

# **PLANNING IDEAS FOR HOMESCHOOLING FAMILIES**

By Lisa Donovan

Realize that planning is a necessity. If you take the time to plan, you will not regret it!

*Proverbs 16:9 says, “The heart of a man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.” Proverbs 21:5 says, “The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.”*

Here are some ways to make time for planning:

- If you have older children, take a week twice a year (August and January) and plan one subject each day during the school day for an hour or two. Plan half the year each week. Teachers in a school system take planning time: we can too.
- Schedule a few days of planning time throughout the year. If you can't take entire days, set aside some chunks of time during the day on several consecutive mornings out. Swap babysitting with a friend.
- Use one Saturday morning or Sunday evening each month to plan the upcoming month.
- Plan the upcoming year over the summer. Take one night a week during June and July and you will be amazed at what you can accomplish. Use this time to do research you may be unable to do during the school year. File your findings in appropriate files/notebooks where the information will be readily accessible.

## **Planning Tips**

- Pray. Cast your cares on the Lord. Ask Him for His wisdom and what your goals and priorities should be for each child and subject. Do this with your husband.
- If you begin to get overwhelmed, stop and pray. Make goals for yourself. Write a list of what subjects need to be planned and when you will plan them. Estimate how much time planning each subject for each child will take. Allow a little more time than you think you will need.

## **Planning for Projects**

If your child is an unconventional learner, projects may be particularly helpful, but you will need to plan for them! Projects, especially projects involving kinesthetic or multi-sensory components give children the opportunity to learn while doing, to make projects that flip, fold or tuck – and this is a great opportunity for those children who are typically bored with workbooks. Lap books are projects which involve these components. For more information on projects, please see the FSP website for a handout.

---

## Nuts & Bolts of Homeschooling

### **8 Subject Areas**

The State of Maryland requires that home schooled children receive instruction in the following areas:

**Math, English, Science, History, Geography, Art, Music, P.E. and Health.** Foreign Language

instruction is recommended at the high school level. FSP also recommends Bible be addressed as a subject.

### **Enrichment**

Families are also expected to provide extracurricular activities and field trips.

➤ Approach planning with a cheerful dependence on the Lord and not as a necessary evil.

➤ We see the school year as a 40-week year including two 1-week vacations. Instead of planning for 38 weeks, plan for 36 weeks to give flexibility in case of sickness or unexpected events (which always happen). The state of Maryland expects that we will home school our children 180 days; most families actually exceed that number. Consider keeping a running tally of the days you “do” school in a one-page annual attendance form. None of this type of record keeping is required by the state or FSP, but it is a quick, helpful habit.

➤ Consider planning workbook subjects “loosely.” Instead of doing a daily plan for elementary students, give children a daily minimum of pages done; then simply record what they’ve done. (We use this approach for math, spelling, and grammar.) If you do this, be sure you look through the books during your planning time so you will know what topics you may need to prepare additionally for. For example, Horizons Math does not cover time telling thoroughly so additional instruction will be needed. Mark those kinds of details in your plan book.

*To figure a daily minimum number of pages: total pages of workbook divided by 36; then divide by number of days child will work on this subject each week;*

➤ For other subjects such as history, consider planning using an undated planning sheet. Once you’ve written your plans on these sheets, simply highlight and date and what you’ve done. Whatever you haven’t done is then apparent. By using this approach, you do not have to transfer plans repeatedly.

### **Plan Book**

There are numerous plan books and planning systems on the market (e.g. <http://www.homeschooltracker.com/>). Whether you choose a prepared book/system or you create your own notebook, here are some ideas of things to keep in a plan book:

- A pen and a highlighter in a pencil case
- A one-page annual calendar (available from “calendars” section of [www.donnayoung.org](http://www.donnayoung.org))
- A list of books borrowed/loaned
  - Encouraging verses or quotes about homeschooling;

## Nuts & Bolts of Homeschooling

- Any goals for subjects or children;
- Field trip planning log
- Annual attendance sheet  
(not required, but helpful to know how much school you've done)
- Lesson plans
- Each child's curriculum plan for this school year
- This year's report cards
- FSP calendar, notes from meetings and FSP phone list

### **Calendar and Weekly Schedule**

Use a calendar of some type to plan your day, week, and year. Consider what works best for you and your family: computer vs. paper; a week/month at a time. Record holidays, vacations, and other special events that can impact school plans.

Consider creating your own weekly schedule that is updated weekly. Sample schedules are included in this handbook. You can delineate who does which thing using colors or their initials.

Have regular calendar updates with family members. Get in the habit and teach the habit of not agreeing to appointments without running the date by your husband.

Write everything down. Don't assume you will remember important information. Also plan in planning time and projects such as spring cleaning, gardening, and grocery shopping.

Blank calendars and planners can be printed from the internet: [www.donnayoung.org](http://www.donnayoung.org) to choose from.



History Fair Admin Team, 1996-2003

## **Nuts & Bolts of Homeschooling**