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Editorial correspondence and address changes may be directed to review@thsc.org. The deadline for article submission for the November 2016 Issue is September 1st. Interested authors should see Writers' Guidelines at THSC.org.

The articles in this magazine reflect the freedom of home educators in Texas to choose from a wide variety of home school philosophies and teaching methods. Opinions and attitudes expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the Texas Home School Coalition Association. THSC does not endorse or advocate any one method or philosophy. The board encourages each home educator to seek God's will in determining what is best for him, his school, and his students.

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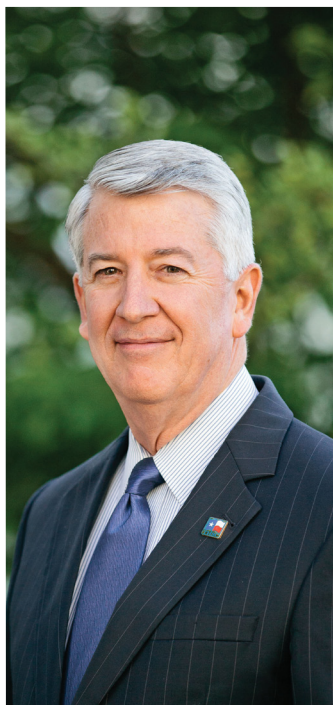
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With 30 years of defending families under its belt, THSC has expanded into new and exciting areas and has experienced God's hand of blessing in unprecedented ways.

Just last year THSC expanded to hold a second home school convention in Arlington, Texas, in addition to its longstanding convention in The Woodlands. On top of that, THSC has increased its customer service team to assist more home school families. It has established relationships, coordinated events with home school groups across the state, and, thanks to the generous support of donors, augmented its participation in the election process more than eight-fold since 2014.

THSC has been active in its discussions with various state entities, negotiating on behalf of home schoolers and parents. Recently, it negotiated a change to Child Protective Service's policy on home schooling that will help to ensure that home schoolers will not be unlawfully targeted by CPS.

Additionally, after the passing of legislation in 2015 that gives home schoolers equal access in college admissions, THSC contacted several state universities that had not updated their home school policies, and was able to prompt changes to those policies that protect home schoolers.

Furthermore, in a state representative race in Houston, THSC-endorsed candidate Briscoe Cain won by 23 votes, showing that one home school family going to vote and bringing their friends can make a difference.

Of course, we continually seek to offer readers of *Review* practical helps for home schooling. In this issue, we explore the upheaval of adolescence in "Enter Hormones Stage Left: The Drama Begins" (page 14). And if you happen to have one foot still in the 20th century, "STEM: Springboard to Student Success" (page 6) may just compel you to fully embrace our high-tech world.

Mainstream culture seems to be doing its best to undermine Christian values and parents' rights to raise their children according to those values. Yet home schooling is exploding across the nation, and THSC has talked to families from other states who move to Texas so they can home school. I am increasingly convinced that if America is going to be carried out of the mire, it will be only on the backs of parents and families who are standing firmly in God's truth.

To this end, we will continue to defend the rights of parents and families to raise their children as they see fit. ■

These early teen years see more physical changes to the body than any time except birth to two years. Remember how much those babies slept? Teenagers need the same thing and for the same reasons.

Louise Butler p. 18

Everywhere in our culture, we are being fed the line that dads don't matter. But dads have power. Great power. Generational power.

Frederic Gray p. 22

With the gap year under my belt, I feel I am more capable of living independently than I was just one short year ago.

Taryn Koroschetz p. 28

In an active child, oxygen and glucose are constantly being delivered to the brain; but once a child sits, it takes less than 10 minutes for those resources to be pulled away from the brain and for learning to slow down and a sleepy state to set in.

Peggy Ployhar p. 36



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SCHOOLING THE DA'S OFFICE ON HOME SCHOOL LAW

by Stephen Howsley

Late last April, THSC member Jennifer Darnell contacted us because the local school district was pressing truancy charges against her and her daughter, Kathryn. Even though Darnell had previously withdrawn her daughter from public school, the district was pressing charges for missed school days because of medical issues. In the past, the school had excused Kathryn's absences for the same medical issues, but now that she was home schooled, they pressed charges for truancy.

Darnell referred the problem to the local district attorney's office, where they continued to press charges for the accumulation of the days missed and requested that she send information to their office regarding her curriculum, lesson plans, record keeping, as well as involvement in any home school groups.

When Darnell explained that state law did not require home school parents to report any of the requested information to the state, the district attorney's office responded by giving her the email address of their clerk so that she could send the requested information. A follow-up meeting with the district attorney's office was then set for the end of May.

In response to Darnell's call, THSC contacted the district attorney's office and the school district. Although THSC outlined the law and clarified that Darnell was in complete compliance, the school continued to press charges.

THSC followed up with the district attorney's office outlining the authority of the family to home school under the Texas Supreme Court decision *Leeper v. Arlington ISD*, the family's compliance with Texas Education Agency's policy (providing a "letter of assurance" to the district), and the school district's clear discrimination in accepting the medically required absences right up until the family chose to home school. THSC then called the district attorney himself, notifying him of the issue and asking that he review the letter and speak to his staff.

Five days later, the case was dismissed. The district attorney thanked THSC for bringing the matter to his attention and even asked where he could find more information on home schooling for his staff in order to protect home school families in the future. At their request, THSC has invited the entire district attorney's office to attend our Continuing Legal Education Seminar this fall, where we teach judges and attorneys the pertinent areas of home school law.

THSC advocates on behalf of many member families each year through interfacing with state agencies and local authorities; informing judges and attorneys around the state on the issue of home schooling; and writing ministry letters to help families work out issues with local, state, and federal government. Local advocacy is just one more way that THSC helps to *Keep Texas Families Free!* ■

Stephen Howsley is a policy analyst for Texas Home School Coalition.





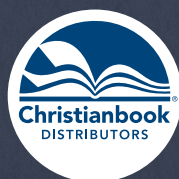
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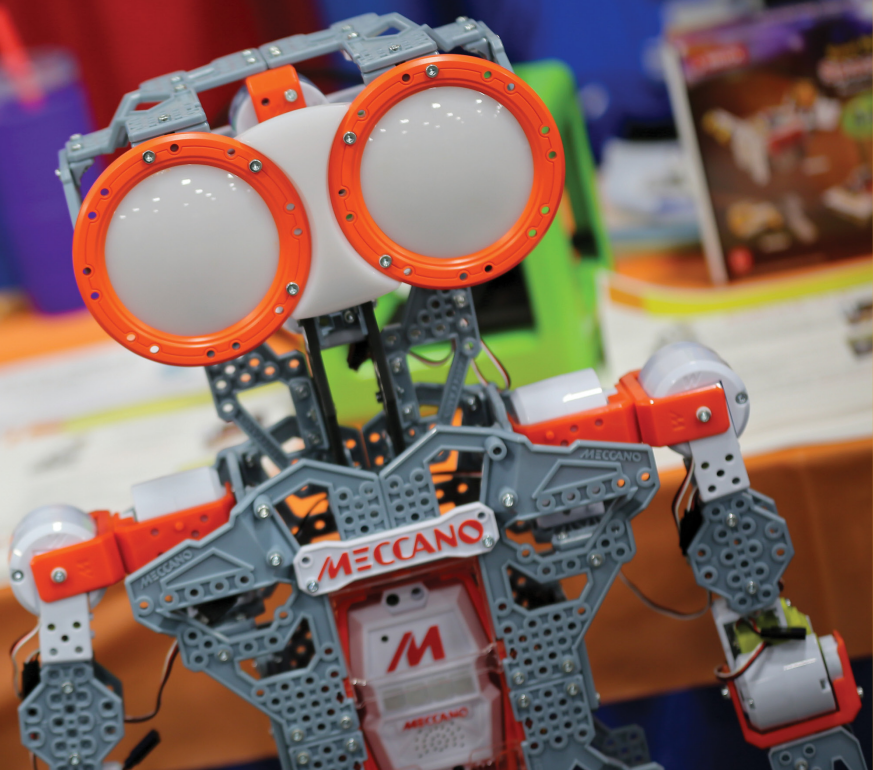
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STEM: Springboard to Student Success

by Paige Hawkins Matcke



All photos this feature by Heather Solsberry, courtesy of THSC.

STEM is the latest educational buzzword on the lips of teachers and parents everywhere. You hear it a lot, but what does it mean? Why is it significant now? What are the benefits of learning STEM for our children and for our country? And what do we as home schooling families do to make sure our children get enough STEM in their education and that they benefit from having learned it?

Although the acronym STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, it is much more than the sum of its parts. We've been learning these subjects for decades, but STEM combines them into an interdisciplinary approach of inquiry and problem-based learning applied to everyday situations, be it creating inexpensive energy-saving devices or designing new agricultural practices that save water and increase

crop yield. This integration is a revolutionary change in American education, and with it comes a different way of looking at the world.

Benefits of STEM Education

STEM helps students develop critical thinking skills to solve real world problems, and helps them become lifelong learners with meaningful careers. By learning to approach problems based on the scientific method, students gain valuable analytical and information management skills that can be applied to all areas of their education. STEM education is education about life, and it teaches students to think creatively and logically to solve complex problems. With an emphasis on problem solving, inquiry, and creativity, students have the chance to move from being simply consumers in our society



to makers, people who invent and build things for the betterment of life. Furthermore, STEM is hands-on and applied, making it interesting and fun to learn.

Why is STEM Critical?

STEM education may be the single most important movement in the history of our country. Why? In a word: employment.

“The future of the economy is in STEM. That’s where the jobs of tomorrow will be,” says James Brown, the executive director of the STEM Education Coalition in Washington, D.C. Some promising statistics for future STEM employment prospects:

- From 2000 to 2010, the growth in STEM jobs was three times greater than that of non-STEM jobs (2013 Federal Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Education 5-Year Strategic Plan).
- In the coming years, STEM occupations will grow 1.7 times faster than non-STEM occupations (Department of Commerce).
- America will create 779,000 jobs between 2008 and 2018 that require a graduate degree in a STEM field (Georgetown University’s Center on Education and the Workforce).
- Employment in occupations related to STEM is projected to grow to more than 9 million between 2012 and 2022 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

Based on these projections, the likelihood that our children will be working in some type of STEM field increases every year. As parents, we need to make sure they are prepared for the jobs of the future.

Jobs in STEM

The number of projected jobs is immense, with nearly 600,000 open jobs



Kids enjoyed the Amazing Chemistry Show and Family Experience event at THSC Convention - Arlington, May 2016. This event is also available at THSC Convention - The Woodlands.

in manufacturing and 1.7 million in cloud computing alone. What other types of jobs will be available? Computing will make up nearly three quarters of all available STEM jobs; traditional engineering will make up nearly one fifth; and physical sciences, life sciences, and mathematics will make up the rest. These U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics don’t begin to reflect the types of jobs that combine STEM with other disciplines.

Although not all STEM jobs will require higher education or even a college degree, a four-year degree strongly impacts compensation. As of May 2013, the average advertised starting salary for entry-level STEM jobs with a bachelor’s requirement was from \$47,000 to \$128,000—26 percent higher than jobs in non-STEM fields. There are more than twice as many job postings for a bachelor’s degree recipient in STEM fields than in non-STEM fields. STEM education appears to be a sure path to high-paying employment.

What about Jobs in Texas?

The outlook for STEM jobs in Texas is equally bright. Business is booming in

With an emphasis on problem solving, inquiry, and creativity, students have the chance to move from being simply consumers in our society to makers, people who invent and build things for the betterment of life.

Texas, and the business is STEM. According to an October 2011 state-by-state analysis:

- The Texas economy will need more than 715,000 STEM jobs by 2018, up from nearly 585,000 in 2008.
- STEM jobs will be five percent of all jobs in Texas in 2018, representing a 22 percent increase in STEM jobs.
- Fourteen percent of all jobs for master’s degree holders and 25 percent of all jobs for Ph.D. holders in Texas will be in a STEM field by 2018.



Without STEM skills, their employability drops. And isn't this one of the main purposes of education: to raise employable, contributing members of society?

This means Texans can take advantage of STEM opportunities without leaving the state. These statistics mention nothing of the possibilities for STEM-related entrepreneurship in Texas, and the future looks bright for new business as well.

National Initiative to Increase STEM Education

For the United States to maintain our competitive economic edge, we must continue to innovate, and STEM education is the key to this momentum. In order to assist industry in creating and using skilled American workers, the government is investing increasingly in STEM education initiatives. In 2015, President Obama articulated a clear priority, allotting \$2.4 billion in STEM education for pre-kindergarten through graduate school.



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Allyson (Mercer) Martin, Associate Food Scientist Professional Certificate of the Culinary Arts, Culinary Institute of America-Greystone, Bachelor of Science in Food Science, Purdue University



apologia.com



Although this program is primarily geared towards public schools, many programs can be accessed by home schoolers as well. The National Science Foundation and the Smithsonian Institution are two government entities that offer resources and guidance for STEM education to the general public, much of which may be useful to home schooling families.

Clearly, STEM is critical to our children's education and future economic success. Without STEM skills, their employability drops. And isn't this one of the main purposes of education: to raise employable, contributing members of society?

STEM for Home Schooling Families

Home schooling families need not feel left behind in the STEM movement.

Although the task of educating our children in a field that didn't exist for many of us when we were in school may seem daunting, there are more resources available than ever. It's all a matter of figuring out where to begin and keeping in mind a few simple rules.

1. STEM is all around us—in the courses we're already teaching. We just need to fine-tune our attention to STEM. Doing a unit on categorizing native birds using a camera and computer? You're doing STEM! Using a computer program to design bridges? You're doing STEM! Teaching your first grader about simple machines by creating little ramps? You're doing STEM! Do a little research into what STEM is all about, and you will probably find that you're already doing quite a bit of STEM.

2. If you don't have a computer, get one, and an Internet connection. It's kind of hard to do STEM without them, and the effort you put into learning about firewalls and protection preferences will be worth it when you see the nearly endless resources available for STEM education. With some careful set-up, you and your student will be able to take advantage of the freedom of choice and control the Internet allows, without compromising safety.

3. You don't need to reinvent the wheel. There are vast STEM resources available on the Internet, from lesson plans to printables to interactive websites, and much of it is free. Science-focused and other museums offer online STEM resources and on-site programs.

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Read comments from home school students who are now attending HPU by visiting www.hputx.edu/thsc and learn more about becoming a member of the HPU family!



Visit local public or university libraries. Many STEM product companies offer curricula and lesson plans. Do your research to find suitable, high-quality, researched-based or data-driven STEM curricula and go from there. If it's worked for other people, it will probably work for your family.

4. STEM doesn't have to be expensive. Although you could spend \$1,200 on a state-of-the-art programmable drone for your 6th grader, she will learn the same, or maybe more, if you use a well-designed curriculum that teaches her with paper airplanes. Many effective and creative STEM curricula use everyday objects you can find in your home.
5. Ask around for the best methods. Find out what other home schoolers

are doing. Join a co-op. Ask support group friends what works well for them and where they find their resources.

6. Take advantage of out-of-school STEM activities. If you live in proximity to a city, odds are there is some sort of STEM-related activity happening. Maker spaces, local

Four Stages

Age-Appropriate STEM Topics

Kindergarten to Grade 2

- 3D geometric shapes and spatial awareness
- Simple machines and gravity
- Basics of logic and block coding
- Weather and ecosystems

Grades 3 to 6

- Complex machines, energy
- Structural engineering basics
- Robotics engineering introduction
- Game design and strategy
- Concepts of aeronautics
- 3D printing

Grades 7 and 8

- Principles of design
- Rube Goldberg machines
- Renewable energy
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Building web-based apps
- Lasers and light

Grades 9 to 12

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science or art museums, high school science and robotics fairs, and STEM learning centers, such as The CORE (TheCoreRockwall.com) or Texas STEM Coalition (TXSTEM.org) offer many opportunities for students to experience STEM learning first hand.

STEM education is the future, but it is also the past. By combining disciplines that we, as Americans, excelled in during the last century and adapting them for life in this century, we give ourselves and our children the opportunity to continue to learn, innovate, create, invent, and solve the problems we face as a nation in the future. STEM is something we should all look forward to learning. ■



Paige Hawkins Mattke is the principal instructional designer/curriculum developer for the CORE, a STEM Teknasium in Rockwall, Texas, which specializes in student-driven, project-based STEM learning.

Worth Your While

- ◆ Visit **stemmom.org** for a wealth of STEM teaching ideas, including a dedicated home schooling tab.
- ◆ **PBS's Design Squad** has targeted resources to help parents understand and lead kids through the engineering design process. PBSKids.org/designsquad/parentseducators
- ◆ Under the Browse tab at **TeachEngineering.org**, access units, lessons, activities, and labs for all grade levels.
- ◆ **Engineergirl.org** seeks to engage middle and high school girls just as they are statistically losing interest in math and science.
- ◆ **Code.org** gets early elementary students coding with Minecraft, Elsa from Frozen, and Star Wars. Offerings include "unplugged" computer science lessons done without computers, helping students understand concepts. Site also offers parent tutorials.

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Enter Hormones Stage Left: *The Drama Begins*

By Lea Ann Garfias

Only once in all the time I have been home schooling have I seriously wanted to put my child on the bus and send him off to school. And I blame hormones. Not mine—his! Hormones had transformed my smart, respectful, hard-working, obedient son into a back-talking, lazy, negligent student who barely passed his assignments after repeated nagging and cross words! During those months, I counted the minutes until my husband came home as if I were babysitting quintuplets. The constant power struggles, the bad attitudes, the needless arguing, and the smell—that awful smell! In despair, I pleaded with my husband to let me turn the boy out of the house and onto the school bus: Have mercy, man! This mom's had all she can take!

Spoiler alert: my husband didn't let me put him on the bus—and now the boy is a home school graduate. But it was touch and go there for a couple of years until the curtain came down on that drama.



Teen Staff members channel their drama for a good cause at THSC Convention - Arlington.

I applauded in blissful ignorance that this was not a one-act play. Soon the curtain went up again, this time starring my daughter. Act three—my second son! It's from the sweet intermission before the final act starring my fourth child that I offer these suggestions for not getting too caught up in the drama of puberty.

Mom and Dad Should Co-Direct



Yes, I was the one “stuck in the house all day” with the preteens (and their younger siblings), so I bore the brunt of the struggle, but my husband and I maintained a united front. Dad took on more and more of the discipline, coaching the preteens before he left for work each day about his expectations. When he returned home at night, he held them accountable for finishing their school work and chores. His increased involvement with the older

students allowed me to step back from micro-managing their tasks, which greatly eased tensions during the day.

Help the Actors Learn Their Lines



The preteen years are difficult for young people. The emotions, changes, and struggles are so new, so I tried giving them labels for what was going on: “Are you feeling frustrated all of a sudden?” “Sometimes at your age, I felt angry for no reason. Does that happen to you?” “Are you tired? Would you like to take a break now?” “Do your siblings annoy you at times?” I showed my daughter how to track her monthly cycle and encouraged her to simply tell her brothers, “This is a bad week for me. Please don't tease me for a few days,” when she felt overwhelmed. Soon the preteens learned to speak up when their emotions were

overpowering, and the entire family appreciated the heads-up.

Add Lots of Blocking



We gave them outlets for their energy. The preteen years send vast emotions along with bursts of physical energy that can often result in the whim-whams, fidgets, and unintentional property damage. To make things easier for everyone, I tried to give them physical tasks, hard work, and exercise. After mowing the lawn, running a couple of miles, or playing a rousing game of four-square, my young people felt happier and calmer. Their grades improved, too!

Role Model the Toughest Lines



The hardest lesson of the preteen years is control—controlling body, emotions, and words, no matter

how one feels. That's hard for adults too, so this stage was a reminder to humbly apologize for my own outbursts. We all get tired and cranky, and everyone overreacts from time to time. Apologizing quickly and sincerely goes a long way.

Tone Down the Intense Scenes



When preteens begin to think for themselves, arguments ensue. However, disagreement isn't as problematic when they learn how to respectfully state their opinions. Young people should learn to think and to speak up for themselves; these are healthy qualities that protect them from abuse, bullying, and false ideas. But it's hard for everyone to disagree kindly. Preteen years offer plenty of rehearsal in respectful disagreement; actually, there are several opportunities each day!

When we as parents listen patiently to our preteens and calmly state our own differing opinions, we demonstrate how to discuss differences maturely.

The preteen years send vast emotions along with bursts of physical energy that can often result in the whim-whams, fidgets, and unintentional property damage.

Encourage Improv



Healthy preteens have a growing need to separate from their parents. Childhood is all about preparing to be an adult. Our young people are anxious to begin the process by asserting their personalities, opinions, and ideas every chance they can. This separation process can lead to unhealthy and dangerous activities

(joining gangs, breaking the law, experimenting with illegal substances, etc.). However, separation in itself is not bad. My husband and I looked for

opportunities that allowed our young people to separate in healthy and age-appropriate ways. We let them work odd jobs for the neighbors without our direct supervision, babysit younger siblings for increasing lengths of time, walk a mile down the road to buy ice cream, play at friends' homes, and volunteer in community events. My middle son took over most of the

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garage, creating his own personal space by converting it into his man cave with furniture and electronics he purchased from thrift stores with his lawn mowing money. Each of our preteens began making their own friends and relationships in church and in the community. With increased independence, our young people had more opportunities to learn how to build a reputation, how to work well with others, and how to resolve conflicts outside the family.

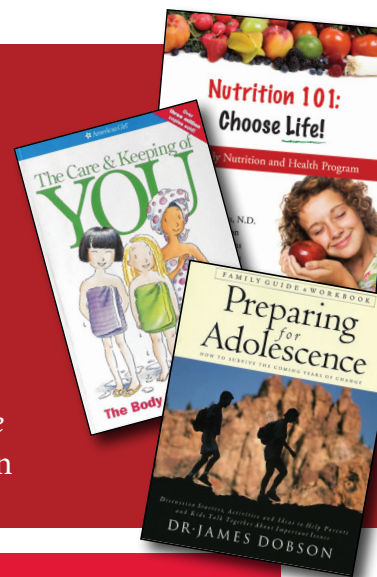
As a young mom, I had dreaded the preteen years. And when I first encountered these hormones with my oldest son, I was just as overwhelmed as he was. Even though I won't be calling for an encore when the final curtain goes down, I thoroughly enjoy watching the story unroll as God shapes them into the exceptional people He created them to be. ■

HELPFUL FOR TALKING WITH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT PUBERTY:

Nutrition 101: Choose Life by Growing Healthy Homes (written by home school mothers)

The Care and Keeping of You (an American Girl book)

Preparing for Adolescence: How to Survive the Coming Years of Change by Dr. James Dobson



Lea Ann Garfias believes there is enough coffee in the world to make even dreadful Thursdays possible. She helps ordinary moms realize their extraordinary influence in her new book *Rocking Ordinary*, available July 1. When she's not home schooling her four children, directing her church choir, or playing the violin, she's passed out asleep. You'll find evidence of her existence at lagarfias.com.



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Under Construction: The Teenage Brain by Louise Butler

There was a time when the seemingly incongruous, manic workings of the young teen brain were tossed off as a “stage.” Now, thanks to the work of magnetic resonance imaging we are able to see what is happening in that wonderful, confused, hormone-fueled, frenetic teen brain.

The main part of the brain, the big part that most people think of when they hear the word “brain,” is the cerebrum. This is the thinking, communicating, reasoning part of the brain.

The cerebrum works the same in your teen as in your spouse, but not under the same conditions. Your teen’s brain is doing things that absolutely no adult brain does!

Humans are born with a brain designed to learn. Your brain learns by connecting brain cells along electronic pathways. These pathways are the leap of energy from the dendrites of one cell to the axons of another. As closely packed

as our neurons are, the spidery dendrites never actually touch. The space between them is called a synapse, thus the spark from one to another is a synaptic connection. Our brains are flowing electronic rivers of information. In the first decade of your child’s life, he will create trillions of these synaptic connections. That is more than he will ever need. But your brain is a greedy organ that will not tolerate energy spent on maintaining little used or inefficient connections. So, between the ages of 11 and 15 the brain goes through a massive reorganization. It systematically destroys more than 20 percent of all previously built connections!

The goal is efficiency; the method is pruning and the result is the poor, confused teenager! Collateral damage are the frustrated parents who go through each day shaking their heads and muttering “Whatever was that child thinking!” Blame biology. Information that was in one place in the brain one day may not be

there the next. It won’t be gone, but the pathway for retrieval may be lost or broken. The book report may be complete, but its location and is buried. If the brain is a file cabinet, theirs has been upended. But there is help for them and us.

These early teen years see more physical changes to the body than any time except birth to two years. Remember how much those babies slept? Teenagers need the same thing and for the same reasons. Teens need about 10 hours of sleep each night. They also need extra hydration because the brain uses 30 percent of all the water your child drinks.

With all those electronic misfires, their attention span is less than 15 minutes, so direct instruction should come in small doses. They also work best with diversified applications of knowledge: using math in social studies, art in science, music in communication, and movement in everything. Optimal instruction might look something like this: instruct,



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– Bethany Rogers



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practice the skill presented, relate the instruction to another area, allow them to apply the instruction creatively. Lather, rinse, repeat!

For example, if you are teaching pie charts and percentages in math, teach the direct skill then have them practice that skill in a workbook. Follow that with instruction on how the pie chart might be used to show other things. Introduce an American history lesson and talk about the five Presidents serving during a particular era (Grant, Hays, Garfield, Arthur, and Cleveland during the reconstruction, for example) and ask them to compare, in pie chart form, how influential they think each President was. Then have them prepare a written defense of their choice. Math, history, and English all play together, with a little artistic impression thrown in for the pie chart.

In this example, one skill is used in four disciplines. Mastery depends on the strategy of review. Remember, our teens

are destroying old synaptic connections and building more efficient ones. The more you use a synaptic connection the stronger it becomes. The more you access it, the more diversified it becomes. The brain wants to remember! One of the best things you can do for your teen's learning is give him or her constant but brief doses of review.

We know that practice helps musical performance. Athletes know that the will to win is useless without the will to prepare. If you want to know math, science, Spanish, or Shakespeare the same is also true. Review and memorization have long been decried as "old school" or pedantic by the "relevance-based" educational theorists of the 70s to 90s. It turns out that our grandparents knew from experience what research now knows from analysis: practice makes perfect.

Your adolescent's brain is under construction, so dawn your hard-hat and start building. ■



Louise Butler is an award-winning educator with a passion for both the art and science of teaching. In

December of 1996, Louise Butler made a presentation at the Global Summit on Science and Science Education in which she outlined the four components required of students to beat the bell curve and achieve the academic success that they deserve. Her book, Beating the Bell Curve, (in its second edition and available at amazon.com) grew out of that presentation.

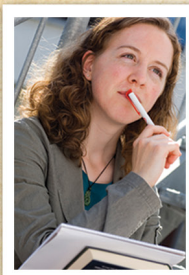
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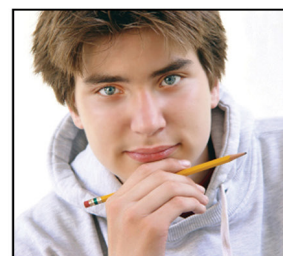
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BECOME A THSC WATCHMAN

by Joshua Newman

One year ago, Texas was one signature away from a new law allowing Texas hospitals to detain people against their will without due process.

Scary, right? That, however, is what nearly happened after the 2015 session when both houses of the Texas legislature voted to make SB 359 the law of the state. All the bill lacked was the signature of our governor, and any hospital in the state of Texas could have detained you against your will without any due process or review by proper law enforcement. Thankfully, at the request of Texas Home School Coalition, several other conservative organizations, and many concerned Texas citizens, Governor Greg Abbott vetoed the bill on June 1, 2015.

Thwarting threats to your freedom is the mission of THSC Watchmen.

During the 2015 session, I had the privilege of working alongside some of the best men I have ever met as a member of the 2015 THSC Watchmen team. We fought with great success against many bills that threatened Texas families (like SB 359).

Being a THSC Watchman was one of the best experiences of my life! Working on specific bills and meeting with state legislators to assist in *Keeping Texas Families Free* from countless government overreaches made it a uniquely rewarding experience.

With the 2017 legislative session on the horizon, THSC is once again launching this important effort to protect your freedoms. I am very pleased to announce that applications are now being accepted for the 2017 THSC Watchmen team!

The program is open to all home school students who will have graduated from high school by January 1, 2017. If you are a home school graduate who is interested in making a difference in our state while gaining valuable experience in our legislative process, please consider submitting an application. Visit THSC.org/watchmen to learn more and apply.

There is no better way to protect the freedoms of home schoolers than having home schoolers themselves step up to the plate to defend their own. When we speak, legislators listen. Do you want to help make our voices heard? Apply today and share this opportunity with others! ■

Joshua Newman is a policy analyst for Texas Home School Coalition.



 **THSC**
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The THSC Watchmen program achieves three main goals:

- ★ Provides a front-line of defense for parents against government overreach.
- ★ Proactively works with state legislators to pass laws that offer more freedom to families.
- ★ Offers home school graduates a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to both give back to their community in a meaningful way and gain unique and valuable experience.



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Dad— The Home Schooling **X-Factor**



by Frederic Gray

A friend of mine, a mom, once told me, “We home school. And when I say, ‘We home school,’ it’s kind of like saying, ‘We’re pregnant.’”

Everywhere in our culture, we are being fed the line that dads don’t matter. But dads have power. Great power. Generational power.

As parents who have side-stepped the modern cultural current and have decided to proactively empower our children with parent-driven education, home schooling, we must do all we can to help our children be all they can be for the Lord. And that means accessing Dad—if he is available.

First we will look at historical and biblical proof of the generational power dads have over children. Then I will give you specific things every dad can do to

maximize his home school efforts—in only a few minutes each day! Dads are truly the home schooling X-Factor.

Historical Proof

How important is a dad in the rearing of his family? Don’t ask me. Ask the Jukes.

“Jukes” is a fictitious name given to a family that was the subject of a multi-generational, groundbreaking study by Richard Dugdale. In 1874, Dugdale asked a question that many of us ask when we see people’s lives go awry: “Why? Why did this happen?” He asked that question a lot, because he was a member of the executive committee of the New York Prison Association. Being a compassionate man, he was concerned about the inmates he met.

One day, during a normal inspection of one of the county jails, he discovered something that sent his compassionate curiosity into overdrive. He found that in one jailhouse there were six blood relatives serving time for various offenses. Their charges included attempted murder, attempted rape, and burglary.

How could this be? Why were so many people from one family in the very same jail, for such horrible crimes?

That is when Dugdale began researching the roots of this family to whom, in an effort to protect their identity, he gave the fictitious last name Jukes.

Dugdale traced the ancestry of the Jukes back to a man he called Max, who was born some 150 years earlier. Max had eight children: two sons and six daughters. Some were born outside of



How you do anything is how you do everything. –T. Harv Eker

marriage. His work history was nothing to be proud of, and his life was filled with bouts of heavy alcohol consumption.

Dugdale published his findings in 1877 in a book entitled, *The Jukes: A Study in Crime, Pauperism, Disease and Heredity*. Out of the roughly 1,200 members of the Jukes family, he was able to track down and verify just over 700.

The results are stunning.

- 180 were what were at that time called “paupers.”
- 140 were criminals.
- 60 were habitual thieves.
- 50 were prostitutes.

These results helped shift the thinking of the day—that people were products of heritage, not habitat; your genetics predisposed you to either prominence or crime. Much has been done since then to validate Dugdale’s assertions.

The word was out. “Max Jukes,” the deadbeat dad, had triggered a family culture and cascade of immorality and crime. Richard Dugdale awakened people into realizing the potential negative

generational impact one dad could have.

However, as stunning as the results of Dugdale’s study are, the results are even more stunning when you contrast the Jukes family with the Edwards family.

In the early 1700’s, the colonies that would become the United States of America experienced what has become known as the first Great Awakening. A central figure in that spiritual awakening was the preacher Jonathan Edwards. Edwards had very high standards and demanded biblical integrity and congruency from everyone—especially himself.

A. W. Winship, a man of similar curiosity to that of Richard Dugdale, researched the family of Jonathan Edwards. Again, the results are stunning—especially in light of what we know about the Jukes. Among the roughly 1,400 descendants of Jonathan Edwards whom Winship researched, we find:

- 13 college presidents
- 65 professors
- 100 lawyers, one of whom was a law school dean
- 30 judges

- 66 physicians, one of whom was a medical school dean
- 80 people who held public office, including:

- 3 U.S. senators
- 3 mayors of large cities
- 3 governors
- a controller of the U.S. Treasury
- a U.S. Vice President

The numbers are staggering. The trends are undeniable. It reminds me of a saying I heard a long time ago: “How you do anything is how you do everything.”

–T. Harv Eker

One dad. That’s the power of one dad . . . for generations.

If the historical markers do not move you, let’s consider more inspired evidence.

Biblical Proof

Abraham is a prominent figure in the Bible to both Jews and Christians. He’s such a central figure to Christians that the Bible calls Christians descendants of Abraham (Galatians 3:26-29).

Abraham was no spiritual bum. He was special. He was even called a “friend of God” (James 2:23).

Yet, in spite of that, Abraham gives us a Jukes-type example in the Bible.

Abraham, while traveling through a



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foreign land, was afraid people might want his wife. So, he misled people into thinking they weren't married (Genesis 20:1-13).

Lo and behold, Abraham's son Isaac engaged in the same act of misleading people into thinking Rebekah was not his wife. And he did it because of the same fear (Genesis 26:6-11).

Depending on what experts you listen to, people are born with only one fear, maybe two (heights/falling and loud noises). It is generally agreed that most fears are learned. The Bible supports that notion by stating, "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18).

Here's my point. Isaac learned the *same fear* his dad had, and responded in the same misleading way his dad did, in the *same location* (Gerar), and maybe even with the same king! (They had the same name.)

In essence, Abraham, known as the father of the faith to billions of people across the planet, gave us a Jukes-type illustration with his son Isaac.

On the opposite spectrum there is Joseph and Jesus.

When I ask people what occupation Jesus had, many will say, "He was a carpenter." After I ask them for proof, they will almost always say these exact words, "Well, we don't know for sure that he was a carpenter, but we assume he was because Joseph was."

It's at that time that I point out that the Bible does actually identify Jesus as a carpenter (Mark 6:3).

Let's see.

- God chooses Joseph to be the "dad" in the life of His son, Jesus.
- Joseph disciplined Jesus in the family business, carpentry.

➤ Jesus made disciples—spiritual carpenters in God's house (Ephesians 2:19-22).

➤ The apostles are to make more disciples who will further build God's house (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 2:19-22).

Given this information, you could say that the discipleship pattern in Christianity points back to the heavenly Father's choice of the best earthly father for His son.

Anecdotal Proof

Even simple observation makes the same point. I have heard dozens of moms from across the country tell me that they "have to" put their sons in school, or they "can't handle" their sons. I've even seen moms and daughters hiding from their angry son(s) until the dad came home.

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Lorelei Ketcherside, Spring, TX

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The common thread is Dad's lack of involvement in the home schooling of the children.

A pastor I'm close to told me something I've never forgotten. It rang true with me and everyone I've shared it with—both moms and dads: "Usually when a wife gets angry with her husband, it's not as much about what the husband did to her, as it is about the impact the husband's behavior has on the children."

Dads, wives are crying out for their husbands to be involved in the home schooling of their children, in any way. Many dads are already involved, and the numbers are rising. Let's make the numbers rise even more.

Dad Disciplines

Here are some things dads can do to help make the home schooling of their children the best it can be.

Every morning tell your children you expect them to honor their mother.

- ▶ Get them to commit to it orally. If you don't see them in the morning, do it the night before. Remind them that she is doing what you want her to do, and if they disrespect her, they are disrespecting both you and God (Ephesians 6:1-2).

Every evening ask your children if they honored their mother.

- ▶ Ask in front of their mom. Then, after they answer, ask their mom how they did.

Read one Bible verse each day.

- ▶ Simply read one verse. Many dads put tremendous pressure on themselves to lead a lengthy devotion each day and consequently give



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up quickly on trying to establish a routine. I've been there.

The accountability, the daily regimen, the questions, and God's word will all work together to take you places you never have been.

Even if moms say, "We home school" the same way they say, "We're pregnant," dads can still be the X-Factor in your home school. Learn from the Jukes, the Edwards, Abraham and Isaac, Joseph and Jesus, and the collective cry among home schooling moms across the country—a few minutes a day can have a huge impact on your children.

That's because dads have power.
Great power.
Generational power. ■

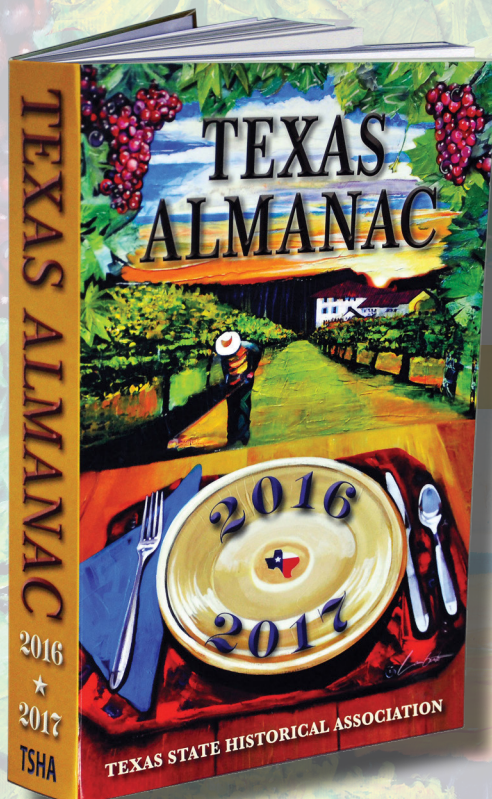


Dads, wives are crying out for their husbands to be involved in the home schooling of their children, in any way.



Frederic Gray is the founder of the Fathers of Faith and Daughters of Excellence father-daughter retreat, as well as the Unquenchable Love Marriage Workshop. For over 20 years, Frederic has been speaking into the lives of others. In his teens, he began speaking to youth. In his twenties, he began speaking to churches, schools, and business groups. Churches, schools, home school organizations, youth organizations, abortion counseling centers, lectureships, and conventions have invited Frederic to speak on issues pertaining to families, marriage, parenting, and concerns for today's youth (including abstinence, student leadership, and healthy choices). Gray will present three workshops at THSC Convention - The Woodlands, including one entitled, "A Dad's Duty: Balancing Teaching and Discipline (Guidance and Boundaries)."

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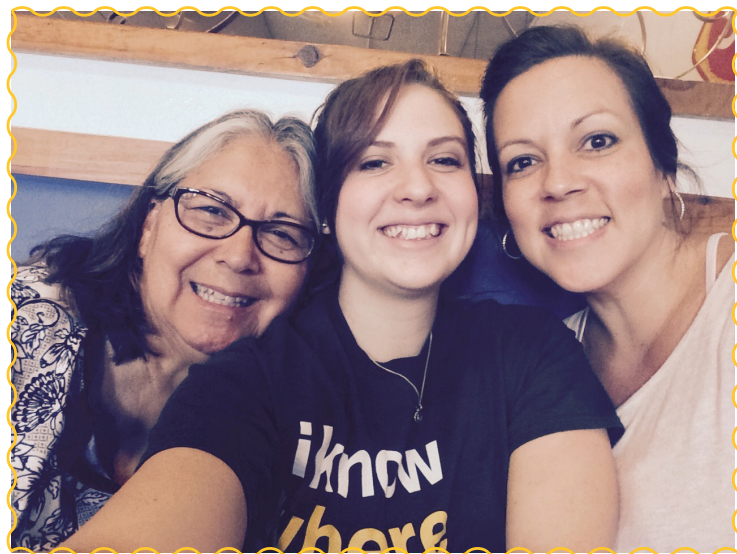
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Filling the Gap: Finding Purpose in My Gap Year

by Taryn Koroschetz



During my senior year of home schooling, I had to make a decision: would I go straight to college, or take a gap year? I knew that I was not ready to tackle the world on my own yet. I wasn't prepared to leave my family or familiar activities, and I wasn't sure if college was the route I wanted to pursue. Truly, I just was not emotionally, mentally, or physically ready to leave home.

At my age, young people often aren't sure which path is right. It is not an easy selection, as there is immense pressure and expectations from peers and adults about what a young person should do after high school. Taking a gap year isn't an easy decision. Just as home schooling was unpopular and misunderstood for such a long time, I believe that the gap year is going through the same process.

After much prayer and discussion

with my mom, I decided that I would take a year off to work on my dream before heading to college. Taking a gap year gave me the opportunity to increase knowledge of myself. It gave me time to figure out whether I really wanted to go to college, and if so, what to study, or if I should pursue a dream God had given me. A gap year would allow me to pursue something that would take time and effort I wouldn't have if I were attending college. I didn't want to have regrets later on if I failed to give my dream a try!

I knew that my gap year wasn't going to be a time for laziness. My mom laid down the law pretty quickly; I either needed to get a job or pursue working on that dream about which I had talked! Hearing this almost made me want to head off to college instead. Almost, but not quite.

For about a year, I've had a passion to create a magazine for teen girls; one that would stand in the place of the popular but not-so-good-for-you teen magazines—something wholesome and pure. A place of encouragement for lost teens with real stories, real life, and real people. I know from experience that many young girls who look up to celebrities grab these unwholesome magazines and pour through them, searching for current fashions, trendy hair and makeup ideas, and advice on boys—especially advice on crushes and how to attract guys.

I wanted my magazine to help girls with their self-image and self-esteem, to show them they are beautiful, to teach them what true beauty is, and to bring back the simple elegance and grace of what it means to be a girl. That

Gap Year: noun

A year that you spend traveling, working, etc., before continuing your studies (Merriam Webster). First known use of gap year was in 1985.

A gap year is usually taken between a student's high school graduation and his or her freshman year of college. It's a time for students to get a bit of a refresher before they start off on their college journey. Many students feel the need to take a gap year from academics to help their minds and spirits relax and refresh so they can better take on academics challenges in the years to come.

Great uses of a gap year include traveling, volunteering, working to save money for tuition, and pursuing a dream.

Lilies and Jeans

BRINGING ELEGANCE AND SIMPLICITY TO GIRLS | EST. 2015

HOME TRUE BEAUTY FAMILY FRIENDSHIP LIFE NEWS



Left: Taryn with mother Anna Koroschetz and grandmother Grace Moerlein.
Above: The home screen banner of LiliesandJeans.com

What Will Colleges Think About My Gap Year?

Colleges are beginning to recognize the value of a gap year for emotional maturity, perspective, and recharging before entering into the challenge of college. View the gap year policies of five Texas universities and dozens of others around the nation at AmericanGap.org/fav-colleges.php. If you need financial aid for college, it's crucial that you coordinate with your college of choice. In many cases, enrolling then deferring will secure your institutional aid and awarded scholarships.

is why I named my magazine *Lilies and Jeans* to portray elegance, beauty, simplicity, and casualness.

I dove headfirst into the process of creating my dream. My mom helped me with a plan: I would start out with an on-line magazine and blog first, then move towards a full-print magazine. It took a lot of elbow grease, but we got it up and running. I was excited and couldn't believe that my idea was becoming a reality!

In addition to the online magazine enterprise, I've had part-time jobs in retail and as a virtual assistant during my gap year. Employment has helped me to be more appreciative of the quiet days I have enjoyed this past year (which I won't get much of once I'm in college).

Working in retail was a huge change for me! I had to wake up much earlier than normal and work long hours on my feet. Working as a virtual assistant was slightly easier because I got to stay home. I learned to manage my time and responsibilities for myself *and* someone else. I feel I'll use this skill for the rest of my life more than any other! Good time

management will enable me to schedule time for homework and for having fun with friends and activities once I live independently.

My gap year is drawing to a close now. I have decided to attend college this fall to pursue an English major, which will assist me further in pursuing my dreams of the magazine and becoming an editor. I still experience sadness when I think about moving three hours away to live on campus and leaving behind everything familiar: my parents, friends, brother, and pets. With the gap year under my belt, I feel I am more capable at living independently than I was just one short year ago.

I believe the most important thing I've learned from this gap year has been that my dad was right when he said, "Be a kid for as long as you can, because it goes by quickly—and once it's gone, it's gone."

I've learned to better appreciate the time I have with my family and friends and to not rush growing up so fast. Life happens quickly enough as it is. I don't want to speed through life! I want to slow down and live fully, enjoying the time I have on this earth and accomplishing the calling God has given me.

Taking a gap year has been an essential journey in my life, and has given me time to grow and mature. I have learned a little more about what it takes to be an adult and make real-life decisions. Although I don't view myself as a full-fledged adult, the responsibilities I've shouldered during my gap year have helped me grow and prepare to live on my own. ■



Taryn Koroschetz will be attending Baylor University in the fall of 2016 where she will major in English to further pursue her dream as an editor. She attended public school until third grade and was home schooled thereafter through her senior year. She enjoys reading, editing her friends' stories, and spending time with her family.

Gap Year Bucket List

by Shannon Kingsbury,
Contributing Editor

From official programs to growing a skill set or your character, here are some practical and enjoyable ways to spend your gap year.



1. **Become a pilot.** Each of these aircraft ratings takes a few months of lessons and study and approximately \$10,000 to earn: Private Pilot, Instrument Rating, Commercial Pilot. Learn more at FAA.gov/Pilots/Become.
2. **Worldview at the Abbey.** This gap year program allows Christian students to strengthen the foundations of their faith and prepares them to be examples of Christ's love to the world in college and beyond. Tuition is \$15,800. Learn more at WorldviewBridgeYear.com.
3. **Sail the world!** Seamester allows students to travel the world by boat and work on research and service projects in different countries. For more information visit Seamester.com.
4. **Study art history.** Art History Abroad offers 12-week programs each fall and six-week programs at other times throughout the

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year that allow students to learn about art on-site in Europe. Go to ArtHistoryAbroad.com.

5. **Visit Ireland (or another foreign country).** Irish Gap Year is a program that incorporates leadership skills and community service with opportunities to explore the untamed beauty of Ireland. Find out more at IrishGapYear.com.

6. **Go on the mother of all mission trips.** World Race: Gap Year is an organization that spends three months in each location the team visits, for a total of nine months. Go to WorldRace.org/GapYear.

7. **Get an internship.** Internships are a great way to gain experience in a field you are pursuing, assist an organization you admire, and gain maturity in character. Check THSC.org/opportunities.

8. **Volunteer at your church.** Taking on the responsibility of a children's Sunday school class or another project will teach leadership skills and allow you to mature in handling life situations, as well as grow spiritually.

9. **Learn to play an instrument.** If there is an instrument you've begun to learn (or haven't started at all due to time constraints), find a local music teacher and block out practice time. You may awaken a life-long love for creating music!

10. **Get a job.** Whether working at a fast food restaurant, a grocery store, or as a secretary, you can put away money for tuition and gain skills to place on your resume.


11. **Learn practical homemaking/life skills.** Ask your parents if you can assist in the kitchen with meals, learn how to budget, have someone show you how to change a tire, etc.

12. **Develop specific character traits.** Set specific, measurable goals for improving a character trait(s) about yourself and ask a family member or close friend to hold you accountable.

13. **Serve in the community.** From outreaches your local churches do to community-wide events, finding a place you can serve will develop your character and bring joy to God, yourself, and others!

14. **Serve our nation.** The Americorps program offers 10-month compensated opportunities to work in disaster relief and preparedness, social services, and infrastructure development and repair all over the nation. Learn more at NationalService.gov.

15. **Pursue your passion.** If you have a talent or dream that can begin to flourish in a year's time—like creating *Lilies and Jeans*, pursue it! ■



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We Will Survive: Learning Life Skills *by Lynn Dean*

One morning, my friends and I left our cars at a ranger station and hiked into the rugged wilderness prepared to survive with nothing more than our good sense and the items we could carry on our backs. Everything was an exciting adventure that first day, but when I woke to the sound of rain on my tent the next morning, body bruised and blistered, reality settled in. My evolution from comfort-loving co-ed to hardy hiker was an arduous process, but by the time we got back to civilization my 30-pound backpack wasn't the only weight lifted from my shoulders. I

"homesteading off the grid," knowing a few survival skills can be empowering. Here's why:

Appreciation of History

Most of our ancestors had few possessions and often risked what little they owned for the opportunity to better their lives. Some emigrated from overseas; some moved west as pioneers, all relied on adaptability and survival skills to get them through every challenge. The more we put ourselves in their place, the more we understand their motivations, struggles, and the value they placed on freedom and opportunity.

could mean the difference between life and death in perilous circumstances.

Self-Esteem

Teaching children how to "rough it" can lead to greater confidence in their own abilities. From tying their shoelaces to tying a half hitch in a tent rope, children take great pride in doing things for themselves. Pastor and leadership expert John Maxwell says, "If we're growing, we're always going to be out of our comfort zone." Introducing real-life skills may take children out of their comfort zone, but developing self-sufficiency builds confidence, and confidence increases our comfort level—which is likely to make us want to get off the couch and get outside more.

Gratitude

Children will find new meaning in and appreciation for industry when their survival depends on it. Many of the difficulties we've come to expect from children and teenagers—laziness, contrariness, lack of responsibility—are caused, in part, by living in an age of convenience. Exposing children to the wild and what it takes to survive can spark conversation and unparalleled understanding about privilege, luxury, and gratitude.

Family Bonding

Ready to launch out on family adventures? Begin with short hikes and overnight camping trips. This will help develop the group rhythm and smooth out family dynamics in these novel circumstances. Eventually, build up to full-day hikes and extended trips such as three-day canoe or camping excursions. Remember, not everyone will be a "happy camper" at first. Reluctance to try new activities is absolutely normal. We grow when we consider the strengths and weaknesses of others and make accommodations for the good of the group. As a family, this can bring a deeper

Exposing children to the wild and what it takes to survive can spark conversation and unparalleled understanding about privilege, luxury, and gratitude.



experienced a surge of confidence that came from knowing I could take care of myself, and I had a new understanding of how few things are truly essential and a fresh appreciation for those things that make life more comfortable.

Based on this enriching experience, I strongly recommend teaching children life survival skills. Even if your family is more into suburban convenience than

Life-Saving Skills

Emergencies don't give advance notice. Would you know how to survive if you were lost in the woods, if a natural disaster resulted in the loss of technology, or if there was an accident that required first aid? Skills such as orienteering, hunting, shelter and fire building, water purification, food preservation, and first aid



Even if your family is more into suburban convenience than "homesteading off the grid," knowing a few survival skills can be empowering.

understanding of the uniqueness of each person and his or her role. No matter the starting point, it's important to get out of the comfort zone once in a while and stretch your survival skills. Your children should come back from each adventure more open and receptive to the experiences. They'll also come back well-exercised and tired . . . two more benefits!

If you're looking for places to begin learning primitive or antiquated skills, here are a few suggestions:

Pioneer Sites

Take field trips to places where you can see how the forefathers lived. Our ancestors were resourceful people, and many interpretive historical sites will let children experience such skills as spinning, weaving, soap and candle making, home building, farming, and harvesting.

Individual Lessons

Friends or relatives are often a fount of knowledge and can teach your children to cook, sew, quilt, garden, or fish. Maybe

you have a grandmother who cans garden-fresh produce or bakes bread. Some of my fondest memories are shelling peas and baking bread with my grandmother. Look for opportunities that build skills and relationships.

Other survival skills like drown-proofing, swimming, and first aid are taught by service organizations such as the Red Cross and YMCA. Both the Red Cross and the American Heart Association teach CPR, a skill everyone should know. Check into the availability of summer programs in your area.

Scouting Programs

Trail Life for boys and American Heritage Girls are Christian scouting programs where children can learn and have adventures like in Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. Programs like these continue teaching the significance of primitive skills while encouraging personal development in a Christian learning environment. ■



Lynn Dean was a reluctant historian. Bored with schoolbooks that chronicled battle dates and dead people, she feared inflicting mind-numbing data on her own students. Fortunately, she discovered the classic appeal of storytelling—adventure sagas about real people who struggled to overcome obstacles while pursuing their dreams. For more than a decade Lynn has combined unit studies, field trips, and quality literature to create unique and memorable experiences in discovery learning.

Only in Texas

Barrington Living History Farm in Washington, Texas (northwest of Houston) allows you to step into 1850 as you explore the home of Dr. Anson Jones, last president of the Republic of Texas. Costumed interpreters welcome you to lend a hand with chores! 936-878-2213, WhereTexasBecameTexas.org/about/barrington-living-history-farm

Texas Survival School in Royce City (Dallas area) hosts church groups and father-son survival weekends, as well as a variety of one- to three-day classes. 214-883-0163, TexasSurvivalSchool.com

Camp Tonkawa in Collinsville (one hour north of Dallas) conducts special day camps and field trips for home schoolers. 940-440-8382, CampTonkawaTexas.com

The Human Path near San Antonio is a survival school with a unique focus on wild edibles and herbal medicines. 210-807-0891, TheHumanPath.org

Earth Native Wilderness School in Bastrop offers a wide variety of summer and day camps, as well as custom classes on a wide range of outdoor and survival skills. 512-299-8870, EarthNativeSchool.com

Omega Survival School in San Angelo offers instruction in primitive skills, self-reliance, survival, and bushcraft. They offer 20 percent off for military, first responders, police, and fire fighters, as well as one child under 18 free with a paid adult. OmegaSurvivalSchool.com

Primitive Texas and Louisiana hits the road with their day camps and lessons, teaching in College Station, Huntsville, Lewisville, and other places. 979-777-3902, PrimitiveTexas.com

Three PRIMITIVE SKILLS You Can Learn at Home

by Alisha Mattingly, Contributing Editor

WEAVING

Supplies: 12" strips of fabric (16-28 strips), two heavy items such as rocks, books, or book ends.

Why it's important: Many useful tools such as baskets, blankets, traps, and clothing are produced through weaving. These tools can keep a person fed, warm, and protected from the elements which are fundamentals to survival.

What to do: Begin by laying 6-12 strips of fabric horizontally in a row. Space these strips about a ½" apart. At the end of the strips, place the heavy items, one at each end. This will secure the strips in place for weaving. Weave one strip at a time vertically through the horizontal strips by alternating pushing the strip under and over the horizontal strips. Continue with an additional 6-12 strips,

sliding each vertical strip close to the previous one. Once done, use the leftover strips at the end of each side of the weave to secure the weave in place by wrapping them in a circle around the horizontal strips near the end of the vertical strips. Alternate the wrapping by going over and under in a similar weaving fashion before circling the strip. Tie off the ends of that final strip and do the same thing to each side of the weave. Remove the heavy items and the weave is complete.

Take it to the extreme: The Yucca plant, native to Texas, is excellent for weaving and making cordage, so for added difficulty substitute Yucca leaves for strips of fabric. For an instructional video, visit YouTube.com and search "Camp Liberty Primitive Basket Weaving."

TYING KNOTS

Supplies: Rope or string.

Why it's important: Tying knots is one of the most important survival skills. Knowing different knotting techniques helps with fishing, first aid, scaling mountains or trees, and crossing water.

What to do:

Square Knot

This knot uses two rope ends to secure a rope together. Begin by holding one end in the right hand and the second end in the left hand. Place the rope ends over each other, right over left, and tie. Then reverse the order and do left over right. A firm tug will secure the knot. Useful for bundling firewood, elongating a rope, and tying bandages.

Bowline Knot

Begin by making a loop with the free end

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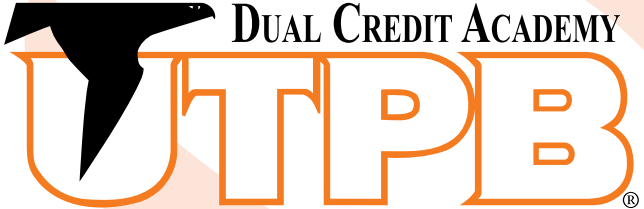
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of a rope. Pass the free end through the loop and around the back of the line. Bring the free end back down into the loop and then pull the line to tighten. This knot will take some practice. The further up the rope you go, the larger you can make the loop at the end of the rope. Useful for hanging hammocks or shelters, suspending food from a tree, or rescuing a drowning person.

Flemish Knot

Begin forming a loop by passing the free end of the rope over itself. Continue that end around the base of the loop and then pass the free end through the loop. It will look like a figure 8. Useful for securing rope or cordage to a ring or post.

Take it to the extreme: Google “20 Knots You Need to Know” and follow the link to Outdoor Life’s listing. They begin easily enough, but by the end your fingers will have experienced quite the workout.

SHELTER BUILDING

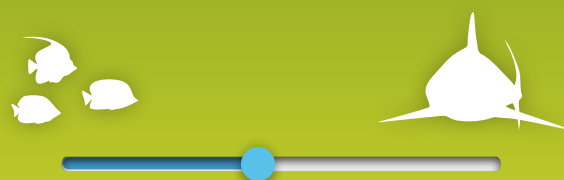
Supplies: Chairs, poles, or other sturdy “fort-building” foundations, a tarp or sheet, rope, blankets, books, rocks or other heavy items.

Why it’s important: Obtaining shelter is one of the top three things to secure first when in the wilderness. Shelter is important for maintaining body temperature and protecting the body from the environment.

What to do: The easiest and most basic shelter to learn is the lean-to. In the wild, a lean-to would be built between two trees, but for an at-home lesson use chairs or other “fort-building” foundation pieces. Place chairs no less than 4’ apart. Tie a taut rope between the two chairs. Place the sheet or tarp over the rope and pull the sheet firm to the ground in a diagonal. Place the heavy items on the back of the sheet to secure in place. Lay blankets and pillows inside the shelter and take a nap!

Take it to the extreme: Practice all three skills by weaving a large cover for the shelter and knotting it to whatever household items you are using as poles.

Adventure Further: Check out WikiHow.com/Build-a-Lean-to-Using-Two-Trees and attempt to build a lean-to in an outdoor setting using natural materials. Then camp overnight in your new shelter! ■



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HELP! MY CHILD CAN'T SIT STILL!

by Peggy Ployhar

Every once in a while the Texas Home School Coalition Special Needs Department gets a call from a parent saying, “I can’t get my student to sit still. How can we get any work done if my child can’t sit long enough to complete an assignment?” Although there are many variables involved in answering this question, the biggest hurdle I usually encounter is trying to help this parent realize that sitting still doesn’t mean learning is happening; quiet desk work doesn’t mean the best learning method is being delivered.

In fact, learning and movement go hand in hand. Many new studies decisively show that lack of movement actually decreases overall brain function, thus increasing the overall time a child needs to process new data. The science behind how movement affects learning has to do with the delivery to the brain of two very important chemicals which stimulate faster thinking. In an active child, oxygen and glucose are constantly being delivered to the brain; but once a child sits, it takes less than 10 minutes for those resources to be pulled away from the brain and for learning to slow down and a sleepy state to set in.

Unfortunately, most research done on the connection between learning and movement is done on test subjects who are typical learners—not children with special needs. In his book *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*, Eric Jensen, cofounder of SuperCamp, the nation’s first brain-compatible learning program, states that movement in a special needs educational setting can be a game changer in helping students get past learning barriers that the traditional “sit in your seat and learn” type of teaching exasperates:

“Many teachers have found that programs that include movement help learners with special needs. Several hypotheses may explain this phenomenon. Many special-needs learners are stuck in counterproductive mental states, and movement is a quick way to change them. Second, movements, such as those involved in playing active games, will activate the brain across a wide variety of areas. It may be the stimulation of those neural networks that helps trigger some learning. For other students, it may be the rise in energy, the increased blood flow, and the amines that put them in a better mood

to think and recall. Some routines that call for slower movement can do the reverse, calming down students who are overactive, hence supporting a state of concentration.”

Sharing Jensen’s findings usually helps a questioning parent accept that movement and learning should be added to the child’s home school curriculum. But this is the question that always follows: “So how do I teach them while they are moving?” To which I give the following suggestions:

- Do flashcards while pacing the floor.
- Put math facts on sheets of paper at your student’s hand height up a flight of stairs. Have the child touch the sheets one at a time while repeating the information.
- Go beyond sitting and listening to songs that teach educational facts. Make up movements to go along with the songs.
- Practice storytelling while on walks. One person thinks of three things to be included in the story, and another person makes up the story and tells it to the others walking with them.
- Buy washable window markers and have your students do their writing on the window while standing. Or add a large blackboard to your classroom.
- Do longer read-out louds while your children are eating lunch or folding clothes.
- Create a hopscotch grid that your students can use to “jump out” their spelling words.





- Practice sight words by putting them on a wall; then have your child read them after shooting them with a Nerf gun.
- Have your student skip count while jumping on a mini-trampoline.
- Graph math equations on the driveway with chalk.
- Instead of doing matching activities with pen and paper, write out the items to be matched on post-it notes and have your student tape yarn to connect the matching items.
- Have an older child practice writing skills by creating a scavenger hunt with handwritten clues that need to be written clearly and concisely for the hunter to understand and follow.

Although it would be nice to adapt all learning activities to include movement, I realize it is not always possible. Thus, my final bit of advice is to urge parents to alternate their students' seated learning time with active learning, and to limit the seated activities to 10-minute chunks. I also tell them that over time their students

may learn to increase seated learning time. If not, the practice of switching from inactive to active learning is a good coping skill into adulthood.

If you have questions about home schooling your struggling learner or special needs child, check out the Special Needs section of the THSC website. ■



As Texas Home School Coalition's Special Needs Consultant, Peggy Ployhar leads the special needs ministry for THSC. This ministry includes consultations, event speaking, relevant

blogging, and the Special Buddies® program at THSC Conventions. Peggy is the former MACHE (Minnesota Association of Christian Home Educators) Special Needs Coordinator whose home school journey started when her oldest child was diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome. Peggy, her husband Doug, and their three children (19, 17, and 11) live and home school in Conroe, Texas.

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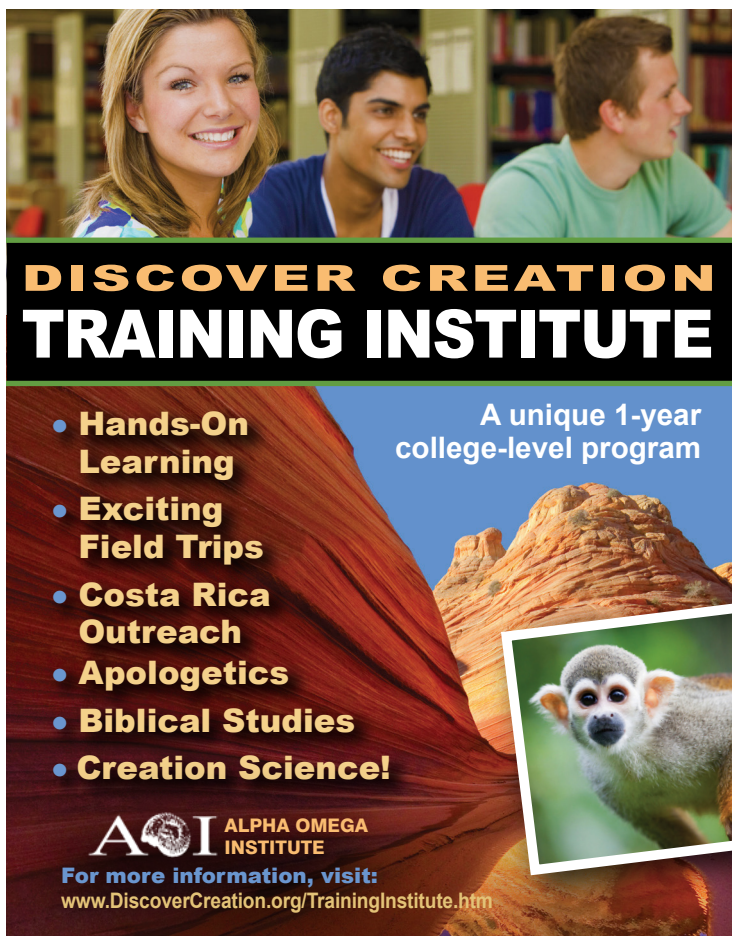
- ◆ In his TEDx talk entitled, “Run, Jump, Learn! How Exercise Can Transform Our Schools,” John J. Ratey, M.D., an associate clinical professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and an internationally recognized expert in neuropsychiatry, cites research and case studies to support that exercise is more for the brain than for the body. The findings indicate that exercise can be as effective as pharmaceuticals to treat depression, attention deficit disorders, and discipline problems, as well as drastically improve academic performance.

He cites the case of a Naperville, Ill., high school that used physical education daily for all students. Consequently, only 3 percent of the student body was overweight, at a time when the national statistic for the same age group was 33 percent. Among their 7,500 high schoolers, not one was obese. The students took the TIMSS test—the instrument taken by countries every three years to establish global ranking in math and science. The United States

generally ranks globally in the low to mid teens. Naperville students participated as their own country and ranked number one in the world in science, and number six in math.

Ratey’s conclusion: The more fit the child, the better the learner. View the 10-minute talk on YouTube.com by searching “Ratey run jump learn.”

- ◆ The case for activity is made even stronger by the physical and mental detriments of inactivity. Contributing to one in 10 deaths worldwide, the ill-effects of inactivity start early with underdeveloped vestibular (balance) systems in sedentary children. Learn more at YouthFit.com, searching the article “Why so many kids can’t sit still in school today.” The blog’s owner, Kids Fit, is a developer and manufacturer of fitness equipment to get kids moving while they learn, including desks with built-in stationary bike, strider, ellipse, or kneel and spin platform, which they offer in single units for home schools.



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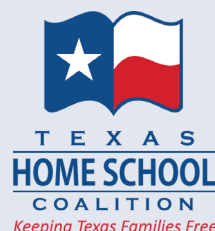
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The Texas Home School Coalition (THSC) is a 501(c)(3) educational organization that is supported by tax-deductible donations. THSC is dedicated to serving the home school community; it promotes home education in Texas by educating the public, the home school community, and officials about home schooling.

THSC Association, a 501(c)(4) advocacy organization, is dedicated to *Keeping Texas Families Free*. It is supported by membership fees and donations. THSC Association membership benefits include legal assistance, home school helps like customizable report cards and high school transcript templates and a

long list of other offerings and discounts. The work of the THSC PAC (Political Action Committee)—endorsing and supporting pro-home schooling candidates—is supported by donations that are not tax-deductible. See **THSC.org** for more information.

THE TROUBLE WITH THIRTEEN

by Donna Schillinger

The day my daughter turned 13, she was a little girl; the day she turned 14, she was a young woman. In the 365 days between the two, she was in the sometimes painful process of metamorphosis. She had to slough off childhood and emerge into adulthood, and there were some awkward moments between the two stages.

One particular “moment” during that year required some disciplinary action. We had to take the phone away. Not for a month, like the last time. This time the phone was going bye-bye for good. In the months she had owned her phone, it went from being a toy of sorts—good for sharing ring tones and taking pictures of random things—to being a tool for socializing, sometimes with guys with whom she shouldn’t be talking for various reasons, age being primary among them.

The day I had to take the phone away, I started on my knees, asking God to give my daughter understanding, help her to submit to her parents’ authority, and squelch the spirit of rebellion. That weekend had been a rocky one, and now that I had made up my mind what needed to be done, I dreaded the backlash. She had been so angry—more so than I had ever seen her. It’s scary to see your child express unprecedented anger. And it’s worrisome—how much worse could this get? I believed I was about to find out.

Parenting an adolescent is uncomfortable at times. The path of least resistance is to stay out of her business. Ignore what might be going on behind closed doors. Abate the curiosity about who is on the other end of that text. Give her some independence.

Frankly, that’s a cop out and it’s not biblical. A child left to herself will bring shame to her mother (Proverbs 29:15), and discipline is the force that drives out the foolishness inherent in the heart of a child (Proverbs 22:15). So into the fray I went.

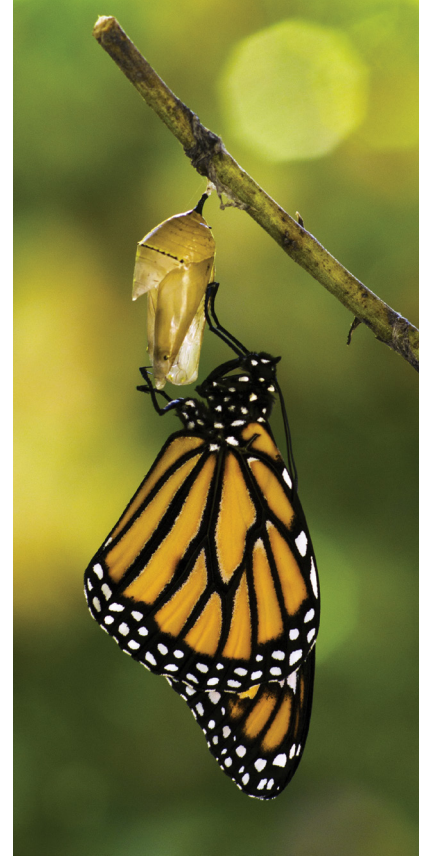
Good-bye phone.

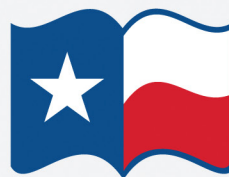
What? She didn’t yell at me? No “Mom, you’re being ridiculous”? Nothing. Hmm, Maybe there would be a delayed reaction. I kept my guard up.

Later that day, still nothing. What was up with that?

Seven years have passed and there never was a backlash from taking my daughter’s phone away. In fact, she almost seemed to be relieved. Maybe all that social life was actually stressful—too much so for an emerging butterfly. Maybe she felt loved that day in the form of discipline. Maybe my prayer was answered. ■

Donna Schillinger serves as publications manager at Texas Home School Coalition.





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