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Volume 43 | Issue 2

GREENHOUSE

Nurturing Home Education in North Carolina and Beyond



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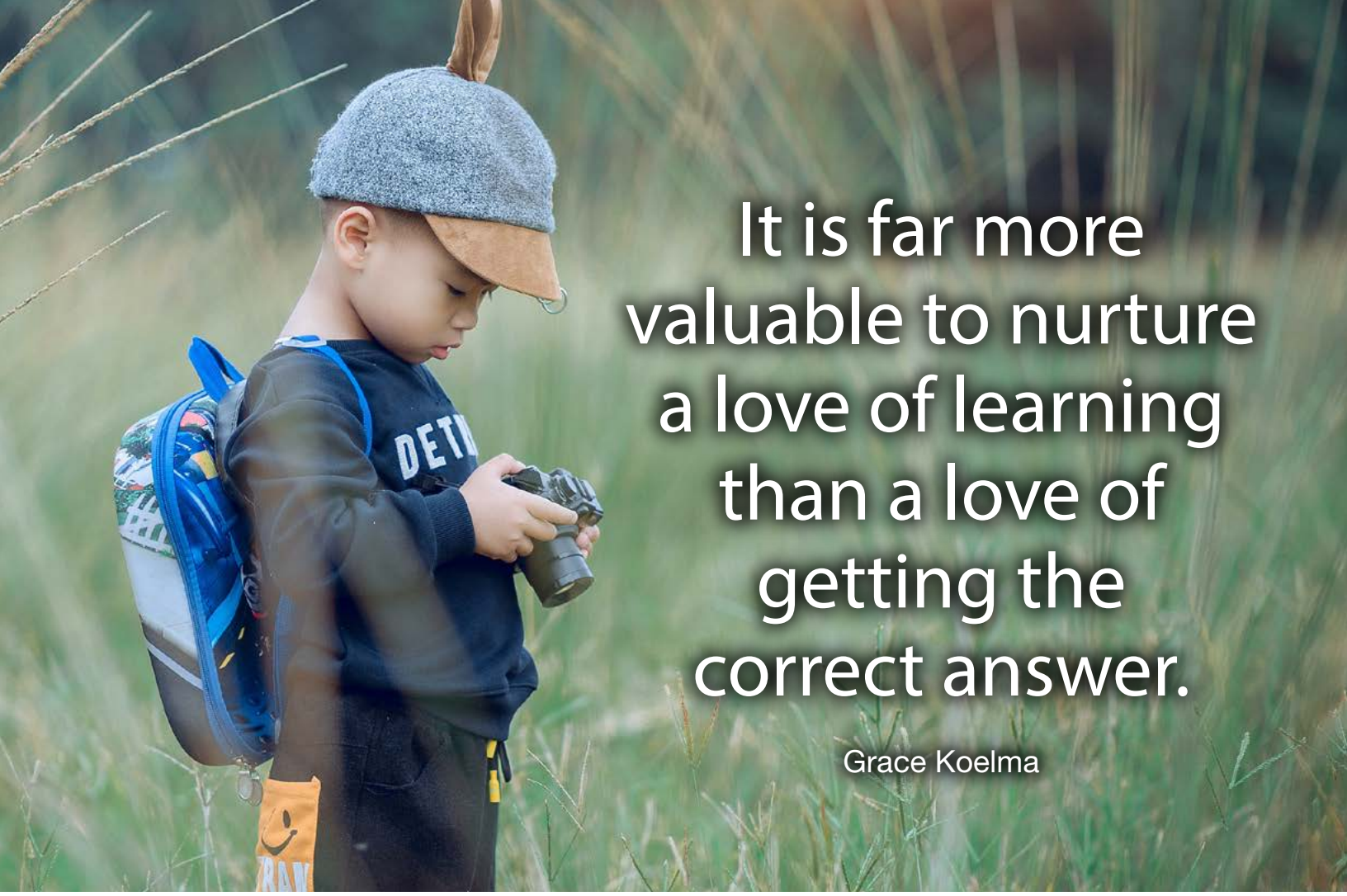
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Fall – *September*	July 20	July 31
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What to Do about Mom Guilt

by Matthew McDill

As I entered the worship center for our church service, I saw my wife praying with a young mom who was crying. Later, I asked what they were talking and praying about. As my wife described the fears, doubt, and worry that the mom was experiencing, I concluded that she was wrestling with "mom guilt." I am beginning to think that this isn't just common but nearly universal. Another version of this weight that many parents experience further down the road is regret.

These common experiences are one of the reasons that NCHE has made our mission to help parents homeschool with confidence and joy. There are many wrong and ineffective ways to respond to feelings of guilt and regret that will not lead to confidence and joy. Some parents just accept these feelings as fact without processing them at all. This results in discouragement at best and self-hatred at worst. Others ignore these feelings and try to look on the bright side. Many moms (and even homeschool conference speakers) sooth each other by saying, "You are doing such a good job!" But without facing these feelings head on, they continue to lurk and haunt us in the corners of our hearts. There are two main reasons for this guilt and regret. One is where we have sinned and the other is where we feel inadequate, that we didn't have what it takes to do a good job of homeschooling. In this article, we will deal with the guilt and regret that comes from sin in our lives.

How can we process our feelings of guilt and regret in a way that brings freedom, healing, and forgiveness? There is an important passage in Scripture that provides insight.

"For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death." (2 Corinthians 7:10)

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When we are experiencing grief, we want to make sure it is godly grief that gives life instead of worldly grief that leads to death. Here are three biblical steps to help you benefit from godly grief and reject worldly grief.

1. Discern the truth.

Sometimes when we feel like we've done something wrong, it is actually the result of false accusations. These can come from others or even from ourselves. Often they come from what the Bible calls spiritual forces of evil. In fact, one of Satan's designations is "the accuser of the brothers" (Revelation 12:10). So, we can begin by asking, "Is this true?" and "Is this from God?" We are not to be judged by our own standards or the standards of others (1 Corinthians 4:3-4). God is the one who helps us understand when we are right or wrong. He does this through his Word, in which he reveals truth and righteousness, and by the Holy Spirit, who speaks to us personally about our lives.

When you feel guilty, go to God. Ask Him to help you discern what is true. Read his Word and listen to his Spirit. As we grow spiritually, we will learn to recognize His voice. When God speaks to us, it comes with love and hope and aligns with Scripture. We can also rely on godly people in our lives to help us discern the truth. When we realize through this process that we are being falsely accused, then we can choose faith and courage to trust God and reject those accusations. That's not always easy to do, especially if we've been listening to lies and worrying about what people think about us for a long time. But as we grow closer to the Lord, we can gain freedom in this area.

2. Confess and receive forgiveness.

Sometimes, we don't want to face our guilt and take it to the Lord because we are afraid that we are truly guilty. Coming to the Lord requires humility and a willingness to admit our sinfulness and need of Christ's forgiveness and help. If it becomes clear to us that we have sinned against the Lord and others in some way, then the only right way forward is to confess it and ask for his forgiveness. We can ask in faith because He has promised to forgive those who confess their sins (1 John 1:9).

When we have also sinned against others, God tells us to confess our sin and ask their forgiveness as well (Matthew 5:23-24). They may or may not forgive you, but it is up to us to take that step of obedience. If we are forgiven by others, then those relationships can be restored. But even if they do not forgive us, we can receive forgiveness from God through Christ and experience tremendous peace. In the context of parental guilt and regret, we sometimes need to ask our children for forgiveness. This act will be a powerful testimony to them, an example of following Christ, and an opportunity for them to find healing and peace also.

3. Make a plan for repentance and growth.

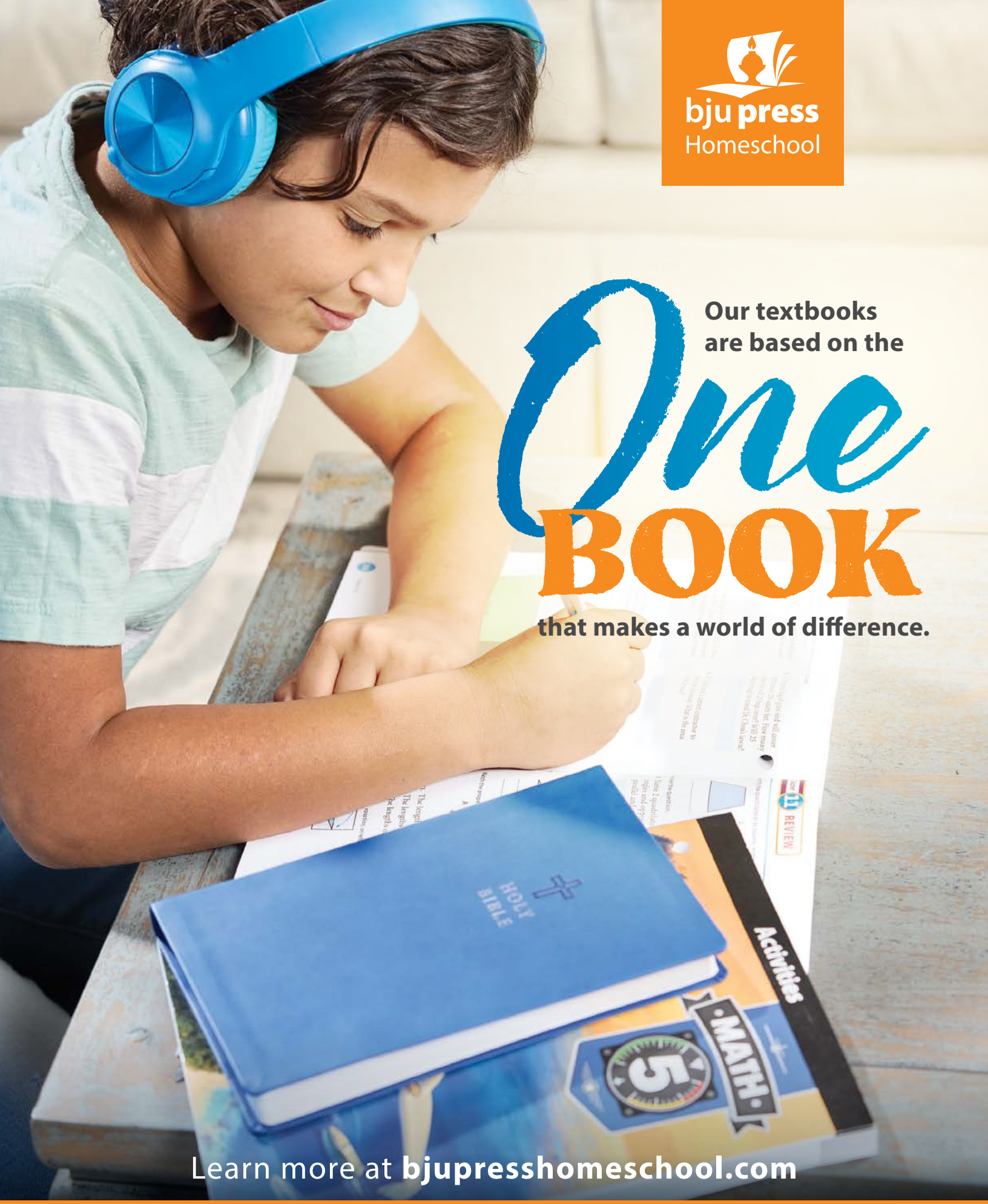
Even though we have received forgiveness and peace, the results of our sin are often still present. What can we do now so that we don't continue in sin and its destructive effects? This is another part of godly grief. Paul explains that "godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret" (2 Corinthians 7:10). The next step in processing our sin is to make a plan for repentance and growth; God does not just forgive our sins, he is also working to transform us into the likeness of Christ. So we then ask ourselves, how will I now live moving forward from this moment? How can I be more like Christ? What steps of obedience can I take to turn away from this sin?

As we answer these questions, we should be as specific as we can. We should also consider sharing our sin and plan of repentance with godly friends who can help us grow. This repentance "leads to salvation without regret." We can be delivered from this sin and grief so that we no longer live in regret but are able to move forward in hope and freedom, trusting the past to the Lord.

When moms experience "mom guilt," it can really be debilitating. Ignoring or burying it doesn't help. Often, this guilt is heaped on us by others or the enemy. We can learn how to discern and reject this. Getting a pat on the back and "you're doing a great job" can be super encouraging, but we can't always assume that means that we don't have sins to confess and areas in which to grow. Taking these biblical steps can help us process these thoughts and feelings and help us find victory and peace. As NCHE's mission states, our prayer is that we can all homeschool with confidence and joy!



Matthew McDill and his wife, Dana, homeschool their nine children in Clemmons. Matthew is the executive director for North Carolinians for Home Education and continues to serve as president of the board. Through his ministry, Truth to Freedom (truthtofreedom.org), he teaches and writes about discipleship, marriage, family, parenting, home education, and church. Matthew holds a bachelor's degree in communication, along with two master's degrees and a doctorate in biblical studies.



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"We plan to attend every year! The conference is such a blessing! I can't believe that we homeschooled for 7 years before ever attending the conference! It's been such an encouragement. It has also really helped my husband feel more confident and connected with homeschooling. He's not involved in most of the "schooling" but the past year since our first conference experience, he's been more involved and taking ownership of us homeschooling! I've so appreciated this!"

— Nicole —

For details about the conference, go to nche.com/thrive. Preregistration prices end May 15.

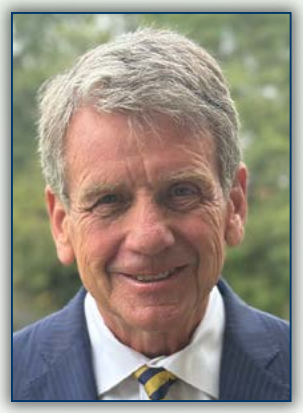
Conference Speakers and Workshops

Featured Speakers



Christy Faith, a social media powerhouse with over 350k followers and millions of video views, motivates countless moms to take the homeschooling leap, remain steadfast, and revitalize their purpose. With 20+ years in education and homeschooling, she has advised countless kids and families, including high-profile clients. Known as a "teacher's teacher," her heart is to help parents build homeschools their kids will thank them for later. She is host of The Christy-Faith Show podcast, founder of Thrive Homeschool Community, and author of *Homeschool Rising*.

- **Balancing Act: Giving Your Kids What They Need without Overwhelming**
- **Homeschooling 101: Doing It Scared**
- **Resistant Kids. Lack of Motivation. Constant Battles. Help!**
- **The Featured Speakers Answer Your Questions**
- **Goodbye Math Struggles**
- **Overcoming Self-Doubt: The Quiet Battle of Homeschooling**



Michael P. Farris was founding president of both the Home School Legal Defense Association (1983) and Patrick Henry College (2000) and continues to serve as chairman of the board of HSLDA and chancellor emeritus of PHC. Farris served as the president and CEO of Alliance Defending Freedom from 2017 to 2022. In "semi-retirement," he serves as general counsel to the National Religious Broadcasters and consults with the Convention of States Project. For over 40 years, Farris has practiced constitutional appellate litigation specializing in religious freedom and parental rights. Mike was CEO of ADF while ADF served as co-counsel to the Attorney General of Mississippi for the case of Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health which reversed Roe v. Wade. Farris also served as the Co-Chairman of the Drafting Committee for the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which was enacted by Congress in 1993. For his work in homeschooling, Farris was named one of the Top 100 Faces in Education of the 20th Century by Education Week. Farris is the author of over fifteen books. He and his wife, Vickie, have ten children, many grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

- **The Spiritual Power of a Mother**
- **The Ever-Escalating Battle against Parental Rights**
- **Key Insights from 33 Years of Homeschooling**
- **The Constitution & Civics for Both You and Your Children**
- **The Featured Speakers Answer Your Questions**
- **The Homeschooling Father**



Andrea Hall, at the heart of EPIC Homeschool Network, is a guiding light for homeschooling families seeking clarity, confidence, and a sense of community. In 2012, she embraced the homeschooling path for her children. Andrea has a BS in math education and a master's in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. She channels her knowledge and creativity into developing curriculum materials, available in her Teachers Pay Teachers store. Her personal interests include restful sleep, losing herself in books, and expressing her thoughts through journaling. Understanding the challenges of homeschooling firsthand, Andrea is intimately familiar with the feelings of anxiety, lack of focus, and overwhelm that can accompany this educational journey. As a busy, working homeschooling mom herself, she leverages her extensive experience and knowledge to offer unparalleled support and guidance to other homeschooling families.

- **Designing Your Own Homeschool Curriculum**
- **Making Math Meaningful—Real-World Math for Homeschoolers**
- **The 5-Step Path to Your Best Homeschool Year Ever**
- **Balancing Work and Homeschooling Like a Pro**
- **Staying Focused as a Homeschooling Mom**

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Conference Speakers and Workshops

Featured Speakers



Abraham Hamilton, III (Abe) is a husband, father of six wonderful children, homeschool dad, lawyer, Bible teacher, and national radio and television talk show host. He serves as American Family Association's General Counsel and host of *The Hamilton Corner*, which airs Monday through Friday at 5 P.M. CT on the American Family Radio Network (AFR). He also hosts *The Hamilton Corner* television program, which airs Friday evenings at 8 P.M. CT on the National Religious Broadcasters Television Network (NRB TV). He has an undergraduate degree in New Testament biblical literature and a juris doctor degree. Abe is a Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) board member and is licensed to practice law in Texas and Louisiana.

- **You Shall Love the Lord with Your Mind**
- **Declaration of Dependence**
- **Fatherhood Is Essential**
- **The Featured Speakers Answer Your Questions**
- **The Family: God's Primary Mission Station**
- **Contending for the Faith in a Post-Truth Culture**



Dr. Rochelle Matthews-Somerville is an esteemed educator with over twenty-five years of clinical experience in early childhood and special education. With a background that includes an MS in special education focused on autism/Asperger syndrome and behavior disorders and a doctorate in psychological and cultural studies with a concentration in severe and communication disorders, she has served as a university professor, county-wide autism specialist, educational consultant, and K-12 resource teacher. In 2010, Dr. Matthews-Somerville co-founded EFM Educational Consultants, channeling her expertise to support homeschooling families, particularly those with children with disabilities. Since joining the Home School Legal Defense Association in 2019 as a special needs educational consultant, she now serves as an educational resource specialist. Dr. Matthews-Somerville, a mother of six, has been homeschooling her children for fifteen years and remains dedicated to providing high-quality, inclusive educational resources and support to families.

- **You Can Homeschool Your Neurodivergent Learner—and We Can Help!**
- **Developing and Drafting an SEP (Student Education Plan)**
- **Understanding the Strengths in Students with Executive Functioning Disorders**
- **The Featured Speakers Answer Your Questions**
- **Understanding the Twice Exceptional Learner—Boundless Gifts**
- **You Can Homeschool Your Child with Autism! Building a Successful Program**



Renton Rathbun has been a classroom teacher for over twenty-five years. His teaching experience has included both secular and Christian colleges and universities. He and his wife homeschooled their oldest son, Daniel, and are now homeschooling their two littles, Jude and Olivia. Renton has spoken for homeschool conventions and podcasts all over the nation. Renton holds a BS in English education and an MA in interpretative speech from Bob Jones University. He has also received an MFA in creative writing from Minnesota State University, an MA in philosophy from the University of Toledo, a ThM from Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, and a PhD in apologetics from Westminster Theological Seminary. Renton serves as the director of the Center for Biblical Worldview in Greenville, SC.

- **Intro to Apologetics: Not Exactly What Was Expected**
- **The Problem of the Unbeliever in Apologetics**
- **Walking Away from the Faith: The Roots of Gen Z Thinking & How to Respond**
- **Living in a Trans World: How Gender Identity Affects Young People**
- **Losing Our Religion in How We Think: Creating a Stickier Biblical Worldview**
- **The Featured Speakers Answer Your Questions**
- **Only in the Mind? Why Biblical Worldview *Must* Develop Holiness**

Additional Conference Speakers

Margie Abbitt
How to Survive High School and Enjoy the Journey, aka, Don't Stress

Set Free to Homeschool: It's Not Traditional School



Aaron Brewster
Expectational Education

The 5 Types of Homeschooling Parents



Clay Broussard
Teaching without Infused Worldview Is Dangerous for Our Kids!



Dr. Janice Broyles
Building a Strong Writer

Reading and Writing: The Perfect Combination!



June Campbell
Teach Reading to Your Young or Struggling Reader



Angie Cutlip
Choosing and Using Curriculum

Testing Testing One Two Three



Aliyah Daley
Plant, Learn, Thrive: Gardening for Education and Wellness



Amy Denton
Money Matters: Saving and Paying for College



Dr. Seann Dikkers
The Digital Divide

Play More



Jessica Embry, M.Ed.
Gifted Homeschooling



Jeff Ertzberger
Teaching on a Shoestring Budget—Tie into These Free Tech Tools



Aimee Eucce
Why Teaching Boys to Read/Spell Is Different than Teaching Girls!

Homeschooling Your 2, 3 and 4-year-olds! A Practical How-to Session



Jessica Frierson
Bridging the Gap: Preparing Homeschoolers for Careers in Industry



Michelle Gano
Help, My Kids Are Bored (& So Am I)!

Help, I'm Outnumbered & Teaching Multiple Grades!



Danni Gugel, M.Ed.
Beyond ADHD Symptoms

Wired for Resilience: Building Emotional Regulation



Debra Haagen
Oh Boy! Homeschooling the Young Ruffian

The Theory of Intelligent Design



Eve Hullette
Math Games: Laughter and Learning All in One



Kayla Jennings
Don't Waste Your Youth



Darren Jones
The Secret to Homeschool Freedom



Natalie Mack
Military Service Routes for Homeschool Graduates

NCAA—How to Navigate for Success



Mike & Ronda Marshall
Secrets of Endurance: Successful Co-ops and Tutorials

Getting Off to a Great Start



Inga Masek
7 Key Questions to Build Your Homeschool Blueprint

Create a Breathable Homeschool: Flexibility that Fits Your Family



Debbie Mason
The Empty Nest—It's Coming

Homeschooling Young Children



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Self Sabotage: Are You Working against Yourself



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Leading Homeschoolers in North Carolina

How to Help Your Children Discern God's Direction in Their Lives

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Marji McIlvaine
Homeschooling, Foreign Languages, and Me—Can We Make This Work?

Fifty Homeschooling Things I Did Not Do: Confessions

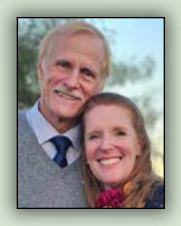


Terrie McKee
Choosing Curriculum for Struggling Learners



Don and Renita Miller
Showing the Love, Power, and Beauty of God with Science

Two Trains—Which Will You Ride? (Wisdom or Knowledge)



Adelaide Olguin
Leave the Homeschool Room: Travel the World



Danielle Papageorgiou
5 Lifeschooling Hacks (+1 Secret) to Conquering Homeschool Burnout



Mandie Rose
Teaching the Trades



Abigail Schopen
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Sandy Smith
The Impact of Brain Development on Behavior & the Ability to Learn

Brain-Savvy Parents



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Pathological Demand Avoidance or Oppositional Defiance Disorder



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How to Homeschool High School

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The Changing Face of Homeschooling

by Jessica Frierson

My homeschool journey began thirty-four years ago, in 1991, when my mother withdrew me from my high school prior to my junior year. Ten years later, I opened my homeschool when my oldest child turned seven. In the years that have passed since then, my family has grown to include seven sons and three daughters with the seventh one to graduate this spring. Across our state and even our nation, homeschooling has grown as well. As it has, the face of homeschooling has undergone significant changes in terms of demographics, motivations, methods, and public perception.

1. Growth in Popularity

- **1980s:** Homeschooling was a relatively rare and often misunderstood educational choice. In the 1988-1989 school year, the first year that homeschool numbers were kept in NC, there were only 1,385. Families choosing homeschooling often faced skepticism or legal challenges as homeschooling was not widely recognized or regulated in many states. NCHE recently shared the stories of some of the homeschool pioneers in our state in a series of articles chronicling the forty years of our organization (nche.com/40years).
- **Today:** Homeschooling has become a mainstream option with millions of families participating worldwide. Legal acceptance has grown, and homeschooling is now regulated to some degree in most places. Gone is the fear that our founders faced of fines or serving jail time for schooling our children at home. In the 2023-2024 school year, there were 96,529 homeschools in NC.

2. Diverse Demographics

- **1980s:** The homeschooling movement was dominated by two primary groups:
  - Conservative Christian families motivated by religious beliefs.
  - Progressive families seeking alternative, child-centered education.
- **Today:** Homeschooling appeals to a broader demographic, including secular families, minority groups, urban professionals, and families with specific educational needs (e.g., gifted students or children with disabilities). It reflects the increasing diversity of motivations and cultural backgrounds. NCHE strives to meet the changing needs of the growing population of homeschooled children from more diverse backgrounds through efforts such as our homeschool helps director and offering resources for families with children who have special needs, multicultural liaisons, and our annual state conference with featured speakers from a wide range of specialties.

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3. Motivations

- **1980s:** Common motivations included religious beliefs, dissatisfaction with public schools, and a desire to protect children from secular influences. Many felt compelled to homeschool to give their children a strong start in life without the burden of peer pressure and expectations to perform academically before they were developmentally ready.
- **Today:** Adding to the former motivations are the quality of education, concerns about school safety and bullying, flexibility, tailored learning for special needs, and the ability to incorporate cultural or personal values.

4. Methods and Resources

- **1980s:** Resources were limited. Families often relied on library materials, self-created curricula, or resources shared within small homeschooling communities. For example, my mother had one curriculum option. Publishers refused to sell to homeschool parents and teacher keys were worded for classroom teaching instead of providing a means for busy parents to check their child's answers.
- **Today:** As any attendee of the vendor hall at our annual Thrive! Conference can attest, there are now hundreds of curriculum options. Publishers have discovered that homeschoolers are the jackpot of marketplaces! Curricula specifically designed for homeschoolers are now the norm, and the hardest obstacle is narrowing down the many choices to find the best fit for your child's learning style. Additionally, the Internet has revolutionized homeschooling. Parents now have access to online courses, educational apps, YouTube tutorials, open educational resources, co-ops, and community classes for shared learning experiences.

5. Technology Integration

- **1980s:** Homeschooling was primarily paper-based with a focus on hands-on activities, with minimal use of technology.
- **Today:** Technology plays a central role, including virtual classrooms, adaptive learning platforms, and global networks connecting homeschool families. Our children can open a laptop and engage in livestream classes from around the world.

6. Legal and Public Perception

- **1980s:** Homeschooling often operated in a legal gray area with some families facing legal action. Public perception was skeptical with concerns about socialization and academic outcomes. Parents were afraid to take their children anywhere or even allow them to play outside during school hours, fearing that someone would report them as truant. The most common response to informing a curious inquirer that my children were homeschooled was a perplexed look and more questions about what that was.
- **Today:** Homeschooling is legally recognized in all fifty states and in most countries. Academic studies and success stories have improved public perception, though debates about socialization and oversight continue. An encounter with a curious inquirer usually ends with them telling me how their grandchild, neighbor, niece, and best friend's child "are all homeschooled, and it is just the most wonderful thing!"

7. Socialization Opportunities

- **1980s:** Socialization opportunities were limited to small homeschooling groups or community activities. For perspective, when I say small, I mean that if you found one other family in your county who homeschooled, your entire homeschool universe just doubled!
- **Today:** Homeschoolers participate in a wide array of social and extracurricular activities, including sports teams, co-ops, scouting, and local or virtual clubs. Like most homeschooling parents I know, we have trouble staying home enough, not trouble in finding activities to attend.

There were just over 3,000 homeschools in total for the entire state the year that I began homeschooling as a student. Today, there are more than that in my tri-county area alone. Homeschoolers come from all walks of life: we see more fathers homeschooling, working moms and single parents are doing whatever it takes to be able to homeschool, and families from all ethnic backgrounds are bringing new perspectives and fresh ideas to the culture of homeschooling. The face of homeschooling has shifted from a niche, counter-cultural movement to a flexible, widely accepted educational option that accommodates diverse families and learning styles. It has been an incredible experience to come along for the journey over the past thirty-four years. I wonder what kind of changes are in store for the remainder of my homeschooling years.



Jessica Frierson is a second-generation homeschooler. She is married to Ernie, a retired minister. They have been homeschooling their seven sons and three daughters since 2000. She is a speaker and writer. She serves as the secretary for NCHE and writes for the GREENHOUSE and the NCHE blog.



Minding the Gap

by Amanda Garner

One of the best pieces of homeschool advice I've ever heard wasn't actually about homeschooling. Rather, it was in the form of a public service announcement. About a year ago, my husband and I visited London, which has an intricate rail system that weaves its way in, out, and around central London. As our train car neared each station, the prerecorded message would warn: "Mind the gap between the train and the platform." To the daily commuters, it was merely a familiar refrain they heard on a regular basis, but to two American tourists, it was quite entertaining. What was simply a warning to remind passengers about the potential danger of the gap between the train and the platform serves as an excellent admonition for homeschoolers. Let's consider three gaps that could pose a hazard to any homeschool family.

The Education Gap

The first is what I'll call the education gap. If you've attended a homeschool conference, read any statistics about homeschooling, or spent time researching curriculum options, chances are you've heard something along these lines: *Homeschoolers score higher on achievement tests; homeschool students excel beyond their peers in college; homeschool students are graduating with higher GPAs than their public-school counterparts, etc.* All those things can be wonderfully encouraging until you have a student who doesn't excel academically. Or, even worse, who is *(gasp)* "behind." Suddenly the parent (usually mom) begins to panic and starts running the mental list of all the things she has "done wrong." Those who are fairly new to the homeschooling realm are most vulnerable to this form of self-torture. There is this false notion that if we just do it right, our students will excel. Worse still is when we pick up that insinuation from unsupportive family members or even other homeschoolers in our circles. There will be tremendous freedom and greater joy in your school when you simply allow your children to learn at each one's own pace. Certainly, some excel quickly and early,

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while others take a little longer to master the same lessons. You know your child best—when he needs a little nudge and when he needs a lot of patience. This is true from the earliest preschool activities to the most advanced high school lessons. One of the best decisions we made for one of our now-adult children was to skip teaching a foreign language in high school. This child struggled significantly during most of his school years with English and grammar being no exception. Why would we frustrate him needlessly with another language? Conversely, I've seen the collateral damage of a severed relationship from parents constantly pushing a student who is academically gifted to do more and achieve more. Mind the gap between the classroom and platform of expectations.

The Spiritual Gap

The second is the spiritual gap. How often do we skip over the very subjects that compelled us to homeschool in the first place in order to get to lessons written in our planner? When my children were elementary age, we typically started the day with Bible time, which consisted of a short devotion, the recitation of one or two catechisms, and prayer. However, my tendency on days that we started late was to skip Bible time and jump straight into math. If this had happened on a rare occasion, it would have been a different matter, but it was a frequent struggle. One of the main reasons I wanted to homeschool my kids was to teach them from a biblical worldview and to pour into their spiritual growth and development, yet it was the first thing I wanted to jettison when my plane lacked enough altitude. As my children reached middle and high school years, it was still tempting to shortcut Bible study lessons or relegate Bible literacy to Sundays. I wasn't a complete failure in this area, but if I could redo some of those earlier years, I would hold a more resolute, non-negotiable resolve in biblical training and knowledge. C.S. Lewis offers this sobering insight: "Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil." The mind is important, but how much more the soul that lives out of the abundance of the heart. Mind the gap between the classroom and the platform of eternity.

The Relationship Gap

Lastly, there is the relationship gap, and this one is the most perilous. If you lose the heart of your child, then you have lost your voice of influence. As parents, we long to have deep, meaningful relationships with our children where they willingly share their deepest thoughts, desires, and struggles and seek our wisdom and advice. Like any



relationship, though, this takes intentional effort and work, and it begins when they are young. It involves giving them your undivided attention as they share the childhood wonders of a rock collection or a Lego creation. It's enjoying, and joining, them in swinging, or playing hide and seek, or searching for buried treasure. In short, it's taking delight in your child. In their younger years when every day is exhausting, and it takes everything you have to do school with all the distractions and interruptions, it's all too easy to think, "I've done school now, so go along and play and don't bother me or need anything!" As your children grow into their middle school years, it can be challenging to be patient as they hit puberty and morph into an unrecognizable ball of hormones. Suddenly, they have strong opinions and equally strong attitudes. They have a hard time adjusting to all the dramatic physical and emotional changes, and it takes more patience than most parents possess not to speak out of anger and frustration. I had to remind myself quite often: "You're the adult in the room, and you need to act like it!" The high school years are much the same, only the issues they are dealing with are more critical than ever. Stay tuned into their lives, ask questions, and listen without interrupting or reacting. Stay engaged with the things they are passionate about. And stay fervent in prayer for wisdom to shepherd their hearts. Mind the gap between the classroom and the platform of expectations.

Perhaps there are more gaps that come to mind when you consider the intricate weavings of everyday life and the high calling to homeschool. Whatever the challenges may be, the truth is our own pride is often the largest gap we need to be cautioned against on a daily basis. Although we want what's best for our children academically, spiritually, and relationally, it's so hard not to react to our perceived shortcomings out of pride. If we're honest, we fear others will judge us as inadequate or as a failure. Somehow, we have this false notion that if *we do it right*, they *will turn out right*. So, we let our unmet expectations rob us of the joy of the unique way God has created each of our children. Yes, we have to do our part faithfully, diligently, and prayerfully, but ultimately it is His work. Ask Him to help you love your child for who he is, not who you want him to be. And, as you respond in faithful obedience to what He has called you to do, you can walk in confidence that His grace is sufficient for you and that He is working in and through your child's life.



Amanda Garner and her husband, Wes, have been married for thirty years and have home educated all four of their children. With three homeschool graduates and only one more to go, Amanda's heart is to help encourage and equip families to stay in the homeschool race for the long haul. She is a regular conference speaker, contributing writer to the NCHE GREENHOUSE magazine, occasional blogger, and most often, a regular homeschool mom and wife. In her free time, she can be found binge-reading historical fiction and frequenting local cafes for a good espresso. Amanda and her family live and serve in Franklinton, North Carolina.

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Fun Field Trips in North Carolina

by Laura Adams

A good field trip is the perfect way to break up the monotony of a school year! North Carolina is home to many historic sites, science museums, and art exhibitions. Whether you reside in the mountains, on the Coastal Plain, or in the Piedmont, there are many fun places to explore.

Mountains

Horn in the West in Boone is an outdoor drama that has been performed every summer since 1952. Horn in the West tells the story of Daniel Boone, a pioneer who fought in the Revolutionary War, and his fellow mountain settlers. The play covers the period between the Battle of Alamance (1771) and the Battle of King's Mountain (1780). Bring a light jacket or a sweater if you go. Even in the summer, mountain evenings can be chilly!

Grandfather Mountain is a classic High Country experience located in Linville. Walk across the Mile High Swinging Bridge, which is not nearly as terrifying as it sounds. (It's a mile above sea level, not a mile above the ground.) The hiking at Grandfather Mountain is beautiful. You can also visit the Wilson Center for Nature Discovery, which is indoors, before you head outdoors to the wildlife exhibits.

Piedmont

The **North Carolina Museum of Art** is located in Raleigh and is completely free! The museum features pieces from

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ancient times up to the modern era. I take my kids there about once a year to look at pieces of art that correspond to our history studies.

The **North Carolina Symphony**, also in Raleigh, typically offers two or three concerts per year, which are designed specifically for children, as well as many traditional performances. The best ticket prices are available during their annual Black Friday sale. I highly recommend signing up for their email list if you live in the Triangle. Every once in a while, they will send out an email about a free concert during the day on a weekday—those are perfect opportunities for homeschoolers.

The **Museum of the Alphabet** in Waxhaw is a free museum about the Bible translation work of JAARS. The museum also explores the history of writing, how alphabets have been made in the past, and how alphabets are made today.

One of my favorite field trips as a young child was **Mrs. Hanes' Moravian Cookies** in Clemmons. People have enjoyed Moravian cookies for centuries. The tour discusses how cooks used to use wood stoves. Your student can also visit the warehouse and the boxing and shipping area. The mixing room and the baking areas, however, are the most exciting. Visitors also get to sample the cookies. The tour guides emphasize the importance of a good work ethic to students.

The **North Carolina Zoo** in Asheboro is fun for all ages. Did you know that our zoo is the largest natural habitat zoo in the world? The North Carolina Zoo was also ranked the best zoo in the Newsweek Readers' Choice Awards in 2024.

The **North Carolina Legislative Building**, the **North Carolina State Capitol**, and the **North Carolina Justice Building** are all located in downtown Raleigh. Every other year, NCHE hosts Capital Fest, an event for homeschooled students to learn about the functions of our state government. Capital Fest includes workshops on the state government, meetings with legislators, and tours of government buildings.

Coastal Plain

If you're studying World War II in your homeschool, you don't want to miss the **Battleship North Carolina** in Wilmington! The Battleship brought history to life for my boys. Note that many of the below deck areas are not stroller accessible. There are nine levels to explore. Children ages five and under are free.

As you've seen on your license plate, North Carolina is first in flight, and you can learn the story of how it happened at the **Wright Brothers Memorial** in Kill Devil Hills. Tour the visitor center and museum first, then head outside to see exactly how far the Wright Brothers flew on their first flights. Children ages fifteen and younger are free.

Any study of North Carolina history is incomplete without diving into **The Lost Colony** in Manteo. In the summer, there is an outdoor drama based on the true story of The Lost Colony. However, **Roanoke Island Festival Park** is open from March through December. The Festival Park covers the years 1585-1590. I visited it with my family and still remember it vividly twenty years later. The Festival Park is more interactive than your typical museum. Kids can try on late 1500s costumes and even board a replica sailing vessel. The interpreters on the *Elizabeth II* wear historically accurate garb and will answer your kids' questions in character.

The **North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher** in Kure Beach is my favorite of the NC aquariums. The otters are adorable, the fish are mesmerizing, and you can even find unexpected creatures there. Fort Fisher State Recreation Area is nearby and features a beach with free parking, public bathrooms, and changing rooms.

I hope this list sparked some ideas for your next field trip!



Laura McKinney Adams is a wife and mother of three. She holds a bachelor's degree from Liberty University. While at Liberty, she met her husband, who is a fellow homeschool graduate. She writes about classical education, lifelong learning for moms, and homeschooling the early years at lauramckinneyadams.com.

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Five Must-Read Books for Homeschool Parents (That Aren't about Homeschooling)

by Christy Faith

Sometimes, when I sit down at the end of a chaotic homeschool day, I find myself craving wisdom—not about the mechanics of teaching math or phonics but about life—about how to lead with love in the mess of it all or how to find purpose amid the piles of laundry and lesson plans. If you've felt that too, these books are for you. They're not about homeschooling (not directly, at least), but they speak to the heart of what matters most in our homes, our relationships, and our lives.

Here are five books that have guided me, challenged me, and reminded me of why this homeschool life is worth it.

1. *Hold On to Your Kids* by Dr. Gordon Neufeld and Dr. Gabor Maté

Dr. Neufeld and Dr. Maté pull back the curtain on the role of attachment in parenting. Their research highlights how strong parent-child connections are foundational to healthy development. For homeschool parents, their concept of "attachment parenting" explains how prioritizing relationships over rules fosters trust and resilience in kids (Neufeld & Maté, 2006).

This book reminds us that our children's need for connection doesn't go away when they can read or solve math problems. Instead, it grows. Homeschooling offers a unique opportunity to strengthen those relationships daily, and this book provides the roadmap.

2. *The Gap and the Gain* by Dan Sullivan and Dr. Benjamin Hardy

How often do homeschool parents find themselves measuring their progress against an impossible standard? Sullivan and Hardy introduce a powerful mindset shift in *The Gap and the Gain*. Their research shows that focusing on incremental growth ("the gain") rather than shortcomings ("the gap") leads to greater satisfaction and motivation in both parents and children (Hardy & Sullivan, 2021).

For homeschool parents, this is a game-changer. When progress feels slow or messy, this book can help you celebrate the wins—like when your child finally grasps long division or is building confidence in their artwork—rather than being consumed by what's left to master.

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3. *Atomic Habits* by James Clear

Homeschooling often feels like juggling a thousand little things. James Clear makes the case that it's not the major overhauls but the small, consistent habits that shape our lives. Clear's analysis of habit formation, grounded in behavioral psychology, demonstrates how even 1% improvements can lead to monumental transformation over time (Clear, 2018).

This book is a treasure trove for homeschool parents. Struggling to establish a morning routine? Feeling overwhelmed by lesson planning? Clear shows how stacking habits—pairing new practices with existing ones—can make a world of difference. Imagine starting every homeschool day with a shared moment of gratitude or reflection—it might seem small, but the cumulative impact is huge.

4. *Simplicity Parenting* by Kim John Payne

When our days feel cluttered with to-do lists, toys, and endless activities, Kim John Payne offers a compassionate call to slow down. Payne's research highlights how simplifying a child's environment can reduce anxiety, improve focus, and foster creativity. A study on environmental simplification in children even supports these benefits, with findings that reducing clutter led to measurable improvements in play and mood (Payne, 2009).

For homeschool families, where the home is both the classroom and a sanctuary, Payne's message resonates deeply. Scaling back isn't about doing less—it's about making space for what truly matters.

5. *The Explosive Child* by Dr. Ross W. Greene

Homeschooling isn't always peaceful, and few books capture the emotional energy of parenting through tough moments like *The Explosive Child*. Dr. Greene explores collaborative problem-solving as an approach to managing challenging behavior in children. His research emphasizes co-regulation and helps parents move from power struggles to understanding (Greene, 2014).

This book is like a lifeline for homeschooling parents dealing with their children's emotional outbursts. It equips you with tools to transform conflict into connection and to work alongside your child in creating solutions that meet both your needs.

Final Thoughts

Homeschooling doesn't happen in isolation. It's shaped by the relationships we nurture, the habits we build, and the growth we choose to pursue. These five books offer practical strategies, grounded research, and heartfelt wisdom to help homeschool parents not only survive but thrive. Because in the end, homeschooling isn't just about teaching academics—it's about creating a life together. And as these authors remind us, a connected, intentional life is the most valuable lesson of all.

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Christy Faith is a homeschool author, speaker, and mentor with over twenty years in education. She's the author of Homeschool Rising*, a #1 new release on Amazon, and founder of Thrive Homeschool Community, a network that empowers parents to build joyful, effective homeschool environments. Her mission is to shift families from fear-based to joy-based education, transforming lives and learning at home. Connect with her and access free resources at Christy-Faith.com.*





Demystifying Transcripts

by Diane Helfrich

Your child is about to enter high school. Panic sets in. For perhaps the first time since you began homeschooling, the fear that you are bound to ruin your child's life sets in. It matters now because you are entering the final laps before setting your child free to move independently toward adulthood. This stage of schooling has many new things to consider, like the unknown world of transcripts. Did I strike a chord?

Take heart! This season is nominally different than where you've been. You just need to do a little more record-keeping. You also need to research the entry requirements for where they want to go next to know what you must accomplish in these next years. When do you start doing that? I recommend eighth grade because you need a roadmap before you begin the journey. Then, you know what to put in your transcript and what to ensure they learn! What I will give here is in the mindset of best practices. I have reviewed many transcripts over the years, and I can tell you that if a transcript is hard to read or follow, it is a strike against your student in the application process, whether for a scholarship, entry to college, or job entry. The goal is to be clear and concise. You want to communicate to the admissions counselor in ways that they understand. And a good tip is when in doubt, contact the school and ask.

You should follow some content guidelines when creating a transcript for your high schooler.

1. **Student Information:**
    a. Include your student's full name, address, and phone number.
    b. Include the student's sex and date of birth.
    c. Include your school name. If your school address and phone number differ from those in number one above, please include them here.
    d. Note: Some schools may require a social security number, but most do not. Check with your admissions advisor at the schools where you want to apply.
2. **Student Academic History:**
    a. You can compile your transcript by school year or by subject matter. I prefer school year, so the yearly cumulative grade point total is easy to follow. That means you have freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior categories. You can also title them by 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. If your student took high school classes before 9th grade, list them. Some

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people identify the year they were taken, and some roll them into the 9th grade year. Again, it's best to ask the admissions counselor at each school what they prefer. It is important to be aware that some may not accept pre-high school courses.

b. Give the class type (English, math, science, history, etc.), the course title, the letter grade, and the units. To calculate units, one credit would be two to three hours of work a week for a school year. Include the numeric grade point average or GPA. An uweighted GPA is 1.0=D, 2.0=C, 3.0=B, 4.0=A. For honors or concurrent enrollment, a weighted GPA would be 2.0=D, 3.0=C, 4.0=B, and 5.0=A. Be sure to see number seven below.

c. Have a way of identifying courses you did not teach, in particular, community college or dual enrollment courses. Use a system of asterisks or other symbols, or simply list the letters of the institution by the course title. For example, Fayetteville Community Technical College may be listed as FTCC by the course title with a definition at the end of the transcript of what FTCC stands for.

d. Calculate the grade point total for each year and give a cumulative grade point average that includes each year of high school as you finish it. *Do not leave it for someone else to determine the yearly and cumulative totals!* I liked using an Excel spreadsheet format where I could calculate both yearly and cumulative scores automatically.

3. **Summary of Academic Records (Optional):**
   a. You may include attendance by year. Yes, we are homeschoolers, and the number of days may be subjective, but you should have close to 180 days per year if you school regularly. List it.
   b. Give the total graduation units (credit hours) and a final cumulative GPA, with either an unweighted GPA, a weighted GPA, or both.
4. **Test Scores:**
   a. While not required by law in NC, I strongly recommend taking the CLT, SAT, or ACT in high school; all three count for your legal yearly testing requirement. List the test name and the top score achieved, regardless of which year it was attained.
   b. Note: If you use test scores like the California Achievement Test (CAT), Iowa Test, or Woodcock-Johnson test, these are not college admission tests, and your student will be disadvantaged compared to other students. Do not put them on a transcript. In the theme of best practices, take a standard college entrance test, especially if your student is college-bound! If your student takes the PSAT in their junior year, you may include that, especially if they were a top-tier scorer.
5. **Previous Schools Attended:** You may not need this section, but if your student was enrolled in public, private, or charter schools for secondary schooling, you'll need to list them. Include grades from these institutions in your transcript under Student Academic History and clearly indicate where the grade was received.
6. **Additional Student Information:**
   a. As part of the transcript or on a separate page, list interests, activities, awards, volunteer activities and hours, extracurricular activities, and employment. If it fits, include this section directly in the transcript. Your transcript should be one or two pages. When in doubt about how long your transcript should be, contact the school that you are applying to and ask. If you need extra space, make this section a separately included document.
   b. You may wish to maintain a list of textbooks used as a separate document. Some schools will ask for details, and you need to be able to supply them expediently. *I would not include this information with a transcript, but I would have it available and keep it updated yearly.*
7. **Grading Scales:** On your transcript, you need to define the nature of your grading scale. Is 90-100 an A? Or is it 93-100? Is your scale weighted or non-weighted? Weighted gives extra value for an honors course or community college course. See 2B above for how to weight grades. Some people include both weighted and non-weighted GPAs. I only used non-weighted and gave the same value to community college courses as the courses I taught. Just be clear on your methods.
8. **School Officials:** Have a clearly labeled place for the chief administrator's name and signature, and optionally, the teacher's name and signature, with lines for printed and signed names. If you and your spouse split the roles, you can each have a place to sign. If you only have one role, just put one place for your name and signature.

There are sample transcripts on both nche.com under Helps and on hslda.org. If you do an online search on example transcripts, you will find many; choose one that covers the above information. If you decide to design your transcript, make sure it is well-organized and easy to read.

This is a lot of information and may even feel daunting. Find a format and begin using it in the first year of high school. Don't get behind, or you will have a hair-pulling session trying to remember everything! You've got this. Once the first year is established, the rest is like falling off a log.



Diane Helfrich is a retired fourteen-year veteran of homeschooling. She is married to David, and they have two children who have flown the nest. In addition to her passion for helping homeschoolers and volunteering as the development director for NCHE, she enjoys reading, teaching middle-school Sunday school, and being part of a ukulele club.



The One Career Question You Should *Never* Ask Your Teen

by Whitney Cranford Crowell

Just a century or two ago (and in many cases, much less), the idea of career choice barely existed. The vast majority of young people had their vocational decisions made for them. Young men either entered the family business—whether that be farming or shop-keeping or practicing law—or were set up to train for a job chosen by their parents as an apprentice or student. Young women might also help in a family enterprise but, of course, were mostly expected to marry, keep house, and rear children. Except in the occasional case of exceptional talent, very little thought, if any, was given to the preferences of the young person in question; the focus was on ensuring he or she was provided a steady and stable way to earn a living and support a family.

I find this historical reality a fascinating contrast to modern society, which has elevated the career decision to a mystical, almost spiritual, experience, akin to falling in love or finding a soul mate—a choice to be made with the heart and not so much the head. As a result, parents tend to be very hands-off in questions of vocation, expecting their teens to simply have a gut insight into their true selves and the right path for their future.

There's certainly great benefit in giving young people more autonomy over the decisions that will shape their adult lives! I know I am grateful to have had those choices myself. But I wonder if we haven't lost some of the old wisdom along the way. Choosing a career path is an eminently practical decision, and future happiness hinges much less on the appeal of the work and more on its potential to provide and support the lifestyle a person desires. Parents have a wonderful role to play here, both in helping their teens envision the life they want for themselves and in helping them understand whether and how a given career is a good fit for that life.

Why You Should Never Ask, "What Do You Want to Be?"

Career conversations should never start with the career. I know that sounds all wrong—but hear me out.

We are not our jobs. Making the career (and, by extension, the choice of college major) the focus of your initial conversations sets the choice of career as the prime decision, the only real thing your teen needs to know about himself or herself. "What do you want to

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be?" sends the message that if your student gets this decision right, everything else will fall into place. You and I both know that's not remotely true.

Instead, reframe the discussion; the choice of career is not the ultimate decision. The choice of life is. Now, for most teens, having a stable income that provides materially for themselves and their family will be every bit as important as it was for their great-great-great-grandparents. And ideally, they will like their work as well. But in our modern world, many other factors may also be part of the package. This could include anything from living where they want to live to how they structure their time. In this way, our teens have even more choices than we did a mere 20 or 30 years ago.

So instead of trying to make the choice of career the one penultimate decision, treat it as part of the whole package. Ultimately, the career exists to support your teen's desired lifestyle. It should fit into the rest of your teen's life, not the other way around.

Questions for Daydreaming about Life

Teens are notoriously bad about living only for the moment. Even ones who are inclined to think about and plan for their future tend to have tunnel vision toward a certain (yes, often career-related) goal. But you have the benefit of having been around the sun a few extra times. You can see the bigger picture, all the things that together make for a fulfilling life. Your primary goal is to help your kid see them too.

Envisioning a dream life requires a level of introspection that might be new and even scary to your teen. It's okay to take it slow and make these conversations as low-pressure and organic as possible. This isn't a job interview! You're not trying to get to the answers so much as you're encouraging your child to daydream.

Try asking some of the following to get your student's wheels turning:

- What are your favorite subjects in school? Which do you think you're best at?
- What are your hobbies and interests? What skills have you developed through your hobbies or other activities? How could those be useful in a career setting?
- What are some of your best personal traits? How would others describe you?
- What sort of work environment appeals to you?
- Do you prefer working with others, working independently, or something in between?
- Do you like a fast-paced environment with lots of change and excitement, or are security and stability more your style?
- Do you want to work indoors or outdoors? Do you prefer to be on your feet or behind a desk?
- Is a traditional schedule (Monday-Friday, 9-5) more your speed, or would you consider (or prefer) something else?
- Do you want to travel for work or work from home?
- Do you want to be your own boss, manage other people, or just be a team player?
- What kind of lifestyle do you envision for yourself?
- Do you want to live in the city, the country, or the suburbs?
- Is living close to family and friends important to you, or are you willing to relocate?
- Do you want to be married? If you want to have children, do you envision a particular life for them, for example, being homeschooled and having a stay-at-home parent?
- Do you need flexibility? For example, do you want to be able to travel while working, work part-time, or even step away from the workforce for a time to raise a family?
- What kind of income would you need to support this lifestyle? Make sure to consider the cost of living in the area where you would like to end up, which may be different from where you live now.

Think of this as an ongoing conversation, not a problem to solve. Throw in one or two of these questions at a time, especially if they already make sense in the context of something else you were discussing. Let your teen talk, and ask lots of follow-up questions. When in doubt, "Why?" can be a very effective question. Your only job here is to be curious.

As I said, choosing a career is an eminently practical process, mostly because once you know what you want your life to look like, it's pretty easy to begin narrowing down which careers will fit into and support that life. There are plenty of practical ways you can help your teen explore specific careers that are a fit for his or her interests and aptitudes. But they will be much more effective if you lead with this process first and continue it even while looking at the more technical aspects of selecting a career. Keeping the career decision in the greater context of your teen's wider life is vital to helping him or her create the life that makes them happiest.



Whitney Cranford Crowell knew she'd reached peak homeschooling when she bought a custom nine-foot by six-foot bookcase with matching ladder and still didn't have room for all the books. She lives in her childhood home outside High Point with her husband of twenty-four years and their fourteen-year-old son. Their daughter and first homeschool graduate is a National Merit Scholar at The University of Alabama. Whitney is the founder of Launchpad Consulting, a career and college coaching firm. She can be reached at whitney@yourguidancecounselor.com.



Cultivating a Creative Practice for Your Family's Sake

by Holly Lee

"I need more joy, Jackie," the confession burned as it came out of my mouth. The school year had started hopeful and new, as it always does. Then, the doldrums of September hit us, and the mundaneness was settling in. The workload seemed heavy, and the freshness had worn off. Goodness knows how much my kids had also been burdened by my lack of joy.

As I confessed this, I knew I wasn't the only one who sometimes felt like a cog in a wheel in my own home. This feeling is not a rarity. It's not relegated to the morally weak or the control freak. No; rather, this joylessness can hit any one of us homeschool moms. How does one find joy?

There are a million answers to this one question; at the same time, there is only one answer. The short answer is Christ is our joy. The long answer is we find joy in imitating the Creator because He made us creative beings. He is Lord over all of our lives, including the interdependent parts of play and art-making.

My own motherhood experience has taught me that the more playful and creative I am, the more joyful the home can be. It's life-giving for the whole family. I believe there are three main ways to get creative again and bring joy back: imitation, inspiration, and aspiration.

Imitation

Imitation is "an act or instance of following" (Merriam-Webster). It is learning side-by-side. Twentieth-century painter Norman Rockwell was known for capturing the wonder in everyday life. He once said, "The commonplaces of America are to me the richest subjects in art." Do you believe this?

The act of following happens regularly in our homes. It can be a wonderful thing. Just imagine this scene: grandmother, mother, and daughter are working in the kitchen together to bake said grandmother's favorite chocolate chip cookies. Can you imagine *that* in a Norman Rockwell painting? I sure can!

The picture I'm trying to paint is that in mothering, we have so many chances to be imitated, but who are we imitating? What kind of joy arises from imitation? I think imitation plays a huge role in creating art. It's sitting down to receive instruction or input and being okay with our initial blunders. It's an immersive experience as we become more and more in tune with the making process.

Play also puts you fully into a moment, which makes it an immersive experience. Play, like art imitation, is a creative process. In both play and art-making, you are learning new skills. You keep building upon what you learned before. Let's consider how

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children play. They start with a premise. "Let's play cops and robbers!" Then they organize their groups, and because they are imitating the art of being a cop or being a robber, referencing either their book intake, movie intake, or real-world experience, they can play out the scene and build upon it. It's an immersive experience, and shapes some formative memories.

Imitation fosters joy because one is learning something new in an immersive, even playful way. It's a way of getting "unstuck" from the "cog in a wheel" motions of life. It is not forced but organic. Some examples of creative imitation can be: taking voice lessons to imitate a variety of tunes, playing with clay or watercolor and experiencing new techniques, becoming a connoisseur of an author's work, and playing around with writing in his or her style.

While imitation certainly can be joyful, it is not the only way to bring back joy through creativity.

Inspiration

Inspiration is "the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative" (Merriam-Webster). Another definition: the act of drawing in breath. It makes sense that inspiration is a dance between passivity and activity. One must breathe in to breathe out. In order to be breathed into, we must be passive. God is speaking to us and showing us a new thing (or reviving an old thing).

On the other hand, in order to become skillful and make art, we must be active. We have to stick with something without becoming lazy at one end of the spectrum or too serious at the other.

A posture of collaboration is important in diminishing the inevitable slide into seriousness. Every time I've taken myself too seriously, I've simultaneously felt the joy being sucked out of my being. So, working with others and bouncing ideas off one another is essential to joyful inspiration.

Some personal examples of inspiration are: collaborating with other authors to create an event, collaborating with a publisher to write a book, and bouncing book ideas off other people. You might collaborate with fellow moms about new recipes and how to implement them. A lot of people in our old homeschool co-op loved to bake homemade bread, so they were constantly collaborating and inspiring one another with new bread recipes. Do you teach in a homeschool co-op? I bet you are inspired by various homeschool moms and resources to put together a delightful array of class offerings.

Joyful inspiration is active passivity. It is seeking out but allowing yourself to draw in breath from external sources. I am not particularly inspiring to myself. I must seek external, higher sources of inspiration. God is the true and better Creator, and He made his creation beautiful. Why not seek out the inspiration there?

Aspiration

Aspiration is "a drawing of something in, out, up, or through by or as if by suction. . ." (Merriam-Webster). Many of us moms know about the bulb syringe or "aspirator." Does that paint a picture? When you are honing in on a creative endeavor, you are not experimenting and playing around anymore. You are focused.

Aspiration is honing in and following what we believe God is calling us to in the creative realm. It's not that we don't have joy in this process. We surely do! In order to not exhaust our joy, we need to come to terms with our own limits. We are creatures in need of rest. If you are so focused on the creative process that you forget to rest, what do you think could happen? Exhaustion? Problematic priorities? Unrealistic expectations for perfection? We must identify problems in our priorities and kill unrealistic expectations.

After all, God created us to merely be imitators of Himself. This side of heaven, we won't know what it's like to live a completely creative, joyful life. In heaven, everything will be made perfect and new. Our work will be for the sake of glorifying God and enjoying Him forever. This side of eternity, we can practice aspiration, albeit imperfectly. Some examples might include: practicing a daily writing rhythm—keeping in mind that a "yes" to writing is sacrificing other things—or acting on a big creative goal (i.e., starting a business, writing a book). These endeavors come with sacrifice this side of heaven. But they are shadows of a more perfect and fully redeemed art.

Here are some questions to ask before you embark on a creative pursuit, be it in imitation, inspiration, or aspiration:

- Can you find joy in this creative pursuit?
- Will your family benefit from it?
- Does your creative pursuit bring glory to God?
- In your inspiration, are you making yourself present to the true Vine, Jesus?

In cultivating a creative practice that breathes in beauty from God, we moms can breathe out joy and vitality into our families.



Holly Lee is a homeschool teacher and wife as well as a mother to three children. Holly grew up teaching her stuffed animals and later became a public elementary school teacher. After she ended her teaching career in the public schools, she earned a graduate degree in counseling. Now, Holly has combined her love of teaching and forming relationships with real historical figures as she reads books to her own children. When she is not reading to her children, Holly enjoys going outdoors in her beautiful state of North Carolina. Her relationship with Jesus Christ is paramount to any other pursuit in life. It is a driving force behind her life's work of helping her home to flourish. Holly is the author of a biography for middle grades students on the life of G.K. Chesterton entitled, The Life of Chesterton: The Man Who Carried a Swordstick and a Pen (published by Blue Sky Daisies).



More Valuable than Time?

by Dava Banner

What could be more valuable than time? Our time is limited. Our time is not renewable. Time wasted cannot be restored. How we spend our time and on whom shows the value we place on it or them. We only get one chance with our allotted time for today. How will we use it for good? How can our time be well spent?

I would personally say that investing in my children was the best use of my time for the twenty years they were growing up in my care. I chose to give them my most valuable gift. I had choices and options, but being with my children was more important.

It was a joy and a privilege to spend all of our time together. It was time well spent.

Homeschooling was a wonderful use of my time. It was often challenging and always hard work, but it was so worth the effort. I can't recommend it enough. We learned and grew and enjoyed the time together. A love for learning was our goal! I wouldn't trade it for anything! It was time well spent.

Often, our time was spent serving others in their time of need—both good practice and good training. This service could be a meal, a phone call, a visit, a card or letter, or serving in church—time well spent.

Did the time pass quickly? Yes, it did, way too quickly! I have so many sweet memories of that time together! My children grew into young adults who were ready for new life adventures and challenges. I'm happy to report that they have done very well in all these new stages of life.

I pray they are finding worthy ways to invest their time and that they continue to see the value of time and the satisfaction of time well spent.

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I hope they realize that the time I invested in them was a gift that I freely gave—a gift I would gladly give all over again. We made the most of our time each day. We were good stewards of our time. It was time well spent.

Please be sure your allotted time is spent in a worthy manner. Invest it wisely. It's that important, and it's that valuable!



Dava Banner has been married for thirty-seven years and has three fine sons. She and her family live on a small farm in Crouse.

Wisdom is the principal thing;
Therefore get wisdom.
And in all you getting,
get understanding.
(Proverbs 4:7)



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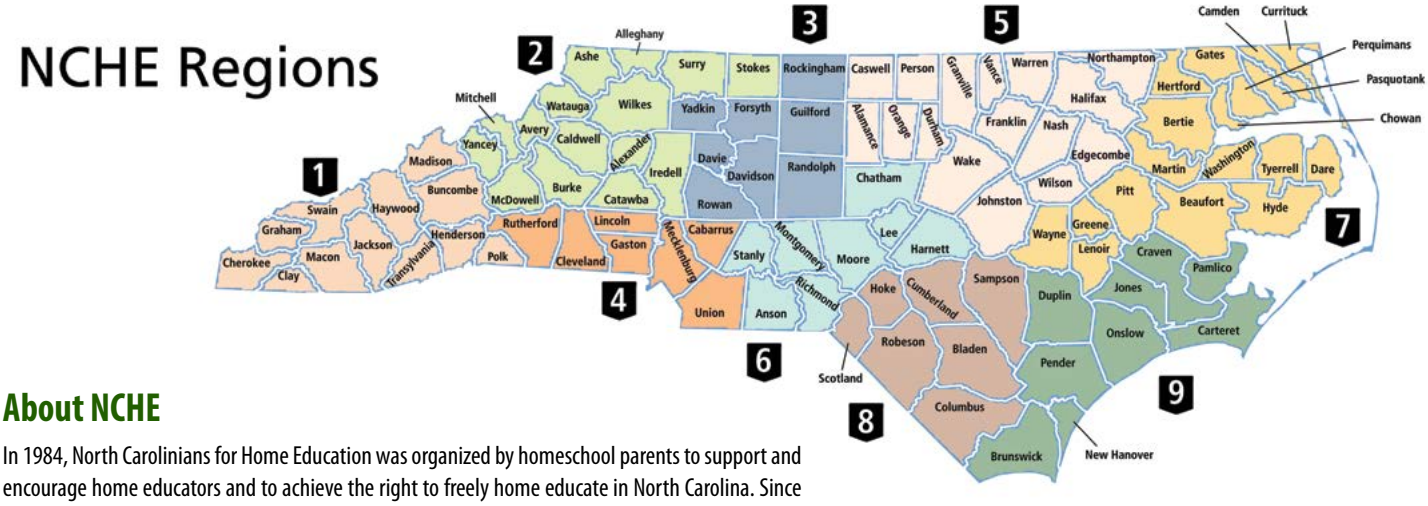
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About NCHE

In 1984, North Carolinians for Home Education was organized by homeschool parents to support and encourage home educators and to achieve the right to freely home educate in North Carolina. Since that time, NCHE has endeavored to serve the homeschoolers in NC. NCHE continues to work to promote the excellence of home education, provide support for those who choose to do so and protect the right to homeschool. Our name was selected so as to include all who are for home education, not just those who are currently homeschooling. NCHE is governed by a working board of directors who volunteer their time and efforts to serve homeschoolers. A non-profit organization, NCHE operates on the basis of biblical principles and welcomes members of all races and religions.

GREENHOUSE Information

The GREENHOUSE is the periodical of North Carolinians for Home Education. It is published twice a year, spring and fall. There is also a special graduate publication in May. It is mailed to all members and posted online. The name GREENHOUSE was chosen to represent the type of care homeschooling parents are able to give to their children. Children are lovingly "tended" in a protected and nurturing environment until they are sufficiently mature to go out and take a place of service in the world. Letters and articles addressed to the GREENHOUSE become property of NCHE with full right to publication without further permission required. Ideas and opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily represent those of NCHE.

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Thrive! The NCHE Homeschool Conference will be May 22-24, 2025, at the Benton Convention Center in Winston-Salem, NC. See pages 5-9 for more information.

NCHE Graduate Offerings. NCHE offers several opportunities for graduating seniors of NCHE member families. The NCHE graduation ceremony, a high school diploma, the GREENHOUSE graduate issue, and a scholarship program. More information is available on the NCHE website at nche.com/graduate-central/. Deadlines vary but are coming soon. The earliest deadline is March 6.

NCHE Capital Fest is planned for early April, but the date is not yet firm. We urge everyone to attend. This is an opportunity for you and your family to advocate for homeschooling with your elected officials and to learn more about our state government. For more information go to nche.com/events/capital-fest.

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