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Introduction

Another mom called me this morning with questions about homeschool legalities in our state and how to get started. I reassured her and explained what to do. She asked a few questions, getting more enthusiastic and excited with each answer, before saying, “I have three children,

and I'm planning to homeschool our youngest child. I would love to homeschool all of them, but I just don't think I can. How do you homeschool more than one child?"

How do I answer that question? We homeschool four children, and many families I know successfully homeschool four children and even more. Anita has four children, Shelley has five, Bonnie has six, and Victoria has seven, just to name only four that I know personally. I look at them in amazement sometimes. How do they homeschool several children successfully?

Just as each family is different, each homeschooling family has its own unique method for success. As for me, I am a list-maker. I am rather organized, or as my husband fondly says, "anal retentive." I make lists about everything because I have a bad memory. Four children will do that to you.

In this book, I share my lists with you. As a homeschooling mom of more than one child, you likely do not have time to weed through extraneous information that may or may not apply to your situation. On the other hand, you probably do have time to highlight quick tips and long-term strategies for handling a variety of situations you will likely face as you homeschool more than one child, especially if those tips and strategies have worked for others.

However, this book includes more than lists. After all, not everything can be listed neatly, particularly when dealing with children. Plus, list-making is not a requirement for homeschooling successfully. If you are not a list-maker, you will still benefit from the tips and techniques in this book because they all relate specifically to families with more than one child.

Who This Book Is For

Homeschoolers with more than one child face a unique situation. Unlike parents with a single child, we must juggle the academic needs of each individual child while at the same time organize the required paperwork, gather books and materials, plan field trips, find extracurricular activities—not just for one, but for two, three, four or more children at once! Additionally, we often must do so with the same limited space, time and finances as those of parents with only one child. This book addresses those unique concerns. This guide is for you and for other parents who need help getting started or who desire fresh ideas for homeschooling more than one child.

Homeschooling More Than One Child: A Practical Guide for Families contains answers to questions I have been asked over the years. These answers are based on my experiences with homeschooling four children and on lengthy discussions with families who have homeschooled even more children for longer than I have. It also includes information gathered from numerous resources. As a result, you should find the information sound and helpful.

This book is not a warm and fuzzy collection of stories. Rather, it is a sensible reference for homeschooling information, tips and strategies for families of any size on any budget. Whether you plan a traditional, eclectic or unschooling approach, this book will help you:

- Get started and meet state requirements
- Organize your time, records, and materials

- Modify or design a curriculum to suit more than one child
- Use the Internet and free software to make homeschooling easy and affordable
- Balance the needs of different ages and abilities
- Occupy babies, toddlers, and preschoolers when you need to teach older kids
- Tackle homeschooling as a single parent or working parent
- Get housework done while homeschooling
- Keep your children motivated
- Prevent teacher burnout
- Handle the inevitable sibling rivalry
- Find socialization opportunities that appeal to multiple ages and interests

Whether you homeschool two children or ten, have ample funds or a limited budget, the tips and strategies in this book will give you the confidence you need to continue homeschooling all your children or to start homeschooling your first grader even though you still have two in diapers. Homeschoolers in every stage will find pertinent information, from tips on handling toddlers while teaching older children to advice on juggling the academic needs of preschoolers, middle schoolers, and high schoolers simultaneously.

How To Use This Book

Homeschooling More Than One Child: A Practical Guide for Families is an organized, step-by-step approach to homeschooling with an emphasis on multiple children. It covers issues that a homeschooler of more than one child may face from the time a family starts to homeschool until that family graduates the last student. To get the most from this book, you may want to read it from beginning to end; indeed, it is written with the idea that once you get started, you choose a curriculum next, and then gather supplies, then work on a schedule, etc.

However, given the nature of homeschooling, some topics overlap chapters. For example, the sections on selecting a curriculum for multiple children may be found in “The Right Curriculum to Suit Each Child” as well as in “The Penny-Pinching Homeschooler: Affording Materials on One Income.” As a result, you should be able to find solid answers to your questions without worrying that you may miss vital information by jumping around the chapters.

Sure, you could surf the Internet for homeschool articles or discuss homeschool topics in a forum, but the results may be difficult to retain and hard to take along with you. Besides, I have already done the research for you! This book encapsulates information on homeschooling multiple children and provides practical advice and helpful lists right at your fingertips. Take it with you, consult it at a moment’s notice, and highlight the parts you want to remember.

As with other homeschooling books, keep what fits your family and leave the rest. After all, each homeschool experience is unique. All the tips that work for my family may not work for yours. Whether you are a new homeschooler or a veteran, you can use the ideas as they are, or use them as a springboard to find the best for your family.

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