

Teaching Tips Crafted from Common Mistakes

Mistake #7 'Going it Alone': Schooling all by yourself

~~~~~  
*News for H.O.M.E. May, 2001 A service to home educators across the world from H.O.M.E., Inc.*

Many of us have the mistaken concept that when we take on the responsibility of homeschooling, we must do it all by ourselves. This may be rather simple to do when children are young, but as they mature, subject matter gets more complicated and the skills and talents of our children aren't always the same as ours. We have the option of teaching them what we know and then letting them just read their way through the rest, or we can seek help from other sources. For instance, if you have never taken a chemistry course, but have the time and desire, you and your child can learn chemistry together. However, if you are homeschooling several children at once, your time might be better spent placing your chemistry student in a class equipped with lab and instructor. Keep in mind, we don't have to know everything in order to provide our children a well-rounded, quality education: we just need to be resourceful.

Here are some suggestions:

1. Trade off: In this situation, homeschooling parents work together to teach classes in which they excel. For example, one mom teaches sewing to three families of girls, then the other mom teaches music lessons. Simply find someone with skills other than the ones you possess, and trade. I've used this method quite successfully for the past three years and we all have benefited greatly.
2. Hired tutors: Math and science often call for hired tutors when the content reaches high school level. College students of a science or math major, retired teachers, or friends with expertise are possibilities. To lessen the cost, let three or more students participate in the tutoring session and divide the cost. The group should meet at least twice per week. The key to success with tutors lies in the careful selection of the tutor and the consistency of course content and pace.
3. Hired teachers for classes: If you want an art class, find a local artist to teach it. If you need a computer class, find a computer expert to teach it. As homeschoolers you have flexible hours, so classes can meet on Saturdays or weekday evenings if necessary, to adjust to the teachers' schedule. This is not a costly approach since every one splits the cost (an art class could have 10-15 students). We experienced an excellent art program this year taught by a local artist at a nominal fee because 12 students split the cost.
4. Apprenticeships: Again, with flexible scheduling you can arrange for you child to learn skills and gain knowledge by allowing your child to assist a friend of the family on the job. Choose an industry that interests your child and let them spend large quantities of time learning from the expert. An apprenticeship is not a job (there is no pay) but a hands-on learning experience. For example, working in a greenhouse is a great way to learn botany and plant care.
5. Fun days: Some homeschool support groups are large enough to provide an array of courses for a minimal fee. One friend organized such a day to meet every Wednesday and offered courses throughout the day such as art, drama, physical education, science labs and choir. These courses may last a semester or an entire year and are relatively inexpensive.
6. Multi-media: Of course, when the subject matter just isn't your forte, you can always resort to audiocassette, videotape, CDs or internet classes for further instructional help. The Internet offers an array of free online courses in almost all subject areas (including foreign languages) and across all grade levels.

7. People resources: Don't forget to notice the wealth of resources around you such as grandparents and other relatives, neighbors, or friends. For example, my mother taught oil painting, my sister-in-law worked with the children on 4-H projects and nature studies and my dad taught high school agricultural courses to both of my boys. In addition to receiving a well-rounded education, they made special memories with family members.
8. Private schools: Occasionally, private schools will permit homeschooled children to enroll in one or two classes, especially at the high school level. This could be another way to achieve higher level courses or fine arts subjects such as art, drama and music.

Trudy \_\_\_\_\_  
306 Rockhill Road, Purvis, MS 39475  
1-601-794-8450 office  
[for-home@netdoor.com](mailto:for-home@netdoor.com)  
1-601-794-5054 fax