this plan for career exploration for my own teens, and we have found it very effective as a first pass at narrowing down choices.

You can approach this type of study in whatever way suits you and your student. This plan can be done in a few weeks over summer break or expanded to fill an entire high school semester. Your teen may prefer to work independently, or you may find it more productive to do many of the research and thought experiments together.

However you decide to approach it, I encourage you to find ways to stay engaged with your student throughout this study. These conversations should be formed and informed by your family's particular values and your insights into your child's personality. And even though your teen may be prickly, she does value and want your guidance—especially on a topic of this magnitude. Most teens are anxious about launching into the adult world, even if they appear indifferent or act as though they have it all figured out. Don't miss this opportunity to guide your teen and get to know her in a new way! Learning about the life she envisions for herself will equip you to equip her to build it while also giving you a deeper appreciation for your unique and precious child.



## The Career Journal

I highly recommend having your student keep a journal throughout the career exploration process. While this can be a place for reflection—and some students will find it an excellent way to explore their hopes and dreams for the future—it can also be more utilitarian in nature. The career journal is simply a place to record the information you and your student uncover as you conduct the activities outlined below. It can take any form that works for your teen, from a handwritten diary to an audio journal.

### Step One: Start the Conversation

First and foremost, forging a path for yourself requires an introspection that might be new and even scary to your teen. It's important to dialogue with him to move him beyond thinking in terms of "just a job" and towards his broader vision for his life. Try asking some of the following to get your student's wheels turning:

- What are your favorite subjects in school? Which do you think you're best at?
- What are your hobbies and interests? What skills have you developed through your hobbies or other activities? How could those be useful in a career setting?
- What are some of your best personal traits? How would others describe you?
- What sort of work environment appeals to you?
  - Do you prefer working with others, working independently, or something in between?
  - Do you like a fast-paced environment with lots of change and excitement, or are security and stability more your style?
  - Do you want to work indoors or outdoors? On your feet or behind a desk?
  - Is a traditional schedule (Monday-Friday, 9-5) more your speed, or would you consider (or prefer) something else?
  - Do you want to travel for work? Work from home?
  - Do you want to be your own boss? Boss other people? Just be a team player?
- What kind of lifestyle do you envision for yourself?
  - Do you want to live in the city, the country, the suburbs?
  - Is living close to family and friends important to you, or are you willing to relocate?
  - Do you want to be married? Have children? Do you envision a particular life for them, for example, homeschooling your children, being/providing for a stay-at-home parent?
  - Do you need flexibility? For example, do you want to be able to travel while working, work part-time, or even step away from the workforce for a time to raise a family?

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- What kind of income would you need to support this lifestyle? Make sure to consider the cost of living in the area where you would like to end up, which may be different from where you live now.

If possible, encourage your teen to write about these questions in his career journal first, or at least spend some time thinking about them before your discussion. You want to guide his thinking, but this is his life, and the answers must ultimately come from him. When you discuss these topics, let your teen talk, but ask lots of follow-up questions. When in doubt, “Why?” can be a very effective question.

### Step Two: Assess Interests

Taking an interest assessment can be helpful, especially for students who may have a hard time seeing their own strengths and talents. There are many free online career interest tools; I like the Career Interest Assessment at [careeronestop.org](http://careeronestop.org) (under Toolkit) and the O\*NET Interest Profiler at [mynextmove.org](http://mynextmove.org). While these aren’t scientific tools, they can quickly and easily help identify the traits unique to your teen and how those may be marketable.

After taking the assessments, have your teen write in his journal and/or discuss some of the following:

- Which career(s) did the assessments indicate might be a good fit for you? Do you agree or disagree? Why?
- Were there any results that surprised you?
- Were there any major discrepancies between the results of the two assessments?

### Step Three: Narrow the Field

Once your student has a general idea of her talents, interests, and preferences, she can look at the career fields that might suit her best. One of my favorite resources for this is *Careers: The Ultimate Guide to Planning Your Future* by DK Publishing, which organizes various careers by industry and provides an infographic-style snapshot of each. Your student can thumb through the book (no need to read every entry in detail), looking at the jobs listed. If one piques her curiosity, have her note it in her career journal, along with what appeals to her about that job and—just as important—anything that is *unappealing*. When she’s finished, she should review her notes and look for common threads: Maybe the jobs she has chosen all require a certain skill set (e.g., creativity, working with people), or perhaps they will provide the lifestyle she wants. The goal is not to pick a career but to think more about the attributes her ideal career would have.

I highly recommend buying a copy of the DK book, especially if you have multiple children to guide through the career exploration process.

But if you choose not to, or it’s not available through your local library, Khan Academy has a careers unit that can serve a similar purpose.

### Step Four: Conduct Career Research

By this point, your student should have an idea of some career fields that might be a fit, or at least some that definitely are not! Have him select his top three fields to research further. For each field, he should list one to three specific career options that fall under that category. These can come from the DK book, his own ideas, or a Google search. Even if he plans on attending college, be sure he includes at least one job that does not require more than a two-year degree in each field. It’s best to remain open-minded at this stage. He may be surprised!

Now he can research each career option on his list by looking them up in the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook, available at [bls.gov/ooh](http://bls.gov/ooh). For each one, make a chart in his career journal that includes the following:

- What does someone in this career do on a daily basis?
- What kind of education is necessary for this career?
- Is any on-the-job training required for employment or advancement (e.g., apprenticeship, certification)?
- What is the median pay?
- How many jobs are currently available?
- What is the growth outlook?
- What kind of lifestyle could this career provide?
- List at least three alternative careers that are related to this one. (You may have to do some additional research. For example, interest in becoming a baseball player could lead to a career in sports medicine, coaching, manufacturing, or counseling, as well as becoming a team owner, scout, sportscaster, journalist, photographer, publicist, statistician, groundskeeper, recreational director, sporting goods store owner, or personal trainer. Be creative!)

### Step Five: Make a Plan

In this final step, your student will choose one career to research further. She is not choosing a career for herself. However, the job she researches now may end up being the one she chooses later. The hope is that the previous steps have led her to an option that she finds intriguing, perhaps one she’d not considered before. But the point of this step is to help her get a feel for the real-world preparation she will need to pursue a career—invaluable information when it comes to actually selecting a career path when her time, effort, and money will need to pay a return worthy of her investment.

She can begin her research by reading about or watching a video about someone who has the career she’s chosen. Better yet, help her to

find someone she can interview via email, phone, or in person. In her career journal, have her write the following:

- How did this person become interested in this career?
- What training did they receive?
- How long have they been in the career?
- What is their job description—what do they do on a daily basis?
- What advice would they give to someone considering this career?

Lastly, have her write up the plan she would follow if she pursued this career. Her plan might include:

- Courses to study in high school to prepare for this career.
- Post-high school education/training needed, where to get it, how much it will cost, and how to finance it. For example, how long will it take to pay off student debt if making an average salary?
- Skills needed and ideas for developing them.
- Character traits needed and ideas for developing them.
- Volunteer work, internships, or job shadowing options to learn more about and prepare for this career.

This last step is the hardest for many students. Planning can seem daunting to a young person with limited real-world experience. Give as much assistance as needed. Help your teen to brainstorm things she can do now to prepare herself for success in the future. Because she did the work of identifying her interests, talents, and desires upfront, many of the skills and character traits needed for this job should also serve her well in any other career field she eventually chooses, so following her plan will not be a waste even if she chooses another path.

### When Should I Start Career Exploration?

I usually advise parents to begin exploring career options around the age of fourteen or fifteen (typically eighth or ninth grades). While some children have a strong sense of their future vocation much earlier, most will not have a deep enough understanding of their own personalities, interests, and desires to begin to make steps toward adult decisions before their mid-teens. And many will continue to refine these ideas well into their teens and even beyond high school graduation. Your goal here is to open the conversation, not end it. Starting just before or as you begin high school-level work will allow you as the parent-educator to guide your child's high school studies with an eye toward future goals. Knowing whether your student is leaning towards the humanities, STEM, a trade, or something else can better equip you to formulate a high school plan that prepares him or her while still providing a well-rounded education and allowing plenty of time to explore and find new

interests. (For a step-by-step guide to high school planning, see my article "How to Make a Four-Year Plan for High School" in the fall 2022 issue of GREENHOUSE.)

Most of all, remember that you are not trying to lock your young teen into a career for the next fifty years—and it's important that she understands this! Many things will change as she travels the road of life, and she doesn't have to prepare for them all right now. She merely needs to be able to take the next step—and many "next steps" can ultimately lead her to her desired destination. Now that she knows how to think through any option, she's well-equipped to make good decisions as she needs to make them.



*Whitney Cranford Crowell knew she'd reached peak homeschooling when she bought a custom nine-foot by six-foot bookcase with a matching ladder and still didn't have room for all the books. She lives in her childhood home outside High Point with her husband of twenty-three years and their twelve-year-old son. Their daughter and first homeschool graduate is a National Merit Scholar at the University of Alabama. Whitney can be reached at [whitnycrowell@gmail.com](mailto:whitnycrowell@gmail.com).*

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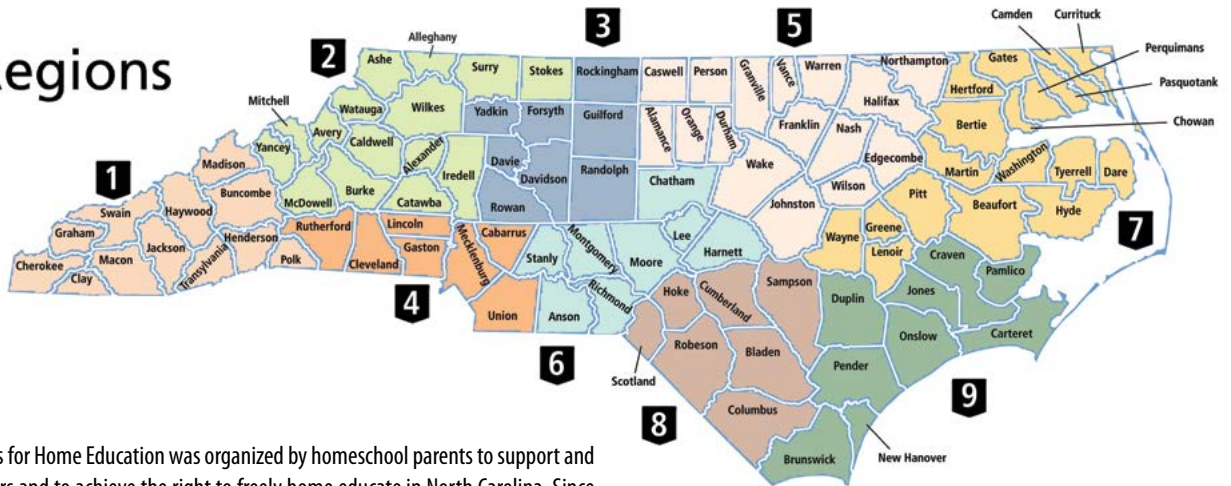
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### About NCHE

In 1984, North Carolinians for Home Education was organized by homeschool parents to support and encourage home educators and to achieve the right to freely home educate in North Carolina. Since that time, NCHE has endeavored to serve the homeschoolers in NC. NCHE continues to work to promote the excellence of home education, provide support for those who choose to do so and protect the right to homeschool. Our name was selected so as to include all who are for home education, not just those who are currently homeschooling. NCHE is governed by a working board of directors who volunteer their time and efforts to serve homeschoolers. A non-profit organization, NCHE operates on the basis of biblical principles and welcomes members of all races and religions.

### GREENHOUSE Information

The GREENHOUSE is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is published twice a year, spring and fall. There is also a special graduate publication in May. It is mailed to all members and posted online. The name GREENHOUSE was chosen to represent the type of care homeschooling parents are able to give to their children. Children are lovingly “tended” in a protected and nurturing environment until they are sufficiently mature to go out and take a place of service in the world. Letters and articles addressed to the GREENHOUSE become property of NCHE with full right to publication without further permission required. Ideas and opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHE.

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