



# *Back to School*

PLANNING GUIDE

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## **RESOURCES**

# 1 | GETTING FOCUSED & GETTING STARTED

This week we're laying the foundation for our school year. It may not seem like much of a start, but we have to start somewhere. By taking the time to evaluate what we want out of our homeschooling journey, our children's interests, and our current season of life we can plan with realistic, hopeful expectations as we understand our limitations and build our family culture.

This week we're going to get a little dreamy and introspective. It'll be good. We're building a vision for all that could be.

**“Education should no longer be mostly imparting of knowledge, but must take a new path, seeking the release of human potentialities.”**

**Maria Montessori**

## DAY 1 | Get It All Out There

Today's the day we start. Are you ready? We're going to start slow, but we're going to go deep. But first, we've got to get it all out there.

### **BRAIN DUMP | WHAT'S TAKING UP YOUR MENTAL SPACE?**

Write down the things that are floating around your head- to dos, fears, stresses, ideas, hopes, weaknesses, that thing you don't want to forget. Take a few minutes to jot all that down. Revisit this as needed.

## LOOKING BACK | EVALUATING YOURSELF

Last year, what worked for you and your family? What didn't work? This could be in your homeschool routines & rhythms, your curriculum choices, extracurricular activities, or even in your household routines.

What *worked*:

What *didn't work*:

What worked *okay* but could be better:

What areas of your homeschool life (routine, preparation, teaching lesson, etc) need improving?

What are your strengths? What are your children's strengths?

How can those two work together to build a stronger environment?

## **FOUNDATION | WHAT ARE YOU BUILDING?**

Montessori isn't just about checking off skills and subjects. It's about what we're building in our homes and in our children. We are tilling the soil and cultivating an environment that will be the foundation of a lifetime of learning, exploring, and community. How we teach and what we build in our homes will have lasting effects for years to come.

What is the reason you are homeschooling?

What do you want to create in your family's education? Why?

What activities or interests are important to your family?

How might you incorporate those into your homeschool life?

**What creates an environment where you, as the parent & guide, can *thrive*?**

What are you holding onto because you feel you "should" or someone told you it's a "must do," but isn't working for you or your family?

*"Today's principles and ideas are too much set on self-perfection and self-realization." The goal of self-development is rather for service to mankind as well as individual happiness.*

Paula Polk Lillard in *Montessori: A Modern Approach*  
(quoting Montessori's *The Absorbent Mind*)

## **CREATING A VISION | WHAT DO YOU WANT?**

Describe your ideal homeschool:

Why is that important to you?

What's standing in the way of that ideal?

What steps can you take to move in that direction?

What creates an environment where you, as the parent & guide, where you can thrive?

*Joy is the best teacher.*

Julie Bogart

## **MOTIVATION | KNOW YOUR WHY**

When you have a hard day, remember why you're doing this. Write down 1-2 sentences to yourself that you can look back on during a hard day or week to remind you why you chose to do this.

## **EXPECTATIONS |**

What expectations do you have of yourself? Of your kids, your home, your time?

Are these realistic? Are they life-giving? Will they help you reach your goals in a healthy way?

What's motivating these expectations? (Fear, people pleasing, the desire to impress?)

## **VISION STATEMENT**

In 1-2 sentences, combine all the work you've done today to craft a purpose statement for your homeschool environment. Put this in a prominent place so you and your children can see and remember what you're working toward.

## DAY 2 | Putting It on Paper

Today we're going to get a little more detail oriented.

### STATE REQUIREMENTS

If you haven't already, look up your state's requirements for homeschooling. Each state has its own requirements for instructional days, subject matter, record keeping, parent/teacher qualifications, and assessment. You can find out your state's laws at Coalition for Responsible Home Education (CRHE) or Homeschool Legal Defense Association (HSLDA)<sup>1</sup>.

What's required?

What constitutes a homeschool day for you? What will you call a win?

Be okay with not replicating a traditional school day. That's not why we homeschool, right? Don't hold yourself (or your kids!) to a standard of perfection. We will have days that don't meet our standards, every teacher does. Work toward your goals, while realizing every day won't be your ideal. We're in process.

### RHYTHMS & ROUTINES

As you're envisioning your homeschool year, consider what rhythms or routines will most benefit your family. Rhythms change with the time of year, our season in life (hello infants!), and our current responsibilities in and out of the home. Every season may look different. What's worked one year may not work the next year. Be okay with that.

#### Things to consider:

- What's the natural flow of our day right now?
- What's working? What's not working?
- What areas could use more structure? Less structure?
- What do I want our day to look like? What's realistic?
- What will be life-giving for my family?
- Are there natural anchors to our week? Are they working for us?
- Are there new things I'd like to incorporate?

Give yourself permission to adapt and change things as needed. Rhythms and routines are to work for us, not us for them.

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<sup>1</sup>\* You can find these links listed under the Resources section.



## OUR *Weekly* RHYTHMS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Notes & Alternative Ideas:

## OUR *Daily* RHYTHM

Write down what is natural to your family rhythms right now. We often think there's something wrong with the natural rhythms and routines our family's have. Perhaps there's areas we need to improve, but more often than not we're trying to align our home life to fit a traditional school schedule or what works for another family and then get frustrated when it doesn't work for our own family.

**Start with where you are:**

morning	afternoon	evening

Now that you've observed the rhythms and routines of your family life. Jot down what you'd like your days to look like.

**Where you'd like to be:**

morning	afternoon	evening

Now look at those two charts.

Where are there similarities? Perhaps you desire a certain rhythm, but your family already does that but it looks or you've termed it slightly different than it was presented to you.

What is the biggest obstacle between the rhythms and routines you want and the rhythms and routines you have?

Remember you don't want to overhaul everything at once! Take the rhythms you have that are working and pick one rhythm or routine to focus on at a time. Trying to change everything at once will only lead to frustration and burnout.

**Rhythm & Routine to Change:**

Why do you need to change or add this rhythm/routine?

How do you imagine this will improve your homeschooling and family life?

What needs to happen to transition to this new rhythm?

Write 3-5 steps to work toward incorporating this new routine:

- 1 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 - \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 - \_\_\_\_\_

## CALENDAR

This is where the fun begins. Take a few minutes to brainstorm how your school year will look on the calendar. Will you school five days a week for 36 weeks or four days a week for 45 weeks over a 11 month period? Maybe you like a year-round schedule and school for six cycles of 6 weeks on and 2 weeks off.

Will you follow the calendar of the school district in your area? Or do you want to make sure your holidays are when most kids are in school? Do you want to take your children's birthdays off? Anniversaries?

Are there any big things happening in your life this year? Moving, a new baby or adoption, big trips planned, seasons that are more stressful due to jobs (ie, tax season, holidays), spouse's deployment, conferences you want to attend- all those will affect our homeschool life. If we can plan these things into and around our calendar, then they'll be less of an upset or shock to our daily and weekly rhythm when they occur.

Consider a calendar schedule that works best for you. If it's hard for your family to go back to school right after New Year's, then take that into consideration. Think how you can craft your calendar to support the rest of your life.

In the Resource section, you'll find a guide for planning by terms or planning by months. Each section has a space to jot down the amount of instructional school days needed for that term or month, breaks, seasonal and family celebrations, as well as travel and field trips. This will help you frame your school year, giving you a realistic look at the time you have and how you can frame the natural happenings of a term or month to support your educational goals.

Then use the School Year at a Glance calendar and take your highlighters or markers and color code your days for school, holidays, vacation, if you have a CO-OP or nature group, your own teacher work days (plan those! Homeschool mama's need them too!) and write them on your calendar.

*Knowing yourself and your family,  
will help you build a calendar that works for you  
and allows the whole family to flourish!*

# School Year 2019-2020

*August 2019*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

*September 2019*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

*October 2019*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

*November 2019*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

*December 2019*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

*January 2020*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

*February 2020*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

*March 2020*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

*April 2020*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

*May 2020*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

*June 2020*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

*July 2020*

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

School  Holidays  Vacation  CO-OP  Field Trip  Planning Day

## DAY 3 | Broad Strokes

Today we're going to dig into our curriculum and put to paper what we'll be teaching this year, as well as the direction our children are heading.

What are you studying this year (Ancient Greece, zoology, weather, parts of speech)? Are there certain unit studies or topics you want to cover (Black History month, botany in the spring, astronomy)?

**MONTHLY** | Write down your general idea of what you'll be studying each month.

August	September	October	November	December	January
February	March	April	May	June	July

**DAILY** | Will you cover every subject daily or group subjects by day (ie, M/W - History, T/Th - Science)?

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

**PER CHILD** | Since Montessori's approach is to each individual child rather than a grade level dictating what will be covered, it's important to take the time to see where your child is within the scope and sequence and begin planning for the next lessons in the sequence.

CHILD				
What's next?				

## DAY 4 | Scope & Sequence

**WHAT IS IT?** | Here's where we get to the nitty, gritty. The source of many people's frustration and confusion, the Montessori Scope & Sequence. What traditional educators call curriculum, we call our scope and sequence. Because no two children learn at the same pace in the same way, we don't address their education based on their age or grade level. We recognize that every child is different and needs space to learn and grow at their own pace.

The Scope & Sequence allows us to do that. It covers every subject area over a three year period, based on the planes of development. We introduce a lesson, the child practices and actively works on that skill until it is mastered. Once it is, we move onto the next lesson in the sequence, expanding skills and information within that subject as the child progresses.

While it can be overwhelming to see the amount of lessons for a scope and sequence, especially one that covers everything from practical life and sensorial to botany and astronomy, it really does simplify the Montessori teacher's life and benefits the child. We know what lesson is next and for Montessori teachers in a classroom, they've practiced these lessons in training, taught them to previous students, and have albums/manuals to assist them. Just do the next thing.

### SCOPE & SEQUENCE IN THE HOMESCHOOL | *How does it work?*

The scope and sequence in the Montessori homeschool environment works the same way and has the same benefits as it would in a classroom. If you haven't done your teacher training or purchased albums/manuals, then the hard part is finding one.<sup>2</sup>

Once you do, print it out and get familiar with it. This is a guide, a tool. Not every child will need to have every lesson. You won't need to do everything or have every single material, so don't get hung up on creating the material perfect environment. For one, it's not possible in the home. Second, many things can be taught without a formal lesson. Be okay with the difference between the school and home learning environment.

Scope and sequences are also great, because they double as record keeping. You have an automatic record of every skill and lesson a child has done, making observation notes along the way. These are great for progress reports or when you need to provide records to the state.

### **How to get through a scope + sequence without getting overwhelmed?**

Make a general plan over a 3-year period. Not everything has to be done in one year. It isn't designed that way. Even if your scope and sequence suggests a lesson for Year 2 or Year 3, it's okay if you save them for later or combine them with another area. We have freedom here.

The scope and sequence acts as our map. It helps us to see an overview of where we're headed. Don't look at it and feel you have to get every lesson and every

<sup>2</sup> Check the Resources section for suggestions of where to find a scope and sequence.

material ready now. Or that you're already behind and have failed. You haven't.

Work with what's in front of you and combine it with your child's interests. Use the scope and sequence in a way that gives life to your family and encourages a love for learning. Remember, it's a tool. Let it be a guide and aid.

**How to make the scope + sequence work for you?** Be familiar with the general sequence your child will be on in any given subject for the next 3-6 months. Using your Broad Strokes worksheet, try planning for a month or six weeks at a time. This doesn't mean your child will be ready or complete everything you've outlined within that time frame. It means that you're ready, have anticipated, and prepared for their needs, which alleviates the stress of feeling the need to prepare across every subject for whole year or 3-year sequence at one time.

Remember, each child learns at their own pace. And that is okay. It's necessary. Our goal is for our children to love learning and be engaged in the world around them.

**What do you need for the next month or term?**

## DAY 5 | Prep for Next Week

This has been a big week of planning, but we've started laying a great foundation for our school year! Hopefully, the task that seemed overwhelming is being to feel manageable.

Today we're going to make some notes and plans for next week, *Let's Prep!*

**What materials do you need to prepare?** Think short term, what's needed in the next 6 weeks?

**What supplies do you need for your prep (scissors, laminating sheets, printer ink, paper cutter, etc)?**

**Looking at your scope + sequence, what do you truly need?** There's a lot of great things, but let's prioritize. Consider how much a material will be used and whether it can be repurposed?

**What materials do you need to buy? What can you make yourself? Where will you shop?** Begin drafting that list.



## 2 | Let's Prep!

It's time to plan some late nights, a Netflix binge, listen to a good audiobook, or put in your earbuds for few podcasts...or ten. Plan simple meals or order take out.

This is hustle week. This is the week our hands hurt from cutting and laminating and our floor looks more like a tornado came through than a prepared environment. It'll be okay. We'll get there.

### DAY 1 | All the Lists!

As you get into planning, remember to prioritize what will be most useful and important. It's easy to get caught up in cute, free, and seasonal ideas, but if it's not something that can be reused, fits your budget, have space to store it, or a benefit to your child, then it's not useful or going to serve you. It will end up being a burden.

There are a couple of different lists to help you organize your planning. Don't feel like you have to use all of them. A first year Primary Montessori student will have different needs than a Lower Elementary student or even a family with children of multiple ages. These worksheets are designed to be a tool. Use what fits your season and your child's needs.

### Prioritize, Prioritize, Prioritize!

I feel a bit like a broken record, but I can't say it enough (from hard-learned experience): **Spend your time preparing materials that will help you and your children out in the long run.** Halloween counting cards are cute, but you're only going to use them for one month. Print plain numeral cards that you can use for every season and then if you want to cute it up, buy counters (erasers are great) to fit the season. Less work, similar effect.

The same goes for 3-part cards. There are so many options these days, but are all of them really necessary? What fits your goal for this year? Can they be used in multiple ways across multiple subjects? Multiple children over multiple years? What materials has your child benefited from in the past? Not all children are drawn to the same materials.

**Remember, the idea of Montessori materials is to isolate and draw attention to the concept being presented.** The work should speak for itself. Not to distract or manipulate the child to learn by making it shiny. It should invite the child in.

As you prepare and buy materials, I'd recommend spending your resources (time and money) on what can be used in multiple ways across ages (much of the bead material) or is foundational or hard to replicate on your own (the language series). When it comes to printable materials, I would prioritize math and language, then botany.





## LESSONS TO PREPARE BY SUBJECT

CHILD	Math	Language	Practical Life	Sensorial
CHILD	Geography	History	Science	Art/Music

## LESSONS TO PREPARE BY SUBJECT

CHILD				
CHILD				





## DAY 2 | Buy, Download, Print

What materials do you need to buy? Let's make a list. Not everything will need to be printed, but a lot of nomenclature (3-part cards) or materials for the language series and math equations will need to be.

This is the part that can get overwhelming, so go back and remember what do you need for the next 6 weeks? Maybe the next 6 months? What will be most useful? What do you already have that can be repurposed? Put everything else on your wish list.

There are a lot of great, free resources in the Montessori and homeschooling online communities, but **free doesn't always mean it's good for you**. It's easy to spend hours looking for a free resource that may end up just being alright and not quite what you needed. Sometimes it pays off to purchase a well-thought out, consistent, and quality piece.<sup>3</sup>

### MATERIALS to BUY & PREP

**Use this sheet to track your purchases and progress.**

Key: B - Bought, D - Downloaded, P - Printed, C - Cut, S - Stored

X	Material	Shop	B	D	P	C	S

<sup>3</sup> Check the RESROUCES section for a list of reputable Montessori shops.





## DAY 3 | Get Cutting

Today, we're going to focus on cutting. You may not have many paper materials to prep this year and that's fine. Or you may be attempting the whole grammar series (bless you!). Either way cutting materials can be overwhelming. Sounds a bit over dramatic, I know. But it's true. So either plan a late night prep session with your favorite show (or even with friends), maybe you can find a friend or relative to watch your children during the day so you can cut, prep, laminate, and cut again.

Make sure you take breaks. It can be physically overwhelming for hands and posture, as well as mentally draining when you feel you've done so much work, but see how much more you have to go. Plan those breaks. Whether it's to get coffee, have a dance party in your kitchen, do a little yoga (Yoga with Adriene on YouTube has great short flows for hands + energy)--remind yourself to take a break.

If you don't have anything to cut or make copies of, begin to sort and organize your materials by subject and priority.

## DAY 4 | Just Keep Cutting

Just keep cutting, just keep cutting, just keep cutting...

Hopefully, your hands are holding up. You're going to make it! Promise. Just think, if you're doing it now that means you're not going to be doing it when you're trying to present a lesson and realize you're missing half the materials needed. I've been there! Being unprepared is almost always the source of a good lesson or day being derailed.

If you have no materials to cut or laminate (and cut again), then use today to move ahead in organization.

It's good to be prepared as much as you can, but there will be days when you find yourself missing something or not knowing the next step as your children wait for you. Take a moment to pause. Remind yourself your worth as a parent and home educator don't ride on this. Perhaps tell your child, "We'll need to come back to this another day. It looks like I'm missing a key to unlocking this lesson." Or "You know what, it looks like we don't have everything we need for this lesson. Would you want to help me make (or find) the missing piece?" or even "It looks like I don't have all the materials I need/want, are you willing to try the lesson with me without it?"

## DAY 5 | Organize

How are you going to store all the materials you made when they're not on the shelf? Binders, file folders or boxes, binders and page protectors, plastic containers, baskets...what works for your home and space? Do you have closet or wardrobe you can use? Maybe even a file cabinet or an old card catalog (I mean...that would be a

dream.)

What system will allow the materials to be easily accessible and ready without being in the way? Few of us have the room to set up a full Montessori classroom. And that's okay. We can work within our limitations and still flourish.

Do you have the materials needed to display the works on the shelf? How will you organize your classroom? What order will you put the materials in? Usually materials are laid out in the same order as the scope and sequence, however few of us have the space or materials to lay out a whole primary classroom. If we have children in both primary and elementary (lower and/or upper), then that would be quite a lot of materials to prepare, organize, and display in one room!

**Organize your space by priority.**

What materials will be used and needed the most this year?

What about for the next 2-3 months or terms?

Where can they be displayed so they're easily accessible to the children that will use them?

Is there a way you can rework your current space to fit your educating needs for this season?

## 3 | Being Prepared Off the Shelf

Montessori is more than lessons and materials, it is the intentional preparation of the environment and teacher to foster independence and growth in the child.

“The first aim of the prepared environment is, as far as it is possible, to render the growing child independent of the adult.”  
Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*

### DAY 1 | The Prepared Environment

**WHAT IS A PREPARED ENVIRONMENT?** | The prepared environment is a well-thought out environment, classroom or home, designed with the child’s maximum ability for learning and exploration in mind. The six principles of the prepared environment are freedom, structure and order, beauty, nature and reality, community, and the intellectual environment.

**DESIGNING YOUR PREPARED ENVIRONMENT** | In creating a prepared environment in your home please keep in mind what works best for your family, your children, and your home may not be what works best for someone else. It’s easy to see Montessori environments on the internet and pine for the immaculate, perfectly proportioned furniture and expensive, hand-crafted wooden toys. We don’t all have the budgets or the space for our “perfect” Montessori dream homes.

**A prepared environment will differ with each family based on the child’s own needs and development as well as family practices and the home itself.** There is no one size fits all. You have freedom in creating your prepared environment to best suit the needs of your child.

Consider your home learning environment. Does it allow the child to move freely about? Is the child able to access materials on their own? Do you foster freedom of choice with responsibility in the child?

Is there a natural structure and order to the space? The work on the shelf is in a logical sequence? Things are not overcrowded, but placed in a way that is inviting and accessible.

Is it pleasing to the eye? Are there natural elements and textures? Do trays have weight? Do materials engage the senses? Do they allow for control of error?

Begin to brainstorm how you can refine or grow in these areas. Take into consideration that our environments will continue to change as our child’s needs and interests change.

## DAY 2 | The Prepared Environment, cont'd

Today we'll take those big ideas of the prepared environment and begin to put them in place. Rearrange shelves and materials, fix or any broken furniture or materials.

Begin setting up your shelves with your lesson materials and sequence.

## DAY 3 | The Prepared Adult/Teacher

“And so we discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words, but in virtue of experiences in which the child acts on his environment. The teacher's task is not to talk, but to prepare and arrange a series of motives for cultural activity in a special environment made for the child.”

Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*

The prepared environment is more than just the setting, it's you too. A Montessori teacher is often called a guide. Our role is not to stand in front and instruct, but to curate an environment that invites the child in to explore. As a prepared teacher, through observation we are in tune with our child's interests and sensitive periods. We cultivate and adapt the learning environment to maximize the potential of those periods.

We realize the education of a child is not about us, but about the person the child is becoming. We do not teach as authorities, forcing a child to meet our will, but we teach as students. We are constantly learning our children- their needs, skills, and interests. We must come to our children's education, not with the idea of filling a bucket, but of lighting a fire. The child isn't an empty vessel waiting to be filled, but full and waiting to be poured out. It is our responsibility, as guide, to find avenues for that potential to flow.

Take some time to consider how you approach teaching. **Do you see your role as guide and facilitator or as the focal point, the one in charge?**

**Do you prepare and teach in a way that gives room for each child's individual needs and personality?** How so? Do you allow freedom of choice? Where are areas you can give your children more freedom?

**How can you grow in your role as guide, observer, and facilitator? Where or what do you need to let go of to be the guide and parent your child needs?**

## DAY 4 | Make a Plan for Self-Care

As teacher and parent, it's important to take care of ourselves. We love our children and pour ourselves out for them, but if we also don't take care of our mental, physical, and emotional needs we'll run into burn out. Self-care is ultimately accepting the limitations of our humanity and realizing we are not God.

**PRACTICAL SELF-CARE** | As we build routines for our children, we should build routines for ourselves. Self-care is simply putting practices in place that support and encourage our mental, physical, and emotional health.

Home educating is hard, all consuming work! We often discount, or allow others to, the educational work we do because we're not in a classroom at a public or private school and we only have a few children compared to the twenty-five in the classroom down the street. For most home educators that's three or more ages and stages to prepare for! And yet, we prepare and teach for the grade level of each of our children, assessing their needs and strengths, adapting lesson plans and our schedule, and researching for what will best fit their personality and educational needs. Don't discount the work you do. **Home educating is a full time job and to do it well we need to care for our self as much as we do the child and environment.** Think of it as grace and courtesy for the self.

Think through your routines, are they supporting you in wholeness or do they leave you thin and stretched? What does your morning routine look like? Evening routine? Do you allow yourself breaks from work?

What are the parts of your day or week that make you feel most like yourself, the whole-hearted person you want to be? How can you incorporate that into your rhythms?

What does your ideal day look like? One in which you and the children both thrive?

**As you're thinking through self-care consider your season of life.** Self-care for a mom with an infant will look different than self-care of a mom whose children are all elementary age. That doesn't mean the younger mom can't have self-care practices, but simply hers will look different. And here's the thing, we have to be okay with that.

We have to be able to recognize the season of life we're in and acknowledge that we cannot do everything well. Be content with where you are and realize it's a season. It'll pass before you know it. And we need sleep, okay mama?

What physical self-care practices do you routinely ignore? A good night's sleep, healthy food, washing your face? We all have seasons where we don't take care of ourselves as we should. And sometimes it's just going to be that way.

But we should strive toward what will make us healthy and whole, as we do that we will be able to better serve our family. Take small steps. If you've been lacking in your self-care practices, don't feel like you have to do everything at once. Set small goals for yourself, maybe this month you'll work on getting 7-8 hours of sleep and next month's goal might be taking a walk twice a week.

**What self-care practices do you have in place?**

**What areas do you need to grow in?**

**SET BOUNDARIES** | As mother and homeschooler, it can feel like our task list is endless. We can easily allow ourselves to always be working, always on. This will inevitably lead to burnout. We have to set boundaries in order to flourish.

**Homeschool Prep** | As homeschoolers, it's easy to always be working toward the next thing. It's good to be prepared, but it shouldn't take over our life. Even for good things we need to set boundaries. What will your boundaries be? Consider when and how long you'll prep materials and lessons. A few weeks in the summer, maybe one day every few weeks? You need time when you are just teaching and enjoying it, not mentally multi-tasking and staying up late to get it all done. Make your own teacher work day, whether you can hire a babysitter or just let your kids have a movie marathon (Shocker! I know.), having your own planning day alleviates the stress of feeling you have to do it all now or always be prepping. When something crosses your mind to prepare or research, put it on your Teacher Work Day task list and discipline yourself to let it be until that day.

**Social Media** | Whether it's Instagram, Facebook groups, Pinterest, or blogs, we need to be aware of what we're taking in and allowing to influence us. Many of these have great benefits, but if we're not in a healthy place mentally, they can begin a quick downward spiral into comparison, feelings of worthlessness and self-rejection, isolation, and perfectionism. Social media isn't bad in and of its self, but we need to be honest about our relationship with it. Maybe a weekend social media fast or only checking in at certain times of the day.

Are there social media boundaries you need to set? If so, what's your plan?

**Expectations of Others** | One thing that often happens to stay at home moms (or even work at home moms) is people assume because you are home you have plenty of free time. People can often not understand why you can't bend your schedule to fit them in for a morning coffee or why you can't find a babysitter to go to this

workout class. *“Just bring the children along! It’ll be fine!”* people often say, without knowing the work you’ve put into building a routine or that you’ve finally in a good rhythm or a struggling child had a spark and you need to keep stoking the fire.

Sometimes it is fine and even good to break from the schedule, but it’s not uncommon to receive those type of invitations multiple times a week or month from different people. So while they may not feel that they’re asking you to do too much you know what’s already being asked of you. Be ready and okay with yourself to say “No” that for this season (day or week) we need to prioritize being at home. With homeschooling there is plenty of flexibility to change the schedule, but we also need consistency. That’s a balance, or rhythm, you’ll have to figure out for your family, but you’ll also have to be okay with saying no to people and opportunities at times.

**MOTHER CULTURE |** Mother culture is the idea that mothers should cultivate their own mind, heart, and soul, so they can in turn cultivate that of their children. What feeds your soul, makes you feel alive? Maybe it’s reading a good book, hiking, cooking a great meal, painting, going to a museum- whatever it is, incorporate it into part of your life.

**How are you going to cultivate your own heart and mind?** Take small steps to incorporate this into your daily, weekly, and monthly rhythms.

## DAY 5 | Review Your Goals & Celebrate!

Three weeks of preparation- you made it! I hope your journey through this guide has given you a vision for your homeschool, helped organize the details, and made you confident in your abilities and direction you’re going.

I’m sure there are still things to prepare. There will always be something. But take the time to step back and be glad at the work you have accomplished. The work you have done and will continue to do is building the next generation and yourself in a lifelong love of learning and exploration. This is valuable work!

Take some time today to review your goals and homeschool vision. Consider typing your vision statement (or maybe a meaningful quote or picture) and putting it in a place you’ll see daily to remind you what you’re working toward.



# Planning by Terms

2019 - 2020 Homeschool Year

Use these worksheets to help think through your calendar and family needs for the upcoming school year. As you plan your school year, take into consideration family and seasonal celebrations, as well as field trips and travel you're planning. Plan for the life you have without trying to fit your home educating into a traditional school calendar. Remember - you home educate! You have the freedom to choose and figure out what works for you and your family! Make the calendar work for you!

## Term 1:

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

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Field Trips & Travel:

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## Term 2:

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

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Field Trips & Travel:

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**Term 3:**

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Field Trips & Travel:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Term 4:**

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Field Trips & Travel:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Term 5:**

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Field Trips & Travel:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Term 6:**

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Field Trips & Travel:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Total Instructional Days:** \_\_\_\_\_

# Planning by Month

2019 - 2020 Homeschool Year

Use these worksheets to help think through your calendar and family needs for the upcoming school year. As you plan your school year, take into consideration family and seasonal celebrations, as well as field trips and travel you're planning. Plan for the life you have without trying to fit your home educating into a traditional school calendar. Remember - you home educate! You have the freedom to choose and figure out what works for you and your family! Make the calendar work for you!

## August

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

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Field Trips & Travel:

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## September

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

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Field Trips & Travel:

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## October

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

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Field Trips & Travel:

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## November

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

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Field Trips & Travel:

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## December

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

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Field Trips & Travel:

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## January

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

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Field Trips & Travel:

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## February

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

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Field Trips & Travel:

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## March

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

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Field Trips & Travel:

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**April**

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

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\_\_\_\_\_

Field Trips & Travel:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**May**

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Field Trips & Travel:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**June**

Instructional Days: \_\_\_\_\_

Break: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdays & Celebrations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Field Trips & Travel:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Total Instructional Days:** \_\_\_\_\_

# RESOURCES

## MONTESSORI MATERIALS

Montessori Services

[www.montessoriservices.com](http://www.montessoriservices.com)

For Small Hands

[www.forsmallhands.com](http://www.forsmallhands.com)

Alison's Montessori

[www.alisonsmontessori.com](http://www.alisonsmontessori.com)

Montessori Outlet

[montessorioutlet.com](http://montessorioutlet.com)

## MONTESSORI ALBUMS

North American Montessori Center (*Infant/Toddler - Upper Elementary*)

[www.montessoritraining.net](http://www.montessoritraining.net)

Montessori Research & Development (*Infant/Toddler - Upper Elementary*)

[www.montessorird.com](http://www.montessorird.com)

KHT Montessori (*Primary*)

<http://khtmontessori.com>

Keys of the Universe (*Elementary*)

[keysoftheuniverse.com](http://keysoftheuniverse.com)

Montessori Wiki Album (*incomplete, but free*)

[www.montessorialbum.com](http://www.montessorialbum.com)

## SCOPE & SEQUENCE

Montessori Compass

[montessoricompass.com](http://montessoricompass.com)

NAMC Albums

The Helpful Garden (*Primary, free*)

<http://thehelpfulgarden.blogspot.com/2011/11/montessori-primary-scope-and-sequence.html>

Montessori for Everyone

[http://www.montessoriforeveryone.com/Comprehensive-Lists\\_c\\_19.html](http://www.montessoriforeveryone.com/Comprehensive-Lists_c_19.html)

## MONTESSORI PRINTABLES

Montessori Print Shop

[www.montessoriprintshop.com](http://www.montessoriprintshop.com)

Montessori for Everyone

[www.montessoriforeveryone.com](http://www.montessoriforeveryone.com)

The Helpful Garden (*See 'Free Downloads' Tab*)

<http://thehelpfulgarden.blogspot.com>

Elementary Observations (*See 'Freebies' & 'Store' Tabs*)

<http://elementaryobservations.blogspot.com>

## **BOOKS ON MONTESSORI**

Maria Montessori,

*The Montessori Method*

*Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*

*The Absorbent Mind*

*The Discovery of the Child*

*The Secret of Childhood*

Paula Polk Lillard

*Montessori: A Modern Approach*

*Montessori Today: A Comprehensive Approach to Education from Birth to Adulthood*

Elizabeth G. Hainstock,

*The Essential Montessori*

*Teaching Montessori in the Home: The Preschool Years*

*Teaching Montessori in the Home: The School Years*

*Child of the World: Montessori, Global Education for Ages 3-12+*, Susan Mayclin Stephenson

*How to Raise an Amazing Child the Montessori Way*, Tim Seldin

## **BOOKS ON HOMESCHOOLING & EDUCATION**

*The Brave Learner*, Julie Bogart

*Rethinking School*, Susan Wise Bauer

## **HOMESCHOOLING LAWS**

Coalition for Responsible Home Education

[www.responsiblehomeschooling.org/policy-issues/current-policy](http://www.responsiblehomeschooling.org/policy-issues/current-policy)

Homeschool Legal Defense Association

[www.hslda.org/laws](http://www.hslda.org/laws)