

# THE SOCIAL DISTANCING AND HOMESCHOOLING SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Hello! You likely know me as “Tina Alberino, Beauty Industry Window-Smasher Extraordinaire,” but I also happen to be homeschooling my five children. As someone who routinely spends days on end indoors with their kids *by choice*, I’m uniquely qualified and feel slightly obligated to help other parents survive the same.

What follows are the websites, apps, activities, movies, shows, books, games, and podcasts I personally recommend. I’ve also included links to a few legitimate work-from-home sites that my husband and I have vetted ourselves.

*To survive, you will need to make tradeoffs.*

Those of you who have been around a while probably won’t be surprised to find out that I’m sort of a weird person. I’m cool with my kids making messes and following their interests, especially if it keeps them out of my hair while I’m working. There are a series of trades made every day.

- I can spend 40 minutes reading a book and drinking my coffee in relative silence, but I have to do it at the kitchen counter with my headphones on while the kids attempt to make [Cinnabon waffles](#).
- I can get two solid hours of work done, but I have to surrender every pillow and blanket in the house to be used as building materials for a fort that will span from the playroom to each child’s bedroom—and probably also half the staircase.
- I can buy three hours of gaming time but only if I spend 30 minutes planning out and setting up an art project (and another 30 minutes cleaning it up when they’re done).

You’ll likely find yourself making the same trades. Don’t feel forced to personally keep your kids entertained all day or you’ll go insane. It’s not only okay but extremely beneficial to give your kids freedom to do things independently.

Before we get into this, I want to make this clear AF:

Nothing about this situation has substantially changed my daily life (except that I’m ordering groceries versus shopping for them myself). I will have my phone by my side

constantly. I **am not simply being nice when I invite you to email me.** Just do it. Send me your questions, if you have them. Reach out to talk if you need to. I'm a parent, just like you are. I can and will help by sharing my experience—all you have to do is ask.

This is the most expansive resource I could make in the 10 hours I gave myself to produce it, so it doesn't even scratch the surface of what I could offer if I had even more time. I intentionally chose things that were affordable and accessible. I omitted resources I've used that were designed for full-time, year-round homeschoolers. (If I had included them, it would have added another 10 pages, easily.)

I may end up expanding this list in the future. When I do, I'll push out an update to [the blog's Facebook page](#).

## APPS/WEBSITES

NAME	AGE	PRICE
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<a href="#">Khan Academy Kids</a>	2-6	Free
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This free app contains a wealth of games and videos that educate and entertain.

<a href="#">Khan Academy</a>	7+	Free
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Provides kids with a variety of free online courses.

<a href="#">Udemy</a>	4+	Fee Per Course
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Udemy hosts a broad collection of courses that range in price. I recommend the following:

<a href="#">Udacity</a>	16+	Expensive AF (but currently discounted)
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Udacity offers online nanodegree programs for a wide variety of IT specialties. If your older teen wants to gain valuable tech credentials, now may be the time to move on that, as Udacity is offering 50% off right now. (I'm currently enrolled in [the Full-Stack Web Developer nanodegree program](#). It's fantastic.)

<a href="#">Masterclass</a>	12+	Price Varies
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Want to learn acting from Natalie Portman? Or space exploration from Chris Hadfield? On Masterclass, you can learn directly from living legends. (In our house, we're taking Neal DeGrasse Tyson Teaches Scientific Thinking and Communication and Gordon Ramsay Teaches Cooking right now.)

<a href="#">Teach Your Monster to Read</a>	4+	Free (Browser)/\$1.00 (Mobile App)
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Created by the founder of Usborne Books, this app is absolutely phenomenal. Kids create their own monsters and have to help them complete epic quests, but—there's a problem—their monsters *can't read*. It's up to your kids to teach them how...while learning how to read themselves. (My 2, 5, and 7 year old children LOVE this app.)

<a href="#">Night Zookeeper</a>	4+	Price Varies
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Night Zookeeper inspires a love of writing with their online creative writing games and interactive lessons. They actually draw and color their own animals to add to the Night Zoo, write stories about them, and play games. (My 7-year-old has been using it every afternoon for the last three months. It's her favorite way to spend her free time.)

<a href="#">Typing Club</a>	4+	Free
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TypingClub is a full online typing curriculum that teaches kids (and adults) to type faster

and more accurately through games. (Until I found Typing Club, my kids were using a paid typing curriculum they hated. I won't lie and say they *super love* being required to type for an hour every day as part of their homeschool curriculum, but they much prefer TypingClub over their prior program.)

[Flipaclip](#)

4+

Free (with premium option)

My oldest daughter creates hand-drawn animations using this program. I can't say enough nice things about it. It's free, but premium is cheap and adds a lot of features.

[Stop Motion Studio](#)

5+

Free

My second-oldest daughter creates stop-motion videos using this app. Again, this is a great tool.

## ACTIVITIES

**Plan an epic battle.** Point them at the mountain of Amazon boxes in your garage, hand them a roll of duct tape, and tell them to build suits of armor because if they don't, they won't be adequately prepared for the sword fight you scheduled to take place in two hours.

**Let them cook.** If your kids are under 7, they'll need help. If they're over 7 years old, hand them a recipe appropriate for their skill level and walk away. (As a mother of five, I've learned that our kids are a whole lot more capable than we give them credit for. I've also learned that having a 12-year-old who can bake delicious cookies whenever you want them is *fantastic*.)

**Assuming you have access to grocery items, have your kids make a meal plan, then execute it.** I would advise against allowing them to pick whatever they want if you don't want to end up eating ice cream and waffles for dinner every night. Our kids are required to choose dishes that incorporate fruit and/or vegetables. If you're giving them free reign to choose recipes from anywhere, expect to spend a lot of time arranging food into animal shapes or their favorite cartoon characters. (You've been warned.)

**Give them screens (and jobs).** My 12-year-old is an aspiring 2-D animator. She has spent hours creating short animations every day with [FlipaClip](#). Now, she takes drawing and animation courses online. My 7-year-old is an aspiring writer and stop-motion director. She spends hours on [Night Zookeeper](#) creating animals with super powers and writing stories about them. She also spends entire afternoons turning hundreds of pictures she's taken into full videos using [Stop Motion Studio](#). Neither of these kids would have discovered these passions if I hadn't downloaded the applications and shoved tablets into their hands to get a few hours of silent cleaning time. Trust me. Give them the damn screens but try to give them a new interest too.

**Let them follow a DIY craft tutorial (or 50).** It's totally normal to see my three oldest kids seated at the kitchen island, following along with a tutorial of some sort. If you're mess-averse, get yourself some [cheap sewing kits](#) or [washable Crayola watercolors](#). As far as art messes go, those are—without question—the easiest to clean up.

**Plan to do something cool, but don't invite them to participate.** You know what's fun? Building a castle out of tupperware on the kitchen floor. You know what's more fun? Telling your kids they can't help because it's a serious job. You know what happens

when you tell a kid they can't do something? They beg to do it. Let them take over. If you have younger kids, expect them to turn the tupperware into makeshift instruments. Grab your headphones in advance.

**Introduce them to the best movies ever.** On Saturday nights, we watch movies together as a family. My husband and I made a list of titles we want them to watch and have included it here. Use your judgment. We're the kind of family that allows our younger kids to watch scary movies (like Alien and Jurassic Park). If you aren't, that's okay. There are plenty of other movies on the list to choose from.

**Watch a show together.** On Wednesday nights, we watch a show together. This has been great for our oldest, who has inherited her mother's unfortunate habit of falling into obscure fandoms. Now, we're all fans of Steven Universe and she has an entire household to share her enthusiasm with. My 7-year-old loves Doctor Who, so we watch that together also.

**Play board games.** I know this sounds like a lame idea, but I'm not talking about boring ass Connect 4 or Monopoly. I've included recommendations for *real*/board games in the list.

## MOVIES

E.T.	Up	Hocus Pocus
Star Wars	The Sandlot	Jumanji
The Avengers	The Goonies	Free Willy
Wall-E	The Little Rascals	Homeward Bound
Toy Story	Adventures in Babysitting	Flubber
Avatar	Mrs. Doubtfire	Mighty Joe Young
Back to the Future	The Indian in the Cupboard	Cool Runnings
Labyrinth	Old Yeller	The Karate Kid
The Princess Bride	Where the Red Fern Grows	Flight of the Navigator
The Neverending Story	Space Jam	Indiana Jones
Star Trek	Matilda	The Monster Squad
Napoleon Dynamite		Ghostbusters
Shrek		
<b>12+</b>		
Jaws	I Am Legend	The Truman Show
Terminator	Bad Boys	Ferris Bueller's Day Off
Alien	Independence Day	The Others
Jurassic Park	Psycho	
Night of the Living Dead	The Breakfast Club	

## SHOWS

### Netflix

Lost in Space

Raising Dion

Trollhunters

The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance

Anne with an E

A Series of Unfortunate Events

The Good Place

### Hulu

Steven Universe

Rugrats

Adventure Time

Doug

Teen Titans Go!

Modern Family

Full House

Family Matters

Malcolm in the Middle

Gravity Falls

### Disney+

Hannah Montana

The Simpsons

That's So Raven

Wizards of Waverly Place

The Suite Life of Zach and Cody



## BOARD GAMES

Some of these games are available on the Google Play store. If you add them to your Family Library, you can grant access to your family members and play together on your devices. As a collector (a term I prefer to “hoarder”), I have nearly 200 games, including those on this list. If you want more information about a title or recommendations for more complex games, [let me know](#).

[Castle Panic](#) 5+

Defend your tower from trolls and ogres!

[Carcassonne](#) 5+

Build cities and roads to score points in this easy, fun tile-based game. (This is available as an app.)

[Dice Forge](#) 6+

Customize your unique dice to increase your resources throughout the game. Accomplish heroic feats to gain special powers and the glory you need to win.

[Dixit](#) 5+

This is a light storytelling and guesswork game. The artwork is beautiful.

[Ex Libris](#) 7+

You’re a collector of rare and valuable books in a thriving fantasy town. Outshine your competition by expanding your library and creating the most organized library!

[Forbidden Sky](#) 5+

You and your friends are trapped on a platform in the sky. The only way to escape is to repair and power your ship, but you’ll have to do it fast. The storm around you is raging and only getting worse...

[Gloom](#) 6+

Murder your family while bestowing good fortune on your opposing families. In this fun storytelling game, the most miserable family wins!

[Hogwarts Battle](#) 6+

We have all of these titles. They’re all great! Highly recommended for Harry Potter fans. (Here are links to the [second](#) and [third](#) titles.)

[Hive](#)

5+

Like chess, but with bugs...and no board. This game was endorsed by Mensa. It's easy to learn, hard to master.

[Onitama](#)

7+

Another that's like chess, but with martial artists...and cards that dictate how you can move. Along with Hive, Onitama ranks among my top recommendations.

[The Bloody Inn](#)

7+

Teach your kids that murder is a messy, expensive job. In The Bloody Inn, you and your other players are a family of murderous scammers who decide the most efficient way to rob people is to open an inn, kill the guests, and steal their money—but you have a code of honor! You can't steal from someone until you bury them, and police are lurking about...

*I'm running out of time here, so I'm dumping the rest of my  
recommendations down below:*

[King of Tokyo](#)

[Machi Koro](#)

[Pandemic](#) (Also available as an app. Not trying to be cute. It's a great game that contains a lot of education value right now. Good luck finding a physical copy, though. It's selling out everywhere.)

[Patchwork](#) (also available as an app)

[Potion Explosion](#)

[Roam](#)

[Root](#)

[Second Chance](#)

[Welcome To...](#)

[Spirits of the Wild](#)

[Splendor](#) (also available as an app)

[Stuffed Fables](#)

[Sushi Go!](#)

[Ticket to Ride](#) (Also available as an app, and honestly, it's better than the physical game.)

[Trekking the National Parks](#)

[Unearth](#)

[Wingspan](#)

[Fluxx](#)

## EARN MONEY FROM HOME

A lot of professionals have been asking me how they're going to pay their bills while we wait out COVID-19. These online jobs are entry-level and legitimate. While the individual tasks tend not to pay much, they pay *something* (and that's better than nothing when you're stuck at home without pay). However, most of these sites will be flooded with new users (yourself included), so assignments will likely be scarce.

[Transcription](#) pays little, but if you're a fast typist who can zone out and flawlessly turn spoken words into lines of text quickly, you could do pretty well.

[User Testing](#) pays people to test websites. It requires a microphone (so you can record the test), but that's it.

[Enroll](#) pays people to test websites. Unlike UserTesting, they don't require a microphone.

[Fiverr](#) allows users to do a wide variety of jobs from high-skill work like graphics and translation to entry-level services like data entry and virtual assisting.

While [Etsy](#) doesn't necessarily deserve to be on this list (because you only get paid when you make a sale), I'm putting it here because our industry is full of creative, talented people. If you're a crafter and have been holding off on starting an Etsy store—stop procrastinating. Break out your sewing machine, plug in that hot glue gun, and whip out your hammer. If this virus has taught you nothing else, I hope it's that additional revenue streams are worth establishing.

## TEMPORARILY SCHOOLING AT HOME

I know a lot of you are panicked about the possibility of having to educate your kids through school closures. In this section, I've provided as much information, reassurance, and resources as I can. Let's start with the reassurance.

### You're More Capable than You Realize

I'm almost positive only the most extreme Type-A's are worried about this right now, but if you're like me, you're probably freaking out about knowledge evaporating from your child's brain with every minute they aren't in school. I'll tell you how to turn that worry into something productive and wonderful, but for now, it's important for you to understand that *you are more than capable of educating your kids*. Every second is an opportunity to teach them something.

If you want your kids to learn, spend time with them. Let them try new things. Give them freedom to pursue their interests. Allow them to make messes and to fail. Assign them an exciting new responsibility and let them figure it out without your help.

You don't need workbooks, videos, or curriculums. They help a lot, and I've included a ton of them here, but *you don't need them*. Just be there. Be weird. Think like a kid and less like an adult by focusing more on fun than inconvenient consequences (like messes). Have fun.

### What I Wish I Had Known Before I Started Homeschooling

I started homeschooling three of my five kids in February of 2019 and have learned a whole lot in the last year. The transition wasn't easy, as I encountered some pushback from my kids (boundary testing) when we first started. I can't imagine making that transition reluctantly and suddenly, during a pandemic.

Here's what I wish I had known on Day 1.

**Your child's progress will be shocking.** When we started homeschooling my four-year-old wanted to participate so I let him sit with us as we did our lessons. At that time, he could not hold a pencil properly, let alone write. He knew his alphabet but hadn't yet been taught the letter sounds.

By the end of Week 10, my son could not only write all letters and numbers properly, he could also do single-digit addition problems independently. Just one year after he started, he can read fluently at a first-grade level, add, subtract, and perform basic

algebra. The other two school-aged children progressed far beyond my expectations too, completing an entire year's worth of schoolwork in five months.

Like I said, you will be shocked.

**No matter how well you plan and prepare, you will make changes.** Don't beat yourself up over expensive mistakes. Every homeschooling parent I've met has thrown money into programs, products, workbooks, and curriculum that turned out not to be a good fit for their family. It doesn't seem to matter how much research you do, how many reviews you watch/read, or how careful you are in your selections. What looks great to you may not resonate with your child, and that's okay. You know what else is okay? Dropping things that aren't working and trying something new.

Buy new, take care of your stuff, and sell what doesn't work if you can.

**You don't need a boxed curriculum.** It's true. You can design your own curriculum or forego curriculum entirely. Because structure suits our family when it comes to academic subjects (and because I have way too many kids and too few hours in the day to create my own program), we use a variety of different pre-made resources.

**Don't attempt to duplicate public school at home.** In the beginning months of our homeschool, I made the rookie mistake of attempting to duplicate public school. I had a schedule, lesson plans, and a dress code. It was a stressful, counter-productive mess. I felt as if I had to be teaching them for some arbitrary amount of time every day, so we were working from 9 am until 4 pm, Monday through Friday.

Now we have a routine, not a schedule. We spend anywhere from 4-5 hours per day on academics, Monday through Thursday. After lunch, the children are free to spend the rest of the day learning about whatever they want. They can do an engineering project from one of their [Tinker Crates](#), code one of their [BitsBox](#) apps, choose a painting or sculpting technique to try from one of our [art lab books](#), or just go outside and create their own adventure.

If your kids are old enough to work independently, I highly recommend subscribing to [Acellus \(Power Homeschool\)](#) and allowing them to work at their own pace throughout the week. My older two children prefer to do their schoolwork in the evenings, when the younger kids are in bed. They often work ahead, completing their assignments before they're due so they can spend their days doing projects and activities.

**You don't have to teach everything at once.** I have to remind myself of this damn near every day. Try to limit yourself to four or five subjects at one time. Under these circumstances, I'd recommend starting smaller with maybe two or three subjects, setting an accelerated pace so the kids get accustomed to working at home without being overwhelmed by too many classes.

When I started homeschooling, I had the kids doing spelling, reading, grammar, vocabulary, handwriting, writing, math, science, history, health, typing, digital citizenship, and emotional intelligence journaling. It was *way* too much. Combine lessons where you can and plan to do those extra subjects sometime in the future—not simultaneously.

**Limit yourself to 3-5 hours per day.** Again, do not duplicate public school. For one, it's unnecessary. In public schools, kids are constantly having their education interrupted. There are a ton of distractions. When you're working one-on-one with your kids (or if they're working independently in a distraction-free area), they'll learn much more efficiently, accomplishing in one hour what would take three in public school. They also aren't forced to adhere to the public school's arbitrary schedule. If they've mastered a concept already, *they can skip it*. They don't need to complete arbitrary busy work just for the sake of earning a grade. In a home education environment, the education is catered to the child's needs and abilities. Don't feel like you have to teach your kids for the same length of time they spend in public school for them to gain the same benefit. Quality over quantity.

**Take a mastery-based approach to math.** I don't want to get into too much detail here, but there are two primary ways to tackle math.

**Spiral systems presents a set of concepts that repeat from level to level. Each time the material is revisited, more depth is added.** Spiral curriculum "spirals back" to prior concepts (to review) and then introduces a new one. My kids *hate* that approach and it doesn't work for them. (It's one of the reasons we chose to homeschool.) I consider it a "jack of all trades" approach that results in kids sort of knowing a few things and being frustrated/overwhelmed by whatever the new concept is...every...single...week.

**A mastery-based system requires children to master a concept so thoroughly that they never have to review it again.** For instance, my 7-year-old and 5-year-old spent *30 lessons* learning how to skip count by 2's, 5's, and 10's. They're spending another 30 lessons learning basic addition and subtraction. Once those 30 lessons are done, their

next 30 focus exclusively on multiplication. (We use [Math U See](#), which teaches kids math in a visual way, using manipulatives.)

This approach empowers you and your children. Especially when it comes to math, their attitude about their competence really matters. Your attitude also matters a lot and since mastery-based systems are far easier to teach than spiral systems, you'll save yourself a ton of aggravation.

**Use living books.** I've included a list of books I recommend, but here's how you implement them:

Step 1: Read the book together.

Step 2: Talk about the book together.

Step 3: Assign book-related projects (if you want).

We're currently learning philosophy from the book, [Big Ideas for Curious Minds](#). We read two chapters every day while we eat lunch and talk about each concept. In the past, I've assigned writing and art projects based on books we've read together.

**Keep records.** In my state, we're required to have an annual portfolio review and to keep book logs and daily records. I've created a portfolio site where I keep all the information so we can have digital reviews done, but yours won't need to be as fancy. Grab an old notebook to use as a journal. Each day, document what your kid(s) did. Include the names and pages of any resources they used. Take pictures of their work also.

Our portfolio site is normally password protected. I've dropped those protections for now, but I'm unwilling to share the URL here. If you'd like to see our portfolio, [email me](#) and I'll send you a link.

**Ignore grade levels.** Grade levels are arbitrary, invented and structured for the public school model (which is sort of a "mass production" system, designed for efficiency and practicality). You're free to ignore it. Kids should work at their level, regardless of the "grade" they're in.

- My oldest (who just recently turned 12) should be in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. She's in 7<sup>th</sup>.
- My second-oldest (who recently turned 7) should be in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. She's in 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- My son (who turned 5 in November) should be in Kindergarten. He just started 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.



Home education is child-led, not dictated by the public school system. Considering the circumstances, I recommend you do whatever is easiest for you and your child. Scale up or down as you see fit. Drop the subjects your kid hates for now. Don't beat yourself up over *anything*, ever. We are all doing our best right now. Please don't pressure yourself to take on more than you (or your kids) can handle.

**Get dressed every day.** It's okay to do school in your pajamas every once in a while, but I recommend having everyone (including yourself) get dressed and ready as if they were leaving the house. Many of us will not be leaving our homes for weeks, which can get depressing if you're dressing like a scrub every day. (Trust me, I'd know.) Getting dressed will help you and your kids retain a part of your normal routine and will help increase their focus.

### Resources

I've learned over the course of the last year that religious affiliation matters a *ton* when selecting instructional materials. If you're Christian (or are cool with Christian teachings), you're in luck as the vast majority of homeschool curriculum providers cater to Christians. You'll have a massive wealth of options to choose from. However, we're atheists, so the curriculum I've shared here covers all world religions from a cultural and historical perspective and teaches *strictly* secular science (not faith-neutral). If you want your kids to learn Christian science, the programs I'm sharing won't be for you.

### [Acellus](#)

\$25/month per child

Acellus (aka PowerHomeschool) by [the International Academy of Science](#) is the curriculum we're currently using in my home. Each concept is presented in short video lessons followed by short games and quizzes. I love that my oldest children can work on their core subjects independently at their own pace, so I can work with my younger kids. They typically complete their work in less than three hours, so we can spend the rest of the day doing extracurriculars (painting, engineering, robotics) and projects.

Acellus no longer allows customers to buy yearly plans at a discounted rate (except for me and every other annual customer who was grandfathered in before they changed their policy), so you sign up and pay monthly. When the schools open again, just cancel your subscription through your customer dashboard. I've done it before and didn't have any billing errors (which I cannot say about my next recommendation).

If you choose to use Acellus, [email me](#). I can send you a spreadsheet that can automatically calculate your child's daily goals so you can set the pace that works for them, or calculate your goals for you (for free).

[Time4Learning](#) \$20/month per child

We used Time4Learning briefly last year. While the kids loved the games and the animated videos, Acellus was a better fit for us. I'd still recommend it, especially for younger children.

Like Acellus, Time4Learning is also billed month-to-month, however, when I cancelled our subscription I was billed again and had to call customer service to issue a refund and properly close the account. Apparently, this is a problem T4L has had for a while. One phone call corrected my problem, but I would recommend using a prepaid Visa gift card if you want to avoid that kind of thing.

[Waldock's Wizards and Wands](#) \$40

Guys. I can't even! We did "wizard school" for a few months last year and had *a total blast!* If you have any Harry Potter fans in your household, buy and use Waldock's Wizards and Wands as your curriculum while you wait out the quarantine. I could go on about this forever, so I'm not even going to start. If you want to hear me gush about how great this printable program is, [email me](#).

[Torchlight](#) \$45

I cannot tell you how much I *adore* Torchlight. Like Waldock's Wizards and Wands, Torchlight is offline completely—just buy the PDF, hit the library, and get to work. We use Acellus for core subjects, but we often pull activities, books, and movie/show recommendations from Torchlight. Each "level" can be scaled up or down to adjust the difficulty (Level 3 is for learners 8-10). Torchlight is fully hands-on while Acellus is fully hands-off. I love both, but I recommend you choose based on your and your child's preferences.

[Teachers Pay Teachers](#) Price Varies

TPT is an online marketplace where teachers sell a huge variety of materials. I recommend choosing a few fun unit studies. (We did this [Seeds & Plants unit study](#) last year. My oldest daughter loves this [Bell Ringer Journal](#) and enjoyed this [Refugee Novel Study Unit](#) also.)

## [Big Life Journal](#)

Price Varies

I discovered this company through an ad for their Big Life Journals. After purchasing the kid and teen versions of the book, I received a free downloadable activity (like a unit study). The kids loved it, so I've purchased more. I highly recommend checking them out.

## Teaching Without Curriculum

Here are some ways you can keep learning without paying a dime or giving your kids the impression that they're doing something educational:

- Answer every question (no matter how ridiculous) as seriously and as thoroughly as you can.
- Answer questions nobody asked, like, "What is that thing you're using to peel the vegetables and how does it work?" and "How does soap kill microbes?"
- Fall down a YouTube hole. Start with [Kurzgesagt](#).
- Ask them what they want to know about, then research it.
- Challenge them to bring you a weird fact about something specific—like Bob Marley. (Did you know he was a palm reader before he was a singer? Now you do...and so does my 12-year-old who is now a big Marley fan.)

GIVE YOUR KIDS AGENCY. I hate scream-typing, but if I could get one thing through to you, it's that kids genuinely want to learn things—they just want the ability to choose which things they learn and how. Give them that and they'll learn faster and will have a more joyful time while learning. They'll work longer and harder when they're passionate about what they're learning. Give them the authority to choose subjects or topics. Give them the space and time to let them make discoveries. Give them support when they ask for it, but don't do their work for them. Praise and encourage them a ton.

I promise, it's a lot easier than it seems.

## Teaching with Books

Here are my book recommendations for reluctant homeschoolers. I considered assigning subject categories to each, but most qualify for multiple subjects, so I'll leave it up to you to decide how you're going to label them.

Just as with curriculum, your religious affiliation will come into play here, so I've separated resources that are created for atheists.

To get this resource out as fast as possible, I've linked everything (rather than providing summaries and author names). Most of these are also available on e-readers. I've done my best to provide age ranges as well (based on my own kids' abilities) but review the descriptions. Your younger child may be mature enough to handle more advanced concepts.

I promised myself I'd only go 10 pages deep into my Amazon history to find book recommendations, so I'm going to stop there. If you need specific recommendations for something I haven't listed, once again, *I insist*, [email me](#).

### Emotional Intelligence

[Breathe Like a Bear](#)

2-5

I know I said I wouldn't provide details, but if you have a child between the ages of 2 and 5, you *need* this book. YOU NEED IT. Buy it right now. Go. Teach your kid how to blow out their candles, breathe like a bear, and be a bumblebee. Thank me later.

### Secular Science and Skepticism

[Maybe Yes, Maybe No](#)

5-8

[The Annabelle & Aiden Books](#)

5+

These are free on Kindle (for now), so snatch them up. However, I recommend the hardcover versions. The art is beautiful and a lot of the detail is lost in the e-reader versions (unless you want to spend a lot of time pinching and zooming).

This series includes:

What Happens When We Die?

Sapiens

The Story of Life

Worlds Within Us

Oh, The Things We Believed!

### Philosophy

[Big Ideas for Curious Minds](#)

5+

[Is Nothing Something?](#)

5+

### Journaling

[Write On](#)

6+

[The Big Life Journals](#)

6-16

### Writing/Vocabulary

[Story-Writing Sandwich Prompts](#)

[Daily Academic Vocabulary](#) (I linked the 6<sup>th</sup> grade version, but there is one for each grade.)

[Wordly Wise](#)

### Science/Engineering

[The Way Things Work Now](#)

6+

[The Poetry of Science](#)

[Nature's Wonders](#)

### History

[Who Is/Was Books](#)

[You Wouldn't Books](#) (All of these are available on Amazon, but I linked the publisher so you could see the entire collection.)

### Other Activities & Interests

[A Kid's Herb Book](#)

[Wizard Craft \(Magical DIY Projects\)](#)

[My Book of Rocks and Minerals](#)

[Sewing for Kids](#)

[Art: A Visual History](#)

[Astrophysics for Young People in a Hurry](#)

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## YOU AREN'T ALONE

I sincerely hope this download provided at least a small amount of reassurance and assistance. Moving forward, please know that the homeschool community is *extremely* supportive and helpful. Like me, many are actively reaching out and providing resources

to parents who have found themselves in your position. Curriculum providers, teachers, and authors are donating materials and heavily discounting others. The helpers won't be hard to find.

Please, take advantage of every resource, and try not to be too hard on yourself for the next few weeks.