

Educational Philosophies

Before choosing any educational methods or materials it is important to research the various educational philosophies first.

There are many different approaches you can take to home-school your children. To help narrow down what might work for your family, you need to think about what goals you have for your home-school, what types of learners do you have, and what kind of teacher will you be. The philosophy that you adopt, or the various ones that you blend, will be part of your ultimate vision for your family and children.

Let's take a look at a few options. To understand these philosophies better, you will need to read the books by the authors of the philosophy that most attracts you or fits your child's learning style.

The following schools of thought are not arranged in any particular order or preference.

Un-schooling-

The un-schooling approach often looks nothing like a traditional education. There are no textbooks or schedules to keep; there aren't grades or report cards either these things are believed to be counter productive to the goal of maximizing the education of each child. The basic philosophy is the parent lets go of control over what the child will learn and facilitates the educational process by ensuring a learning-rich environment for the child to flourish.

Strengths: This type of learning enables the child to learn from an early age to take ownership of his education; given that the parent is dedicated to surrounding him with educational opportunities to learn from.

Weakness: There is no measurable way for a parent to gauge where the child is academically. This philosophy has a negative stigma; but is not necessarily the case in all home-schools. If a parent chooses to follow this philosophy diligently, and balances it with godly instruction, they can reap great rewards in their children's lives.

Resources: *Teach Your Own* by John Holt, *Growing Without Schooling* magazine by John Holt

Delayed Academics-

Dr. Raymond Moore and his wife, Dorothy, began this approach and wrote several books on the topic. They purport that young children are not developmentally ready for formal education until age 8. They believe the child will catch up to their peers in due time. The Moores have written several books about their educational theories, *School Can Wait*, *Better Late than Early*, *Homegrown Kids*, to name a few, check them out at your local library.

Strengths: Delaying academic studies allow the child to develop at their individual rate. This approach also gives time for the parent to train the child's character before introducing academics.

Weakness: This option might be hard to explain to others.

Delight Directed or Unit Study-

This method is an all encompassing approach to learning and is based on themes or topics. Many families with multiple ages to teach enjoy this approach mainly because it's easier to teach all the "subjects" at different age appropriate levels. A unit study takes a topic and "lives" with it for a period of time, integrating science, social studies, language arts, math, and fine arts as they apply. The older children learn and help teach the younger children. Most unit studies give several options to learn about a topic. Let your children choose how they want to study the subject and how they want to demonstrate what they've learned; by either writing a report, making a board display, diorama, acting it out, or any other creative way.

Strengths: Each child studies the topic at his or her own level. This saves over half of your teaching and preparing time. All children can go on field trips together, many projects can be done together such as writing assignments and vocabulary words, just on different levels. Unit studies work well for children with different learning styles too.

Weakness: Learning gaps can occur using this method, in areas such as math and grammar, but can be easily supplemented with suitable resources.

Resources: Konos Curriculum, Sonlight Curriculum, Heart of Wisdom



Charlotte Mason or Living Books-

The Mason method incorporates all core subjects, with a strong focal point on classic literature, poetry, fine arts, crafts, and classical music. Charlotte Mason used the best books, the best music, and the best art possible. A variety of classical literature books are used, she called them "living books". Living books are books of high quality that often include stories of real life characters a child can easily identify with. Mason spoke highly of the importance of poetry, enforcing good habits, keeping nature diaries and the value of dictation and spelling. She believed that the development of good character and good habits was essential. This method supports the child's own learning style and abilities.

Strengths: The use of good quality literature, exposure to fine arts and nature are just a few positive aspects of the Charlotte Mason method.

Resources: There are so many resources on this method; Karen Andreola has written a companion guide to the 6 volume set of Charlotte Mason's home-schooling books its called Charlotte Mason Companion: Personal Reflections on the Gentle Art of Learning. Sonlight, Heart of Wisdom

Textbook – School at Home-

School at home is a traditional school in a home setting. You use textbooks, grades, tests, and report cards. The parents set up regular school hours and often in this type of schooling there is a room designated specifically for "school" but not always.

Strengths: Everything is laid out for ease of use and follows a standardized scope and sequence very closely to the public school requirements. You get the feeling of doing school.

Weakness: is very nonspecific in matter and geared to the "standard" student without considering the different learning styles or special needs of individual children. It also, focuses on the rote memorization of material and the regurgitation of that material.

Resources: Bob Jones, Abeka, Alpha Omega, Christian Liberty Press, Rod and Staff.