

Six Everyday Ways to Raise Intellectually Curious Children

Homeschooling is now mainstream. If [recent reports are any indication](#), it isn't going to fade into the background anytime soon. Having homeschooling forced upon them for several months, many parents have found they love it, while others find they can't wait for schools to relieve them in caring for their children for six or more hours each day.

But in the midst of news reports and debates about homeschooling and whether or not parents should continue the practice, many Americans are missing an important point: Every parent is a homeschool parent.

It doesn't matter if schooling is left entirely up to you or entirely up to the school. You are still a homeschool parent responsible for creating a learning environment and helping your children to grow intellectually.

But how does one do that? Many of us feel inadequate in our own academic prowess, so how could we ever raise intellectually curious children?

The late author and speaker Elisabeth Elliot offers several simple tips for doing just that in her book [Keep a Quiet Heart](#).

1. *“Teach your children to memorize!”*

Memorization, a chore to many adults, is effortless for children. Repeat something a few times in a child's presence, and they'll have it solidly memorized before you even have

time to fully process the concept. Elliot taught her grandchildren the Greek alphabet this way, casually repeating it now and then while babysitting them for a few days. Making memorization seem like a fun activity is likely one reason why children internalize information so quickly, Elliot implies.

2. “*Ask questions at the table which will make children think.*”

Don't just stick to “How was your day?” Ask deep questions. Questions that maybe you don't even know the answer to. Causing children to ponder deep thoughts will challenge their minds and introduce them to being independent thinkers, something often squelched by today's institutional schools.

3. “*Read aloud to children.*”

“My father did this for us as long as we lived at home,” writes Elliot. “He would bring a book to the table and read a paragraph, or share something in the evening as we all sat in the living room reading our own books.”

Reading aloud is not only enjoyable for the whole family, it also [builds vocabulary and comprehension](#) for those listening.

4. “*Buy a microscope or a magnifying glass.*”

When children have the opportunity to explore the world through these unique lenses, everything is open for exploration, building children's curiosity. Generating interest and looking for answers to life's questions are always great ways to foster thinking and knowledge in a young mind.

5. “Have a globe on which they can find any country they hear named in the news or in conversation.”

Americans are especially focused in on their own little corner of the universe. Giving children a visual and spatial introduction to other parts of the world will not only give them a leg up in geography, but it will also generate awareness of other nationalities and ideologies. In the process, they may learn just how blessed they are to live in a free country.

6. “Teach them to see illustrations of abstract truth in concrete objects.”

We all know that truth is in short supply these days, so teaching children to grasp difficult truths at a young age is essential. Elliot points to Christ and His parables as an example of someone who used stories to teach difficult subject matter in an easy-to-grasp format. What better way than to do the same by using stories or everyday objects to illustrate the truths children will need to hold on to as they grow older and are besieged by relativistic ideas?

Are these steps difficult? No, not really. Can the average parent – even the one that feels inadequate – utilize them regularly? I think it’s quite possible.

If you’re a parent who looks at this simple list and realizes, “That doesn’t look hard, I should be able to do that! In fact, I already do some of those things!” then congratulations. You, my dear friend, are a homeschooling parent. Who knows to what intellectual heights your child will rise because you took the time and care to give him everyday tools to stretch and train

his little mind?

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