

***The Family* CURRENT**

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7 Time-Management Secrets Every Homeschooling Mom Should Know

by Heather Sanders

Leaning back on her elbows atop a handmade quilt she brought for us to sit on, my friend didn't appear to have a care in the world. She smiled as she watched her kids playing hide-and-seek using the jungle-gym as "base." *"Isn't today a lovely day?"* Having just plopped down next to her, I paused, looked around, noticed the sun was out, and surprisingly for southeast Texas this time of year, it wasn't humid. *"Yea, I guess it is. I hadn't noticed."* And I hadn't. Meeting my friend and her kids at the park was no small feat. It took all my energy that morning to make it happen. I wanted to cancel. But it would have been my third cancelation that month, and I liked spending time with my friend. *"...and then, the kids finished all their work before noon again today, so we finished planting the garden. Hey, are you planting a garden this year?"*

I thought about how my husband Jeff and I discuss planting a garden every year. In our neighborhood, a garden was impossible without a deer-proof fence, which was out of the question. For that matter, where would I find the time to prep, plant, weed, and water it? *"Helloooooo...did you hear my question? Are you doing a garden this year?"* *"Oh. Yes. I mean, no. Yes, I heard, but no, we aren't planting a garden."* Satisfied, my friend launched into an entirely different topic. It was something about curricula and the newest research concerning reading aloud to one's children. I sat, listened, nodded at the appropriate times, and tried not to cry. What's with the tears? Just...because.

At that point in my life, I didn't believe I had time to meet my friend at the park. There was too much to do. I needed to get home to clip coupons, make a grocery list, pay bills, file receipts, finish up the kids' homeschool work with them, and write. I dreaded all the late nights writing when I just wanted to sleep. I was tired. Being there, listening to her talk about all the things she was reading, planning, and doing made me even more tired – maybe a little bit angry. Sound familiar? Do you wonder why some of your homeschooling friends have enough time to meet for park dates and always appear

rested while you run yourself ragged trying to keep up? I did. I coveted their free time. Who has that kind of free time? What was their secret? So, I decided to investigate. I started observing them more closely, and I asked questions – lots and lots of questions. I'm going to share with you what I discovered. Then, you can share it with anyone else you know who is completely wiped out, cannot seem to keep up, and on top of that, never has time to meet you for coffee. It'll be like the '70s Faberge commercial where you tell two friends, and they tell two friends, and so on. Together, we'll shine a light on the secrets you and every homeschooling mom should know so you can find all the free time you want.

Time-Management Tips To Get All The Free Time You Want

1. You've got to get real with yourself about time.

There is no secret. Everyone has the same 24 hours. *But I thought you said...* Right. I did. Because I knew when you saw the word "secret", you'd read this post because you'd think, "*Ah ha! I knew they were holding out on me.*" The truth is, your friends and family are not holding out on you. They love you. They want you to be happy and rested, and they want to see you more too – and not just in passing. If there were a secret, you'd be the first person they'd tell. It's time to be honest with yourself and realize your homeschooling friends haven't jumped into some time warp. You have the same 24 hours as they do in a day. I had the same 24 hours as my friend with the smile and beautiful garden. A day is a day. You can't barter for extra minutes. If you stay up past midnight, you've moved into the next day's economy. Get it? Got it? Good.

2. You've got to give to get.

Don't take this to mean you (or your kids) need to join, attend or sign-up for anything else. I would imagine you already have a case of **overschedule-itis**. What I mean is your friends with more time than you realize they will not **GET** free time for themselves if they don't **GIVE** up something else. Depending on when your head rises from your pillow to the going down of the same, you may have as little as 12, or as many as 16 hours to spend in any given day. That time dwindles quickly. Here's a quick guesstimation:

- Making and eating meals: 2 hours/day
- Daily chores: 2 hours/day
- Daily hygiene, dressing, self-care: 2 hours/day
- Kids' hygiene, dressing, self-care: 2 hours/day
- Homeschooling: 2-4 hours/day (shorter hours for older/more independent students)
- Kids' extracurricular activities (soccer, baseball, piano, etc.)
- Work: ___ hrs/day (Maybe you freelance part-time or work from home full-time?)

There are numerous other things that I haven't listed that take up our time. Granted, some of them overlap. I can fold laundry while listening to my daughter practice her

speech, but multi-tasking is limited. For instance, until someone perfects cloning, I cannot bathe myself while simultaneously making my bed or cooking dinner. But honestly, isn't it worth giving up two hours of television to finish that new novel or getting quality time with your husband on the back porch? Also, you can give up a few of your chores to your children to get extra hours during the week.

3. You've got to delegate.

To get more free time, you need to assign your kids some chores. It's good for them. They are part of a family – let them share in the responsibilities as well as the benefits. Cooking and cleaning should be group events within a family. I can hear it now: *“But my kids are too young.”* In some cases, that is true. A two-year-old cannot mow the lawn or scrub toilets, but they can work with an older sibling to put their blocks back in a basket. See there? Let an older sibling stand in for you to help your younger child(ren) put away blocks. Siblings training siblings; it's a beautiful thing. You will have seasons when the chores feel endless because there are lots of little bodies and too few hands. That's when you outsource wisely. So, think outside the house. Hire a teenager. They are often looking for ways to make more money. Hire your friend's kid to come and clean, do laundry, wash dishes, or even babysit a few hours per week so you can be more efficient with your time.

4. You've got to reframe what it means to have a clean house.

You've been to your friend's house. You know, the one who asked you over a gazillion times but you keep canceling because your schedule is running your life? You notice the vacuum cleaner is out. There are dishes in the sink. There are wet towels on the bathroom floor. There are unfolded clothes piled on the far end of the couch (she moves them to the bed to give you room to sit). You secretly make a judgment. You know your house is spotless, your dishes are washed and in the cupboards, your bathroom floors are clear of linens, and you folded and put away clothes before walking out the door. You silently pat yourself on the back because **YOU** have it together. But you don't. Remember, you're the one *without enough time*. In fact, you've checked your watch twice since arriving because you need to get to the bank before it closes, and go by the grocery store on the way home. Your friend offers you a cup of coffee and a dessert she baked for you, which explains the dirty dishes in the sink. Her oldest walks into the living room holding a wet younger sibling, and you realize he's bathing them after they played in the mud outside. You stop even caring that she hasn't folded her clean clothes because you realized she gave up having clean dishes in the sink to get time to spend with you, and that makes you feel special. All of a sudden, her home feels cozy and clean. You settle in. You want to be there. You feel welcomed and loved. You just reframed what it means to have a clean house, and now you realize it doesn't matter.

5. You've got to learn to let go.

And please, I beg you—do NOT sing the song. You just did it, didn't you? **sigh** We've already established you've got to give to get. Well, take it a step more and simply "let go" when the situation fits. Maybe it was a rough year for your family. Perhaps there was a death of a close family member or friend. As a result, your kids do not have time to finish all 36 weeks of your homeschool curriculum. It's fine. Let go. Great time-managers learn what has long-term importance and what doesn't. So what if you eat dinner at 8:00 p.m. instead of 6:30 p.m. Let it go. So what if you haven't taken a shower in two days but you have an opportunity to go to the movies with a friend. Use dry shampoo. Put on a cap. Let it go. So what if the kids had a horrible attitude about school. Let it go. Make a park date with a friend and then, instead of finishing school assignments that night, start again the next day. Let it go. If you're tired and stressed, you probably cling to things that you should let go.

6. You've got to make simple meals and take advantage of deals.

For almost two years, we ate Sonic burgers every Tuesday night because of their "*Five Burgers for \$5.00*" deal. My husband picked them up on his way home from work, and I was in heaven because I didn't have to cook. There are endless cooking shows, blogs, Pinterest boards, and cooking apps full of delicious meal ideas you can cook for your family, but if you don't have time, look away. If you love to cook, fine. Give up something else up to get more cooking time. If you don't love to cook, make simple meals and don't feel guilty about it. Make friends with your Crockpot and Google. Pick up a pre-cooked chicken, a bag of mixed salad, and slice up some fruit. Voila! A meal. Wherever you live, there are specials. Ask around, figure out the schedule, make sure it is cost-effective for your family, and plot it out for a night or two of your weekly meal round-up. One less hour in the kitchen is one more hour spent doing something YOU want to do. Which brings me to my final, and most important, time-management "*secret*", and that is...

7. You've got to make yourself a priority.

Don't get me wrong. I don't mean that you put yourself on some gilded pedestal and refuse to glance down upon the *peasants* in your home; although, on some days that doesn't sound half bad. What I mean is that if you aren't meeting your most basic needs, you're not going to be effective in anything else. If you don't rest, your brain will turn to mush after the 5th Algebra question and 31st, "*Momma??!!??*" If you *task* (Yes, I turned that noun into a verb, deal with it.) your way through your breakfast and lunch hours, you are not going to have the sustaining energy to get through the day. If you don't set aside time to be with your spouse, you will likely not get the love and care you need to love and care on those around you. In other words, while you're making out your weekly schedule, **divvy up time for yourself, or else.**

In case you missed something, here's a quick recap:

1. You've got to get real with yourself about time.
2. You've got to give to get.
3. You've got to delegate.
4. You've got to reframe what it means to have a clean house.
5. You've got to learn to let go.
6. You've got to make simple meals and take advantage of deals.
7. You've got to make yourself a priority.

The Time is There For The Taking

You're a homeschooling momma. You work hard, and you do it every single day. You deserve the reward of more time to meet with family and friends who you love, and do the things you enjoy. Now that you know how to make that happen, **you have no more excuses**. If there is a secret about time, it's that we all have exactly the amount we need.

Heather Sanders is a freelance writer living in Huntsville, Texas. Visit her blog at <http://www.heathersanders.com> for more articles. This article was found on <http://thepioneerwoman.com/homechooling> site.

Time Management For Homeschool Families

By Cynthia Ewer

<http://organizedhome.com/family-ties/homeschool-time-management>

Time. It's a homeschool family's most precious resource--but the claims on a homeschooler's time are many and noisy! School work, housework, sports and family activities crowd the calendar. How do you get it all done each day? Here are *OrganizedHome.Com's* best time management ideas for homeschool families:

Build a plan...with a planner

Homeschoolers, parent or child, need a beacon through the busy days. Whether you call them planners, activity calendars, schedules or daily assignment sheets, all homeschoolers need a guide for daily, weekly, monthly and yearly activities.

Brush up your planner power with these tips:

- Teach time management first. Nursery schools know that small children thrive on a routine. Homeschool runs more smoothly when everyone knows what's on the plan for the day. From a simple picture-based schedule for little ones, to a sophisticated student planner for high schoolers, bring your student up in the planner habit.
- Learn what you teach! Parents must set the course where time management is concerned. Do you use a planner properly?
- Get a realistic grip on time. The biggest single time management mistake most people make is misjudging the time necessary to complete a task or finish an activity. Take a week to note the time your children need to complete spelling worksheets or finish a Saxon math assignment. Build success into your scheduling by being realistic with time estimates for homeschool activities.
- Pad the time budget for smooth transitions. Even with a realistic view of the time needed to complete each task in a homeschool day, you'll need to take a tip from structured schooling, and plan for between-class breaks. Whether play periods for young children, meals or scheduled recess, don't forget to account for the "time-between" each day's list of school tasks.

Skill with scheduling

Homeschool demands scheduling, and the devil is in the details.

An organized parent of one or two children may succeed with a very flexible, very sketchy schedule, but the older the child or more numerous the students, the more important scheduling becomes.

Here are some ideas to help with homeschool scheduling:

- Start big--and work backward. To schedule a homeschool student, start with the year. List all courses, coursework, books and service activities necessary to complete the year. For each task, develop list of monthly goals: so many Saxon lessons, so many books, so many hours of service, so many worksheet pages. Break down each category by week, and review each week's goals with your student. From the weekly goal comes the daily school schedule. Working backward prevents both make-work and over-scheduling, because it focuses on the big goals, not separate time increments.
- Get feedback from the student. Time management bottlenecks can often be solved by the students themselves, if parents are willing to be flexible. So what if you feel math should be done first thing in the morning? Your sleepy-headed teen may do better when permitted to tackle math last thing in the day. Give your child a chance to solve scheduling problems. He or she may surprise you!

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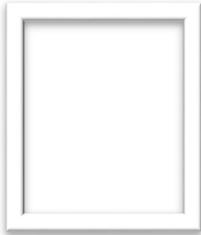
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teach us how to make a living and the
other how to live.”

~John Adams



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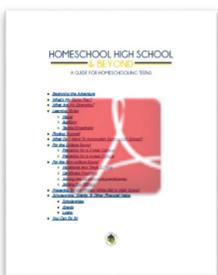
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Homeschooling High School & Beyond: A Guide For Homeschooling Teens

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High School Students and Parents! Visit LetsHSHS.com for more information about curriculum, planning, record-keeping, and post-graduation options. In addition, they offer networking and sharing opportunities via forums and social networks. Check out their free resources and downloads, and get the information you need to more confidently homeschool through the high school years!

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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.

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KID'S PAGE

Winter Game Ideas!!

Frosty Snowball Toss Game

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Snowman Toss Game



Christmas Tree Ornament Pop Game



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:
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