

**HEA**



HEA INC

**HOME EDUCATION RESOURCE BOOKLET**



**Homeschooling**  
the world is our classroom



hea.edu.au  
1300 72 99 91



# HOME EDUCATION RESOURCES

Families new to home educating their children often ask, “What curriculum should I buy?” or “Where can we buy materials?” Experienced home educators find it difficult to answer these questions: there are as many answers as there are home educating families! How a family began home educating is rarely the same one year on: the books, materials and approach used in the early days continually adapt to the emerging individual needs and styles of the children, as well as how the family operates at home and in the community.

In this booklet we hope to widen your definition and approach to the education of your children. The question should not be, “What curriculum should I buy?” but “How can I teach what my child needs to know or be able to do?”. Focussing on the learning objectives often gives rise to the answers you need—and can save you considerable time and money. Finding the right resource is an art that home educators soon pick up. Which is why we urge you to take your time in these early days... Read this booklet and any other others you can get your hands on! Talk to other home educators about how they structure their days and about the resources they use. Get a ‘feel’ for what home education is and can be—it is definitely very different from school!

For those of you seeking to spice up and refresh your home educating approach, we hope this book inspires you to look beyond what we’ve all become conditioned to believe is the way to learn—to view the home and community as places bursting with interesting and engaging resources. A quick flip through catalogues from educational suppliers can offer dozens of ideas of educational resources you and your children can create. Then again, the addition of a few well-chosen items from companies that know the needs of home educators, can give home educating the boost it needs.

Every home educating parent feels overwhelmed at some stage by the huge choice of learning resources available in book shops, educational stores, and online. There is much to tempt you! And there is no easy answer to which is the best resource, or most effective resource because every family and every learner is different. Home educators soon discover that home educating is a journey of discovery: let patience be your ally in your quest for the curriculum that best works for you and your children.

This booklet is divided into parts. The first part introduces home education and the Home Education Association Inc of Australia. The second part discusses in detail the types of resources home educators use every day.

## *PART 1: Home Education*

### **An Introduction to Home Education**

Home education is a rewarding and challenging endeavour enjoyed by thousands of Australian families. It is a practical and successful alternative to school-based education for children. Home educating families select from a variety of approaches and curricula, and draw on a huge array of materials and resources, to suit their children's individual learning styles and needs. Parents find that being involved in all aspects of their children's development is enriching and fulfilling.

### **Home Education is Legal**

Families interested in home educating their children need to inquire about the conditions and regulations from the appropriate educational authorities in their state. The approval process may involve the preparation of a program of learning for the children, an example or description of how you will monitor progress, an initial interview and an annual review. It is helpful to join a local support group or talk to local home educating families about their registration experiences before taking this step.

### **Home Educating Networks**

Home educating families come together to form supportive networks which cater to the educational and social needs of their members. Workshops and conferences are regularly held and provide information about home education in Australia and overseas. Home educating support groups organise regular educational and social activities for children. Educational excursions to cultural places of interest, educational institutions and tours through factories and workplaces are often arranged for whole families. Camping trips and regular picnics are a feature of many groups. There are also group learning opportunities organised for children in all areas of the curriculum, either as stand-alone classes or in learning cooperatives.

The **Home Education Association Inc.** and your local support group can help you prepare for teaching your children at home and support you in getting started and succeeding on this wonderful educational adventure with your children.

### **The Benefits**

A child educated at home has a parent available at any time. This individual attention allows for:

- increased engagement during learning tasks;
- structuring programs tailored to the child's individual learning style and academic level;
- early identification and resolution of learning problems and misconceptions;
- access to real world experiences and activities, in and outside of the home, that most schools only dream about;
- discussion of issues concerning values and relationships as they arise and in context;



- focus on topics of interest to the child for periods of time appropriate to the child's learning needs and ability;
- increased time to learn beyond the required state curriculum;
- provision of, and access to, a huge range of resources not generally available within the classroom;
- access to an increased number and variety of social opportunities and activities leading to the early development of a wide range of social skills and mature attitudes, cooperative behaviours and a balanced understanding of their society.

Home educated graduates have experienced no difficulty in accessing tertiary education and are able to choose a variety of pathways to satisfying employment to suit their individual needs and personalities. Some enter university by direct application or sit an entrance exam; others complete HSC or vocational courses through school attendance or distance education; some do TAFE courses that lead to employment or further education; some start their own businesses or remain vital members of their family's business. Home education is a proven pathway to successful, full and satisfying adult lives.

Home Education is legal in every state of Australia. The regulations and laws governing home education provision vary from state to state. For more information contact the following government agencies (cut and paste whole of link into browser):

**Visit [www.hea.edu.au](http://www.hea.edu.au) and look under 'get started' to find where to register in your state.**

## What is the HEA?



Formed in April 2001, the Home Education Association Inc. (HEA) aims to promote the practice of home educating in Australia and to provide members with benefits which would be difficult to obtain by individuals or smaller groups.

The HEA was formed to support, promote and encourage the practice of home education. The HEA has no affiliation with state education authorities and all members should note that privacy is an Association priority.

The broader objectives of the HEA are as follows:

### HEA Objectives

- to uphold the principle that parents are primarily responsible for the education of their children;
- to promote a broader awareness of home education and its benefits throughout Australia;
- to promote and encourage the development of home education networks;
- to provide services and resources to home education networks and individual home educators;
- to endeavour to procure any rights, privileges, concessions or benefits relating to home education for home educators and their families;
- to maintain a respect for the diversity of philosophies and methods used by home educators.

## Membership

Membership is available to all home educating families in Australia. Becoming a member of the Association is a way in which you can support this Australia-wide initiative to promote the practice of home education. If you would like to find out more about the Association please visit the web site: [www.hea.edu.au](http://www.hea.edu.au).

Joining the HEA costs \$60 per family for the first year, and \$50 per year after that. Home educating groups of eight or more families are eligible to join as a group at the renewal membership rate of \$50 per family, provided the membership is completed as a group on the one application form.

## HEA Services / Benefits

Your membership helps to promote and support the home education community in the following ways:

- maintaining a web presence: [www.hea.edu.au](http://www.hea.edu.au);
- regular newsletters and magazines to HEA members;
- 1300 number for phone enquiries;
- email enquiry service;
- providing insurance cover for events, activities and work experience students;
- responding to requests for information from media and researchers;
- informing bureaucrats and politicians at all levels of government about the nature and benefits of home education;
- producing promotional material to help increase awareness of home education as an option in the public arena;
- maintaining an Australia-wide directory of individual contacts and support groups  
<http://www.hea.edu.au/support/local-support/local-support.html>
- hosting internet discussion forums for HEA members and non-members;
- negotiating discounts and special offers from educational businesses and suppliers:  
<http://www.hea.edu.au/members/discounts/subscriptions.html>
- providing aid to support groups to run local introduction to home education evenings and some other activities;
- developing home education literature and products,.
- communicating with other home education organisations in Australia and overseas.

## Part 2: Resources

### Your Home

The average home is full of objects and equipment that can be used or adapted to teach children concepts, knowledge and skills in each of the curriculum subject or key learning areas.

Think of your home as a learning laboratory! See the kitchen and laundry as the ‘economics centre’; the rooms which house the television and computer as the ‘media centre’; the children’s bedrooms as ‘imagination hubs’ where dreams and creative games take place. Take a fresh look at your home from an educator’s perspective, as though you were a teacher given a house, rather than a classroom limited by four walls, for your students... Most teachers would give anything to have that much space, let alone all the resources and uses contained within!

Together with your children begin to explore the endless learning possibilities within your home. For example, mentally pull the building apart... Can you see how the house was built, the different types of building materials used? How were they put together? How does this compare with other houses down the street? What do houses in different places, cultures and times look like? Imagine how the rooms could be rearranged to suit the individual members of your family. Design the ideal family home. Then design a cubby house, or several!

#### HOME AS BUILDING

Consider the following list as starting points for different investigations:

- Construction methods
- Use of building materials
- Different types of building materials
- Sustainable building materials
- Maintenance of building
- Renovations
- Repairs
- Pest control options
- Tools used for building and repair
- Plumbing
- Electrical
- Drainage
- Weatherproofing
- Insulation
- Phone/internet installations
- Windows (placement, type)
- Heating and cooling
- Lighting
- Tradesmen, service people
- House plans
- Neighbours
- Wall, floor and window furnishings
- Painting and decorating
- Furniture
- Built in features
- Basements, cellars, lofts, mezzanines
- Fire and flood contingencies

Children can explore building in many different ways: through play with construction toys and blocks; building an assortment of cubby houses using different tools; building models of homes for play or projects; creating dolls’ houses. When playing with your children draw their attention to the elements of their home and those around it. When travelling in the car talk about the different architectural styles of the various buildings you see, the purpose of the building, the construction techniques required. Use curiosity and language to link these separate elements into concepts about building children can use in their everyday play and learning. Many households have a shed or garage that can be used for children to practice basic woodwork or metal work skills and projects. Create a sturdy woodworking bench from an old wooden desk or use a folding table and supply it with suitable tools and a box of timber and material scraps for your children to enjoy.

Teaching children that buildings have strong foundations, are built in a methodical step-by-step



way that creates sustainability and durability, and for particular purposes gives children a practical and effective model of solving problems. The lesson here is that all learning is interrelated: we think we're teaching one thing but our children are learning much more!

## THE ECONOMICS CENTRE OF THE HOME: KITCHEN AND LAUNDRY

At the same time your children will be naturally learning and applying mathematical concepts and interacting with technology. Simply being in these spaces, using them for the purposes for which they were built, allowing the children to participate in the daily chores and encouraging them to use them for their own purposes, teaches them many different skills across the curriculum.

Let's look at science and technology first:

- Using measuring devices: gauges, scales (weight), timers, measuring containers (volume)
- Using different utensils for different purposes.
- Exploring the different materials and why they are used for different purposes.
- Using electricity, gas, battery, wood, solar or steam powered appliances such as cookers, ovens, blenders, toasters, microwave ovens, food processors, exhaust fans, etc.
- Maintaining and cleaning appliances.
- Choices of waste management (environmental impact and consumerism); recycling, composting, etc.
- Reading, interpreting and following instructions
- Using materials and tools safely
- Correct use of utensils
- Efficient order of processes, clean-up
- Responsible and safe use of materials (hot water, chemicals such as washing detergent, kitchen cleaners), hygienic food

Believe it or not, your kitchen and laundry are the perfect places to conduct science experiments! They are already stocked with the kind of equipment necessary to dabble in chemistry and physics. Check on the internet for science experiments suitable for doing at home – or buy and work your way through one of the many excellent books available.

Home economics, health and personal development are a couple of curriculum subjects that are best taught in the home, particularly in the kitchen and laundry.

- Cleaning and maintenance – using different tools and products for different tasks safely and responsibly
- Repair and maintenance of furniture, surfaces, etc
- Managing pests
- Taking care of pets' needs
- First aid cabinet
- Safe storage of poisonous substances
- Washing, cleaning, ironing, folding and mending clothes
- Different ways of washing and drying clothes (colour mix issues, ways to remove stains, etc)
- Safe use of different chemicals in the laundry
- Safe and appropriate storage
- Operation of appliances
- Water conservation (difference between grey and black water, etc)
- Stocking the pantry, fridge, freezer, shopping lists
- Safe and appropriate storage methods and containers
- Hygienically handling different foods
- Preparation of healthy food; cooking different types of meals as a way of exploring a family celebration or particular culture or religion

The first aid cabinet at home and the one that travels with you on outings can provide a rich learning experience for children to learn about safe use of medications, basic first aid practice, basic bandaging, correct response to insect bites, minor burns and wounds, sunburn, splinters, etc.

As they get older, your children may want to become first aid volunteers for their family and friends at home education get-togethers. Later, they may choose to extend their training and experience by completing a St. John's Ambulance course. You can extend learning in this vital area by teaching children about poisons, emergency numbers and so on, as well as covering safety in the street, backyard or bushland. The laundry is a great place to put posters and identification charts of snakes, spiders and insects on the walls or backs of doors.

## **THE LIVING AREAS**

Unless you are lucky and have a large house with a separate study, home theatre and games room, chance are your living room is your media and entertainment area as well as being in constant use by the children as a playroom!

Open plan houses are brilliant for home education, as parents tend to be handy to answer children's questions, supervise play or learning activities while doing the daily chores. But if you don't have an open plan or a large house, don't despair – and definitely don't move! – it isn't that hard to make the most effective use of your available space.

Divide the living area into zones based on function. This will not only help with keeping things organised and tidy but also encourage your children not to spread out and 'take over' entire areas. Consider setting up 'learning centres': a cosy nook with bookshelf and library box and comfy chairs or cushions for individual and shared reading sessions; a 'research centre', with internet ready computer, printer, filing cabinet, bookshelf for reference books; 'media centre' – a corner for the television, DVD player, and for playing video games; a desk or table (could be the dining room table) for individual study or group learning activities. If your room is large enough, consider setting up an 'art and craft corner', as well as a 'music centre' complete with stereo, musical equipment and books.

Homeschoolers tend to make the most of any space in their homes: passageways become 'libraries' lined with narrow bookshelves; overhead shelves and cupboards are installed in laundries for storage; verandas are partially filled in to space for art and craft activities; children share a room to make space for a multipurpose 'homeschool room' and so on...

View the items in your home as though through the eyes of a teacher: your sewing box, knitting box and sewing machine come under 'Technology'; different craft materials as 'Arts'; the radio and CD player 'Music (Arts)'; the computer under 'Technology'; books and audio tapes under 'English'; trampolines and sports and outside equipment under 'Physical Education'; construction toys under 'Technology' or 'Maths'; and dress ups and toys under just about any subject you like!

## **INTERNET**

The amount of information to be found online makes home educating much easier. Not only are the children (and adults) learning valuable computer and technology skills, but also research, collation and summary skills. These will help them access the information they need to know to satisfy their interests, and any projects or areas they are working on or studying.

Answers to questions that naturally arise during daily life, such as those about pets, cooking, diet, gardening, insects, sewing, science experiments can be quickly sourced using an internet search. Children can obtain information about current affairs and news, or find out about what is happening anywhere in the world. Unit studies and lesson plans from all curriculum areas can be sourced on line, as can free games and puzzles to complement learning in every area.

The internet is a huge source of curriculum materials for busy homeschooling parents, including

access to companies publishing and supplying text books, student work books and educational aids, as well as forums where homeschooling families can buy, sell and swap used curriculum and books.

In addition there are thousands of online homeschool support groups and forums; a persistent search will find one to suit your particular needs and homeschooling style.

The HEA online service provider and support group directory is a great place to start your search: <http://www.hea.edu.au/support/local-support/local-support.html>

## **THE HOME LIBRARY**

No list of resources and materials for the homeschool would be complete without a word on books. You can't have too many... Many families begin with one small bookshelf which soon expands to a couple, one to house fiction and the other reference books. Some homes end up with walls in several rooms lined with bookshelves! It isn't uncommon to find homeschool library shelves arranged similar to those in community libraries, with shelves for different subjects or areas of focus.

Books can be purchased cheaply from second-hand or opportunity shops, library sales, homeschool classified forums as well as during sales at bookshops. Always be on the lookout for 'how to' books, or those that contain not only information about the world, but also projects and experiments or study guides. Many home educators prefer 'real' or 'living' books, as opposed to 'text' books: these are books written by, and for, people who are passionate about their subject: 'doers' rather than 'teachers'. Be selective and you won't be disappointed. They generally relate stories about real people and real events and appeal to children more than text books: hearing about a scientist's life and what inspired her and the obstacles she overcame engage children and help them understand the science discovered, or technology invented. Biographies and autobiographies are well worth collecting, especially about explorers, scientists, mathematicians, artists, politicians – people from every era who have helped to shape our world. These books often make great 'read alouds' – a great way to learn about history, maths, geography, culture, science, just about anything!

Buying books specifically written for children isn't necessary, as you will always be on hand to interpret the information if your child doesn't understand. Books with pictures appeal to all ages: the pictures can often be the spark that generates an interesting conversation which leads to finding answers in the text.

Home educators also collect a variety of magazines. Often membership with a community or educational organisation includes a regular magazine or newsletter. Encourage the children to create an area for their own books, comics and magazines.

Text and workbooks—new or second-hand—round off the home library collection. It doesn't matter how old they are as you should be able to find something of interest or use, or ideas to spark investigations or complement home made unit studies.

Literature contains an enormous amount of intellectual thought, creativity, information and a record of human endeavour, philosophy, politics, spirituality, culture and society. There is a vast range of opinion about what constitutes good literature, but there can be no doubt that there is a lot to be learned from both fiction and non-fiction books. Of course, aside from the actual content, books help children (and adults), to learn about various forms of writing, composition, style, text-types, comprehension, information presentation, research and reporting. They can also satisfy the imagination and evoke the senses with important human themes.

## **FAMILY, FRIENDS AND SOCIAL NETWORKS**

Few people consider their family and extended family as valuable education resources. The elderly are a fountain of knowledge regarding family history and this can be related back to the current area lived in, or to compare the past living standards and places to the present. Family history is also important when it comes to health matters, and children are intrigued by tracing family traits, both genetic and environmental, such as hair colouring or employment.

Family members and friends often have many of the skills or knowledge we want to provide for our children, in addition to our own. Family forms an integral part of home educating daily life: conversation and social interaction within the family provide lots of practice in social and communication skills needed in adult life. Family traditions, routines and activities form a secure foundation from which to venture out and explore the world.

Children learn first from their parents and siblings, then their extended family and close family friends, trusted adults such as doctors and child-care providers. As they grow in confidence and social ability they happily chat with people they meet when out and about in your care, asking questions and telling them about their lives. Make time in your busy day for these impromptu social interactions, remembering that it is through casual conversations that we learn most in life.

Cultivate friendships that can offer your family experiences in areas in which you don't feel competent or skilled. Don't be afraid to share your child's educational journey with trusted adults that take an interest in your child, or who have abilities and skills you don't. By doing this you will be building a network of friends and mentors that will serve your child throughout the adolescent years into adulthood.

Although not obvious at first, many home educators find that the expertise and knowledge they or their children need can be found amongst family and friends. This can take the form of casual, spontaneous, planned or formal educational arrangements where children get the opportunity to learn about different things, such as being invited to participate in another family's activities, or getting together and tapping into the skills of one of the parents in their field of interest/expertise in a more structured way on a regular basis.

Home educators see people as valuable educational resources and create opportunities for their children to interact with a wide range of people for many different purposes. They deliberately find opportunities for their children to socialise with people from all ages, different ethnic and economic backgrounds and occupations, as well as in various situations.

## **CONVERSATIONAL LEARNING**

Talking seems such an everyday thing and yet many home educators become convinced that discussion is a major key to learning anything and everything, whether the person is a child or an adult. Home educated children have the time and opportunity every day to talk and ask questions of their parents, siblings, friends, extended family and community.

By being an active participant in the conversation and willingly choosing to engage in the discussion, children develop logic, reasoning, communication and relational skills, as well as increasing their knowledge across a broad spectrum.

Talking can also be a way to process thoughts, feelings, experiences and ideas. Talking, as we go about daily life, gives scope to 'think out loud', to remark in the moment on something that is happening, to share who we are and hear the experiences, thoughts and feelings of others.

Conversation can lead anywhere. Children who are encouraged to ask "Why?", "How?", "What?"

and other questions are supported in their natural desire to learn in a way that is authentic, individual and relevant to their present learning needs. Not even the cleverest teacher or curriculum can anticipate these things for each student. Talking to our children gives us an accurate indication of how they are learning and what is going on in their world. It is a continuation of the way we naturally interacted with our children before they reached school age. When we homeschool it remains an effective ways we can support our children to be engaged and expressive about themselves and the world around them.

A great amount of informal learning goes on during an average conversation. Home education also tends to provide broader contexts for these conversations to happen, because there doesn't have to be a limit put on the age of the child, nor does the lesson itself require the conversation to follow a particular path in order to meet syllabus requirements. It doesn't involve assuming beforehand what the child needs to know and when that should be communicated. Many children who progress more slowly with formal types of learning can be confident in the way they talk and express themselves to their family and friends. It is this confidence that will lead them to attempt other ways of learning and exploring when they are ready.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH**

For some families spiritual growth might mean regular attendance at religious services and being involved in community service. To others, it could mean family time reflecting on intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships and consideration of the self in the context of the wider world.

The gift of time allows most home educated families to have the luxury of being able to support one another through those daily ups and downs. They are often able to draw on a strong sense of connection in times of illness or crisis. The growth of the internet has meant that home educating families never need to be isolated—help, advice and friendship is available at all hours. Somewhere in the world, a homeschooling parent or child is able to relate in a real and personal way to what you are going through.

Home educated children are exposed to a variety of religious and spiritual beliefs through interaction with others, particularly contact with other families through local home education support networks. Such groups are often characterized by a lack of formal hierarchy with children are seen as equal participants in the process. Children are able to access the support and help of attentive adults who draw on their personal experiences to help the children solve problems constructively within a set of personal or family values and ethics.

Home educating families have the ability and time to discuss conflict and difficulties as they arise. This enables appropriate and immediate mediation which helps to facilitate and encourage personal and relationship growth.

This doesn't mean that home educated children are unable to navigate their way around without an adult in tow. In fact, research and anecdotal evidence confirm that home educated children have an equal or higher level of independence when compared with their schooled peers. They also tend to have strong independent thinking skills, high self-motivation, high adaptability, a strong sense of family ethics and good relational skills.

## **HOBBIES**

Home educated children have time and opportunity to explore their interests in the form of hobbies. Some of these hobbies may grow into something bigger, become passions or lead to studying at a vocational level during the teen years. Hobbies provide a chance to 'dabble' or

‘plunge’ as the hobbyist needs. It is great to allow children the freedom to try their hand at a variety of experiences in this way. Hobbies can teach children new information and skills, be a means of making friends, and help to focus an interest or skill. They provide opportunities for relaxation, recreation, exercise and fun. They also provide challenges and goals that the child can set and meet in different ways.

## **GARDEN**

In any home or unit, there is an opportunity for exploration of the natural world. From the veranda or in the backyard children can study local birds, insects, frogs and other living creatures. They can observe and study how climate and landform impacts on the lives of these creatures and on the plants upon which they depend. Even the tiniest of gardens are living laboratories full of surprises and learning opportunities for children.

Homeschool families avail themselves of this learning laboratory both informally and formally, either with free play sessions or structured lessons and explorations. Some families love to head out into the garden to focus on specific elements and then sketch their findings; others take a camera and upload the images to a blog or website.

There are thousands of excellent websites and books written by experts that will help your child identify and learn more about what they find in their backyard. Over time, these will probably become some of the most used books in your homeschool library.

Gardens also provide an excellent means to learn about the local soil and rock types. Vegetable and flower gardens need to be planned and managed. Children have fun experimenting with designing and building gardens. Small tubs of herbs, tomatoes and strawberries can be grown anywhere. Children can decide whether they want a native garden that doesn't use much water, or if they use exotic plants, how they will manage the higher water demands during the long dry months of summer. Succulents are fun plants and come in many shapes and sizes. Some even double as pest control, as in the case of Venus fly-traps. When gardening, children need to consider and make many decisions: for example, whether to use herbicides (safely) to manage weeds; lawn versus hard surfaces for a suitable playing surface; the position of plants and timing of planting; when to prune and harvest, etc.

Many communities have local gardens for people to enjoy. They often encourage local volunteers to engage in activities such as communal food growing, bush regeneration, weed identification and seed collection. Gardening with others provides the opportunity to learn new skills, tips and ways of doing things.

Frog ponds are an easy but significant way in which to support your local frog species and study life cycles, from spawning eggs to tadpole to froglet. Small native fish can be added to ponds as a means to control mosquito larvae, without the fish eating the tadpoles. Plants can be added, and within no time your children are studying a thriving sustainable eco-system!

Plants, frog ponds and bird feeders can all help to keep us in touch with the seasons and with nature, right at our back door. Again, use of reference texts, experts (often to be found at your local garden centre), and the internet can provide a vast amount of information and skill.

Gardening with your children will spark a lifelong love of nature and the outdoors.

A good compost bin and making your own organic mulch is an art in itself. Many people include chicken, rabbit or guinea pig manure from their pets' used bedding as it naturally adds fertiliser to the compost in the bin. Adding lawn clippings and household scraps not eaten by the pets can show us how decomposition can work to our garden's advantage and create rich top soil, essential

to growing vegetables, plants and trees. You may even produce enough to sell or value add, leading to valuable lessons in economics and commerce!

## **PETS**

The age old truism of pets teaching children responsibility is but one facet of the value of looking after animals as part of your homeschool program. With parental supervision and support in the younger years, children will often become expert animal handlers with extensive knowledge and skills in animal husbandry, including all aspects of animal care, behaviour and common illnesses.

Areas of the health curriculum naturally covered include reproduction, illness, and death. These can be difficult subjects to tackle, but pets can provide a natural place to start learning what these things really mean.

There is considerable joy and excitement in owning pets and much learning to be done in selecting the right pets for various times in our lives and for where we live, especially as some pets can live for many years. A child can grow up with a pet. Although mice have relatively short lives and guinea pigs can live for a few years, dogs, cats and chickens can live for up to a dozen years; a parrot for decades!

Children can be involved in all aspects of daily feeding and watering, grooming, handling and training, as well as seeking additional information from experts such as vets, animal behaviourists, pet centres and local animal fancier clubs.

Pets also help young children to develop empathy and compassion, not only for animals in general, but for all living things. They can also encourage a desire to become involved in volunteering: for example, with animal rescue shelters or donating time and money to charities that rehabilitate mistreated pets. It can also lay the groundwork for a career in animal husbandry. Some families with older children can become involved in programmes which train you and your pet to visit the elderly or those in hospital. Pet therapy has been shown to have significant health benefits for both the handler and the recipient.

## **SUMMARY**

A home is an environment rich in resources which encourage learning to occur in all areas of our children's lives in a natural way. Although we don't often think of the things our children do at home in an educational way, they nonetheless contribute a great deal to their knowledge and understanding of the world. Our children learn most of the skills they need to use throughout their adult lives in the family home.

Learn to recognise the educational elements of daily life and realise how much these contribute to learning in each subject area. Build on the many resources listed above to create an environment full of variety and interest for your children.

## **USING YOUR COMMUNITY**

Home education really comes into its own when providing the time and means for children and their families to explore the many wonderful community programmes and events held locally and

further afield.

Volunteer and community work is held in high esteem in many educational settings as a base for learning people skills, doing work experience and encouraging a desire to help others. Even very young children can be involved in activities such as Meals on Wheels, bush revegetation and Landcare projects, visits to the elderly and participating in other community projects and groups. Extending this to include cultural, regional or religious experiences offers a rich social education for your children.

Your local paper should contain an event calendar or promote and advertise coming activities, enough to satisfy the most diverse home education program. Don't be shy: approach local social and sports clubs and introduce yourself as home educators. Many are happy to welcome children, especially when they understand the children will be fully supervised by their parents at all times. Contact with people from different age ranges and cultures provides opportunities for children to learn how to interact and connect with different people in different settings.

Community activism is also an area that families can become involved with to gain a sense of belonging and feel they are taking ownership of their local area. There are opportunities to offer feedback on local projects, or to lobby on behalf of social or environmental change. Children are often fascinated to visit and investigate local courts, police stations, council chambers and so on. Again, check the local paper, or talk with other home educators about different places they have visited or would like to visit.

Many home educators form groups in order for their children to participate in a range of performing arts and to experience different art mediums, such as sketching, painting, sculpting, etc. These activities can also be pursued at home with family members and friends. There are many excellent books and online aids to provide theoretical and practical material. Add to this drama groups, choirs and music lessons as well as private tuition or local art or performance classes.

There are many cultural festivals, performances, celebrations and displays within your community that can be experienced by home educating families. There may also be opportunities to participate.

## **MEDIA**

A source of information in various forms, the media requires a critical eye to understand the various social, political and cultural influences it operates within. The media as a subject of study is huge and has many different levels. On a practical note, watching, reading and listening as a family to different forms of media, and critically discussing the issues they raise, helps children to be well-informed. It also helps them learn to understand how to assess the information that is being communicated.

There are many different ways that children can attempt to create their own media reports and publications, such as producing a family newspaper or newsletter. This may bring out the journalist and perhaps even the historian or comedian in them.

Don't forget to inquire about tours of local and state radio and TV stations. Many local and state papers offer guided tours to groups, but it is well worth asking even as an individual family, particularly if you have a child interested in writing and publishing. Many children enjoy being published in the 'local rag'. It can also give them an opportunity to have a voice about local issues.

Issues in the media can be followed in a studious way by paying attention to local, national and



international current affairs by watching or listening to quality news programmes and documentaries. Young children's viewing needs to be monitored carefully to ensure age and developmental stage appropriateness, particularly around sensitive or violent topics. The need to do this can spark interesting and educational discussions about why some items and issues need to be censored, as well as what defines 'quality' media.

Media includes magazines for children, as well as home education newsletters and magazines that publish children's articles and stories.

## **EDUCATIONAL VENUES**

As well as all the obvious educational venues, such as museums, libraries, art galleries, etc., it can be fun and productive to learn to see just about anywhere as a possible educational venue or opportunity for learning. For example, if you want your children to learn about Australian currency, encourage them to help you with the supermarket shopping, or help them to make small purchases of their own. This also offers practical experience with calculating, using place value, estimations and counting out change: all valuable maths skills.

Banks offer another avenue for commerce and economic study. Banking online or at a branch, asking the bank manager or other staff for a tour of the bank, or for a run-down of different accounts, loans and banking terminology, is an engaging way to introduce a weighty topic.

To learn about the responsibilities of citizenship and the role of governments, take them along with you to the local polling booths. Show them how to get your name marked off on the electoral role (and why you need to do this), what the ballot papers look like, who the parties are and what they stand for and talk about why there are lots of people outside handing out leaflets. Involve them in your pre-polling day discussions. Ask your local shire council if you can show the children the council chamber, or go along to one of the meetings and sit in the public gallery. You don't have to stay long: it won't be interesting for most children, but it will help them gain a better understanding of how the country is governed, especially if you tie it in with conversations about the role of rules at home, in society, when playing sports and games, etc.

If your child asks how a key is cut, take them along to the local locksmith/key cutter and get a spare key cut and let them watch. Ask the locksmith questions about what metal is used and why, how long it took to learn how to become a locksmith: model an inquiring and interested mind to your children. Many shop-keepers are thrilled to pass on their expertise, provided they are asked politely during quiet times.

Weekly grocery shopping can be turned into a lesson in life skills by simply involving your children in creating the shopping list—get them to look in the cupboards and fridge and call out necessary items as you write them down. While shopping children love to be asked if they can get items down and put into the trolley. Many will happily load shopping onto the conveyer belt, or into the trolley at the other end. Any community venue visited is an opportunity to learn the culture and way of operating, such as business language, asking about products in stock, or discussing exhibits using appropriate categories.

The natural world is a great place in which to relax, explore and learn from, whether it is your own garden or courtyard, or a farm or botanical garden. Australia has a huge variation in landforms, geology and ranges from tropical rainforest, to desert to snow and mountain ranges, as well as a huge and varied coastline. Simply experiencing these differences can be enriching and often sparks a growing interest in more complex knowledge as children grow, learn to interact with and appreciate nature. There are so many excellent sources of information about areas you may visit.

Some families enjoy living in close proximity to the ocean or the mountains, or live in either tropical or arid areas. Others will enjoy travelling to these different places to experience a change to where they already live. Of course, this can be extended to an international level by travelling overseas, or by studying other countries using the many documentaries, books and online resources available.

On the following pages are some common and easily accessible educational venues as well as suggestions as to how to use them to extend learning opportunities for your children. Don't forget to visit and use these places, etc when on holiday in different parts of Australia, or if you are lucky, overseas. By using community resources children naturally learn across all areas of the curriculum without realising they are doing 'school work'! Treat this list as a starting point: many more community resources can—and should be—added.

## LIBRARIES

- Show the children how to use library catalogues via computer search engines.
- Teach them the difference between fiction and non-fiction and how to find books using the Dewey decimal cataloguing system, as well as alphabetical listing of the author's name and subject groupings.
- Interact with the librarian using correct terminology.
- Understand and comply with the borrowing terms for books, CDs, magazines, etc.
- Recognise and respect the need for quiet activity in the library.

## MUSEUMS

- **Visit and explore the museum shop**—most produce and/or sell a great deal of informative material on science, nature, biology, astronomy, animal and plant species, geology and geography, bird watching, insects, reptiles, palaeontology, gems and minerals etc. Visit different museums: large general ones, interactive ones and smaller specialist ones such as those attached to a university campus/department. Interact with exhibits: read aloud labels and plaques, ask open-ended questions, invite questions from your children. Engage the staff: ask questions, ask for directions, talk to them about the exhibits.  
Learn how to gather information about an exhibit via dialogue, written information or recorded material. Use a particular exhibit or section to discover or add to specific information to subjects you are interested in. Use museum staff expertise to learn more about science, the natural world, history, society and technology. Ask for help to identify objects, or ask where you can find additional information.
- **Attend external study, field trips or regular hands-on children's activities** offered by museums.
- **Geology museums and information centres** provide information and displays on various geological fields of study. They also give visitors a chance to talk to experts and participate in hands-on and field activities. There are many excellent websites that include this kind of information. You can also download topographical maps that display geological features—these are excellent resources for planning and developing busy walks or orienteering adventures.
- **Cultural centres** exist to educate about the variety of cultures that make up community life in Australia. They contain displays about ethnic history, patterns and reasons for migration,

cultural lifestyles both past and present, and how peoples from different parts of the world contribute to Australian life. More importantly they are rich sources of both primary and secondary resources for study, and often hold festivals and celebrations where you and your family can speak with people from different backgrounds and participate in a variety of wonderful traditions.

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cultural centres** are worth seeking out and offer a rich insight into the ancient history of Australia and its first people. Exhibitions, cultural performances and activities often include hands-on participation which extend learning across the curriculum.
- Within every community are **historical sites or houses** which are a great way to get a ‘feel’ for a certain period in history and to see how things have changed over time. Sometimes a walk around a historic part of town, noticing relics or items used in the past resting in back-yards can bring to life a sense of history for young minds. See if you can get permission to explore old shearing sheds, or have a look around historic cottages and talk to the families now living there, to find out about the families that founded your community. Look at and talk about old shops, schools, prisons, mines, and factories. Sometimes these are hidden by new facades. Many places sell or produce books and leaflets containing relevant information which usually include ‘primary’ sources written by the original inhabitants. These allow your family to read the actual view points held by real people living in that area at a particular time in history. It can add a sense of connection with the town or area you are visiting to read the stories of everyday life in days gone by, while standing in the same place years later.
- **Monuments and memorials** also connect us to past events and people, often in an emotional way. Standing at the base of the *Explorer’s Tree* or other places where early explorers perished or finally reached their destination has more impact than reading about it in a book or brochure. Walking through the ‘ghost town’ of Silverton, climbing a mine shaft at Hill End, or visiting the Gold Fields of Ballarat excites and intrigues young minds. Reading the many names of those who fought in wars is a powerful way to envision the vast human cost of war; viewing the photos and reading the accounts of those who survived can be awe-inspiring.
- **Science Centres**, such as those run by the CSIRO, operate school holiday and after-school programmes designed to cover many aspects of the science curriculum in a fun and engaging way. Many put on shows for families and children which explore the basic ideas of science and physics in an entertaining format.
- **Observatories and Planetariums** are a great way to learn about astronomy and participate in workshops and information evenings to learn about stars, planets and constellations.
- **Aquariums, zoos, nature parks, and conservation reserves** offer opportunities to experience wildlife up close and have a myriad of teacher resources available. They provide opportunities to observe flora and fauna as well as talk to experts in their particular fields of interest.
- **Returned Soldiers League** and similar organisations often run bands. They often run band practice sessions and include instrument use, uniform and practice/performances for a small fee per term. Talking with the ‘old diggers’ is an education in itself!
- The different branches of the **Australian Armed Services** hold regular open days where children and adults can experience the science and technology and history by viewing exhibits and displays and watching performances, as well as being given advice about careers and working life as a soldier, sailor, pilot or technician serving Australia.

- **National Parks and Wildlife/WIRES** inform the community about environmental and conservation issues and provide educational material and workshops. You can find information about these and State Forests and Conservation Parks online, as well as information about camping, bushwalking, bird watching, the types of flora and fauna and geological features each park or reserve boasts. Major reserves, parks and forests often offer cabin accommodation, nurseries, guided tours and shops with information and local products on sale. Some run holiday programmes, talks, walks, and information events to educate the public. National Parks are also home to many amazing natural wonders, such as Uluru. They provide a large range of walks and camping areas and are a great place to see native flora and fauna and explore the unique geology and history in the area. NPWS also work with native animal rescue and rehabilitation groups, such as WIRES.

## ART GALLERIES

- Visit a range of different galleries that represent different artistic styles or cultures. Participate in workshops, observe performances and special exhibits. Talk to staff and artist and other gallery visitors. Learn different ways to observe art exhibits (art appreciation). Practice internal reflection and discuss with others the possible meanings, history, mediums, styles, etc. of various works of art (art interpretation). Learn basic terminology used to discuss artistic pieces and performances and form own opinions as well as discuss opinions of others, including experts (development of theory). Copy or mimic various artistic styles and use of various mediums in own art work (practical application).
- Art galleries produce and/or sell many resources and information books, as well as reproductions of art, books relating to special exhibits, etc.

## LOCAL BUSINESSES

- **Arrange a visit to local businesses**, such as butcher or mechanic. Talk to your children beforehand about how to behave appropriately and safely, get them to prepare some questions they can ask. Set and stick to a time limit—fifteen to thirty minutes. Offer some information about home education (flyers are available from the HEA) if they haven't heard about homeschooling before.
- Inquire about **group tours at** factories and places of employment. There may be age limits or restrictions to the size of groups.
- Talk to **local businesses** about home education—especially if you have adolescent children. By getting to know your local businesses you are building a network of 'friends' that may prove invaluable when the time comes to source **work experience or casual and part time jobs**.
- The staff at your **local hardware store** are often able to give advice on projects and construction methods and materials. Ask to speak to the manager about the possibility of workshops: some hardware stores offer **free workshops** on a regular basis.
- **Music stores** are a good way to get free advice and find out about local lessons and musical events in your area. Even if you aren't musically minded, attending concerts, jamming sessions, open-air performances, etc., will expose your children to an appreciation of the culture of music and may spark a lifelong interest.
- **Computer stores and science shops** can often be found in local shopping centres: look in the Yellow Pages or on the internet for locations. They provide materials and project kits for everything from electronics, physics, radio, light, to radio/CB's, soldering irons, model-building

kits, components for electronic gadgets and models, computer software and hardware, etc.

- **Games workshops, clubs and stores** are a favourite place to visit with many children. These sell and swap models to collect, construct and paint. The models (figurines and equipment) are used in strategy games with other enthusiasts, either in stores, where staff are available to organise and oversee the games, or at home with friends. Staff are able to assist with information on gaming equipment and games. Most stores sell gaming magazines and guides and there are many online forums and lists that can increase knowledge of gaming and give game tips and reviews.
- **Gardening stores and nurseries** are full of experts on all matters relating to the life of plants. **Botanical Gardens** are a must visit for families—some also have playgrounds, wetlands and examples of local fauna. Ask about information leaflets and guided tours. You can take samples from your garden for the staff to identify and ask questions about any aspect of growing plants or gardening. Botanical and public gardens are used for many different recreational purposes and are a favourite haunt of homeschooling groups.
- **Health centres and gyms** are not only a great way to get fit and learn about the body and holistic health and lifestyles, but can be used to access experts in those areas. Most people are only too happy to talk about their careers and where they work if asked politely at a time when they aren't busy.
- Every community has a variety of sporting facilities and clubs and it usually takes a simple enrolment process to get your child involved. **Sports complexes** often give school rates or discounts to home educating families and some offer classes for home educating students during school hours. All offer a range of after-school activities for children and adults. Home educated children are to be seen participating in all sorts of weekend and after school sport and physical activity, from martial arts, to football, gymnastics to ten pin bowling. These associations often make a great springboard for the budding athlete as well as providing general organized physical exercise.
- **Vets, animal hospitals, pet stores and animal shelters, RSPCA, etc.**, educate and inform the community about animal welfare. The RSPCA in particular has many ways in which children and their families can be involved, such as junior memberships and being able to participate in awareness and fundraising campaigns: for example, calendars, various promotions and the Million Paws Walk. Families who donate receive regular information about how the donations are spent, success stories and RSPCA programmes, such as the support given to pensioners in hospital by volunteers taking care of their pets while they are unwell or in hospital. You can visit the centres to talk to the staff and see how they operate.

## COMMUNITY GROUPS

Any community group your family is a part of, including a neighbourhood or home education group, can provide an opportunity to care for each other in small ways, such as cooking meals for a family when parents are sick, or have a new baby. Shared gardens and other projects can involve the smallest of children and help to foster community spirit.

- **Volunteering with a local charity or community service** is a great way of making connections with different people in your community. This not only enhances your children's education now but helps them to develop the kind of network necessary as they move into adult life. Ask at your local information centre or council about the different charities and community groups that regularly ask for volunteer help. Once you've found a group or charity that matches

your needs (how much time do you have, do you have empathy for the charity, skills, tools and abilities, etc.), make contact and ask what the organisation's procedure is for accepting and training volunteers and if they are happy to work with children. Don't assume that the organization has dealt with children volunteering before. Some may have policies or legal limitations that prevent young children from participating, but may allow them to be present and observe. Many local churches and charities run second-hand shops that need help with sorting items for sale or customer service. Meals on Wheels, Senior Citizens, and visiting the elderly in aged care facilities or their homes are some of the volunteer activities home educating families take on.

- **Local theatre companies** are a great way to experience the many aspects of production and performance.
- **Youth groups** focus on supporting youth and providing fun activities and mentorship.
- **Historical re-enactment venues and groups** provide real-life experiences of various historical eras in a way that will engage the student on more than just the theoretical level. They offer a way to explore the experience of living conditions, clothing, social structure, diet and work conditions. Many groups re-enact significant historical events via performance, story-telling, recreation and song.
- There are many **enthusiast clubs**, such as those focussed on robotics, or short-wave radio clubs, that cater to specialist science, technology or history interest and provide activity to extend one's knowledge and abilities. Computer clubs meet to discuss things like computer programming, applications, provide opportunities for group gaming sessions and so on. Online forums offer a place to discuss topics of interest, ask questions and find answers. There are also specialist magazines available for those wanting to keep up to date with current information and activities in whatever field you or your family are interested. Local clubs cover hundreds of hobbies and cater to people serious about their interest. They are full of experienced and enthusiastic people. Some examples are those run by animal breed enthusiasts, pony club, council-run dog training, reptile clubs, collecting and constructing clubs, local history groups, public speaking groups, lapidary clubs, gardening and permaculture, writing groups, yoga and mediation groups, St. Johns Ambulance, hiking, bush-walking, chess, literature, poetry, etc. The local paper, community centre and council chambers are useful places to visit to find out about local interest groups and clubs. Before turning up to a group or venue, call ahead and establish how the group operates and how it feels about children or families taking part. For example, some groups will have an age limit, depending on the type of activity and level of supervision required for your child. Most of these groups are run by volunteers and it is good to learn about how much time volunteers give up for their interest or chosen charity and to gain a respect for this.
- **Scouts and Guides** offer an opportunities to participate in group activities with a strong focus on building community, life-skills, outdoor skills, friendship, helping others, etc.
- **Fire stations and the community and emergency services** play a major role in protecting communities and are always looking at ways of educating people about the need to stay safe. They hold field days and attend community festivals and shows and participate in parades and are eager to talk to children about what they do. They also often offer great work experience programmes for older kids.
- We often take **playgrounds and parks** for granted, but if we look closely, we will see how many parks and playgrounds in our local area are designed to provide a good range of physical

activity on play equipment, bike paths, waterways, etc. Many parks adjoin local wetlands or other natural features and it can be quite informative to take a walk around such a park and read the boards and plaques outlining the area's history and current environmental status.

## **HOME EDUCATION ACTIVITY AND SUPPORT GROUPS**

Home educators form part of an active, social and diverse community. Families are usually proactive in getting out and about and forming groups and networks as a resource and means of support and social interaction.

What is especially noticeable about many of these groups is the level of involvement of whole families and the information sharing and encouragement going on between the adults at even the most casual of meetings. While children are benefitting from group activities or informal social time with their friends, the parents are able to discuss their day, their home educating journey and general issues around education, learning and parenting.

New home educators and those with younger children are able to draw on the knowledge and confidence they find in families that are further along the homeschooling path. New social contacts are made and this is the place to bring your ideas on curriculum, programming, resources and everyday 'how-to' questions. These groups can be a great starting point to find out what's on in your local home education community.

In many ways, the more traditional community style of parenting can be seen in such support groups, with families often being able to help out with sharing child-minding, offering specialist skills and knowledge, or practical help when a family is sick or has a new baby, etc. These groups are also distinctive in that they comprise a wide range of ages in children. Older children tend to be more tolerant and patient with younger ones and there is less age and gender segregation than seen in a mainstream school setting.

Activity based groups can take advantage of group discounts at various venues and can access workshops and activities that may not have been open to individual families. There are also many camps that give families the opportunity to hang out together over time, or to give teens the chance to get together for an extended period, while participating in fun activities.

Support groups are an essential aspect of building a strong, vibrant homeschooling community. Some groups meet regularly with structured activities for the children, others simply allow time for the children to play together. Homeschooling families create support groups to meet their family's needs and invite others to join them for social and educational reasons. If you need help or advice starting your own support group, contact the Home Education Association by phoning 1300 72 99 91 or email [admin@hea.edu.au](mailto:admin@hea.edu.au).

## **EXTERNAL STUDY, WORK EXPERIENCE, MENTORSHIPS, AND FIELD WORK**

Home educated students routinely go on to participate in tertiary studies, work experience, part-time jobs and apprenticeships, field work and mentorship situations. Most courses and employees require a minimum age, but many do not require prior qualifications to start. Some will provide training as part of the course or job. Parents of home educated students need to consider these kind of pathways beforehand if possible and be available to act in a 'careers advisor' capacity for their older children, so that courses of study and employment are appropriate to the student. Many home educated students learn important life skills by being actively involved in the planning process and by being given a role in the decision-making processes that will effect their early external years of study or work.

Tertiary institutions have well established programmes and enrolment processes that are provided online or in information packs that can be posted. Employers need to comply with standard regulations in regard to work experience and employment, so it is important to be familiar with these regulations and consider the ethical and professional standard of these establishments. Other venues of study include private colleges: check that they are government accredited.

Consult with the Australian Qualifications Framework and related regulations to clarify tertiary pathways. Always check private institutions for ethical and professional practice as well as the validity and possible transfer of credits within the larger tertiary system in your state and nationally.

Some home educators make use of Distance Education packages to provide for the later high school years. Equivalencies of school qualifications are usually obtainable through various institutions, such as TAFE and OTEN, should home educated students need to provide them as part of course pre-requisites when applying for further TAFE or University qualifications. It is a good idea to find out as early as possible what courses they may apply for, though not all students will know years in advance what they want to do.

## **LOCAL EVENTS, CELEBRATIONS, HOLIDAYS AND SPECIAL DAYS**

Home educators develop a habit of exploring any opportunity for learning—holidays, special community celebrations, local events etc., often spark participation in community projects such as parades, exhibitions or performances. These moments in time, when other families have the day off, relax and play become part of the home educator's curriculum. Such days include National Tree Day, Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, RSPCA Million Paws Walk, City To Surf (and other fun runs and fundraising walks), Weetbix Triathlon, Adelaide Arts Festival, Woodford Music Festival—you can spend the whole year celebrating Australian life and culture this way!

## **TRAVEL**

Using public transport is a great way of learning about its importance in our society: role of public transport, use of timetables, comparing various types of travel (visit to the airport to investigate air travel, the docks to catch a ferry and travel by water), past and present modes and costs, pros and cons, etc. Children who are used to one mode of transport are often keen to try others. Use opportunities to compare different modes of transport and talk about why people choose different ways of getting from one place to another.

Other places to visit include shipyards/boat moorings, ferry trips, sailing, bike tracks, bushwalking, trail-bike riding, horse-riding, etc. All of these possibilities are practical and fun outings that can lead to learning and conversations about past and present transport modes, costs, and wider environmental and social implications.

## **CURRICULUM**

Curriculum can be seen as doing many of the hands-on type of activities discussed under many of the topics discussed earlier in this booklet, such as 'gardening'. It can be as informal as answering your child's many questions and following up their latest interests by taking them to the library to borrow a book on insects. Or it can be as structured as following a set routine of bookwork and



subject matter each day.

Most curriculum material comes in the form of texts, multimedia (such as educational CD-ROMs), educational games and manipulatives and the like. Some curriculums will cover all the necessary subject areas required by the parent/child as well as the state regulations for home education.

Others will focus on one or two subjects only. There are many different approaches to curriculum writing, such as literature-based, step-by-step skill mastery, focus on written work, project based, learning style-based, Montessori, Steiner, religious or lifestyle philosophy based. There are a few that provide for the student to have their work externally assessed and monitored: distance education and correspondence schools operate this way.

Some home educators use curricula written by others, while many choose to write or construct their own, selecting from a wide variety of resources. What we start out using very often changes as we go along, in response to the differing needs of our children and our own learning styles.

Curriculum materials are readily available online as individual topics or complete sets. They are usually divided up according to a mix of age and ability ranges. They may or may not follow the syllabus used in your state, so consider this in your choice, as you may need to supplement with other materials at extra expense.

There are many specialist bookstores that offer a wide range of curriculum and educational materials. Most bookstores and large newsagents stock a variety of state syllabus workbooks and project units at reasonable prices. Many home educators start out with these until they decide what best suits them in the long term.

Try and start out simple and spend as little as you can. Look for quality materials that satisfy your state registration requirements as well as covering one or two special interests for each child. Aside from this, most homes have an ample amount of basic resources on their computer, bookshelf and in their homes and community. Talking to more experienced home educators can be helpful in finding curriculum materials to help you decide what suits your family. Sometimes buying curriculum second-hand, provided it is still current and in useable condition, can be a cheap way to explore different materials and you will feel under much less pressure to keep on using a curriculum that everyone dislikes if you have not spent a large amount of money on it.

The HEA forums <http://www.hea.edu.au/support/discussion-forum.html> are an excellent place to start asking questions about the different types of curriculum home educating families use.

On the following pages is an extensive list of books written about the home education experience by those that have travelled along this path. Try to borrow a few from local homeschoolers and have a read before taking the plunge and spending lots of money on curriculum. Few of us are homeschooling after the first year in the same way we started! A few weeks of researching the nature of home education, as well as working out what your personal learning style and those of your children are, will save you time and money in the long run.

# The Big List of Homeschooling Books

**Organized by Author.** Please note, many of these books are no longer in print.

Abraczinskas, Mary Beth, and Muller, Rachel.

- *The ABC's of Home Schooling (Jehovah's Witness)*

Adcock, John.

- *Teaching Tomorrow*

Albert, David H.

- *And the Skylark Sings to Me*

- *Homeschooling and the Voyage of Self-Discovery*

Aldort, Naomi

- *Raising Our Children, Raising Ourselves*

Andreola, Karen.

- *A Charlotte Mason Companion*

Armstrong, Thomas.

- *In Their Own Way*

- *Awakening Your Child's Natural Genius*

Ballman, Ray.

- *The How and Why of Home Schooling*

Barfield, Rhonda.

- *Real-Life Homeschooling*

Baker, Janice.

- *Gifted Children at Home*

Barker, Britt.

- *Letters Home*

Barnier, Carol.

- *How to Get Your Child Off the Refrigerator and*

*On to Learning*

Beatty, Susan K. and Karen Middleton

- *Introduction to Home Education*

Beechick, Ruth.

- *Dr. Beechick's Homeschool Answer Book*

Bell, Debra.

- *Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling*

Berquist, Laura.

- *Designing Your Own Classical Curriculum: A*

*Guide to Catholic Home Education (Catholic)*

Bittner, Terrie Lynn.

- *Homeschooling: Take a Deep Breath You Can Do This*

Bluedorn, Harvey and Bluedorn, Laurie.

- *Teaching the Trivium: Christian Homeschooling in the Classical Style*

Blumenfeld, Samuel L.

- *Homeschooling: A Parent's Guide*

J Botkin et al.

- *No Limits to Learning*

Boyer, Rick and Boyer, Marilyn.

- *What About Socialization*

Brady, Vicki A.

- *The Basic Steps to Homeschooling*

Brainerd, Lee Wherry.

- *Homeschooling Your Gifted Child*

Bratton, Catherine.

- *Homeschool Helps: Tips on Getting Started*

Brown, Teri J. and Elissa M. Wahl.

- *Christian Unschooling*

Byrne, Susan M. Homeschool

- *Basics and How to Get Started*

Camp, Terri.

- *Ignite the Fire! Freedom Is Real Education*

Card, Michael and Susan.

- *The Homeschool Journey*

Cartwright, Tari Elizabeth.

- *Eternal Harvest: An LDS Perspective on Home Schooling and Accelerated Learning (LDS)*

Caruana, Vicki.

- *The ABC's of Homeschooling*

- *The Homeschooler's Guide To Testing and Evaluation, Home-Based Businesses, Community*

*Involvement, High School and College Entrance*

- *The Organized Homeschooler*

Clay Clarkson and Sally Clarkson

- *Educating the Wholehearted Child*

Clements, Andrew D.

- *Homeschooling: A Research-Based How-To Manual*

Cohen, Cafi.

- *Homeschooling: the Teen Years*

- *And What about College?*

Colfax, David and Colfax, Micki.

- *Homeschooling For Excellence*

- *Hard Times in Paradise*

Colten, Connie.

- *Homeschooling Reflections*

Cowlshaw, Kitt and Terry Dowty.

- *Home Educating Our Autism Spectrum Children*

Curry, Lorraine and Teresa Jennings.

- *Easy Homeschooling Companion*

Dancy, Rahmima Balwin.

- *You Are Your Child's First Teacher*

- Davis, Llewellyn.  
- *Going Home to School*
- Dennis, Jeanne Gowen.  
- *Homeschooling High School: Planning Ahead For College Admission*
- Dinsmore, Mark.  
- *Homeschool Guide to the Internet: Your Onramp to the Information Superhighway*  
- *Homeschool Guide to the Online World*
- Dobson, Linda.  
- *Homeschoolers' Success Stories*  
- *Homeschooling: the Early Years*  
- *The First Year Homeschooling Your Child*  
- *The Homeschooling Book of Answers*  
- *The Ultimate Book of Homeschooling Ideas*
- Dodd, Sandra.  
- *Moving A Puddle*
- Dorian, Terry and Tyler, Zan Peters.  
- *Anyone Can Homeschool*
- Downs, Laurajean.  
- *You're Going to Do What?! Helping You Understand the Homeschool Decision*
- Dowty, Terri.  
- *Free Range Education*
- Duffy, Cathy.  
- *Christian Home Educator's Curriculum Manual*
- Farenga, Patrick.  
- *Homeschooling in the News*  
- *The Beginner's Guide to Homeschooling*  
- *Teach Your Own*
- Farris, Michael P.  
- *Homeschooling Father*  
- *The Future of Homeschooling*
- E Faure et al.  
- *Learning to Be*
- Field, Christine M.  
- *A Field Guide to Home Schooling*
- Field, Christine M.  
- *Help For the Harried Homeschooler*  
- *Homeschooling the Challenging Child*
- Fitzenreiter, Valerie.  
- *The Unprocessed Child: Living Without School*
- Fogle, Karen L.  
- *Simply Homeschooling*
- Forbes, Scott.  
- *Holistic Education*
- Fortune Wood, Jan.  
- *Bound to be Free*  
- *Doing it their way*
- *With Consent: parenting for all to win*
- Frank, Barbara.  
- *Life Prep for Homeschooled Teenagers*
- Gardner, Howard.  
- *The Unschooled Mind*
- *How Schools Should Teach*
- Garvey, Judy.  
- *How to Begin Homeschooling: A Parent's Guide*
- Gatto, John Taylor.  
- *Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling*  
- *The Underground History of American Education*  
- *Beyond Schooling Building Communities Where Learning Really Matters*
- Geib, Pam and Castandea, Deborah.  
- *Help! I'm Homeschooling!*
- Gogel, Sandra L.  
- *One Hundred One Homeschool Tips From the Sycamore Tree*
- Gold, Laura Maery.  
- *Homeschool Your Child For Free*  
- *Homeschooling Your Child Step-by-Step*
- Goodchild, Vicki and Goodchild, Jack.  
- *The Simplicity of Homeschooling*
- Goodman, Paul.  
- *Growing Up Absurd*
- Grey, Marian.  
- *Charlotte Mason*
- Griffith, Mary.  
- *Homeschooling Handbook*  
- *The Unschooling Handbook: How to Use the Whole World as Your Child's Classroom*
- Grille, Robin  
- *Parenting For a Peaceful World*
- Groll, Ronald.  
- *The Homeschool Resource and Supply Manual*
- Guterson, David.  
- *Family Matters: Why Homeschooling Makes Sense*
- Hainstock, Elizabeth G.  
- *Teaching Montessori in the Home The Preschool Years*
- Hailey, Kendall.  
- *The Day I Became an Autodidact*
- Hamilton, Dan and Elizabeth.  
- *Should I Homeschool?*
- Harris, Gregg.

- *The Christian Home School*
- Hartnett, Marsha Kennedy.
- *Choosing Home: Deciding to Homeschool with Asperger's Syndrome*
- Hastings, Michele.
- *The Homeschooling Trail - A Journey of Faith*
- Hayes, Charles D.
- *Self University*
- Hayes, Lenore C.
- *Homeschooling the Child With ADD(Or Other Special Needs)*
- Hern, Matt.
- *Deschooling Our Lives*
- Hegener, Mark and Helen.
- *The Homeschool Reader*
- Hendrickson, Borg.
- *Home School: Taking the First Step*
- Henry, Shari.
- *Homeschooling: The Middle Years*
- Herzog, Joyce.
- *Choosing and Using Curriculum*
- Heuer, Loretta.
- *The Homeschoolers' Guide to Portfolios and Transcripts*
- Holt, John.
- *Learning All the Time*
- *Teach Your Own*
- *How Children Learn*
- *How Children Fail*
- *and many more*
- Hood, Mary.
- *The Enthusiastic Home Schooler*
- *The Relaxed Home School: A Family Production*
- Houk, Katharine.
- *Creating a Cooperative Learning Center*
- Hunt, Jan.
- *The Natural Child*
- *The Unschooling Unmanual*
- Hunt, Gladys.
- *Honey for a Child's Heart*
- Ilich, Ivan.
- *Deschooling Society*
- Ishizuka, Kathy.
- *The Unofficial Guide to Homeschooling*
- Julicher, Kathleen H.
- *Survival Tools For Homeschooling Teens*
- Kaseman, M Larry and Susan.
- *Taking Charge Through Homeschooling:*
- Personal and Political Empowerment*
- Kaufeld, Jennifer.
- *Homeschooling for Dummies*
- Kealoha, Anna.
- *Trust the Children*
- Keith, Diane Flynn.
- *Carschooling*
- Kenyon, Mary Potter.
- *Home Schooling from Scratch*
- Kenyon, Mary Potter.
- *Simple Living - Super Learning*
- Klicka, Christopher J.
- *Home Schooling: The Right Choice*
- Klicka, Christopher J.
- *The Heart of Homeschooling: Teaching and Living What Really Matters*
- Kochender, Rebecca and Kanna, Elizabeth.
- *Homeschooling For Success*
- Kohn, Alfie.
- *Unconditional Parenting*
- *Punished By Rewards*
- *No Contest*
- Krean, Rue
- *Parenting A Free Child*
- Kuepfer, Sharon Schnupp.
- *Homeschooling Moments and Child-friendly Recipes*
- Lahrson-Fisher, Ann.
- *Foundations of Homeschooling*
- *Fundamentals of Homeschooling*
- *Mud-pies and Building Blocks*
- Lande, Nancy.
- *Homeschooling: A Patchwork of Days*
- *Homeschooling: Open House*
- Lavender, Julie.
- *365 Days of Celebration and Praise*
- Layne, Marty.
- *Learning at Home*
- Leo, Pam
- *Connection Parenting*
- Leppert, Mary and Leppert, Michael.
- *Homeschooling Almanac 2002-2003*
- Leistico, Agnes.
- *I Learn Better by Teaching Myself*
- *Still Teaching Ourselves*
- Levison, Catherine.
- *A Charlotte Mason Education*
- *More Charlotte Mason Education*

- Lewis, Gareth.  
 - *One to One A practical guide to learning at home age 0-11*  
 - *Unqualified Education A practical guide to learning at home age 11-18*
- Linsenbach, Sherri.  
 - *The Everything Homeschooling Book*
- Llewellyn, Grace.  
 - *Real Lives: Eleven Teenagers Who Don't Go to School*  
 - *The Teenage Liberation Handbook: How to Quit School and Get a Real Life and Education*
- Lloyd, Ann.  
 - *Tips and Tricks for Homeschooling Survival*
- Lurie, John.  
 - *Allison's Story: A Book about Homeschooling*
- Lyman, Isabel.  
 - *The Homeschooling Revolution*
- Maakestad, Sue.  
 - *Home Sweet Homeschool*
- Mackson, Racheal and Wittman, M.  
 - *A Catholic Homeschool Treasury*
- Madden, Kristen.  
 - *Pagan Homeschooling*
- Manish, Jain.  
 - *Unfolding Learning Societies*
- Mason, Charlotte.  
 - *Charlotte Mason's Original Homeschooling Series*  
 - *The Original Homeschooling Series*
- Mason, Renee.  
 - *Homeschooling All the Way Through High School*
- Mayberry, Maralee.  
 - *Home Schooling: Parents as Educators*
- Maxwell, Teri.  
 - *Homeschooling with a Meek and Quiet Spirit*
- McClaine, L.S.  
 - *Physical Education For Homeschoolers*
- McDowell, Susan.  
 - *But What About Socialization?*
- McHugh, Michael.  
 - *Christian Homeschooling: Foundation and Practice*
- McKee, Alison.  
 - *From Homeschool to College and Work: Turning Your Homeschool Experience into College and Job Portfolios*
- McKee, Alison.  
 - *Homeschooling Our Children, Unschooling Ourselves*
- Meighan, Roland.  
 - *The Freethinker's Pocket Directory to the Educational Universe*  
 - *John Holt*  
 - *Learning Unlimited*  
 - *The Next Learning System*  
 - *Theory and Practice of Regressive Education*  
 - *Natural Learning and the Natural Learning Curriculum*
- Miller, Ron. Ed.  
 - *Creating Learning Communities*
- Moore, Raymond S.  
 - *The Successful Homeschool Family Handbook*  
 - *Better Late Than Early*  
 - *School Can Wait*  
 - *Home School Burnout: What It Is. What Causes It. and How to Overcome It*
- Morgan, Melissa L.  
 - *Homeschooling on a Shoestring*
- Nehmer, Kathleen M.  
 - *Homeschooler's Guide to FREE Teaching Aids*
- Obamehinti, Johnson and Feyi Obamahinti.  
 - *Minority Homeschooler's Guide*
- O'Leary, Jennifer.  
 - *Write Your Own Curriculum*
- Paine, Beverley.  
 - *Practical Homeschooling Booklet Series*  
 - *Getting Started with Homeschooling; Practical Considerations*  
 - *Learning in the Absence of Education*  
 - *Learning without School home educating families share a day in their lives*  
 - *Let's Play Together - Traditional Children's Games*
- Paquette, Alice.  
 - *Curriculum Workshop*
- Peacock, John.  
 - *The Why and How of Australian Home Education*
- Perry, John.  
 - *The Complete Guide to Homeschooling*
- Priesnitz, Wendy.  
 - *Challenging Assumptions in Education*  
 - *School Free*
- Pride, Mary.  
 - *Mary Pride's Complete Guide to Getting Started in Homeschooling*  
 - *The Big Book of Home Learning*  
 - *The Complete Guide to Homeschooling*

- Purdy, Bryn.  
- *AS Neill*
- Pyles, Lisa.  
- *Homeschooling the Child With Asperger's Syndrome*
- Ransom, Marsha.  
- *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Homeschooling*
- Ray, Brian D.  
- *Worldwide Guide to Homeschooling: Facts and Stats on the Benefits of Home School, 2002-2003*
- Rivero, Lisa.  
- *Creative Home Schooling for Gifted Children*  
- *Gifted Education Comes Home: A Case for Self-Directed Homeschooling*
- Rosenberg, Marshall B.  
- *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Compassion*
- Rupp, Rebecca.  
- *Getting Started on Home Learning: How and Why to Teach Your Kids*  
- *Home Learning Year by Year*  
- *The Complete Home Learning Source Book*
- Rushton, Cindy.  
- *A Charlotte Mason Primer*  
- *Homeschooling: Digging Into All the Options*  
- *Notebooking: Yes You Can Be a Binder Queen Too*
- Saba, Laura and Gattis, Julie.  
- *The McGraw-Hill Homeschooling Companion*
- Schaffer, F.  
- *Homeschool Teacher Plan Book*
- Scheps, Susan G.  
- *The Librarian's Guide to Homeschooling Resources*
- Seibert, Eva.  
- *About Face: A Redirection in Education*
- Sheffer, Susannah.  
- *A Sense of Self: Listening to Homeschooled Adolescent Girls*  
- *Writing Because We Love to Homeschoolers at Work*  
- *For the Children's Sake*  
- *A Life Worth Living: Selected Letters of John Holt*
- Sherman, Greg  
- *Ten Great Reasons to Homeschool*
- Shewan, Edward J., et. al.  
- *Christian Homeschooling: Foundation and Practice*
- Silver, Amy & Llewellyn, Grace.  
- *Guerrilla Learning*
- Smith, Barbara.  
- *Teach Me Lord That I May Teach: What We Learned Homeschooling the Kids*
- Smith, R.H.  
- *Home Sweet Home School (Jehovah's Witness)*
- Sobanski, J; R Winegardner; LWherry Brainerd.  
- *Basic Skills For Homeschooling*
- Soyke, Jean M. and Pattye Carlson.  
- *Art Adventures at Home*
- Spraul, RC.  
- *When You Rise Up: a Covenantal Approach to Homeschooling*
- Stevens, Mitchell L.  
- *Kingdom of Children: Culture and Controversy in the Homeschooling Movement*
- Swan, Karey.  
- *The Art of the Homeschool Lifestyle*
- Thomas, Alan.  
- *Educating Children At Home*  
- *How Children Learn at Home*
- Toto, Julia.  
- *How to Homeschool: Yes, You!*
- Wallace, Nancy.  
- *Child's Work: Taking Children's Choices Seriously*  
- *Better Than School*
- Waring, Diana.  
- *Beyond Survival: A Guide to Abundant Life Homeschooling*  
- *Reaping the Harvest: The Bounty of Abundant-Life Homeschooling*
- Wayne, Israel.  
- *Homeschooling from a Biblical Worldview*
- Webb, Julie.  
- *Those Unschooled Minds*
- Whelchel, Lisa.  
- *So You're Thinking About Homeschooling*
- Wilson, Douglas, Douglas Jones, and Wes Callihan.  
- *Classical Education and the Homeschool*
- Wise, Jessie and Susan Wise Bauer.  
- *The Well-Trained Mind: A Guide to Classical Education at Home*
- Workman, K.  
- *Homeschooling: Untangling the Web of Confusion*

# NOTES

