

Building a Full Homeschool Portfolio

PLEASE NOTE: A full portfolio is not required by me (as your assessor) or by Ohio Homeschool law. This document is intended only for those who wish to create a full portfolio. I do believe that a full portfolio is an excellent tool to review the past accomplishments and prepare for the coming year but it is 100% acceptable to bring work samples in other forms to your assessment.

The Beginning and the End

Begin with the letter of intention to homeschool and then the reply letter from the school district. The last page is the signed academic assessment report/test scores.

What Goes in the Middle?

Most families separate the portfolio into the following areas: Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Earth Science, History, Christian Education, Field Trips, Special Projects and then Specials such as co-op, Music, Art, Gym, Martial Arts...etc...)

On the first page of each area, type up a quick overview of what was experienced and accomplished. This gives the assessor a quick overview of what your child can accomplish in each subject area. Behind that overview, choose examples to show mastery of the skills listed along with any tests that were taken in each subject area. Group the tests together in each subject.

For example, after listing the types of composition assignments that were accomplished, most families include examples (one poem, one report, one journal entry...) Be sure to pull composition examples from different times of the year with the date on them so that progress can be noted. A rough draft tells me more about your child's writing strengths and weaknesses more than a whole stack of workbooks.

Helpful Tips

I make a "thumbnail" of all spelling lists and then list the spelling average score week to week and also comprehensive for the year. This way, the assessor can look quickly to see the spelling level and the mastery of the words in the lists while it only takes up 4 pages in the portfolio. (Especially with math) it is not necessary for your assessor to see the whole math book. Pull various pages that highlight mastered skills.

Many extracurricular activities end with a certificate of participation. Save all such things and put them in the specific area. Put labels on the front of the page to explain what was done on that page. Jot down relevant comments that the assessor would find interesting or helpful. Some art projects are so wonderfully big that they don't fit into the binder. Take a picture of them so that they can be included! Many families also include a list of books read and field trips taken.

The Best Tip of All!

Start at the beginning of the school year by putting one three ring binder (the ones with a zipper around the edge work best) for each student in an easy to access area. As you take field trips, complete work and obtain various certificates, simply slide it in the three ring binder. By the end of the year, all that's needed is to slide the work samples into page protectors, put them in order according to subject areas and it will be finished. The final result is a wonderful window into your child's school year that you will enjoy looking at for years to come! Plus, with everything organized and in one place, your assessment will be more efficient and allow more time for discussing ways of extending/enhancing your already wonderful learning environment.

Homeschool Portfolio Checklist

Legal Items:

- Letter of intent to the district
- Copy of Notification Form
- Reply letter from the district

Academic Subject: Language Arts

- Cover page explaining what the child CAN do in this area
- List of Books Read
- Reading Comprehension
- Phonics Instruction
- Spelling (work examples, tests given))
- Word Study (antonyms, synonyms, homophones, prefix, suffix, word patterns)
- Rough draft compositions/ final copies (from the beginning, mid and year end)
book reports, poems, journal entries, various types of letters written etc...
- Handwriting (from the beginning, mid and year end)
- Examples of workbook pages completed/tests given

Academic Subject: Math:

- Cover page explaining what the child CAN do in this area
- Tests given/grades earned
- Sample pages of work completed

Academic Subject: History (Culture, Social Studies):

- Cover page explaining time periods studied and historical field trips
- Examples of work pages/reports written
- Pictures/samples of hands on historical activities/field trips

Academic Subject: Science (Various Types):

- Cover page explaining scientific topics studied/curriculum used
- Examples of work pages/reports written/ experiments done/science fair experiences
- Pictures/samples of hands on science activities/field trips

Special Subject Music:

- Cover page explaining curriculum used, instruments studied, experience

Special Subject Art:

- Cover page explaining curriculum used, projects completed
- Samples of artwork/pictures of art work too large to fit in portfolio

Special Subject Physical Education:

- Cover page explaining activities participated in/pictures participating in activity

Extra Curricular Activities:

- Achievement certificates
- Other areas of study/ areas of interest
- Service to others
- Social events

Legal Item: Signed Narrative Form