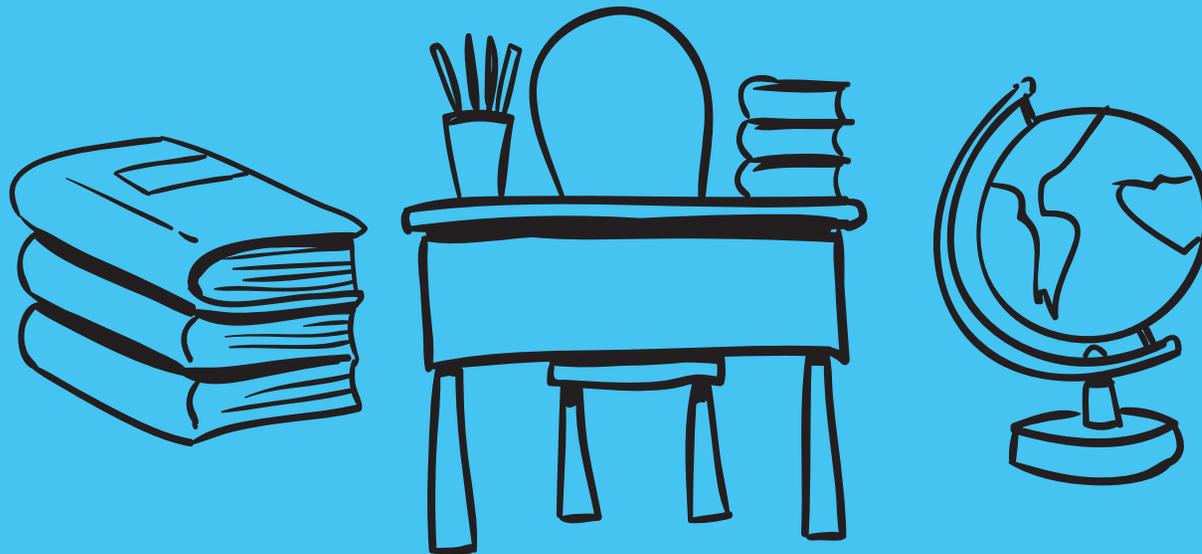
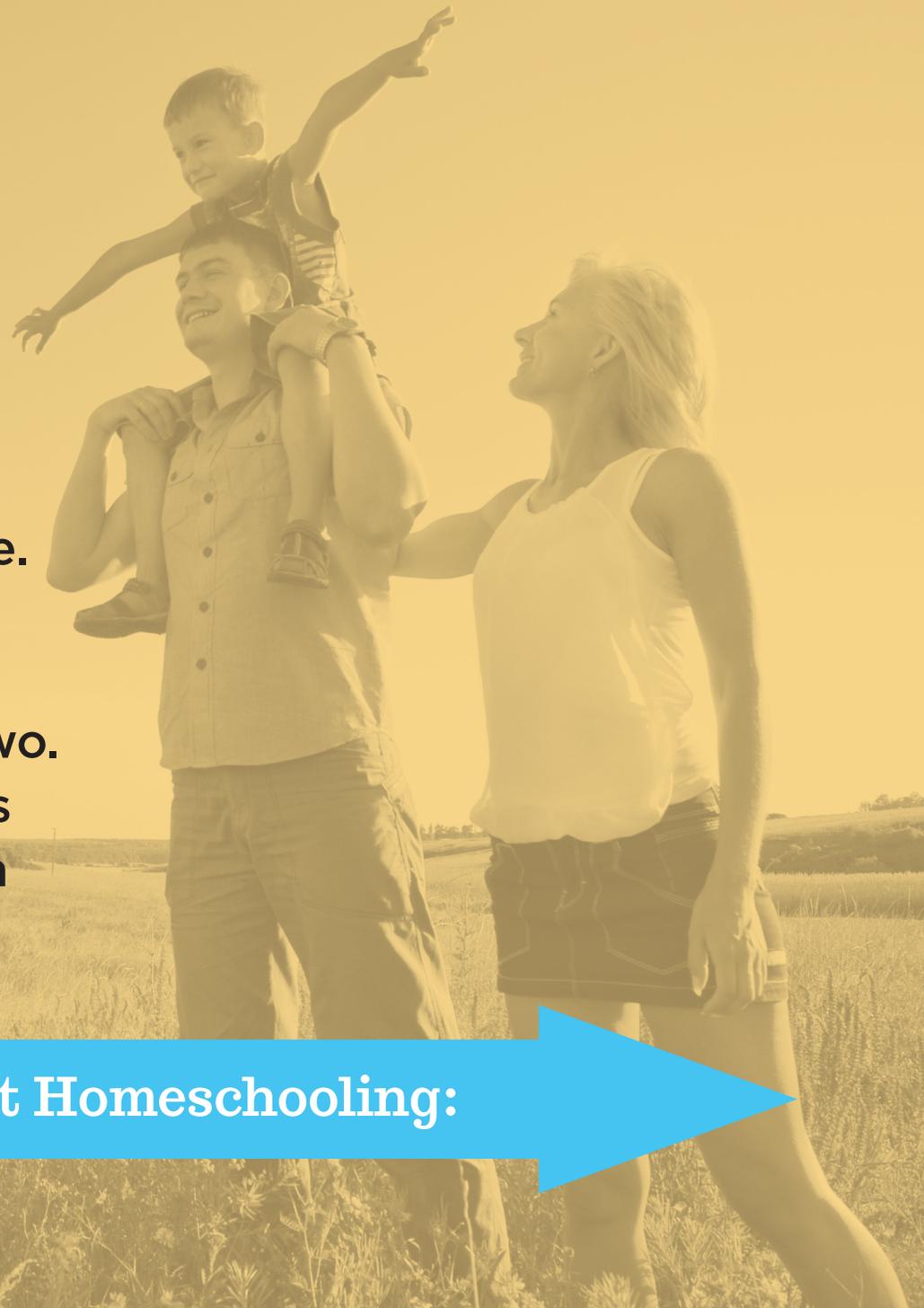


# HOMESCHOOLING STEP-BY-STEP GETTING STARTED GUIDE



*Making the decision* to homeschool is one of the most rewarding choices you'll ever make. But, you may be overwhelmed with the many homeschool programs, homeschool curriculum, and advice. You're at the right place. After 25 years of working with homeschool families, we've learned more than a thing or two. And now we would like to bless your homeschool program with our experience!

Here are the *10 STEPS* to Start Homeschooling:



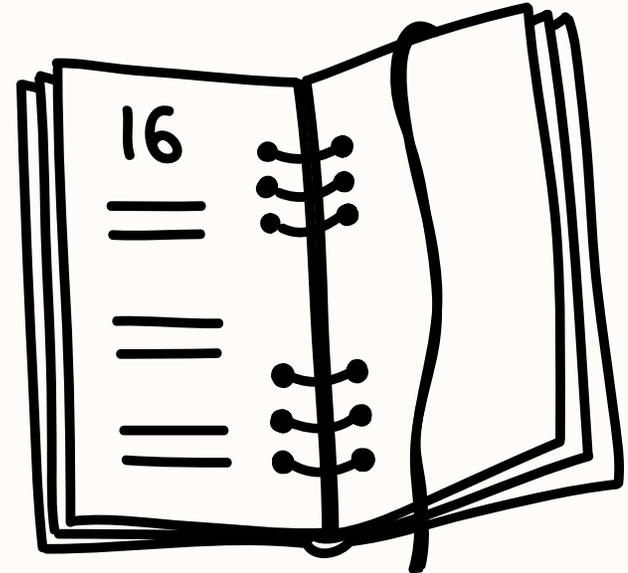
## Step 1

# MAKE THE COMMITMENT

## *Commit to Consistency*

Every family deciding to homeschool must be united in their decision and stay committed to what they have chosen. This includes:

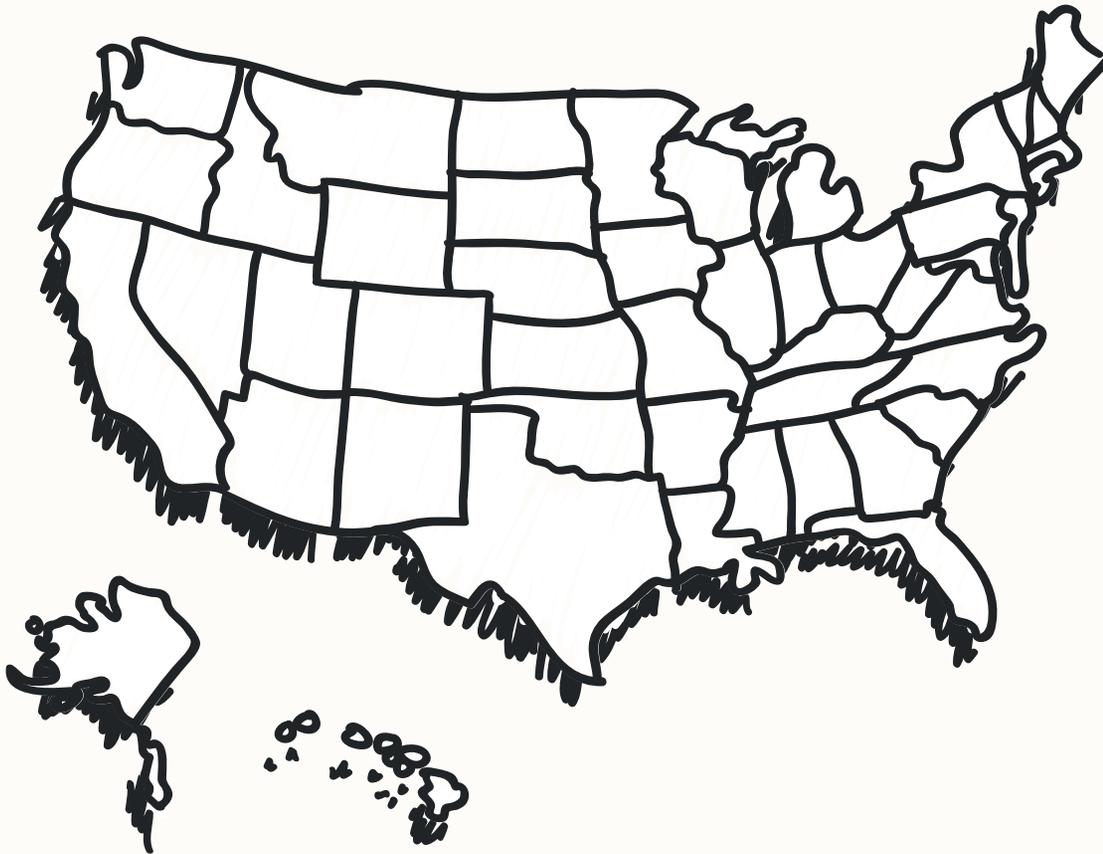
- Commit to a full year—one year at a time.
- Commit to a schedule. While spontaneity is good, it's essential to have a basic schedule. Just make sure to keep your schedule flexible enough to enjoy some spur-of-the-moment outings.
- Commit to your family's spiritual and moral foundations.
- Commit to your spouse. Know your roles and when each of you will be helping your children learn. And get ready to support one another when challenges arise.
- Commit to building new relationships within your homeschooling community.
- Commit to standing firm against the opposition. Every family has those people who will not support your decision to homeschool. Have a planned answer for them and stand firm in what you believe is best for your family.
- Commit to your child! Not every day will be a walk in the park, but stay positive and encourage excellence. Kids will live up to your expectations.
- Commit to helping your child develop a love of learning.



## Step 2

# KNOW YOUR STATE LAW

Homeschooling Laws vary by state, so it's essential to know what your state requires. In some states, there are more detailed guidelines and concrete standards; in others, compliance is easy. However, knowing your state requirements before you begin to explore your options will help to define whether you will homeschool independently or seek the help of a partner like Bridgeway Academy.



*Once you have your state homeschool laws under your belt, the possibilities are endless!*

**[Click here](#) to explore the homeschool laws in your state.**

Step 3

## KNOW YOURSELF

### *Know Your Style*

Before you embark on the incredibly rewarding homeschool journey, you need to examine yourself. What kind of teaching role do you want to take?

- Are you a creative individual who loves to find new ways to explore? OR are you an individual who can take someone else's creative ideas and tailor them to your kids?
- Are you an individual who needs structure? OR are you one who prefers to "wing it" and see where the day takes you?

These questions are important to explore before beginning your search for just the right curriculum. Why? Because they help to define the kind of program you need.

- If you are super creative, you might want to consider a program that allows room for that creative flair.
- However, if you are one who has trouble coming up with your own ideas but can take an idea and make it better, you may need a program that is already laid out for you, providing time for enrichments of your own.

### *Avoid the Comparison Game*

One big struggle among homeschoolers is the comparison game — "Look at what Sue is doing. Her kids are doing so well! I have to try that program!"

*That program might not fit you.*

And if it doesn't fit you, your enthusiasm can easily begin to dwindle, and before you know it, both you and your kids are ready to throw in the towel.

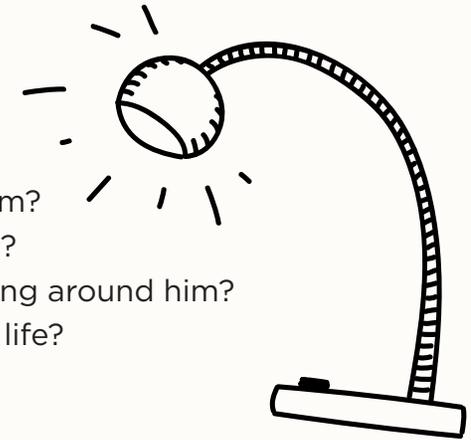
**Know your passions; know your abilities and be willing to accept your strengths and your weaknesses. That is where a successful program begins.**

## Step 4

# KNOW YOUR CHILD

*Ask yourself these questions.*

- Does your child love to get dirty and explore the world around him?
- Is she a child who loves to sit down and listen as you read a story?
- Is he an analytical thinker, who tends to question what is happening around him?
- Is she one who can connect events and experiences to lessons in life?
- Does he seem to thrive when able to create with his hands?
- Does she naturally “get it” the first time she hears it?



**These kinds of questions can help to define the best kind of learning approach for your child.**

- A hands-on learner will not be content to sit and fill out worksheets or listen to you explain concepts.
- A student who has strong auditory skills will thrive with a curriculum that uses interesting stories to teach about history, science or literature.
- A student who needs to hear or try something several times before she is able to grasp it will need a mastery curriculum with a lot of repetition and review.

***Knowing your child's academic level is also critical to a successful program.***

Many parents make the mistake of simply purchasing curriculum that is aligned to their child's chronological grade level. However, in many cases, that math course is too difficult because the right foundations have not been laid, or that English course is too easy because your child is an accelerated learner.

Testing your child to determine his or her actual academic level will ensure that your program will be a successful one.

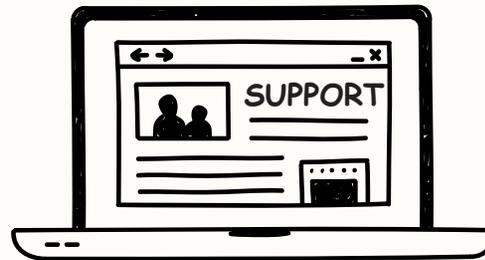
That is why Bridgeway Academy tests each student upon enrollment to determine the best academic level for that child. This information, combined with a detailed learning and personality survey, and a parent interview, provide the basis for designing a program that will work effectively for each student.

## Step 5

# FIND A SUPPORT NETWORK

One of the best moves you can make as a homeschool family is to establish a homeschool support group. At the onset, support groups are families planning field trips together, meeting for “physical education” classes, sharing ideas and supporting one another through the rewards and the struggles. As the group grows, you can begin to provide specialty courses for your kids like:

- Science labs
- A study of Shakespeare
- Writing and Research
- Public Speaking
- Art
- Book Clubs
- Sports teams



The list could go on and on. But where do you find a support network? If you are jumping into homeschooling without established friends or acquaintances who already homeschool, be sure to search out a group in your area.

- Start by seeing if there are any other homeschooling families in your church, or if your church hosts homeschool co-ops.
- Many homeschool groups are now registered on Meetup.com. A quick search will let you know if there is one in your area.
- Check local history or science museums, which often offer homeschool workshops or classes.
- Visit your local YMCA, ice skating rink, gymnastics academy, or youth theater. These organizations often offer special classes for homeschoolers, or work with serious athletes who homeschool in order to gain the flexible schedule they need.

**Another terrific way to network is to consider enrolling in a homeschool academy like Bridgeway Academy, where you can pick up the phone or drop an e-mail to your advisor whenever you need help, tips or advice. In many cases. Your advisor can also point you to support groups or other homeschoolers in your area.**

## Step 6

# EXPLORE YOUR CHILD'S INTERESTS

One of the greatest freedoms in homeschooling is the freedom to explore your child's interests.

- If your curriculum provides an introduction to medieval history and your child is enthralled, take the time to pursue it further.
- If you know your child has a passion for the study of electricity, give him the tools to dig deeper.
- If you have a budding writer who can't wait to publish her own book, provide the time to develop her writing skills.
- If your child loves photography, let him pick up a camera, enroll him in a class, or just provide ample time for him to get out and start shooting.

We learn best when we are interested in knowing more. Consider yourself — when you decided to consider homeschooling, you suddenly developed a deep interest in learning more about it. You have likely spent considerable time surfing the web, reading as many resources as you can find, questioning those you know are involved in homeschooling, and seeking answers for your many questions.

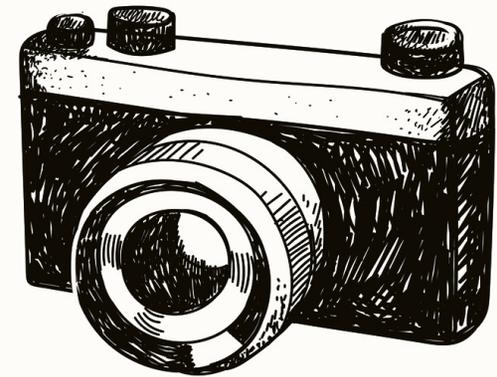
### **You have been learning.**

And all of that study will likely remain with you. Why?

### **Because you want to know!**

Kids are the same way. When they want to know something, they are ready to learn. They are willing to take the time to read, to listen, to study, to explore.

So don't wait to take that detour. Whether you cover it with a formal curriculum or simply supplement your core, your homeschooler will retain much more when he or she is interested.



## Step 7

# GET ORGANIZED

You are well on your way! You have selected your homeschool program; you have researched your state homeschool laws; you have found the right approach for your child ... you are ready to begin!

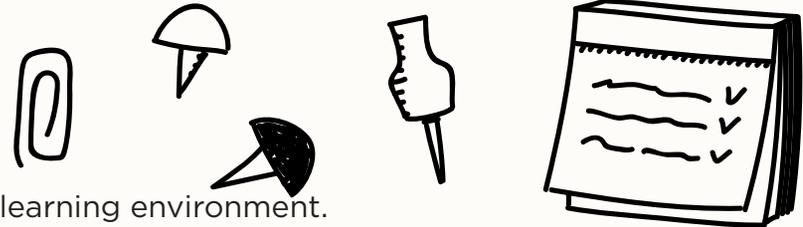
### *What next?*

It's time to get organized! Start by setting aside a specific area in your home for homeschooling. While it does not need to be a whole room, it does mean that each child has their own area to store books, to keep their school supplies, and to find more information. And it gives them room to spread out those books as the learning takes place.

This area could be:

- a shelf
- a specific school room
- a box
- a bin to slide under the bed
- a cupboard in the kitchen or dining room . . .

. . . you decide what will work in your home and learning environment.



### *Do they always do their homeschooling at their desk? NO.*

On many occasions throughout each year, we can be found studying spread out in the dining room, laying on the living room rug, snuggled in my bed, or outside on the porch reading, writing, discussing or working on curriculum.

But the kids got into the habit of putting their materials away every day. This eliminates the need to go searching for things each day and gives them a sense of ownership and responsibility.

So, before your year begins, I strongly recommend that you find a space in your home that is reserved only for your homeschool materials. I guarantee you will not regret it!

## Step 8

# COMMIT TO THE HOMESCHOOLING LIFESTYLE

“Commit to the Homeschool Lifestyle” may sound a little scary. But I am not suggesting that you rearrange your entire life; instead, I am referring to the fact that homeschooling does not simply occur between the hours of 9:00 and noon or 3:00 (depending on your child).

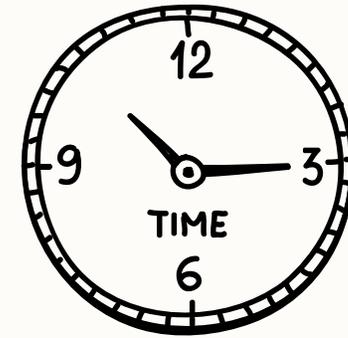
Homeschooling cannot be put into a “box”.

When you commit to homeschooling, you are committing to homeschooling 24/7. You see, when you begin to think like a homeschooler, you find yourself taking advantage of every teachable moment; you find yourself encouraging your child to ask questions; and you find yourself taking the time to research the answers when you are unable to answer them immediately.

This means that dinnertime is learning time; bedtime is learning time; even vacations are often used to teach. Homeschooling on the road becomes part of the normal routine.

For example, traveling to the beach can bring up lots of questions. Many times children will ask about the things they see, like jellyfish, dolphins, crabs, mussels, animals, the tide and more! Take these moments to not just give a simple answer, but to research their questions! This helps them take initiative in learning and inspires more curiosity.

That is homeschooling! It is more than simply completing the requirements of the day or getting through a certain amount of curriculum and materials.



*It is a commitment to learning and to building a love of learning into our children.*

**Step 9**

# BECOME YOUR FAVORITE TEACHER

**I remember my favorite teacher.**

Miss McCullough was my fifth grade teacher and she was amazing! She loved to pour herself into us. She was funny; she was loving; she was willing to steer away from the curriculum and delve into some rabbit trail we started down with our many questions; she would have us pile onto the classroom couch after lunch every day and listen as she read exciting books . . . She was everything I wanted to be as a first-time homeschool mom. In fact, you could say she was my inspiration.

**So how do you become a homeschool teacher?**

When you begin your own homeschool journey, start with a goal in mind. But rather than set a goal that is simply based on what you want to accomplish, define the kind of teacher you want to be. And keep that goal in mind as you meet the challenges of the day-to-day.

You will have days when you want to pull your hair out, but you will also have incredible days where everything comes together.

So define who you want to be in homeschooling. Write it down; post it somewhere and keep that goal in mind. A homeschooling mom is a worthwhile goal.



Step 10

## GET READY TO LEARN

As a homeschool mom, you will learn so much more than you did when you yourself were in school. History that may have bored you will come alive; math skills that eluded you will come together; grammar will finally make sense; and science will intrigue you.

**But your learning will go so much deeper than the academics.**

You will gain so much more insight into your own kids — their passions, their struggles, their amazing abilities, their personalities.

You will more than likely begin to see yourself more clearly as well.

- Are you a highly motivated person?
- Are you organized? Are you able to be silly and upbeat?
- Do you have a quiet spirit?
- Does chaos inspire or discourage you?
- Where are you most creative?

You will learn to be flexible; to be spontaneous; to be ready to explain things in as many ways as necessary to help your child learn.

So you want to know  
**how to homeschool?**

*Get Ready to Learn!*

Want to know more?  
Feel free to call our  
Admissions office  
at 800-863-1474  
or request our free  
information pack [here](#).

So jump in, enjoy your  
homeschooling and get  
ready to learn!

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