

How To Get Started

Go to LayersofLearning.com and download the free Getting Started workbook under New to Homeschooling. It will be very helpful in getting your thoughts organized. This printable is a modified version of their step by step guide. For more thorough notes, check out their posts.

Know Your Why

Write down WHY you are homeschooling. A good WHY will get you through the tough days, and there will be some, eventually.

Be ready for CHANGE, and often. It will NOT be like School (either what you remember, nor what you may be pulling older children out of). Flexibility is key, everyone is getting used to this new way of doing things.

Take notes, make plans, and think through this big change in your life.

Ontario Laws & Requirements

HSLDA.ca is the best place to start. In Ontario, if you are pulling your kids formally out of school, you write a letter of Intent (see Downloads) and submit to your school principal. If you have never put your children in school, you don't have to do anything. You can follow along the Ontario Curriculum if you so choose, but you don't have to.

Take Some Time To Adjust aka “Deschooling”

If your kids are leaving school, make sure you give everyone some adjustment time. You don't need to pull them out on Friday and begin to homeschool on Monday. Between anxiety and lack of preparation time, especially when polluted by recent bad experiences in school, you'll be creating a perfect storm of failure for a new homeschool family. Take a few weeks or a month off to give everyone time to process the life change and to prepare for this new endeavor. It will give you a chance to create a plan and feel more prepared, and will give your kids an opportunity to have a fresh start. Go on outings, get outside, read, play, and go to the library. Visit a museum. Go on a nature walk. Be intentional in how you spend your time, but don't jump right into 8 hour school days at home.

A break is important, but be careful with how you spend the break. Rather than filling the time with TV and boredom, go on field trips and outings, read a lot, go to the library, do some cool science experiments just for fun. Sketch and paint. Play math games online. Write and illustrate stories. Bit by bit, make your house into a learning house.

Brainstorm a List of What You Want Your Kids To Know

Create an IEP (individual Educational Plan) for each student. Before you are told by anyone what you should teach, you should create your own list. Most likely your list will include **Math, Reading, and Writing**. Chances are you'll write down **history, geography, science, and art**. But beyond the normal essential school subjects we think of, there are a variety of electives to consider. Music, a vocational skill, a language or sport. Let go of a limiting public school mentality. You have the chance to teach your kids anything under the sun, so why not start with a huge list of cool ideas?

Subjects To Think About

Here are a few ideas to get you started, though this is a general list and is not exhaustive. Be as specific as you like.

- **Religion/Character**

- **P.E./Sports**
- **Government/Civics**
- **Life Skills** (money, budgeting, understanding insurance, home repairs, automotive maintenance, grocery shopping, meal planning, cleaning, gardening, filling out forms, learning to write a resume, first aid, decorating, sewing, cooking, and more)
- **Specialized Interests** (woodworking, knitting, forging, soap making, beekeeping, how to fly an airplane, and so on.)
- **Computer Programming/Robotics/STEM/Other Tech Training**
- **Foreign Languages**
- **Music or Art Lessons** (different from the arts, where you learn about fine art. Instead this is the process of learning to produce music or art)
- **Speech/Rhetoric** – the study of how to persuade, entertain, or inform an audience.
- **Logic** – Learning to make a valid argument, deliberately use techniques to sway an audience, and spot argumentative mistakes or deliberately misleading lies in the media, advertising, your neighbor, or politicians
- **Dead Languages** (Latin or Greek)
- **Economics**
- **Business/Entrepreneurship**

Long-Term Education Plan

You will not be able to teach everything you want to every single year, so you are going to create a long term education plan. Sketch out a basic plan of what to teach and when for the whole of your child's education. You can, for example, jot down that you would like to teach two years of foreign language in 9th and 10th grades, then one year of logic in 11th grade, and a computer programming course in 12th grade. You might also divide some subjects into semesters, listing more than one in a year.

You can put it right in your homeschool plan binder. Don't worry if you're not sure. You can change the plan later as you gain experience, as your children grow, as your circumstances change, and so on. The beauty of having a long term education plan is that you can now gracefully lay aside many things. After all, you know you will get to them in other years. You can't do it all right now.

The Four Year Plan

As you create your long-term plan you might feel you want to be more specific. This step is completely optional. The Four Year Plan is used by a lot of homeschoolers as they structure their homeschool. It is a way to break down the subjects into manageable chunks.

Create a Homeschool Vision

Before we move to the next step, take a few minutes and write down what your homeschool vision is. Your vision is how you see your homeschool in your mind.

Close your eyes and describe how you envision your homeschool. Do you picture kids sitting at desks or sprawled out on the couch? Do you picture outings and field trips or quiet, peaceful afternoons with books? Read-alouds? Games? Workbooks? Online classes? Nature studies? Will you learn as a family or more independently? Do you see yourself at a co-op with other homeschoolers? Will you travel? Do you want to take a weekly outing to the library? Will music be playing? Will you have science experiments sitting on the kitchen counter? Or will all of your homeschool supplies fit tidily on one shelf? Your vision will likely change somewhat as you go on, but it's important to paint a picture in your mind of what you want to accomplish and what you want your days to look like. This will help you in your next step as you [find your homeschooling style](#).

Homeschooling Styles

As you read about each homeschooling style, take notes on the Homeschooling Style page. Check the boxes that ring true for you. At the bottom, articulate what your style is, remembering that most people are actually eclectic (a combination of several styles). Remember, this is just for you. Writing it out isn't a commitment. It's just an exercise to help you think about what's important to you.

Classical Method

In a nutshell, the classical method involves learning lots of facts in order to create a framework, then learning to express oneself effectively, and finally coming to understand and discuss the great (and not so great) ideas of the past and present. These three goals are met through a method called the Trivium.

Grammar Stage

The youngest students, about age 6 to 9, are in the grammar stage. Grammar means the basics, the foundation. They learn to read, write, and do basic math, but also cover a great deal of history, science, geography and other facts about the world in a broad manner.

Dialectic Stage

The second age group, from about 10 to 13, are in the dialectic stage. At this stage they continue to read a great deal and learn facts about the world, but they also begin to learn to write persuasively and to discuss what they have read.

Rhetoric Stage

The third age group, from roughly 14 to 18, are in the rhetoric stage, the stage where you apply all the ideas and facts to yourself. The teacher at this stage is a mentor. Kids study upper level math, advanced writing and speaking, high level sciences, and the [Great Books](#) (which fill the literature, writing, geography and history portions of a curriculum). The teacher discusses ideas with the student and helps them come to their own conclusions—the student may never know what the teacher thinks.

So Rome fell? The grammar stage teaches you the facts of the Fall of Rome, the Dialectic stage teaches you how to write and understand what others have written about the Fall of Rome, the Rhetoric stage teaches you how to dismiss what everybody else has written about the fall of Rome, make your own conclusions, and figure out what it has to do with you.

To teach kids this way, you choose basic math, grammar, and writing programs, then you add in the history, science, geography, and arts in a four year rotation. The first year you teach earth science/astronomy, ancient history, world geography, and drawing skills. The second year you teach biology, medieval history, world geography, and art and music appreciation. The third year you teach chemistry, renaissance/colonial history, world geography, and more arts. The fourth year you teach physics, modern history, American (or your country's) geography, and again more arts. Then you repeat the whole cycle for the middle grades and again for the high school years, each time increasing in amount of work and difficulty of subject matter.

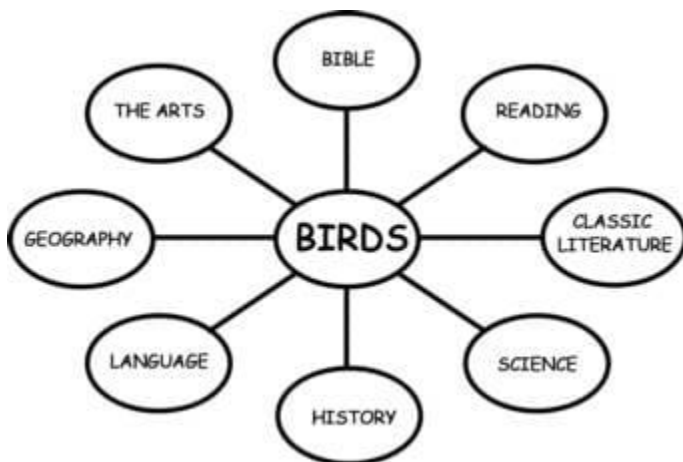
Charlotte Mason

Charlotte Mason and Classical styles of homeschooling are close cousins. There are enough differences though that Charlotte Mason is a distinct style all its own. Charlotte Mason was a school teacher in England when only the rich were well educated and could afford the best classical education, but she wanted all students to have a fine education.

Charlotte Mason's goal was to bring out well-rounded, intelligent children who had a love for learning and an insatiable curiosity about the world. Her students used few text books, they learned from what Mason called living books, books written by authors with passion for the subject. They spent time in nature, looking at the wonders around them. Recording what they saw in their notebooks taught them to identify leaves, bugs, flowers, rocks, and birds. History studies utilized living books and biographies of important people.

Most of Charlotte Mason's students never studied at the high school level. For them, eighth grade was the end of their education. Charlotte Mason homeschoolers tend to turn to the classical style in high school, depending on the Great Books, which after all, are living books.

Unit Study Method



In unit studies you choose a topic and then explore it in every possible school subject you can relate it to.

Unit studies are popular among homeschoolers. The idea is that you choose a topic and surround your curriculum for a period of several weeks with that topic. For example, you might choose bicycles. You could learn about the physics of bicycles: gears, levers and wheels, the history of the bicycle, have spelling words related to bicycles, make a map showing where in the world people use bicycles as a primary means of transport, use bicycle riding for physical education, take a field trip to a bicycle repair shop, read a novel or story where bicycles are

an important element, and so on. All these topics would be delved into with a great deal of detail and would certainly be memorable to the students.

Your core topic could be anything in the history, science, geography, or even character topics. You could do a unit study around the topic of honesty as well as one around the topic of the pyramids of Egypt. If you are working with students of more than one age group you simply have everyone do the same study and adjust the difficulty and amount of work for the specific abilities of the students. Grammar, writing, and math topics are hit upon while using this method, but these topics usually need separate systematic courses for mastery. So the three "R's" are learned using separate curriculum choices. The specific topics you chose depend on educational goals for your children and their own interests. There's not an organized framework or "order" to what you should learn.

Traditional School Method

Of all the methods of schooling the traditional school method is probably the hardest to define because usually people just mean *whatever the local public school is doing* when they say “traditional schooling.” However, this generally means a subject and text book based approach to learning.

Kids are taught from workbooks and text books in the basics from English to math to social studies. Each study area is separate from the others rather than integrated.

Most homeschoolers using this method do so through an online charter school. The school usually sends them the books and materials and has teachers that check in with the parents and often even teach class sessions online. The charter school usually administers standardized tests too. The online schools also provide official transcripts. It can create an easier transition for kids who will eventually be returning to public school. People who continue to homeschool long-term most often drift away from this style. It is harder to maintain, especially when you’re teaching kids of a variety of ages. It’s also not individualized to kids’ abilities and interests.

So Which Homeschool Style Are You?

I’d be surprised if you were just one. Most of us are eclectic, which means we pick and choose the best fits for our family from many styles of learning. For example, I have found that I need overall structure and a yearly plan, but I also need flexibility built in and want my kids to have some choices too. I also know that I don’t find joy in textbooks, but I love all the books we find at our local library. I also have found that we thrive with projects rather than just workbooks. Classical and Charlotte Mason are the styles I tend to favor. Knowing this has helped me focus our time and resources on the things that work for us.

Books won’t be your only consideration. This butterfly kit was an amazing investment for us. We watched the process intently. Natural curiosity caused my kids to ask about a thousand questions and do their own research.

Planning Your Homeschool Year

Hopefully by now you’ve thought about [your overall homeschool vision](#), [decided what your homeschooling style is](#), and [purchased your curriculum](#). Now it’s time to get right down to the business of planning out THIS YEAR in your homeschool.

Before you even begin a homeschool year, the very best gift you can give yourself (and your kids) is a plan. Whether you are hyper-organized or totally laid back, a basic homeschooling plan will make everything go more smoothly.

Set Goals

Goals must come first or else planning your homeschool year won’t have any real substance. Big picture goals, infiltrate every one of our school days. They are specific and manageable, but not immediately accomplished. You’ll see that they are not necessarily the goals that a school teacher has; instead they are a fusion of my “mom goals” and “teacher goals.”

My Goals

1. To express love to each of my kids individually during each school day.
2. To raise kids who are leaders.
3. To utilize one-on-one teaching time without distractions.
4. To provide mentors & outside experiences involving my kids' interests.
5. To incorporate STEM challenges, problem solving, and imagination.

I'll share with you an example – one of my goals is for my kids to be able to be comfortable in leadership positions in their lives. As a direct result, I have them:

- lead our morning meeting
- take turns preparing for and giving our daily devotionals
- stand in front of groups (our family, grandparents, etc.) and present projects
- create note cards for speeches and then learn those speeches well enough to reference, but not read from those note cards
- choose many of their own Layers of Learning explorations, writing assignments, and book projects
- lead discussions
- be responsible for filling out their own planner assignments and then checking them off as they complete them.

All of these things are daily items that are adding up to my overall goal. And I keep it all in mind as I'm planning my homeschool.

Determine A Schedule

First thing, determine what kind of schedule we're going to follow. Some people follow a public school calendar while some use a 4 school days a week plan. Some people take a week off every 6 weeks. It's your school and your schedule.

Before each school year I plan out 40 weeks worth of work. You might use 36, 45, or some other number of weeks, but 40 is my magic number. Over years of homeschooling I've learned that I have 40 weeks in me and need the other 12 weeks in the year for breaks – rejuvenation time for both myself and my little ones. We take some of those in the summer and some interspersed throughout the year. You get to decide what works for you.

Make A Pacing Guide

My pacing guide is my overall plan for my year. It is not dated. Life happens. I can't plan when we'll get the flu or I'll be given extra responsibilities at my library board meeting. The pacing guide helps me stay on track, but still stay flexible. Remember this principle when you're planning your homeschool year – make your plan work for you; you don't work for it.

Our work is divided into two parts – written work and Layers of Learning.

Written Work

Written work is made up of our dailies – math, reading, and writing. Even when things get crazy, we get these basics done. Dailies don't go in our pacing guide. I can't know how long it will take a kiddo to master long division or write a five paragraph essay. Kids shouldn't be moved along just because they are a certain age or a certain grade or because I planned a certain thing and they need to keep up. You can't completely individualize instruction and also adhere to a pre-planned pace for daily work.

Use An Undated Planner

An undated, printable, planner that you can use year after year is highly efficient. Jot down which unit topics we are doing and any ideas I have to go with them. It starts out fairly blank, with mostly just topics, but fills up as the year goes on.

Monthly Extras

As you're planning your homeschool year, consider non-school commitments too. I look at holidays and plan some time for them. We need plenty of time for fun holiday art, poetry, writing, craft projects, cooking, and activities. I also make sure I leave enough room in there for an occasional week off in the middle of the year to recharge our batteries and some vacation weeks for family trips. Record ideas for holiday and extra family fun times on monthly pages since they are dated.

Reading Lists

At the beginning of every school year I also create reading lists. My kids mostly choose their own books each week when we go to the library, but there are a number of books that I consider greats that I don't want them to miss. Each kids has their own reading list for the year in my plan. We also have a read aloud list – ideas for great books that I'd like to read them during the year.

How Do I Cover Everything?

This is the desperate question of so many homeschool moms. And here's my answer: You don't. You don't cover everything.

I realized this as I was feverishly teaching my kids about the Phoenicians. *Wait a minute. I never learned this stuff in school. Not even in college.*

So before we move on, please absorb this – You DON'T need to teach your kids EVERYTHING. You just need to teach them how to learn. Once they know how to learn – to read and research, to think, write, and speak clearly – they can learn anything they will ever need to. Remember in everything you teach that what you are really teaching is HOW TO LEARN.

But when you feel overwhelmed with all there is to teach and learn, remember...

Don't Do Every Subject Every Day

You don't have to learn everything every day. Math, reading, and writing are daily subjects for the most part, but you have a lot of flexibility with the others. But the extra subjects can be studied on a less frequent basis. Maybe you'll just do sign language on Fridays. Perhaps you'll spend Monday and Wednesday afternoons doing history and geography, while doing science and art on Tuesdays and Thursdays. You might enjoy reading [this post on what a week of Layers of Learning can look like](#). It shows the Subject-of-the-Day method.

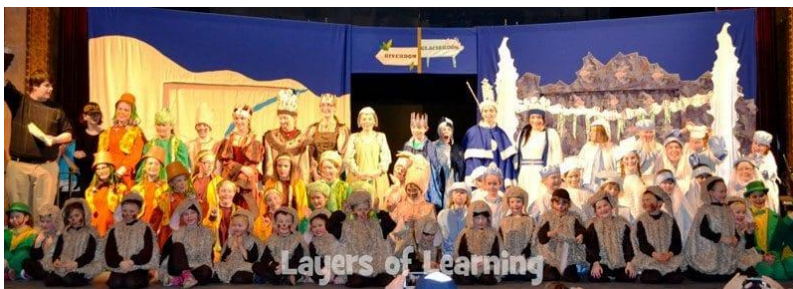
Don't Do Every Subject All Year Long

Study a subject for a few weeks, a quarter, or a semester instead of the whole year, swapping out with a new subject. Sometimes its better to focus more on something for a short time than it is to spend an inadequate amount of time over a long time.

Don't Do It All During "School"

Some subjects may be accomplished through means other than making it part of your school day. Instead of doing P.E. you could require your child to sign up for one sport a year, for example.

In lieu of studying theater you could have your child participate in the [Missoula Children's Theater](#) when it comes to town.



Community Theater has been a really fun for my kids. Homeschooling is about finding the best building experiences for your kids. It doesn't mean you personally have to teach them every single thing.

Instead of a formal study of science (at least in the younger years), you could make sure your family sits down to watch science documentaries several times a month. And now, you see how homeschooling is not just a way to educate your children, but a lifestyle choice.

Several years ago I had a phone conference with a struggling new homeschool mom. She was trying to juggle teaching all of her kids and never seemed to have time to read with her one son. Whenever she tried, it seemed

to get interrupted by her toddlers and other demands. I suggested that perhaps she could read at bedtime with him after the others were asleep. I will never forget her response, “What? It doesn’t count if I don’t do it during school time, does it?” Of course! Let go of the idea that school must be kept in school and recognize that life is one grand classroom.

We watched these baby birds outside of our window from the time they hatched until they left the nest. We learned so much about birds without even a single lesson on them that spring. Let learning be your way of life.

Can I Teach Things I Don’t Know?

When I started homeschooling I didn’t even know the basics of how to teach a child to read or guide a child in writing a book report. And as for science, let’s just say I’m challenged. But I know how to read and I can follow directions. Therefore I can teach my child nearly anything, with a little help from my friends – books. And along the way I’m becoming very well educated along with my kids.

Together, we read the math lessons and work on problems. I don’t “teach” our homeschool as much as we all learn together. I am the facilitator, making sure everyone stays on track and is learning, and making sure we have the books and supplies we need, but I don’t pretend to know everything.

Tyler and I are both solving algebra problems. Just like my kids, I have a math notebook that I work in too. I don’t remember every upper math level concept from high school and college, so I learn with them. We figure it out together and I’m learning a lot too.

My kids have an art sketchbook, and so do I. They have notebooks for all of their school subjects, full of narrations, notes, and projects; so do I. They write essays; and so do I. We all learn together, Mom included.

Not Knowing Can Make You A Better Teacher

Are you still worried that you just don’t know enough? I hear statements like these from new homeschool moms all the time:

“I’ve never been a good speller.”

“I can’t remember anything from high school.”

“I’m no good at math.”

They feel inadequate. They come asking for advice. And I tell them about the best math teacher I ever had.

The best math teacher I ever had was terrible at math. She hated it, in fact. You see, someone who just intrinsically understands something isn’t necessarily the best person to teach it. Sometimes things come so naturally to people that they just can’t explain them. The best math teacher I ever had realized there were a lot of kids who felt just like she did – dumb at math. Math was so hard for her that she made it her mission in life to make math seem fun and easy. She didn’t learn the BEST way to teach addition; she learned 10 different ways to teach it. Different people learn differently and there isn’t always a best way. Maybe most importantly, she realized that kids don’t care if you have all the answers; they just care if you care enough to keep at it with them until they understand.

How Do I Homeschool When Life Is Hard?

This question really translates to:

How do I homeschool when. . .

- I've just had a baby?
- My toddlers are so demanding?
- I'm really sick?
- My family is moving?
- My spouse just lost a job?
- I need to go back to work (or school)?

Our little December baby was born right before Christmas. He had lots of health struggles early on and we spent a lot of time at the hospital and with doctors. Between Christmas, a new baby, and health worries, homeschool had to change. That's okay. Taking some time off or being able to modify your schedule is one of the benefits of homeschooling.

When things are too hard, take comfort in going back to what is most important in teaching your child, again, in order of importance:

When things are too hard, take comfort in going back to what is most important in teaching your child, again, in order of importance:

1. Morality
2. Life skills
3. Reading/ Writing/ Arithmetic
4. History/ Science/ Geography/Art
5. Personal Pursuits

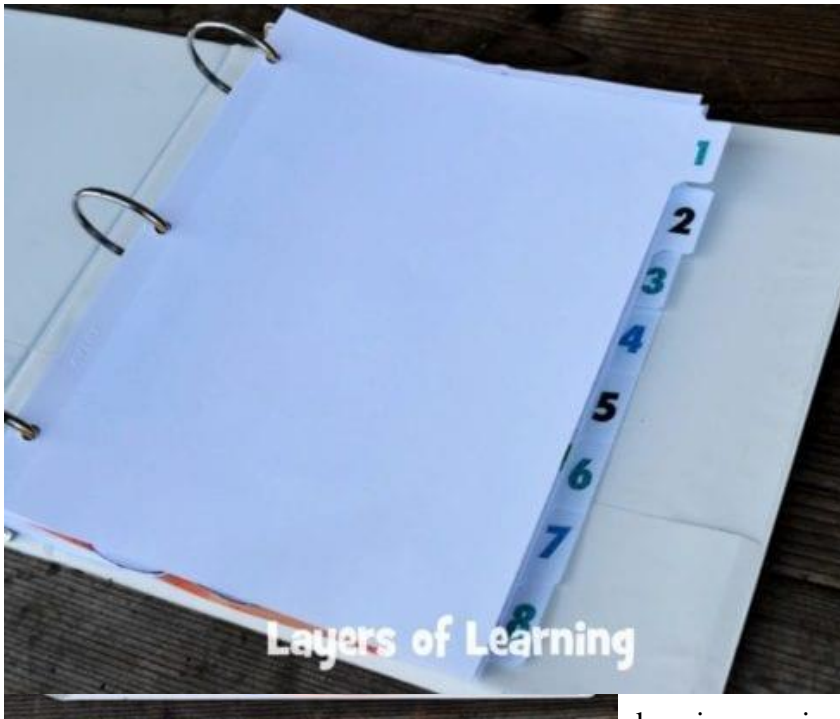
So when your kids are struggling, or you are struggling, this will guide you in how to scale back. Worry about the most important things first. Start at the top of the list, and only do what you can. Your challenge won't last forever.

Our kids learned a lot the year we built our house. This was the day our daughters built the entire porch rail around our wraparound porch. We managed to keep up with the most important subjects, but a lot of what they learned was from building as a family. The lessons were different, but the learning was real.

More Questions?

Do you have other questions? Worries? Struggles? I've helped a lot of homeschool moms get their start, and I'd love to help you too. Feel free to send me an e-mail at contact@layers-of-learning.com or [come find me, Karen, on our facebook page](#). You might also want to come join our [Layers of Learning facebook group](#). You'll find supportive homeschool moms and can ask any of your questions there. I'm there too.

Before you go, let's look at one last important thing homeschoolers should know how to do – [keep homeschool records](#). You should always begin with the end in site, and homeschooling ends with a great portfolio.



How To Make A Homeschool Portfolio

Making a homeschool portfolio is one of the easiest ways to track and record kids' progress in school. Before we get into it much further though, I want to encourage you to find out the laws and requirements in your state or country. You also need to be aware of requirements for any charter school or other organization you're a part of or get funding from. I am not funded by anyone and live in Idaho (where there aren't record-

keeping requirements of homeschoolers). Nonetheless, I keep portfolios for all of my kids, and transcripts once they reach high school age.

In addition to what I suggest, you may need to track attendance days, instructional hours, keep an IEP, record testing scores, or show other proof of courses completed depending on your location and situation. Make sure that you keep adequate records to be within the law.

How I Build A Homeschool Portfolio

Our school year is rolling down to its end and once again, I'm faced with piles and piles of paperwork. I wish I could just feel proud of all the good work we've accomplished, but I'm too overwhelmed by what to do with it all to be proud!

Even if your state doesn't require it, I think it's good practice to keep a homeschool portfolio, but if I kept everything, I'd have to rent a storage unit for it all.

When you're putting together your portfolio, keep these three principles in mind:

1. More is not better, it's just more.
2. Your goal is to show progress.
3. Make it a cool keepsake.

Now, get the trash bag out and let's sort out just what you should {and shouldn't} keep.

My kids each have a portfolio with 8 dividers – one for each grade, 1st through 8th. After 8th grade, our record keeping is a little different since my kids have reached high school age. At that point, I keep more formal transcripts and they have most of their writing assignments typed and stored on the computer.

A Homeschool Resume

Before you even start sorting, you're going to make a one-page summary page of your kid's work. Treat it a bit like a resume. Tell about what he or she has completed, what skills have been acquired, and what's been mastered. You can include school subjects, life skills, personal and social skills, and extracurricular activities.

Recording in this way will set you free! If your resume indicates they've completed Saxon Math 6/7, you no longer need to keep every math assignment. There is no need to keep every worksheet, cursive practice sheet, and spelling list. Toss them.

I print out my [kids' report cards](#) on the backside of the resume, so it becomes one double-sided sheet with lots of information. I also give them a copy of their [report card](#). The report cards are mostly encouragement tools in our homeschool. I write down the growth I've seen in them and use it as a kudos – an encouragement tool that helps them see their accomplishments.

The Best of the Best

Go through all the assignments and choose no more than three that are the best of the best from the year.

If you choose three every single year, you'll have kept 39 samples throughout their school years. That's a lot! Be ruthless. It's okay to just keep one or two a year, but definitely no more than three. I like to choose at least one writing assignment that included their handwriting, just because I love watching how it evolves over the years and seeing those cute little scrawls brings back a world of memories and warmth to me.

Our only exception to this rule is that we have one shelf where we keep really great finished books my kids have done. They certainly don't turn all of their writing into books, but when they do make homemade books, we keep those on the shelf with all the other books we own. The kids love reading books they've written. It's not part of their portfolio, but it is part of our family library.

Take Pictures of the Fun

Much of what we do in our hands-on homeschool is projects. It's impossible to keep all those science experiments, book projects, history posters, shoebox dioramas, and 3-D maps we create. They are some of our best, most memorable work, but they don't work well in a portfolio, so we take pictures instead. Make a few pages that showcase the explorations, expeditions, and experiments you've done over the year. I just make a collage page and print it out.

Include captions or a brief description along with the pictures. You can print it out on card stock or on photo paper. Limit yourself to one history page, one geography page, one science page, and one art page. If you have some pictures from other subjects, combine all of them on to one page as well.

Reading Log

Finally, include a reading log of the books they've read during the year. We keep this all year long as we go, so it's easy to just include that page behind the others.

What A Ten-Page Homeschool Portfolio Looks Like

Page 1: Resume

Pages 2, 3, 4: Three of the best assignments, including at least one handwritten one (It's okay if the stories are actually more than one page long, just make sure they are stapled and kept tidy and together.)

Pages 5, 6, 7, 8, 9: Photo collages of great work in various subjects

Page 10: Reading log

I just keep mine in a big three-ring binder with sheet protectors that we add a "chapter" to, year after year, as they complete another grade.

Trashing It

If you have anything else that didn't make the cut, it's time to let it go. Remember, more isn't better. It's just more. You are much more likely to look over a cute, colorful, picture-filled portfolio with a couple of great writing samples than you are to dig through boxes and piles of unending paperwork. Enjoy your keepsake and let go of the rest. Once it's in the trash bag, don't look back.

Go Digital

We live in a tech world. Embrace it! I love books, so I do keep a ten-page physical school portfolio for each of my kids, but I also back it up to the cloud. Scan each of the pages, put them in a folder labeled with the kiddo's name and grade, and back it up somewhere safe. You'll have peace of mind knowing your records aren't lost even if a tragedy strikes that could ruin your physical portfolio. The other awesome thing about digitizing your portfolio is that if you had trouble with the "Trashing It" step up above, this is your opportunity to keep a few more assignments that you just didn't want to let go of. It will require a few extra minutes of scanning, but no shelf space in your house.

Relax. You're Free.

Now that you have a cute, fun homeschool portfolio and a backed-up digital version, you can relax! Take pride in the good work everyone has accomplished. Relish in the fact that your house hasn't fallen victim to homeschool work clutter. Share pictures of the great work with grandparents, homeschool facebook groups, your co-op friends, and your kids. And turn your focus to the excitement of the new year coming up!