

## 5 R's of Homeschooling

**1. Research** – Homeschooling is a big decision to be sure, but it's one that I made largely after one pointed trip to the library. I read that first stack of books and I was hooked. For the next several weeks (and months and years), I read everything I could get my hands on. I can't recommend doing your research highly enough. Read the [books](#), visit the websites, peruse the blogs, talk to those of us who've walked the walk, *immerse* yourself in the big wide world of homeschooling information. The two big caveats when it comes to research: 1) Keep, and learn from, the things that resonate with your heart and your soul and your sense of reason, and simply leave the rest. And 2) If you start feeling overwhelmed or stressed out or anxious, STOP, BREATHE, and move on to number 2...

**2. Relax** - Seriously. *Relax*. Breathe. Homeschooling is supposed to be fun! I hate seeing parents stressing themselves out (and by extension, stressing their kids out) by either worrying about particulars, or wondering if they're doing the right thing. Nobody's going to benefit from homeschooling if the atmosphere is one of panic and anxiety. Relax. You successfully saw your kids through learning to walk and talk and use the bathroom.... you can see them through learning to read and write as well. The best indicator of a successful period of homeschooling is not how organized you were, or what kind of curriculum you used, or how they scored on a test. It's about CONNECTION. If you relax, if you trust your kids, trust the process, and trust the connection, everything else will fall into place.

“Children may not remember exactly what you said, or what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel.”

**3. Remember that learning is everywhere** – I discovered a long time ago that I wouldn't be very good at having kids in school. For one thing, my kids would have all kinds of absences. I'd keep them home on nice days so we could go to the park or the zoo. I'd keep them home on rainy days so we could snuggle up and watch movies. I'd pull them out for weeks at a time so we could drive across the country, or explore the desert, or go camping in the mountains. In short, I'd take them out of school *all the time*, and I'd do so knowing that they'd be learning the entire time. Learning isn't something that can be scheduled. It's not something that happens in a certain place, between certain hours, under the guidance of a certain person. Learning is everywhere. If you homeschool, you have the awesome and unique opportunity to embrace all the learning that life has to offer, wherever and whenever it has to offer it. If your kids don't get to watch the construction on the street or the bird outside the window or the helicopter in the sky because you're insisting that they stay seated at the kitchen table... you're truly missing out on the best part of homeschooling. Learning is everywhere.

“True learning – learning that is permanent and useful, that leads to intelligent action and

further learning – can arise only out of the experience, interest, and concerns of the learner.” ~  
John Holt

**4. Respect your kids' individuality** – Kids are all different. *Kids are so different.* One of the limitations of public school is that they can't possibly take into account every personality and every learning style in the room. I know that many great teachers would like to, and I know that many try, but with 30 students and one teacher it's not practically or logistically possible. It's just not. But that problem completely goes away when you homeschool. You get to honor your children's unique strengths. You get to let them learn in their own way, in their own time. You get to help and support them as they chart their own course... not a school's, not yours, but *theirs*. As a homeschooling parent, you have the privilege – and the responsibility – of allowing your children's education to be 100% customized and unique to them, their interests, their learning styles, and their path in life.... something a typical school just cannot do. And on those days when your kids are needing nothing more than a day full of down-time? You can honor that too.

**5. Rest and restore** – That means you, Mom (or Dad). Giving yourself permission to take care of YOU is hugely important to keeping a homeschool life healthy and happy for all involved. I've never liked it when people have framed this as “getting a break” or “getting away”, because I strongly feel that your family life should be designed in such a way that it's not something you ever feel you *need* to get a break from. Part of doing that successfully is taking good care of yourself. Getting your rest, getting your exercise, letting your kids see you pursuing things you're passionate about. Meditating. Praying. Playing. Yoga. Whatever helps you feel good and whole and better equipped to be the parent that you know deep down you're able to be.