



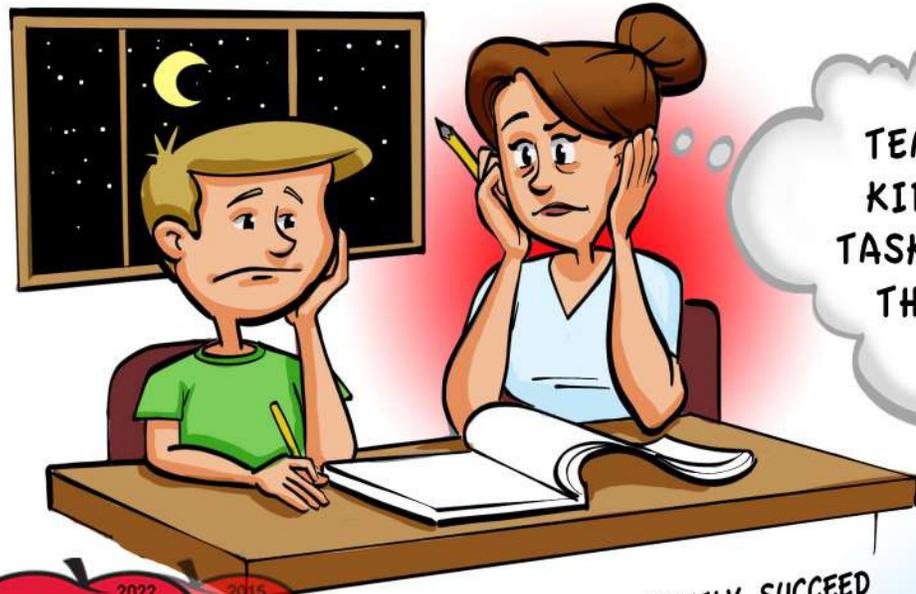
CURRICULUM

Planning Guide

Created by Hip Homeschool Moms

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Welcome!

Thank you for requesting the *Hip Homeschool Moms' Homeschool Curriculum Planning Guide*.

This resource was designed to help current and new homeschooling parents avoid the overwhelm of selecting a curriculum.

Even if you have already started purchasing curriculum, go through this time of reflection and planning. Undoubtedly, you will remember a critical detail or learn something new about yourself and/or your homeschool.

We (Trish and Michelle), combined, have over 40 years of homeschooling experience. We've homeschooled children with learning differences. We've homeschooled while working full-time. We've homeschooled when we had to decide between paying a utility bill or buying that night's dinner ingredients. Trials and triumphs are a natural part of homeschooling; we hope this resource will help you thrive in your homeschool!

When the following pages were designed, the goal was to help you reflect on the current homeschool year, re-evaluate how each child learns and your teaching style, and help you identify what is truly needed for the upcoming homeschool year.

First, take a deep breath, print out this guide, and schedule some quiet time (even if it's ten minutes at a time) to reflect and plan. It's okay if it takes you a few weeks to complete this process.

We want this planning time to stir up excitement and joy for this gift of time we have with our children.

Blessings to you,

Trish and Michelle



Curriculum Assessment Wheel

CREATED BY HIPHOMESCHOOLMOMS.COM

The school review wheel is a great tool to help you assess the last semester. It will help to determine what is working well and what is not. You will clearly see what needs intervention and what to maintain. This assessment is really about how the curriculum is working for your family. You'll need to talk about how well your child is doing using that particular curriculum. If they struggle and you see tears often, it might be time to rethink the curriculum.

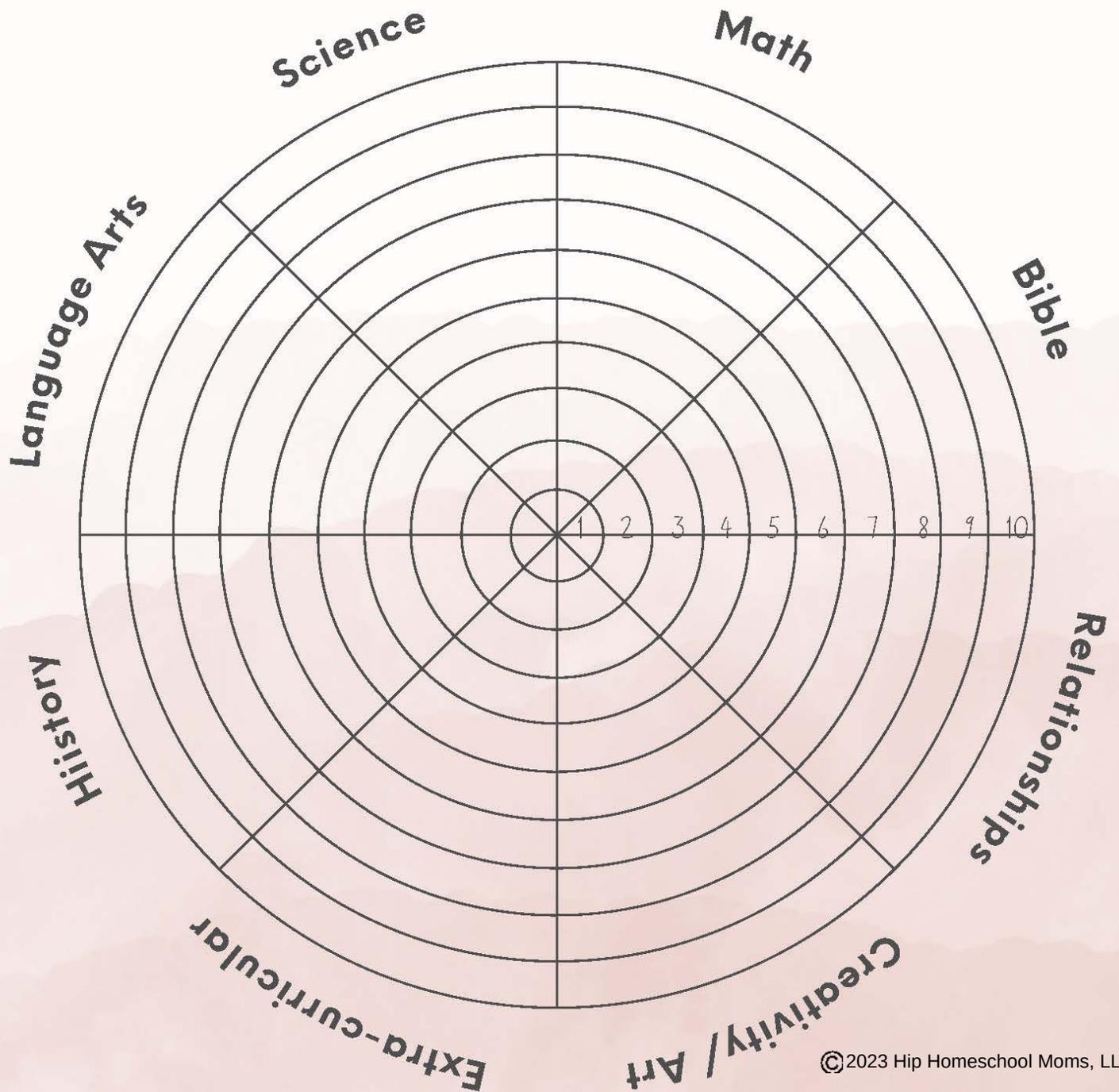
You get to decide the priorities in your homeschool. I have labeled a sample one but have also included a blank one. Label each section and rate each one from 1 – 10 (10 being the best.)

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As you read each question, simply answer "yes" or "no." Count the number of yes answers. For each yes, move outward one band of the circle toward 10. The higher the number, the better fit it is for family.

01	Is my child making progress?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
02	Does it match my child's learning style? ©	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
03	Does it fit into our homeschool lifestyle and meeting our family's needs? (For instance, is it easy to take on trips? Can I adjust the schedule?)	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
04	Does your child look forward to studying this subject using this curriculum? (You also have to determine if this is just a subject my child has to do but hates.)	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
05	Does it inspire your child to want to learn more? (Again, you may have to determine if this is a subject that just doesn't resonate, but will be needed.)	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
06	I don't have to supplement this curriculum often. (Yes = True, No = False)	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
07	Is it easy for me to prepare and teach?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
08	Is my child retaining what they are learning?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
09	Does it match our worldview?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
10	If you need help, the company supports you and will guide you through trouble spots, technology-wise or curriculum-wise.	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

10

Questions to Ask When Selecting Curriculum

The biggest question most moms considering homeschooling have is, “How do I choose the right curriculum?” Just because a curriculum looks nice or interesting doesn’t mean it will work well for you and your family. Several factors need to be considered.

1 What is your child’s learning style?

Many (if not most) young children enjoy hands-on activities. Most of these young students will learn best by moving around, singing songs with motions, dancing, coloring, drawing, playing with playdough, painting, cutting with scissors, cooking with Mom or Dad, helping with chores inside or outside the house, or any other active, hands-on activities.

As our children get older (maybe around 4th or 5th grade), they develop more specific likes and dislikes. (Of course, some children do this earlier and some later.)

If you have trouble defining your student’s learning style, there are books and online questionnaires that can help you pinpoint it. Or you can look at our article [What Is Your Child’s Learning Style?](#) to help you figure it out.

2 What is your teaching style?

One important thing that many homeschooling moms don’t think to consider is that you must find curriculum that you like and that will work well for you.

Of course, your curriculum needs to be a good fit for your child, but if you hate teaching it, you’ll have a hard time doing an excellent job of it.

If you find a curriculum that you think will work well for your child, consider how much you think you will enjoy it too. If you don’t think it will fit your teaching style, consider whether you can make a few changes so that you can enjoy the curriculum too. If not, you may need to choose another curriculum you and your child can enjoy.

3 What is your philosophy?

Do you want to use a Christian curriculum? Do you prefer a secular curriculum? Be sure to investigate whatever curriculum you're considering to determine if it fits your views.

4 How much time do you plan to spend teaching?

If you plan to spend most of your child's school hours teaching him, then you are free to choose a curriculum that calls for much parent teaching/participation. When children are younger (about kindergarten through 5th or 6th grades), you may find you interact with them more during lessons. As your teen gets into high school, it's good to encourage them to be more independent.

If you don't have time (or for some other reason aren't able) to spend most of your child's school time teaching or assisting, you'll need to keep that in mind when you choose curriculum.

Try to be realistic about how much hands-on time you can spend. If you overestimate how much time you'll be able to spend teaching, it can make for a challenging year!

5 How many children do you plan to teach at once?

If you have only one child, you may choose any curriculum that fits that child and you (the parent/teacher). If you plan to teach more than one child, however, you'll need to choose a curriculum for multiple children or adapt to fit more than one child. Sometimes this is as easy as buying enough workbooks or activity books, or other consumable materials that go with your curriculum for all of your children.

Unit studies are another option and are often easily adapted for multiple children. Yet another option is having different curriculums for different children to be taught at different times, but this could be hard to carry out.

6 How much money do you have to spend?

Your budget will probably play a big role in "helping" you choose your curriculum. If you have a limited budget, you'll need to carefully consider each purchase and make sure you don't spend too much in any one area to the detriment of another.

It may be essential for you to choose curriculum that can be used by more than one student and for students in different age ranges.

You may want to look for used curriculum sales (online or those held by local homeschool groups) or even look on eBay. Curriculum companies often have sales or offer free shipping if you order during April or May.

There are also almost always deals to take advantage of at homeschool conventions.

7 Do you plan to reuse the curriculum with other children? Do you plan to sell it once you're finished with it?

If you plan to use your curriculum with other children in future years, you may need to go ahead and buy extra workbooks or other necessary resources now. Many curriculum companies update their books and materials every five or so years. If the book you're using is updated before your next child uses it, the workbook edition you need may no longer be available for purchase. Also, buying extra workbooks now keeps you from paying a higher price later if the same workbook is still available.

8 Are you prepared to scrap the curriculum you're using if it doesn't work well for your child or you?

Remember that you may need to scrap the curriculum you've chosen for one or more subjects—especially if you're beginning to homeschool.

It is better to set aside a curriculum that just isn't working and look for something else if possible. It costs more money to change curriculum, but it will be worth it in the long run! You don't want to spend an entire school year being miserable and hating school.

9 Have you read reviews of the curriculum to learn as much as you can about it before making a decision?

Read the reviews to find out if there's something about the curriculum you haven't noticed or wouldn't have had another way to know about.

10 Have you been able to put your hands on the curriculum you're considering?

I always tell moms making curriculum decisions that there's no substitute for taking a hands-on look at the curriculums you're considering using. If you can't attend a homeschool convention, maybe you can attend a local used curriculum sale or swap. You may even be able to meet with some moms in a local homeschool group to give all of you a chance to get a hands-on look at the other moms' curriculums.



Assessing Your Teaching

Style

As you reflect on the past homeschool year and look to the upcoming academic year, take some time to assess your teaching style and how it fits your child's learning style, your curriculum selections, and your family's homeschooling schedule. Make notes and refer to them as you make curriculum and scheduling decisions.

- ◇ How many children do you plan to teach at once?

- ◇ What is your teaching style? Do you like following a lesson plan from the publisher? Do you prefer print or digital curriculum? Do you like hands-on activities?

- ◇ How much time do you plan to spend teaching?

- ◇ List each child you are homeschooling and their learning style.

- ◇ Do any of your children that you are homeschooling have learning differences that need to be considered?

- ◇ What weekly schedule(s) would you like to try? What has worked or not worked in the past for your family? Are there days of the week that will be spent away from homeschooling?

- ◇ What daily schedules would you like to try? What has worked or not worked in the past? Are there certain times of the day where you must work at a job?



Curriculum Research *Notes*

Curriculum Name _____

Price: _____

Subject & Grade Level: _____

Who will use it? _____

Format of the curriculum? Online Digital Print Other

Purchase? Or Subscription? If subscription how long is the subscription period and when does the clock start ticking? _____

Vendor with best price and their return policy? _____

Does this curriculum fit into our school year and schedule? Will I need to make modifications to it?

Does this curriculum fit my child's learning style?

Do I plan to resuse this curriculum with other children?

Am I prepared to scrap this curriculum if it doesn't work for us?

Are you able to get your hands on a copy of the curriculum to preview?

What I like about this curriculum:

My concerns about this curriculum:

Other Information & Notes