

*successful*

homeschooling

MADE EASY



**STEPHANIE WALMSLEY**

SUCCESSFUL HOMESCHOOLING  
MADE EASY

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BY STEPHANIE WALMSLEY

[www.SuccessfulHomeSchoolingMadeEasy.com](http://www.SuccessfulHomeSchoolingMadeEasy.com)



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# INTRODUCTION

*There is not the slightest doubt in my mind that you can succeed in homeschooling.*

Homeschooling is a marvellous way of life. It's a wonderful way to bring up your children, and I am keen to help you enjoy this lifestyle of home learning with your children.

I can show you how you can start homeschooling your children straight away, and how it can be fun for everyone involved, including you.

One happy aspect of homeschooling is that you will find that you yourself will learn and become educated on so many subjects, and that's a great feeling. And it feels so good to see your children developing a love of learning themselves.

Another aspect that can be overwhelming, is that you will also find that you are being constantly bombarded with interesting and good curriculum, books, websites, and equipment, so that it's easy to become overwhelmed and burned out.

That's where this book will help you. I want to 'fireproof' you against those things and I want to help you discover and apply the homeschooling way that will best suit you and your family. So that you are enjoying daily life with the family.

In many ways this is more than a book on homeschooling; it's more of a manual for homeschooling and family life in general. It's all about how to live and enjoy the full life of homeschooling your children.

I am confident that if you are reading this book, you are going to be able to enjoy homeschooling. In fact, there is not the slightest doubt in my mind that you can succeed in homeschooling. I will give you the tools, and if you use all the tools, I know you WILL succeed.

In this book I'll show you how to:

- Homeschool successfully and happily.
- Make a timetable that works.
- Fit in a wide variety of subjects in teaching your child.



- Balance homeschooling and housework, completing all you need to do in a timely way.
- Homeschool your child, whether a pre-schooler or highschooler.
- Homeschool a group of children of different ages.
- Make good choices of what will suit your children and family when choosing curriculum and books.
- Sidestep homeschool stress and homeschool burnout.

### **HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF THIS BOOK**

Each chapter in the book builds on the previous ones, so the best thing to do is to read the book from front to back. To begin with, I will show you how to ease into homeschooling in a simple way. If you are already homeschooling, you might like to look at this chapter to see if it offers any clues to an easier daily life for you.

As the chapters build up you will see how to add a new subject to your timetable for the first eight weeks, and at the same time that you are doing that, you are digging deep to discover the best approach to homeschooling for you personally.

I recommend that you work on a chapter a week, and you will find that each chapter concludes with a weekly assignment. This is a small task to help you apply what you are learning, and hopefully it will enrich your life as you apply it.

After eight weeks I will help you build a new and improved timetable, and then we will go deeper and wider to look at various aspects of homeschooling and family life.

As you read, you will see that there are some helpful charts and forms, and these are all available to you online. You can then print what you need for your own homeschool folder.

### **A NOTEBOOK IS A GOOD IDEA**

You might like to get yourself a notebook or loose-leaf folder to store your notes as you work through the book. And if this is your own personal copy of the book, then do what C. S. Lewis suggested, and write notes and messages to yourself in the margins, highlight parts you like, and generally make the book your own.

Let me start by introducing myself to you and telling you about my own homeschooling experience.

## CHAPTER 1

# MY HOMESCHOOL STORY

We first started officially homeschooling many years ago, in early 1985 when our oldest child was almost six. Homeschooling was very different then—in fact we homeschooled for quite a while without meeting or knowing a single family who was homeschooling, and our own families thought we were ‘going through a phase’. Nobody around us had heard of the term *homeschooling* at that time. There was no homeschooling curriculum available to me, so I made up my own curriculum and scoured the bookshops for books to fit what I wanted to do.

As I had been a primary school teacher, it wasn’t too hard. And the best thing was that I had been mentored by an old-fashioned-style senior teacher; I learned so much from her about the basics of what I think of as *real teaching* and *real learning*.

After three years training to be a teacher I had been given my piece of paper saying that I was qualified to teach. I had learnt heaps about the sociology, history, psychology, and pedagogy of teaching. I had done very well during my practices in schools with real life children to teach. But I knew remarkably little about actual classroom teaching. Looking back, I am surprised and just a tad concerned that we were let loose in the classroom.

My Head of Department was very generous in teaching me how to teach. She knew what she wanted from the children and she explained it to me quickly. I obeyed her very well, and I got the good results she was after, so that pleased us both.

Then, as a homeschooling mum, I used my teaching experience to homeschool and it worked. I soon developed my own style which improved as I became more experienced as a parent and a homeschooler. I got some things right and plenty wrong. But my philosophy stayed the same, while my method of applying that philosophy improved and became more refined and streamlined.

The two older children had some time in school. Then they came home again and joined their younger sister in homeschooling. After a while we started meeting others who were starting out on their own homeschooling adventure and I started a homeschool support group.

Having homeschooling friends was fun, although it also made things harder for us to homeschool in some ways. For example, one of the things that I didn't bother with when we knew no other homeschoolers, was working in with school holidays. We ignored school holidays and just took rests and breaks when people were tired, then we started back with more formal learning when we had rested. But socialising with other homeschoolers and working in with extra-curricular activities meant that it was very hard to keep up this relaxed approach.

Another thing I noticed was the developing homeschool market, mainly from overseas, having a strong influence on homeschoolers in New Zealand. Over time, I saw that there were 'fashions' in homeschooling. For example, a certain mathematics programme or writing programme or history or science programme would become fashionable. It felt like too many people were going for the fashionable programme rather than what their children needed. It's never a good idea to get distracted with beautiful tools is it? It's always best to focus on what your child needs at the moment.

Over the years, homeschooling has become more popular and widely accepted. I haven't been surprised by this because it's such a happy lifestyle; it's a great way to spend time with your children; and you can be confident that your child is getting a good, wholesome, balanced education.

The internet has made knowledge and information more accessible too, so that was another big change and benefit for homeschoolers. But there is a down-side to the internet. I started to see that homeschoolers were feeling stressed and unhappy. They had so much information available, but it seemed to be confusing rather than helping them. I saw that they were spending a lot of money on equipment, curriculum and classes that were good for some people, but not necessarily good for them.

I could see how hard it was for people to identify what was the best for their family and what was better to leave for others.

Homeschooling had become an expensive and worrying lifestyle for many families.

Of course, the support of an experienced homeschooling friend can make all the difference to a homeschooler. And that's what I want this book to be for you. I can take you logically, calmly, and simply through some basic steps to help you plan your own homeschooling style and method. And as you read, I hope you will learn how to live the life that *you* want with *your* children.

## CHAPTER 2

# START HOMESCHOOLING TODAY

*A journey of a thousand miles begins  
with a single step.*

For many of us, the thought of homeschooling your child can be daunting, and it can feel like an immense responsibility. Most people wonder where to start, and they are certainly afraid of getting it wrong. Then there's the question of how you will manage as your child gets older. And what do you say to those who ask you about exams, university and a million other things?

Those are all valid concerns and questions. But we'll start small. Let's concentrate on *this week* with your child, and how to start homeschooling *today*.

First, I will give you an overview of homeschooling and enough information to apply in your home with your family. Then you will actually be able to say that you have started homeschooling.

Over the next following chapters I will take you deep on various topics so that you can accurately work out the way you are going to homeschool.

We'll start with a plan for the next two months. This will be a timetable that will cover your first eight weeks of homeschooling. By working in this way, you will ensure that you will be successful in homeschooling in the *long run*. You *won't* suffer from burnout, you *will* enjoy homeschooling. And you *will* succeed and see good progress with your children.

### **FIRST MAKE A TIMETABLE**

No matter what style of homeschooling you choose, you will need a timetable. Some people might think that unschoolers don't need a timetable. But you will find that even successful unschoolers have some sort of timetable. It may be flexible, and fluid, but it will be there.

This step of making a timetable is crucial to your well-being

and peace of mind. It will help you be a successful homeschooler.

So let's start with your timetable. This timetable will last you for eight weeks. It is your *Eight Week Timetable*.

The reason for having a timetable for only eight weeks is so that you can start homeschooling today in a simple way, and at the same time you can start to develop your ideas and vision about homeschooling long term. At the end of the eight weeks you will be ready to make a new timetable and I will show you how.

The new timetable will cover things in more depth, and you may be tempted to skip the *Eight Week Timetable* and rush straight off to the more detailed timetable. DON'T DO IT. You want to make a good job of homeschooling. This is the way to do that. Your *Eight Week Timetable* is a wonderful timetable for your first eight weeks. It's simple, it's easy to do and you will be able to relax, knowing that you are teaching your children, that you are making progress, and also, most importantly, that you are building up a very clear idea of what you want to achieve in the long run.

To start preparing to make your timetable, I have some questions for you. Give your very honest answers to these questions. It's not a test, and there are no right or wrong answers. This will help you plan a timetable which will actually work for you. You can use your notebook or folder to keep these answers in. We will be building up pages over the course of the book.

*'If you don't know where you are going,  
how can you expect to get there?'*

BASIL S. WALSH

### **EIGHT WEEK TIMETABLE PLANNING QUESTIONS**

1. What time does your family normally get up on a weekday morning? Say what's comfortable at the moment, and not what you would like it to be.
2. Make a list of the morning chores that you have at your house. It might include things like: get dressed, make the bed, eat breakfast, wash the dishes, put washing in the washing machine, sweep the floor, feed the animals... Make your own list.

3. Do you and your children concentrate better for academic work in the morning or in the afternoon?
4. Do you have any commitments that must go into the timetable? This might include things like regular appointments, work hours, on-going classes.
5. Write down any book titles that you would like your child to read or have read to him in the next month. Choose a couple of chapter books if you have over 7-year-olds, and half a dozen favourite picture story books for younger children. If you haven't got any book titles ready yet, you can look here for some of my own personal favourites: <http://homeschoolfamilylife.com/book-shelf/books-for-children/>
6. Do you have any hobbies or passions which are an important part of your week and you need to allocate time for these interests?
7. What's your refreshment? What do you like to have in your cup? Is it tea? Coffee? Herb tea? Gin? (just joking) Write down what you usually drink as refreshment during the day.

*'The secret of all victory lies in the organisation of the non-obvious.'*

MARCUS AURELIUS

### PUT YOUR EIGHT WEEK TIMETABLE TOGETHER

Now that you have got answers to these questions, you are ready to make your *Eight Week Timetable*.

- **First decide** if you are a morning person and family or an afternoon person and family. Do you find that you and your children are more productive and ready to do sitting-down, brain work in the morning or the afternoon?
- **Then print** a single copy of the appropriate timetable on the last two pages of this chapter. There are two timetables there: one for morning people, and one for afternoon people.
- **Now fill** in the timetable.
  - Fill in your time for getting up each day.
  - Make a realistic assessment of how long it will take you to finish breakfast and complete your morning

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephanie Walmsley is a teacher by profession, with classroom teaching experience in New Zealand and England. She and her husband, Philip, started officially homeschooling their five children in January 1985. The older two had a couple of spells in school; the younger three never went to school.

She worked as a volunteer for over twenty years, supporting mothers in their mothering and homeschooling. Then in 2002 she started writing and conducting courses for homeschooling parents because she saw a need for good, professional, homeschool help available from someone who has 'walked the talk'.

She has written a series of online courses for homeschooling mothers, and also has eBooks and study guides available.

Her passion is to support parents with their children and especially in their home education.

Visit Stephanie at [www.successfulhomeschoolingmadeeasy.com](http://www.successfulhomeschoolingmadeeasy.com)