

20 Elements of Success in Christian Home Education

Periodically evaluating how your family includes and balances these basic elements will keep you on track for success.

1. Bible Knowledge

Develop your children's Bible knowledge and Bible study skills by ordering grade-level Bible curriculum from a Christian publisher, choosing an ungraded family Bible study guide, or reading through the Bible together, stopping to explore meanings and applications. Memorize Bible passages together by drilling verse cards, reading or reciting aloud, or writing and rewriting them.

2. Scriptural Perspective

Curriculum materials from Christian publishers avoid atheistic slants and portray a biblical view. When you use other materials (e.g., library books and encyclopedias), guide your children's understanding in light of Scripture. You can do Bible studies based on school topics as well.

3. World View

Knowledge of Bible doctrine and principles provides a vantage point for an accurate, discerning, yet compassionate world view.

4. Character Training

Qualities such as diligence, responsibility, and consideration can be studied in the Bible and other literature, charted to show personal progress, made the theme of a unit study, or developed through chores and projects.

5. Spiritual Growth

Christian home schoolers seek to promote their children's spiritual growth, including personal acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and loving dedication to Him.

6. Useful Habits

Regular habits that minimize stress, save time, and provide other benefits include grooming and health habits, courteous behavior and speech, concentration on studies, and initiative and thoroughness in chores.

7. Family Teamwork

Each member of the family can make a contribution to the success of the whole. Toddlers can pick up toys, young children can do simple chores, older ones can take on larger responsibilities, teenagers and some preteens can help with teaching, and parents can encourage, support, and help each other.

8. Organization

Organization of time and space contributes to an effective home-school environment. Schedules and lesson plans, however flexible, give direction to daily activities. An orderly household with a planned time and place for everything facilitates education and allows more enrichment activities.

9. Atmosphere

A positive atmosphere of mutual love and respect makes teaching and learning more effective. Parents' understanding attitudes foster parent-child interaction.

10. Involvement

Children learn best from parents who are closely involved with them in work, play, conversation, study, and all of life.

11. Example

It is important for parents to model dedication to God, good character traits, disciplined habits, and enthusiasm for learning. Parents also need to supervise and limit children's exposure to poor examples in TV programs, books, or the behavior of friends.

12. Experiences

Varied experiences, such as shopping, errands, home repairs, nursing home visits, trips to local museums and work places, and out-of-town excursions build the background knowledge for academic learning.

13. Understanding

Parents who are sensitive to their child can recognize and accommodate his readiness to learn new concepts, his abilities or difficulties in various areas, his personal interests, and his tendencies to learn best by either sight, sound, touch, or movement.

14. Motivation

Parents can use a child's curiosity, needs, and interests to motivate learning. They can stimulate new interests through reading, conversation, questions, and family activities. The ultimate motivation for both parent and child is to serve our Lord and others.

15. Discipline

The goal of raising self-disciplined children can be reached only after they learn to willingly accept parental discipline. Parents must consistently require children to behave according to established standards. Affirma-

tion should follow obedience and cooperation; negative consequences are appropriate when a child disobeys or rebels.

16. Thinking Skills

Parents need to ensure children are developing the skills of thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving. Children also need to learn how to study and learn on their own. Besides curriculum materials that contribute to these aims, parents can design questions and projects to stimulate such growth.

17. Mastery

In developing the foundational skills of reading, language, and math, children need to thoroughly master some concepts before others. (This does not apply as much to subjects such as history, literature, and science in which topics can be studied in any order.) Children must review frequently in all subjects to be sure learning is retained. True mastery is demonstrated by generalizing from facts and applying principles.

18. Connected Knowledge

It is valuable to make connections between facts. A master time line or categorized fact file can help you find and call attention to historical events, geographical locations, scientific developments or facts, literature, and art that relate to your present study. These relationships between facts, concepts, and previously acquired knowledge help children to understand and remember what they are taught.

19. Resources

Educational resources that can be used repeatedly include reference books (encyclopedia, dictionaries, thesauruses, Bible concordances, atlases, nature guides, etc.) and higher-level textbooks. Also collect aids such as time lines, maps, globes, pictures, charts, videos, and tapes; manipulatives for math or other subjects; educational games and software; and various tools.

20. Life Skills

Life skills include budgeting; cooking; shopping; driving; repairs; maintaining a house, yard, and car; banking; voting; and finding information by phone, letter, or Internet. (Supervise Internet use closely.)

Children receive training and practice in these skills as they work with parents. When able, children may take responsibility for entire areas, thus rehearsing for adult life.