

SO YOU'VE DECIDED TO HOMESCHOOL

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Uh-oh. I know that face.

You've decided to homeschool... and now you are completely overwhelmed.

Breathe, mama. Come here and have a seat.

SO YOU'VE DECIDED TO HOMESCHOOL

I'm going to tell you what I wish someone had told me when I first started down this path.

THE HARDEST PART IS ACTUALLY MAKING THE DECISION.

Believe me, I understand how you are feeling right now. You are scared and overwhelmed and second-guessing your choice. Still, you know in your heart that this is the right choice for your child right now. The hardest part is making the decision that your gut is screaming at you to make. Research what you need to do, legally, to homeschool in your state and then *do that*. Send the letter. Call your parents. Tell your friends. Start. Do whatever you need to do to make it official and then breathe a sigh of relief, knowing that you've already done the hardest thing.

IF YOU'VE BEEN IN PUBLIC SCHOOL, TAKE SOME TIME TO DESCHOOL.

If your child is transitioning from a brick and mortar school, take a break. Do not attempt to jump into a new version of school at home. Don't rush it. Take some time to just be, to reconnect and to have fun. **Do things together that make you smile**. Don't worry about the academics right now (even though you will anyway!), focus on your hearts. If your child has been misunderstood in school, deschooling may take longer and *that's okay*.

It's *normal*! Let your child heal.

DON'T GO OVERBOARD BUYING CURRICULUM.

You will ignore this one because everyone does. You'll fill your Amazon cart with **all the things**. Most people who go overboard on curriculum suffer buyer's regret down the road. You do not need every imaginable school supply, every book, every teacher's guide. Start

small and see what works and what doesn't. Build your bookshelves over time. Remember, you are just starting out. You need to learn how your child learns.

THINGS WILL CHANGE. AND THEN THEY WILL CHANGE AGAIN.

The first year of **homeschooling is an evolution**. You learn about your child, about yourself, and about your concept of school and of learning. Homeschooling is such a journey and you grow and change together. You might start out homeschooling with a schedule in a school room and, three months later, you might find that unschooling works better for your child. You are in charge and in order to find out what works best, you have to put one foot in front of the other.

THERE WILL BE DOUBT. WHEN IT HAPPENS, READ ALOUD.

You *will* second guess yourself all the time, especially during the first year. This is normal. When in doubt, read aloud. Of course, you should read aloud every single day, but *especially* on the days you are struggling. So much learning happens when you read aloud. You can cover any academic topic, any interest, and any genre. Are you feeling that you have been slacking in math? Grab some **math storybooks** and snuggle up on the couch. That's math, my friend. You can check off that box and breathe a little easier.

FIND A TRIBE...

Don't do this alone. Find other homeschoolers in your area. Visit a co-op, attend a meet-up, have someone over for coffee. If you can't find local homeschoolers, think about creating a group at some point. Not right now, but make it a goal. In the meantime, find kindred spirits online. Everything is easier when you have a **homeschooling sister** or two by your side.

...BUT STEER CLEAR OF THE COMPARISON TRAP.

When you seek out homeschoolers online, please remember that you are seeing the best of the best. No one is posting about the dinner they burned to a crisp or the unit study that left the whole family in tears. You are seeing the successes, and *no one* is successful all the time. **Balance is for the birds**, even if it doesn't seem that way on **Pinterest**.

YOU DO NOT NEED TO KNOW EVERYTHING.

I repeat: You *do not* need to know everything. So, stop silently freaking out that you can't remember what an isosceles triangle is, or the current status of Pluto as a planet, or when the French and Indian War started. *You can re-learn it all together.* If you don't know the answer to something, you can research it together. Diving down **rabbit holes** is both fun and memorable. You'd better learn to relax and enjoy it!

YOU MIGHT LEARN MORE THAN YOUR KIDS.

You are going to learn so much this year. You are going to learn about your child as a learner and person. You are going to learn about yourself as a teacher and mentor. You are going to learn about topics you'd long forgotten or only just discovered. You are going to grow so much as a mother. Also, *your children* are going to teach you more than you'd ever thought possible. You will find yourself wondering who is actually the teacher.

THE PUBLIC SCHOOL MINDSET IS TOUGH TO SHAKE.

The wonderful thing about homeschooling is that it is flexible. You can school early in the morning or school in the afternoon. You can have a four-day week, or work through the weekend. You can homeschool year round or take vacations. If the holidays are crazy, you can take the entire month of December off and then school extra in July. Your kids can learn about **Shakespeare** or **explore chemistry** in elementary school if that is what they are interested in. This can be difficult to remember sometimes, especially when your stress level rises. Sometimes that **public school mindset** tries to sneak back in. Don't let it. You have no one to answer to but yourself.

THERE WILL BE DAYS YOU THINK ABOUT THAT BIG YELLOW BUS...

Some days will be hard. In fact, some days will be *so hard* that you will wonder if things would be easier if your child attended a brick and mortar school. In a weak moment, you may even **threaten to send them back** on the big yellow bus. It's important for you to remember that there would be bad days in public school, too. No one is immune to ugly moments.

..BUT THERE WILL ALSO BE AMAZING DAYS.

There will be days like **the ones Van Morrison told us about**. There will be happiness and love and success and wonder. You will feel so incredibly thankful that you are able to homeschool, that you are witnessing these amazing little souls grow into kind, intelligent, and loving humans.

GET OUTSIDE.

One of the best things about homeschooling is that you don't need to be *at home*. Learning happens anywhere when you just relax and let it. **Take time to be in nature together**, let the world be your classroom. Let those kids explore and get their hands dirty. **Measure your day in smiles and sediment in the tub**.

PLAY.

When children are learning in a small group or one-on-one settings, academic subjects are finished in less time than they would be in a public school. This leaves **plenty of space** for other important things: **art**, music, nature, and play. Have fun together. **Play games**. Make memories.

TRY TO BE MINDFUL AND ENJOY THE RIDE.

Homeschooling can be overwhelming... *if you let it*. Do not worry about next week or next month or next year. Focus on today. **Try to be mindful** and present as a parent. **Motherhood** is a beautiful gift and while the days may feel long, we all know these days will be **gone in a blink**.

ABOVE ALL REMEMBER THIS: YOU'VE GOT THIS.

In your worst moments of doubt and worry, I want you to remember this: You were your child's first teacher. You taught him to eat, to use the restroom, to tie his shoes, to ride a bike. You know him better than any other person on this planet. No one in the world cares more about this child and his education than you do. You are fit for this job. You've got this.

<http://my-little-poppies.com/so-youve-decided-to-homeschool/>