



Homeschooling: The Early Years: Your Complete Guide to Successfully Homeschooling the 3- to 8-Year-Old Child

Linda Dobson

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Discover the Rewards of Homeschooling Your Young Child

Young children are full of curiosity, imagination, and a sense of wonder. They're willing to try new things and possess a natural joy of discovery. Yet in a traditional school, these natural behavior traits are too often squelched. That's why more and more parents just like you are choosing to teach their children at home during these critical years—the years that lay the foundation for developing learning skills that last a lifetime. Inside, respected homeschooling author **Linda Dobson** shows you how homeschooling can work for you and your young child. You'll discover how to:

- Tailor homeschooling to fit your family's unique needs
- Know when your child is ready to learn to read
- Teach your child arithmetic without fear—even if you're math-challenged
- Give your child unlimited learning on a limited budget
- And much more!

"Brings dazzling clarity to the otherwise nerve-wracking confusion of early learning—and the adventure of becoming fully human. Highly recommended."—**John Taylor Gatto, former New York State Teacher of the Year and author of *Dumbing Us Down***

"Provides a much-needed introduction to living and learning with young children. Open the book to any page and you'll find inspiring anecdotes and approaches to learning that leave the reader thinking, 'That just makes so much sense!' Highly recommended for anyone who lives, works, or plays with young children."—**Helen Hegener, managing editor of *Home Education Magazine***

"An information-packed delight; I only wish it had been around when our three boys were three to eight years old."—**Rebecca Rupp, author of *The Complete Home Learning Sourcebook***

"This book brings together the experience and wisdom of a great variety of homeschooling families—tied together with warm encouragement and wonderful simplification of processes that can seem so mysterious and daunting to the beginner. A very solid resource!"—**Lillian Jones, homeschooling activist, writer, and reviewer**

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Author : Linda Dobson

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Martha says

This is a sort of cross between The Complete Guide to Homeschooling and You Can Teach Your Child Successfully but not as good as either. I'd still recommend getting the other two instead, but this one is better than some of the others I read, & does combine some of the "how to set up/run" facets with some of the "how to teach" facets.

Sara says

I read this book after a suggestion from a veteran homeschooler and I really enjoyed it. I found it helpful in answering some of my questions and concerns and finalized my decision to homeschool my 3 kids. It was also full of resources that I will be looking into. I am so excited to join them in their learning journey!

Sheri says

Dobson covered a wide range of topics, but I felt like it was more surface prep than get-your-hands-dirty useful. Perhaps it's because I was trained as a teacher, I thought this was all fairly commonsense, basically reassuring parents subject-by-subject that homeschooling is a doable option.

Lynda says

Many helpful suggestions and resources provided for further information.

Melanie says

Book seems to be heavily tilted towards unschooling and isn't as useful a guide for early years as I would have hoped. I much prefer Terrie Lynn Bittner's books for preschool/homeschooling in general. Also chock-full of outdated resources, though that seems par for the course in the homeschooling world (which is wonderful but frustrating).

Adrienne says

Okay, I feel like this book is manipulative and verging on dishonest. Dobson is clearly pushing her

unschooling agenda without disclosing it as such. Take the passage on page 94. First she references a study funded by the National Institutes of Health that showed that children best learn to read with 1) phonemic awareness, 2)phonics, and 3) exposure to meaning (reading aloud with your child, discussing, etc.). Then she says this:

"Looks like a happy marriage of phonics and whole language, the two sides engaged in the 'Reading Wars', doesn't it?"

Um...no. Actually, it doesn't. To me that research supports the phonics approach coupled with reading to and with your child, which is obvious and is NOT the same as the whole language approach where kids learn to read by memorizing words (an approach beloved by all unschoolers).

On page 118, Dobson first mentions "some" homeschool families who use structured methods. Then she mentions "other" homeschoolers who tend toward a "more natural, 'in context' approach....This approach frequently increases learner interest."

I don't have a problem with an author speaking from her perspective, but DISCLOSE IT. Just mention that yours is one of the unstructured families so I can read your book with that in mind. Instead, she feigns objectivity and then subtly tries to convince the reader that her way is best.

Two stars because the resource lists are helpful (although she mentions a disproportionate number of John Holt's books--shocker).

Hafidha says

Definitely a primer for the considering-homeschooling and newly-homeschooling parent. I didn't get much use from it personally, as I'm committed to unschooling and have been reading about homeschooling for two decades now. I do, however, recommend it to newbies. I think Dobson gives a good overview of Hsing approaches as well as many resources. It's a bit "busy" for me - I prefer more focus in my reference books, but if you're just starting out this will open your mind to the possibilities.

Stacey Miner says

This is just another book to read if you're trying to convince yourself to homeschool. It comes packed with tips and encouragement to make your homeschooling journey a successful one. I think the part I like best is the overwhelming abundance of additional resources (books and websites and things) listed at the end of every chapter. After reading this book, I've added a couple dozen more books to my Goodreads to-read list. I recommend this book to anyone who's still trying to decide whether or not homeschooling is for them and their family. I think it'll convince you that it is.

Deanna says

This book is quite dated now, having been published in 1999. I'm not even sure that half the websites mentioned would work anymore. There was a lot of computer games mentioned that were probably on disks

and can't even be located anymore. I think you could get all the information given in this book simply by visiting a few different homeschool blogs.

I also found the idea that the whole thing was based on a small group of families' answers to a survey kind of flawed. I had to return the book to the library so I don't remember exact numbers, but when some families couldn't even identify how long they had been homeschooling for, I was kind of weirded out... Because even if you believe you started homeschooling from birth rather than at kindergarten age, you would still be able to answer the question of how many years have you homeschooled?

I got annoyed with every chapter having a list of how kids can learn _____ (math, reading how to milk a cow) Every list was identical: Parent can teach. Child can ask. Read a book... Annoying.

What I did like about the book was that it didn't focus on the need for a specific curriculum. I liked the whatever works for you and your family attitude.

Janaleefish says

This book has a lot of tips for teaching the little ones. It touches on how the little minds absorb info and how best to facilitate that need. Great for those parents that feel inadequate to teach compared to those so-called "Experts" in the public school field. The book points out that teaching is easy when you take the opportunities throughout your daily routine to teach. I got a lot of ideas and a good grasp on my homeschool plan this next year with my preschooler and 1st grader.

Brit says

Good. Mostly helpful.

Jenn says

Eh, this book was lackluster. I got a lot out of the Dobson book I read just prior to this one, Homeschooling: The First Year, or something like that. I don't know if this was just too much repeat information from the other book or if it really just wasn't as useful. It seemed a little unorganized. In fact, the author said flat out in one paragraph "I'm having a hard time organizing this information." Um, maybe figure that out before you publish the book?

Rabbecca says

Laying aside for now the viewpoint that homeschooling is the only/best way to do things, the book has other issues.

While there are some useful tips, the age range of 3 to 8 is developmentally huge and reduces the usefulness of the book as a whole. The book would be better suited splitting the age range into actual early years (3-5) and early elementary (5-8).

The book is also old, so much of the information is dated. Homeschooling is far more prevalent. And obviously, the internet and computers have caught on.

Many of the pros that are mentioned for homeschooling, apply to good parenting in general.

S.K. says

Very informative, multiple points of view. Highly recommend!

Kathleen Garber says

I was excited to read this book which is for homeschooling ages 3-8 because of course I've started basic homeschooling with my 21 month old and wanted to be ready for more instruction when my child gets older.

However I must say this book didn't live up to my expectations. The best part of the book was the ideas on teaching Reading, Writing and Arithmetic and the books and websites listed in the resources at the back of each chapter. The information itself is pretty good but the writing style is a little nonsensical. I don't feel the author stayed on the topic she was talking about in each section.

The book is based on the results of a questionnaire of 66 homeschooling parents. Each section is talked about based on the results and quotes are given from the different parents about the subjects. I enjoyed the quotes directly from homeschooling families as I think this is the best advice you can get. (ie. directly from the source.) Although some of the statistics were interesting, a lot of it wasn't very much help.

I wouldn't recommend this book as a first one to turn to about homeschooling but if you have read quite a few already and want some ideas on teaching the early years, then pick up this book. All the more if it's from the library. I did copy down quite a few books from the resources that I'd like to read and although some of the websites were no longer available (as is expected since the web changes so frequently) there were some good ones listed that I know have bookmarked.
