

Homeschool Time Management



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Homeschool budgeting sometimes has nothing to do with math and money, but with time. Planning for the school day and year is crucial for the success and sanity of both teacher and students. At least for most of us. I have friends who are very unstructured in their homeschooling and their children seem to thrive. While I applaud them, I need a plan!

When I started homeschooling, my planning consisted of choosing curriculum and following the scope and sequence. I planned for the week and tried my best to get it done. If I didn't, I felt like a failure. Throughout the year, I got distracted by all the bright, shiny opportunities available. Weekly homeschool choir and drama? Ultimate frisbee? Cool field trip tomorrow? Sign the kids up and we'll make it all work!!!

Except it didn't. Doing "all the things" clogged our busy schedule. I felt like I was doing it all but none

of it well. Many of those activities fizzled with my burnout and lack of energy. Keeping up with everyone and committing to every activity that came along did not work.

Sarah Mackenzie explores the reality of time in her book *Teaching from Rest*. She explains that parents only have a fixed amount of time. Without time management, parents will be frustrated and anxious. Sarah further states that parents cannot base their homeschool schedule on their desire to do hands-on activities. Examples might include growing an organic vegetable garden, taking weekly field trips, or studying a new composer or artist each week. She contends that parents must first consider their reality and plan accordingly.

Now, I budget time in a variety of ways. In the summer, I budget my school year on a chart, splitting the curriculum into months. This is an estimation, but it helps me to avoid unrealistic expectations.

At the beginning of the year, I also set up a schedule for each school day, with our other activities worked into the time that remains. This way I balance our day without overbooking. When I taught in traditional classrooms, each class was only 45 minutes. If I wanted to finish a longer lesson, I had to spread it out over a few days or trade it for another activity I had planned. The same concept applies to homeschooling. I have an allotted time for each subject. If we really get immersed in a topic, we have the flexibility to spend extra time on it because of scheduled "catch-up" days. Sometimes things come up unplanned or we need an extra

day for review. The margin built into our school year covers when life gets in the way of my lesson plan.

I want my time homeschooling to be well-spent and well-invested in the education of my children. Budgeting my time allows me to take a deep breath and enjoy the experience without having to rush.