

# Different Approaches to Homeschooling

**School At Home** - This approach is when the school day looks very similar to the traditional school. The only difference is that it is done at home. Textbooks are used, sometimes there is a desk, a bell, and even a room set aside for the classroom. For those who are just starting out-this is a safe method. I have found in my own experience, however, that it gets old very quickly. One of the benefits of schooling at home is we can do it differently!

**The Classical Approach** - Students' learning is done based on a three-part process called the trivium. Students spend the early years learning facts, which then are recalled and used in the middle grades when students learn to think through arguments. In high school they learn to express themselves through logical thought and reasoning. For more information on this method you can read *The Well Trained Mind* by Susan Wise Bauer. <http://www.welltrainedmind.com/>

**Unit Studies – Thematic Approach** - This approach to learning is so much fun...and so much work! Typically a topic is chosen, perhaps a time in history, and then all of the learning takes place based on this topic. For example, if you were studying the Civil War, your literature would be about the war or the people who lived during that time period. You would learn about how the guns were loaded and shot for science, perhaps eat the food that the soldiers had to eat, and even make an underground quilt that was used to show the path used to escape. I love this method of learning but suggest doing it with a group of moms so you can all share in the planning. There are a lot of packaged programs out there that have great ideas as well.

**Literature-Based Learning** - Students who learn using this method learn through books. The books typically chosen are living books-ones which are written by one author who is passionate about his subject. They tend to write in a conversational style. The difference between this and a textbook is that instead of reading one paragraph about Lewis and Clark the student would learn through reading a book about them. This approach tends to help the reader be more engaged in the people and events that were taking place at the time. This approach, focusing on the teachings of Charlotte Mason, also teaches habits of self-discipline. For more information on this you can google Charlotte Mason.

**Unschooling – or Child-led Learning**- Sometimes this type of schooling gets a bad rap, but I think that is because it isn't really understood. John Holt coined the term when he was describing anything that wasn't done in the traditional school setting. It has evolved to mean learning that takes place around the child's interests. If they are interested in bugs then you check out every bug book the library owns, take them to the bug museum, interview the termite guy when he comes over, and collect the bugs around the house. The child will naturally learn because it is interested in the topic. As a parent, however, it is very important that you expose your child to a variety of learning opportunities so he can begin to see what possible topics he can explore.

These are just a few of the different methods. I have tried and learned using all of them. Most often your homeschooling will grow and change over the years and you will find which method works best for you. There is no right or wrong way – mostly I want you to be encouraged to try a variety of approaches! This is where the fun is – explore, learn, and let the adventure begin!

