

Flee the schools?

People homeschool for a variety of reasons: academics, socialization, religion, finances, and so on. Whatever the case, if you've found yourself considering homeschooling, you've probably considered all of the other options and feel a little overwhelmed. Where do you even start the process? How do you find curriculum? Are you qualified?

You're not alone in having these questions. Consider the experience of Jessie Wise, co-author of [*The Well-Trained Mind*](#) and creator of an entire line of homeschooling curriculum:

"The first day I taught my three children at home, I cleaned up the playroom and set up three desks. I hung an American flag at the front of the room and led them in the Pledge of Allegiance. I was shaking with nervousness.

It was 1973, and my husband, Jay, and I had just done something radical. We had removed our children from school.

I was terrified, which was ridiculous. After all, I was a state-certified teacher. I'd taught public school for six years; I'd taken postgraduate courses in education from Tulane University, the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia. One year, I'd managed thirty-eight second graders from dawn till dusk – no lunch break, no recess break, and no teacher's aide.

Yet I was completely intimidated by those three little children, certain that I couldn't do an adequate job of teaching them myself. All my teacher education had brainwashed me. I was convinced that parents couldn't possibly teach their own children – certainly not at home. It had to be done in an institutional setting, run by professionals, with their resources and specialized training and expertise.

Unfortunately, the professionals had let us down.

I wasn't a stranger to failures in the system. The last year I taught public school, I had in my sixth-grade class two sixteen-year-old boys who had not yet learned to read. I'd never even heard of home schooling, but I remember thinking: If I ever have a child, he will know how to read before he goes to school. I will not have my son sitting in sixth grade, unable to read."

There is so much more to Susan Wise Bauer's story. You can read it by clicking [here](#). If the story resonates with you, then you might want to consider Pamela Patnode's recommendations in her book, [5 Steps to Successful Home Schooling](#).

Pamela Patnode wrote the book after homeschooling for many years and giving advice to a variety of parents who were interested in homeschooling. She writes from a Christian perspective, which will become obvious with her recommended first step.

Below are the five steps she recommends to get started homeschooling:

1. Pray – "Our culture is one of great haste. Everyone is in a hurry. Americans are great at doing many things. People are not as good, however, at pondering many things. Prayer forces you to ponder, and before you rush into something as important as the education of your children, take time to ponder and pray."

2. Establish Your Mission – "So, why are you home schooling or considering home schooling?..."

Many people are eager to jump into curriculum options, look for co-ops, and dive into field trips. All of these activities are important. However, before any of this can be done, I encourage you to articulate your overall mission for home schooling."

3. Read Quality Literature – “Have you heard someone say, ‘Well, it doesn’t matter what my child is reading, as long as they are reading; that’s all that’s important.’ What a sad and misguided statement this is! That’s like saying, ‘It doesn’t matter what my child is eating, I’m just glad he’s eating.’ How ridiculous! Anyone with even the smallest amount of common sense can tell you that a steady diet of jelly donuts, candy, and fast food leads to inferior growth development and poor health. It’s the same with the books that we read. A steady diet of poorly written material filled with slang, poor grammar, and inappropriate story lines can hinder the mental growth and character development of your child.”

4. Get Organized – “Successful home education requires much self-discipline... Home educators must do all of the aforementioned tasks and, in addition, carry out curriculum research, selection, and planning; teach each child his or her lessons; correct homework; write and review mission statements; administer standardized testing; attend conferences; read; pray; complete required school district paperwork; prepare transcripts; plan field trips and other school related activities; etc. Indeed, the only way to get it all completed, on time, is to get organized.”

5. Find Support – “People are social beings. We are not created to live in a vacuum or on a deserted island. Although we must strive to be ‘not *of* the world’, we do live *in* this world. As a homeschooling parent, you will face unique challenges and joys. You will have many questions throughout your home education journey, and will want to discuss them with others.”