

New to Homeschooling

“Getting Started”



Hickman Charter School

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Welcome to this journey we call homeschooling!! We at Hickman Charter School are glad you have chosen to partner with us. We hope that this packet will answer some of your initial questions and concerns. However, we know that we may not address all your needs. Your Education Coordinator is always available by phone or e-mail to provide assistance and support!

Curriculum Planning

A word of wisdom – plan ahead! Your E.C. will help you with organizing your curriculum schedule. Begin thinking with the end in mind.

- Use a yearly calendar to pencil a general plan of topics that you want to cover for each subject.
- Make your goals at the beginning of each learning period.
- Plan your week at the beginning of the week.
- Plan your day and gather the materials you need the day before you will need them. A lot of essential learning time will be gone in the morning if you have to make your lesson plans and gather your supplies!

Time Management

To start with, take into consideration your family dynamics (e.g. do you have a baby or younger siblings that will need attention, does dad work an unconventional shift, what are your necessary outside commitments?). Use your first few weeks to observe and assess your child's attention span and learning style (see *Multiple Intelligences* handout). Determine whether curriculum selections are appropriate.

The days in your first week MIGHT look like this:

- First ten to fifteen minutes of the day – Opening activities (brain/body exercises, independent journaling, family time, etc.)
- Allot about one hour for Math instruction and activities. (Parents should become familiar with the teaching resources, manipulatives and Internet websites appropriate for each grade level they will be teaching.)

- Spend about two hours on Language Arts as defined by the curriculum or unit study (see Thematic Study Nature Unit handout). Language Arts includes reading, writing, and spelling. (A formal writing instruction can wait to begin until week two or three.)
- Spend another hour doing fun learning – P.E., read-alouds, computer time, educational games and activities (see
- At the end of the day, find time for yourself to process what you accomplished. ***It's important to check over your students' work on a daily basis to check for understanding of the lessons taught.*** Plan what you would like to accomplish tomorrow – remember to gather the materials and books needed and put them in one convenient place.

The days in your second week MIGHT look like this:

- Continue to adjust your Math and Language Arts. For many parents, writing tends to be a very difficult subject to teach. Refer to the handout, “Elements of a Well Rounded Writing Program.”
- Science (work up to the goal of 2+ hours per week)
- Social Studies (work up to the goal of 2+ hours per week)
- Remember to include fun learning time as you did in the first week.
- At the end of each day, don’t forget time to plan and gather materials for the next day.

As the weeks continue:

- Continue to adjust your daily schedule to meet your goals
- Add some art and music that could enhance your subjects

Organizing Your Work Space

Everyone has different ways of organizing and various house space available. However, a general rule is to have a place for everything and make it accessible. Some have found that having drawers on wheels for each student is efficient, while others prefer using an individual crate for each student. You will need a place or bookshelf for your teacher’s manuals and supplies. No matter what you choose – stay organized. Make it your student’s responsibility to keep their materials neat, clean and put in a designated place after each use.

Frequently Asked Questions

How available is my E.C. and how can he/she help me?

Your E.C. is always available by phone, e-mail, or appointment. He/she will help you select curriculum, change curriculum if needed, give strategies for learning, provide motivational tips, help with assessment and much more. After each learning period your E.C. will be meeting with you to gather work samples and help you set goals for the upcoming learning period.

How many outside activities should we sign up for?

We suggest that you confine your “extras” to one day a week. Less is more! Fill in “extras” as you get your program balanced.

What should we do during tough times or illness?

Your E.C. can provide suggestions for adjusting your schedule. Remember that learning continues to happen with less structure if you think outside the box: DVDs from the Annex or public library, audio books, educational games and computer time, art, read-alouds, etc.

If I have struggles, complaints or questions where do I go?

First, talk with your E.C. If he/she is unable to address your concerns, you may call one of our program directors, Ellen Hansen or Marie Reynosa.

What special Hickman Charter School events can my child anticipate?

HCS tries to do as much as we can to enhance the learning that goes on in your home. We offer a variety of classes and activities throughout the school year. Information about these events can be found in your binder, from your E.C. and on the HCS website: hcs.hickmanschools.org. Our monthly newsletter also contains information and details about scheduled events.

Remember:
Keep it simple, relax and have fun!
We are glad you are here!