

***The Family* CURRENT**

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Arranging a Strong Week: Your Homeschool Schedule

by Jeanne Faulconer

As a homeschool evaluator in Virginia, I've worked with hundreds of kids in families who have used all kinds of weekly homeschool schedules. I'm also in my 19th year of homeschooling, and since we've moved around a lot, I've been in a ton of different homeschooling communities and groups with so many good homeschooling families. I've seen all kinds of weekly schedules work well for people, and creating a strong week of homeschooling can look different for each homeschooling family. Some families have weekly schedules that look like school schedules, but most homeschooling families use the flexibility of homeschooling to create a weekly schedule that is customized for them. Here are some of the homeschool schedules that I have seen work to create a strong homeschooling week.

The Traditional Five-Day Week Homeschool Schedule

Yes, many homeschoolers follow the same schedule as schools, doing five or more academic subjects each day for all five week-days. This can feel familiar, and many curricula make the assumption that this is the schedule you'll follow, so if you're big into pre-planning and use a formal curriculum, the five-day school week may be the schedule for you.

The Four-Day Week Homeschool Schedule

Some families do traditional academics Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and leave the fifth day free. This often morphs into "Field Trip Fridays," either as families or members of the same homeschool group or co-op plan field trips for the end of the week. Even though some families may not take a field trip every Friday, they leave that day open for errands, appointments, library day, and a head start on weekend trips. Some curricula offer both four- and five-day plans, built right into their materials.

The One-Subject-a-Day Homeschool Schedule

Other families divide their learning into traditional school subjects and address one subject each day. For example, they might do math on Mondays, English on Tuesdays, science on Wednesdays, social studies on Thursdays, and electives or "anything else" on Fridays (art, music, foreign language, etc.). The order might vary from family to family, but the idea is to focus on one subject more thoroughly and in-depth on each day.

The One-Subject-a-Day-*Plus* Homeschool Schedule

The parents and/or kids in these families like delving deeply into one subject per day, but they also want to do some of certain specific subjects *every* day. So the “plus” is commonly math practice, memory work practice, and/or language arts. So they’ll spend time *every* homeschooling day doing those added (“plus”) things, followed by one other subject. So, on Mondays they might do math and spelling, followed by science. On Tuesdays they might do math and grammar, followed by history. On Wednesdays they might do math and writing, followed by geography. And so on.

For a younger child, the language arts portion might be a reading lesson or reading practice each day. For a child who wants to write or who needs practice, it might be writing each day.

Memory work, which is an approach some families might take for learning facts like state names and locations, multiplication tables, geologic time periods, or U.S. presidents, is obviously something that works better when revisited frequently.

In any case, homeschool parents using this kind of weekly schedule may have several things that are done daily because they are seen as the priority or because they are “practice-oriented,” while they designate other subjects for each day to give time for real exploration. If science can take up more time on Tuesday instead of switching from subject to subject every 45 minutes to an hour, then you have time to watch a documentary, read a passage, and do an experiment, all related to the same scientific concept. You will be building a lot of context for that science learning all within the same day, making it easier for a child to make connections rather than shifting gears constantly.

The Co-op-Driven Homeschool Schedule

Some families belong to academic co-ops that meet on a regular schedule, commonly once per week. While some co-ops are self-contained, with the kids doing enrichment learning at co-op with no expected follow-up, other co-ops have the core academic subjects. Students are expected to do assignments at home and study for tests given by co-op teachers. Parents will arrange their weekly schedules at home to help their children prepare for the coming classes at co-op. In my homeschooling life, I’ve been involved in Monday co-ops, Wednesday co-ops, and Thursday co-ops, some of which had homework expectations and some which did not, driven by the type of learning situation my kids wanted. If the co-op has the core academic classes a parent or child wants covered, then other academic interests that are independent of the co-op are also worked in around co-op homework, spread throughout the other days of the week.

The University-Model Homeschool Schedule

In some states, there are university-model homeschool co-ops where classes meet twice a week, using the same type of scheduling you’d commonly find on college campuses. A student might attend four classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and have

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays to complete homework at home. At other such co-ops, a child might attend class four days a week, with a Monday/Wednesday set of classes and a Tuesday/Thursday set of classes.

Yes, this really does become somewhat more like a private school (and some private schools do operate this way), but in some cases, the kids really aren't there more than several hours per day and don't have access to the kind of comprehensive services that a school offers. Their education continues to be directed by their parents, and there is no official diploma awarded by the co-op. Obviously, this kind of co-op has a lot of the same kind of scheduling and homework challenges that attending school has. On the other hand, it may give students access to teachers who are more expert in their fields or to a more structured type of learning that they want or that the parent is seeking.

These kinds of co-ops may sound like a dream come true for someone who has recently taken a child out of school in order to homeschool ("They cover all the subjects!"), but don't be fooled; using a co-op as a replacement for school does not always work well, especially immediately following withdrawing from school. Instead, consider deschooling first.

The Shift-Work Homeschool Schedule

Some families have a parent who is working a more unusual shift or schedule, such as a hospital nurse or a firefighter who works three or four days on with three or four days off. Homeschooling can be coordinated to take place *while* the parent is working — if the other parent is an at-home parent doing the homeschooling. This way time off can be maximized with togetherness rather than worries about academics.

Another approach may be scheduling the academics purposely during the off shift. This way, in a two-parent family, both parents can participate in the homeschooling, or in a single-parent family, the homeschooling can take place during time off with child care covering the work hours.

The Extra-Curricular and Class-Driven Homeschool Schedule

In a large or busy family, extra curricular activities, sports, volunteering, and classes in the community go on the weekly schedule first. For example, the local science museum may be offering an eight-week class in archaeology on Tuesdays, and all three kids go for piano lessons on Thursdays, followed by library story hour. Fridays may be the day that your family volunteers at the animal shelter or at the food pantry.

Families who make liberal use of these kinds of resources work other academics around these outside activities. I have known many families who have found that their kids took off with Scouts and 4-H projects to the extent that they actually became a large part of their academic learning, so prioritizing them made sense. Just as a matter of practicality, outside activities aren't going to bend to your personal schedule unless you are the organizer, so putting outside events on the calendar is just a reality, especially as children get older.

The What-We-Need-to-Do and What-We-Want-to-Do Homeschool Schedule

Families who use project-based homeschooling, interest-based homeschooling,

unschooling, unit studies, and interdisciplinary homeschooling may not find school subjects or community activities to be the most compelling aspects of their weekly schedule. Instead, their homeschooling may revolve around where the project or interest or study leads. Their days of the week are organized around what they need and want to do to follow up on interests or projects.

That might mean a day at home to research and plan and make lists. This might be followed by a day out to shop for supplies and materials. Then a day at home to build and create the project, along with more list-making and research for another round of resource-gathering. There might need to be a day to visit with a mentor or go to the library for books, or a day to wait for help from Dad or Aunt Janie.

Homeschooling parents using one of these approaches may keep their weekly schedules fluid and ever-changing with each project, or they may have designated days that they know they will “stay home” or “be out,” and they tack on what is needed for the week’s learning to certain days. That way, material gathering will always be done on Tuesdays — a designated “out” day, while kids can look forward to help and undisturbed time for working on projects on Wednesday — a designated “home” day.

The Alternating Home/Out Homeschool Schedule

In fact, many homeschooling families, especially those with young children, find that a mainstay of organizing their weeks is that alternating pattern of home- and out-days. A big day of errands, lessons, grocery shopping and volunteering needs to be followed by a slower paced home-based day to give everyone time to recover and have time for reading, playing, exploring, and helping with home maintenance. This may especially be true for people living where there are a *lot* of activities available to homeschoolers, so they have to be careful not to over-schedule.

However, it can also be a wise rhythm for families who live in rural areas who have to drive long distances to activities: scheduling firm home days can be a relief from being in the car too much and valuing outside activities over home-based ones.

The home/out alternating schedule also provides relief for both your extroverted children and introverted children — who can look forward to having time to recharge with the level of interaction that helps them function best.

The Strong Homeschool Schedule

The truth is, most homeschooling parents have to consider many of these things in creating a strong homeschool schedule for their week. They may participate in a co-op, have regularly scheduled outside activities, do shift work, *and* use a curriculum alongside interest-based learning and projects. Or, they may be unschoolers whose kids nonetheless participate in a co-op and a lot of community activities, service work, and time with mentors.

Everyone also has to figure in time for grocery shopping, meal preparation, laundry, home maintenance, and appointments, and many have to include part-time or full-time work. A strong weekly plan takes these things into consideration, along with time for

the homeschooling parent to take a break and pursue her own interests.

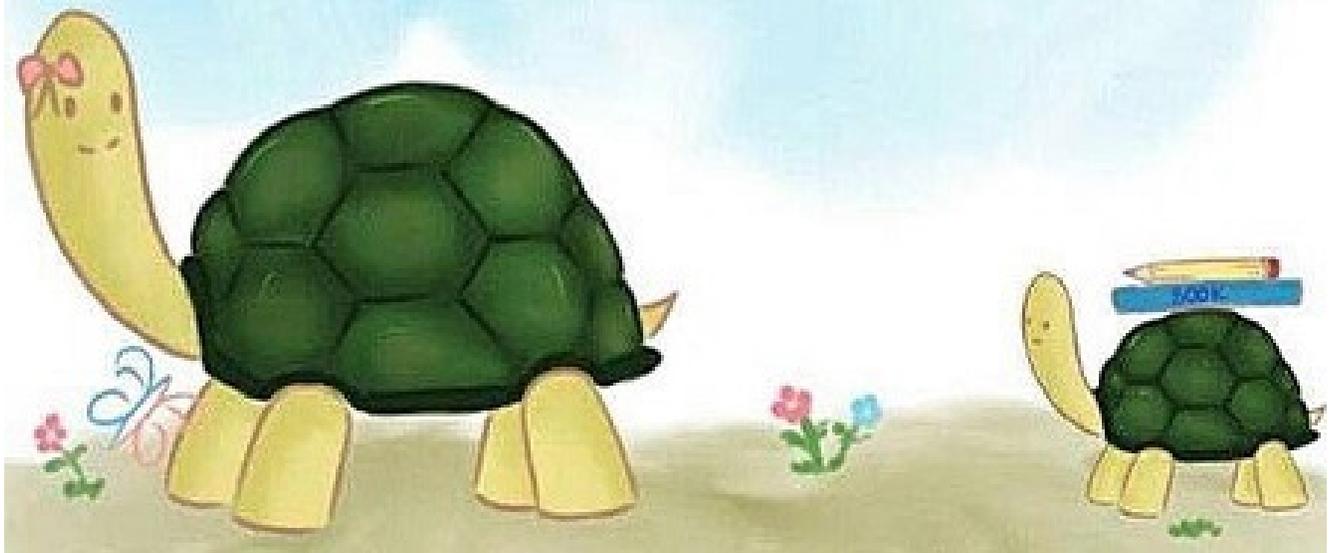
You might find some kind of weekly planner to be a useful tool in working out your strong homeschooling weeks, and as something you can post on the fridge to keep your whole family aware of the regularly occurring weekly events.

In any case, thinking not only about your homeschool year but also your homeschool week can be valuable in preparing for your upcoming season of homeschooling. Rest assured that not everyone follows a school pattern for their weekly schedule, and you can flex your week to meet your family's needs — and your own.

Article source: <https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/arranging-strong-week-homeschool-schedule/>. To read more of Jeanne's writing, inquire about a homeschool evaluation, or ask her to speak to your group, see her blog, [Engaged Homeschooling](#).

It shouldn't matter how slowly
a CHILD learns
as long as we are encouraging them
not to stop

Robert John Meehan



Homeschooling Multiple Children *by Lawrence Williams and DeeDee Hughes*

Families new to homeschooling often wonder if it is possible to successfully homeschool more than one child at a time. It can seem very daunting! There are always challenges to homeschooling, whether you have one child or several. The trick to homeschooling multiple children, ages or grades with some measure of success and grace can be summed up in one word: *organization*.

Plan ahead

Planning ahead is one of the best ways to feel ready for a new day guiding busy minds and bodies who are all moving in different directions at once. Many parents develop their daily plan the night before, after the household has settled down, or at some point late in the day when they have a few minutes. Start by thinking over what worked and didn't work that day, what avenues are worth pursuing again, and which children need work in certain areas. Oak Meadow curriculum is very flexible so that you can guide a specific child to a project that emphasizes a particular skill or focuses on certain knowledge.

Take a look at the curriculum to see what is next and consider which activities are time-specific (weather observations at the same time each day, for example) or need to happen outside the home (community service or library research). Think about what supplies you'll need, how long each activity will take, and which activities need concentrated attention on your part. Plan what the other children, particularly younger ones, will be doing during that time, and then have a backup plan, just in case!

After you've planned the next day's school schedule—take a deep breath and relax. Trust that the day will unfold in its own way. Flexibility is vital in a family of lively, inquisitive, vibrant little human beings. It's important to have a plan, both as a starting point and a fallback position, but it's just as important to be able to let it go if something better comes along. That's the whole point of homeschooling!

Schedule according to age and temperament

When you are planning your day, you will probably automatically take into account the needs of each child. The baby sleeps from 10:30am–noon, so you know that is a perfect time for the 6th grader to work on math while you sit down and work on reading with the 2nd grader. Or the young children have swim lessons on Tuesday afternoons, so that is your library research time for the older children. Logistics aside, you also know your children, and will quickly be able to see how and when they learn best. Some need to be right in the thick of things—front and center on the kitchen counter—and others need to curl up in a beanbag chair squeezed between the couch and the window. Some children are sharp and ready at 7:00am while others need to come awake slowly and aren't really ready to think clearly until after lunch. Every child is different and you can use this to your advantage.

Think of the activities of the day as having a rhythm, and create your daily dance

accordingly. After solving math problems for 45 minutes, don't expect your children to jump right into another brain activity like research or meticulous note taking. Instead, switch gears to something active or artistic. Make sure your schedule includes time for individual and group work. Working together as a family can provide energized, exciting, creative exchanges, but children also need time by themselves, to ponder, reflect, absorb, and integrate. Find time each day to sit for a few minutes alone with each child. You might find that this time alone together becomes the most important teachable moment of the day, and one of the most delightful.

Let everyone have a job

Siblings can help each other out so homeschooling doesn't just fall your shoulders. Called *peer tutoring* by educators, older children can help the younger ones with their work, or those who are better in a particular subject help others who aren't as good, regardless of age. Having children work in pairs can free you up to focus on a child who is struggling to acquire a skill or who needs help with a tricky project.

Older children may need some coaching on how to be patient with a younger child who works more slowly than they might expect. You can model the type of mentoring you'd like to see, and comment on how to make the work go more smoothly: "Try letting your brother sound out the words before you say the word for him—you might be surprised at what he can figure out on his own."

Peer tutoring gives children a chance to experience the feeling of satisfaction that comes from helping someone. It can increase their self-confidence and make them more considerate and appreciative of others. In addition, it gives them a chance to experience the frustrations of being a teacher, which can help them become more patient students in the long run.

Making Connections Across the Grades

Children tend to work together with certain projects, especially hands-on and artistic projects, and separately on others. You can teach several children at once by having them work on the same lesson material but at different levels. Known as *integrative teaching*, you can approach it in two ways: vertical integration and horizontal integration.

Vertical integration involves adapting the same subject to different children's abilities. For example, for U.S. history, you might tell the story of Paul Revere and then have your fifth grader write a paragraph about the ride of Paul Revere while your first grader writes some words from the story (sea, tower, horse, lantern) and draws a picture. Your younger child could be practicing a letter (maybe "B" for British) and drawing a picture.

With horizontal integration, several subjects are integrated into one lesson. For instance, one child might write an essay (an English lesson) about the Revolutionary War ("In three paragraphs, write the story of Paul Revere's ride, then underline all the verbs"), another child can solve math problems related to that story ("If there were 13

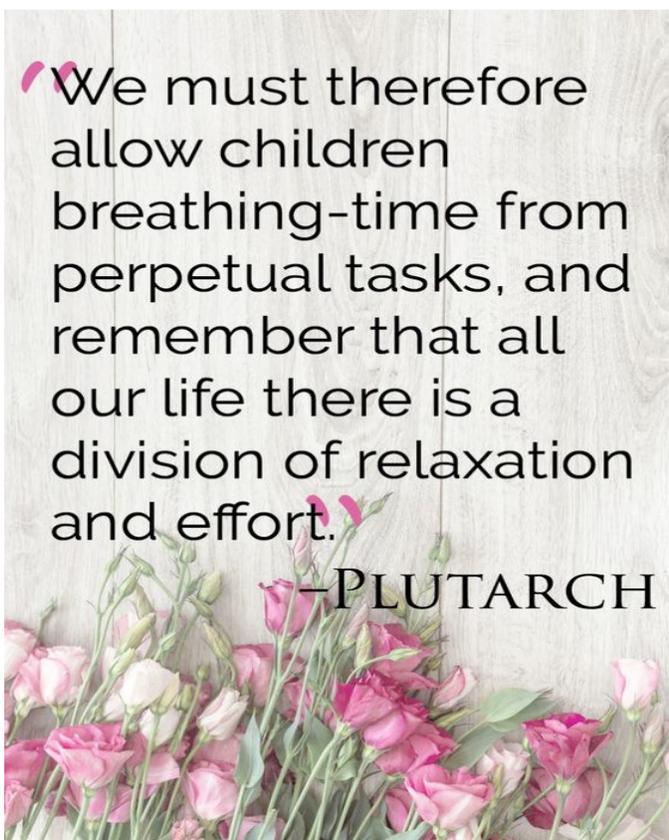
companies of British soldiers, and each company consisted of 75 soldiers, how many soldiers were there in all?”), while a third child draws a map to show the relative locations of Paul Revere, the British troops and the old North Church (a geography lesson). The possibilities are endless.

The Joy of Homeschooling Family-Style

Homeschooling multiple children may seem overwhelming at first, but in reality you may find it easier than you expect. When children have a buddy to work with, they don't need you to answer every single question. In a lively, active group, creative juices can flow and ideas spark off one another.

Children are remarkably ingenious creatures who are internally driven to learn. It's true that they may all be going in different directions at once, and all by vying for your attention at once. You may not be able to reclaim your dining room table for months because the Jamestown diorama morphed into a multi-grade, multi-subject project. But your children will learn. It is their nature. So every now and then, take a minute to sit back amid the non-stop activity and enjoy in the vibrant living and learning that fills your home.

*Article source: <https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/homeschooling-multiple-children/>. Originally published in Oak Meadow's educational journal, *Living Education*, Winter 2009-2010.*



Visit www.familylearning.org for resources and links to helpful websites, including lesson plans, instructional videos, and curriculum providers!

FLO TESTING SERVICE

STANDARDIZED TESTS

California Achievement (CAT) K-12	\$40.00
CAT Survey (CS) 2-12	\$40.00
Markable CAT (MC) K-3	\$50.00
Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI) 3-12	\$40.00
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GED Prep	\$10.00
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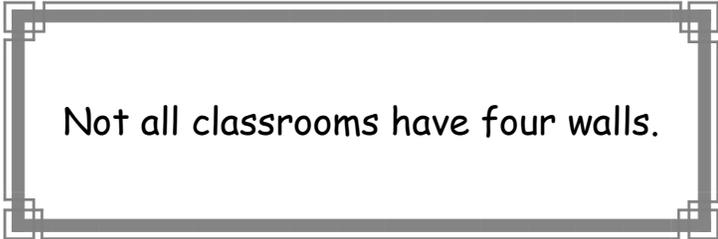
(WA customers must pay sales tax on **test preps ONLY** (not test orders). Tax rates can be found on the WA Dept. of Revenue website: <http://dor.wa.gov>.)

ASSESSMENTS*

Checklist (CSL) K-12	\$30.00
Freestyle (FAF)	\$30.00
(No S&H charge on these items)	

*These reports are completed by parents and evaluated by a Washington State certified teacher to document the child's academic progress according to state standards.

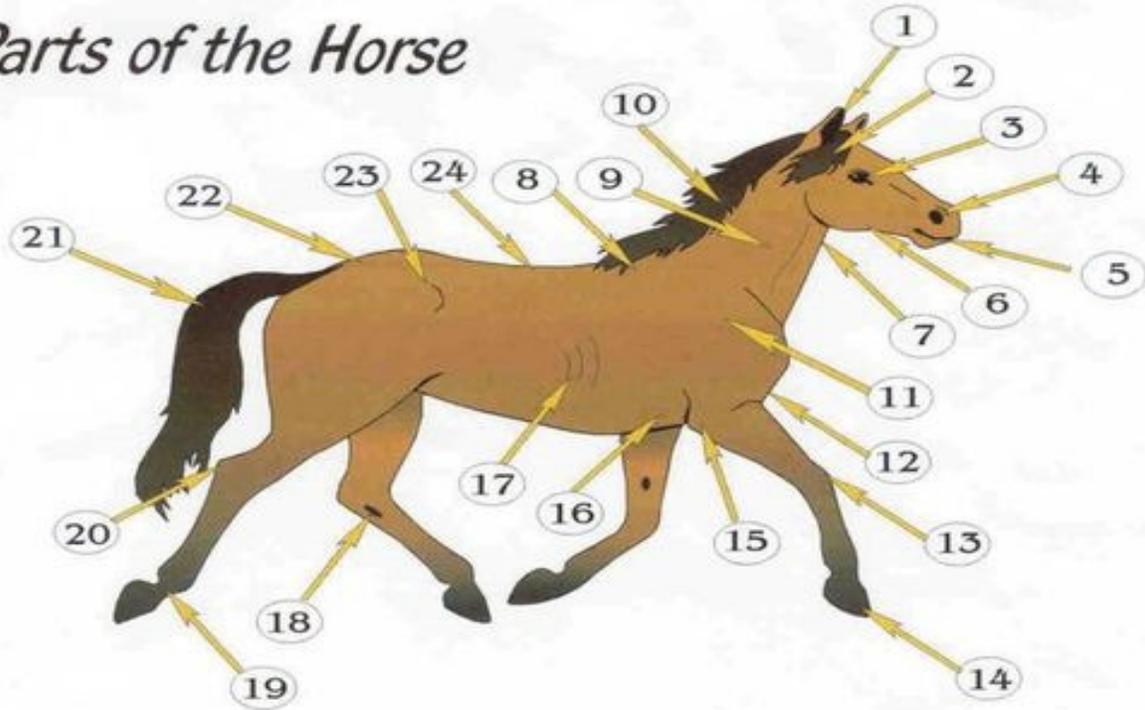
If you are unsure of the homeschooling laws in your state, go to www.hslda.org or www.homeedmag.com for specific state information.



Not all classrooms have four walls.

KID'S PAGE

Parts of the Horse



Match the number with the part.

- | | | |
|------------|--------------|--------------|
| ___ Ears | ___ Eye | ___ Nostril |
| ___ Neck | ___ Withers | ___ Shoulder |
| ___ Ribs | ___ Girth | ___ Chest |
| ___ Hock | ___ Elbow | ___ Muzzle |
| ___ Throat | ___ Pastern | ___ Hip |
| ___ Jaw | ___ Forelock | ___ Mane |
| ___ Back | ___ Croup | ___ Tail |
| ___ Knee | ___ Hoof | ___ Chestnut |

BOOKS

- Academic Homeschooling: How to Give Your Child an Amazing Education at Home - Tracy Chatters
- Suddenly Homeschooling: A Quick Start Guide to Legally Homeschool in 2 Weeks - Marie-Claire Moreau, Ed.D.
- Learning Styles: A Guide for Teachers and Parents - Barbara K Given
- A Child's Garden: Enchanting Outdoor Spaces for Children and Parents - Molly Dannenmaier

ONLINE RESOURCES

- www.edhelper.com - free downloadable lessons
- www.time4learning.com - economically-priced curriculum
- www.kaboose.com - free lessons and craft projects
- www.mentoringminds.com - books & CDs to purchase
- www.besthomeschooling.org - articles about homeschooling
- www.homeschoolfacts.com - state laws and support groups
- www.schoolexpress.com - free lessons and membership for a fee
- www.lessonplancentral.com - free lessons
- www.sightwords.com - games, activities, curriculum, lesson plans, and teaching tips to prepare children for learning to read
- <http://friendoflearning.com> - over 200 free, online worksheets
- www.communitycollegereview.com - free, detailed profiles of community colleges in the USA

If you have found a particular book or resource to be helpful,
and it is not on this list, please send it to:
martha@familylearning.org.

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