

# Preschool at Home

## Episode 40

Rachel Winchester [00:00:02]:

The early years of a child's life are crucial for their long term development and success. In this episode, we are talking about how home is the best nest, especially in the preschool years. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively and enjoyably. Carol Joyside has been helping families homeschool for several decades now through her literature based approach to education. In this episode from the archive, Carol is joined by me, Rachel Winchester, and my husband, Jesse. We talk about how we've approached the preschool years in our home over the last nine years. We originally recorded this episode back in 2020 when all three of our children were five and under.

Rachel Winchester [00:00:44]:

Now that they are older, we still stand beside what we share here, understanding even more now just how important those early years are. Listen in.

Carole Joy Seid [00:00:53]:

Well, this evening, I am meeting with two of my favorite people in the whole world. My assistant, Rachel, and her beloved husband, Jesse Winchester. They live in South Carolina. They've been married about five and a half years, and they've been blessed with three children, one about to be born at Thanksgiving, and then Benjie who's four and Lucy is two. So welcome, Rachel and Jesse.

Rachel Winchester [00:01:19]:

Thank

Jesse Winchester [00:01:19]:

you. Thank you.

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:21]:

So I asked you to talk to our listeners today about the idea of homeschooling for preschool, which kind of is an oxymoron a little bit. But a lot of families who are who are homeschooling are getting some pressure from well meaning friends and relatives asking, what? You're not sending your child to preschool? Or, well, what are you gonna do all day? Or don't you need a break? Or now, Rachel, you're having a baby. Oh my goodness. How are you gonna do it all? And so I just thought I'd love to hear from you,

about what it looks like to in a very relaxed way to educate your children before their, quote, school age. What what what are some tips or descriptions you could give our listeners?

Rachel Winchester [00:02:11]:

Yeah. I think, I don't really conceptualize it as preschool, but the whole idea of pre before they start their school, their academic school. So I think the question is like, okay, if we're not, you know, you teach about better late than early. And so as you learn about that from the Moors, then it and really buy into that, then it's like, okay, well, what does preschool look like if we're not teaching letter recognition or number recognition, or we're not doing these activities just to learn colors or something. We're just learning in a very organic way.

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:52]:

Yeah.

Rachel Winchester [00:02:54]:

So I think it's been cool to watch our kids learn organically to see, oh, they just become curious. They want to count. And so they learn to count or they learn colors or they learn patterns or they learn things, but it's on their, their own timing and their own interests and stuff. And then we just kind of encourage that of, okay, how do we count from one to 10? And we practice and then they learn to count to 10 and then, okay, what's next? And then, but it's in a, they want to know, they start counting past 10 of, like, okay. Eleven, thirteen, 16, 14, you know, and you're like, okay. Well

Carole Joy Seid [00:03:41]:

At least we're god's lesson. That's good. So, Jesse, did you have any apprehension about this homeschool thing with, you know, your kids not going to preschool? Has that been concerning to you, or have you gotten concern from other people in your lives?

Jesse Winchester [00:03:59]:

Well, I grew up in public school and grew up in a family of educators. So, so it's just different. You know, it's just a different we live a different life than I grew up with and that we, either of us, were used to really growing up. So, I mean, we knew from before we were married that we wanted to homeschool our our kids because we believe in it. The Lord have granted us children at that point, and he did. But yeah. So not apprehension as much as just, okay, we need a guide, so we're thankful to have a guide through that. So you keep saying that.

Jesse Winchester [00:04:45]:  
Yes.

Carole Joy Seid [00:04:45]:  
Yeah. Well, I liked why you put first things first when you're recording. Like, you got the big decisions made early on, like, and we will be homeschooling. Yeah. Yeah. I love that. I love that. It's so great.

Rachel Winchester [00:04:57]:  
We knew. Okay. Big picture. We want to homeschool. We want to be the ones spending the majority of the time with our children.

Carole Joy Seid [00:05:04]:  
Yes.

Rachel Winchester [00:05:05]:  
Especially when they're really young. Then once we had kids and then once we got past the napping every few hours stage, then it was a question of, okay, now what do we do? He's awake all like he's awake the majority of the day. He's in, he wants to do things he's into stuff. I need to get things done. You know, how do we, what do we do during the day now that he's 18 or two years old? So I think in that we felt some growing pains and especially I felt the need of, okay, I can do baby, but now what do I do? What do I do now? And so, I really, that pushed me to, to work through, okay. What's the rhythm of our day?

Carole Joy Seid [00:05:58]:  
Mhmm.

Rachel Winchester [00:05:58]:  
And so I referenced, like, I would look at a Walter school or just be inspired by Walter from Montessori of, like, okay. What are they kind of structuring the day around? And then. That really helped me. I did an exercise of putting the anchors in our day of what's important, and got kind of the idea of having times of inhale and exhale. So having times that are calmer and then having times that are for expressing that energy.

Carole Joy Seid [00:06:30]:  
Oh, that's so good. That's really good, Rachel. So why don't you give us a little window into a typical day? Can you do that? Not that any day is ever typical. But, you know, what what are some of those anchors in your day?

Rachel Winchester [00:06:45]:

Yeah. An anchor would be we wake up and we kind of get breakfast going because my kids wake up hungry. So we get breakfast on the table. And then that also gives me time to sit there and read the Bible and have my own time while they're getting started with the day. And so then once that's done, we get ready and get dressed, and they're learning our son's learning to make his bed, and they pack their clothes away in the dirty clothes hamper. We try to brush our teeth every day.

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:23]:

These are these are wins. These are good. Yes.

Rachel Winchester [00:07:27]:

And then, you know, certain days we'll wash laundry, certain days we'll wash the bedding, and so they kind of help me gather that stuff and get it downstairs. Right.

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:38]:

And then

Rachel Winchester [00:07:38]:

once we get back downstairs, we empty the dishwasher. So they each have a part of it that they do. And so, recently, our son graduated from putting the silverware away. So he was very happy when that day came. And now he gets to climb on the counters and put the mugs and the jars and,

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:00]:

oh, great. And and I love the way you said, we do this and we do that. So you're not working while they're watching a video somewhere in the rest of the house. Right. But everyone's working at the same time. Yeah. Yeah. I love that.

Rachel Winchester [00:08:14]:

And so Benji can actually almost start the laundry himself. I mean, though he just can't always reach the detergent. So

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:24]:

Wow. So at eight four, this is a little boy who's almost ready to do the family laundry. Yeah. This is like music to our ears. It's beautiful because as you you know well, doctor Moore taught us not to do anything for our children they can do for themselves. And so this issue of work being a huge part of the preschool journey because the thing about preschool kids is they love to work. It's when they get older, they're like, are you

kidding me? I'm, like, I'm doing my nails. But when they're little, they want to work, and we're really robbing them of the joy of that.

Rachel Winchester [00:09:00]:  
Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:01]:  
So give me some more anchors. Now what happens?

Rachel Winchester [00:09:03]:  
So then, we usually go for a walk, a morning walk.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:08]:  
Excellent.

Rachel Winchester [00:09:08]:  
I would I started doing that when Benji was really little, just so we would get outside immediately. And that always gave I mean, when he was little, I'd push him. So that gave me a lot of kind of me time to exhale and just think have quiet or listen to something or, you know, just be outside together, but not have to be engaging. So, I think that's, it's an exhale for the child, but there also need to be exhale moments for the mom too, to just be together, but not necessarily have to be engaged in a space. So we usually go for a walk or at least just do something outside or yard work or they play while I pull weed.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:55]:  
So and

Rachel Winchester [00:09:56]:  
then we'll have lunch and that's another. And then we have rest time and we always read at least three books before they rest. And they'll usually coax me into more than three, but

Carole Joy Seid [00:10:11]:  
I love it. I love it.

Rachel Winchester [00:10:13]:  
And then they rest, for an hour and a half or two. And, I was really kind of feeling discouraged because Benji wasn't resting very well for me. It was a fight every day. And then I heard you saying, like, you know, you might just have to take your three or four

year old and lay down at them. Yeah. And snuggle them and then because he usually can fall asleep. It's not that he's not tired. It's just he can't calm himself down.

Rachel Winchester [00:10:41]:  
You know? Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:10:42]:  
And so getting them into a vice grip like spoons and then just you going, oh, mommy's so tired. Oh, mommy's so tired. You're still my baby. And then rubbing their back and lots of skin time. Yeah. And then he'll fall asleep with you.

Rachel Winchester [00:10:59]:  
And he especially loves it when daddy's home to do that.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:02]:  
I know. That's the best part of all. Daddy So, Jesse, does that get to happen often? Because you're a realtor, so I know you're working very flexible, who knows, in, out, back and forth. But does that happen?

Jesse Winchester [00:11:14]:  
Yeah. I've been home a good bit lately, so it's been nice to So snuggle Benjie to sleep in the afternoon.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:22]:  
And then you do some of the reading three, four, and five books before quiet time. Yeah. So keep going, Rachel. Then rest is over. Yeah.

Rachel Winchester [00:11:31]:  
When they wake up

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:32]:  
You fall asleep, by the way? I didn't ask you that.

Rachel Winchester [00:11:35]:  
I usually do sleep, at least part of it. Awesome. Yeah. Then, they want a snack when we get up and so they have a snack and then they usually want to eat it outside and then they play outside until dinner's ready. And then daddy comes home.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:53]:  
Yes. And,

Rachel Winchester [00:11:55]:  
you know, the day really begins.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:58]:  
Now the fun begins when daddy walks in the door. Right? Yeah.

Jesse Winchester [00:12:02]:  
So

Rachel Winchester [00:12:03]:  
and then we eat dinner and have a little, like, just time to spend together and then bath and reading, and Jesse puts them to bed. We recently also, like, tweaked that so that it was more daddy's thing to get

Carole Joy Seid [00:12:21]:  
to Yeah. Tell me about that, Jesse, because Rachel told me that you made that change.

Jesse Winchester [00:12:26]:  
Yeah. It's it's been very positive, very positive change in our home. I think they I think they look forward to it, and they still cry for mommy, but I think they're always gonna do that. Yeah. Even until they're 30. But, yeah, I think they look forward to it because I take them upstairs, they get a bath, then we usually both get them dressed, but then mommy tells them good night and leaves, and then I read three, get coerced into four. And then, you know, we we pray together and they, you know, we take turns praying and I sing them songs and kiss them. And, you know, it's just like a really sweet tender time for us.

Jesse Winchester [00:13:09]:  
And I enjoy it a lot, you know, because we weren't doing it for so we weren't doing it that way for so long. I would leave and mommy would pray with them and and just sleep, you know, whatever. So it's been really good to take that on and have that time with them. So yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:26]:  
That's so significant. Daddy ending out the day, laying hands on the children, blessing the children. And are you reading anything good? I know that you have a heart to catechize your children and really disciple them. Are there any things you wanna share, maybe some other dads?

Jesse Winchester [00:13:43]:

Well, we so we started at the table. We started reading. What is what's it's

Rachel Winchester [00:13:49]:

It's the Bible story book by David Helm that you recommend. Yes. Or you

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:54]:

the Big Picture Story Bible. I adore that book. Okay. So that's called by Crossway. Love it.

Jesse Winchester [00:14:01]:

We had trouble for years trying to find a just trying to find a children's Bible that we adored and now we have one. And so, it's it's a great resource to to have. They love it. They look forward to it. They're like, daddy, you forgot to read. And I'm like, oh, yeah. I'm trying to eat too. So, we can we can leave that at the table.

Jesse Winchester [00:14:22]:

So that's been really good just to kind of bird's eye view the Bible story, and it's very appropriate for even Lucy who's too like, she

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:31]:

I was wondering. So even Lucy's engaging with this?

Jesse Winchester [00:14:34]:

And it's not so detailed that you're having to remember dates and names and, you know, it's it's a good overview of the Bible. So It

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:45]:

is. I love that book because it has a ribbon in it. So it's designed to be just read part of at a time, and I love that book. When my little granddaughter was naughty as a little child, it there's a CD that used to come with it. Now you have to go online and download it. But her mommy would say, Eisley, I think you need some alone time. And so she put her in her little junior bed, and then she put that CD on. And Eisley memorized the big picture story Bible.

Carole Joy Seid [00:15:15]:

And it's powerful book.

Rachel Winchester [00:15:17]:



Yeah. I think it's a great like, it has 26 parts. And so we have we borrowed it from the library just to see what it was like before we purchased it. And so we've already read through it once. And so I also feel like it's a really great way to just, for them to get the whole narrative of scripture in a short amount of time of foot within a month, you can have read it day by day. And so they start getting familiar if they recognize Abraham's name, they know Jesus, his name, you know, they know characters. So then it starts to piece because it really is about vocabulary, vocabulary at this point of, you know, especially with the two year old, you can tell, you know, she'll hear Jesus and she'll hear it in different contexts. And then she'll, she's putting things together and becoming familiar with the word itself.

Rachel Winchester [00:16:11]:

And then it builds, you know, from there. And so, And

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:14]:

the illustrations are really whimsical and fun, I think.

Rachel Winchester [00:16:18]:

Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:19]:

I'm so glad. Any other books that have really grabbed your family?

Rachel Winchester [00:16:23]:

Bible things, especially?

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:25]:

Yeah. Yeah. Particularly. Mhmm.

Rachel Winchester [00:16:27]:

We have the read aloud Bible stories by I was

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:30]:

gonna ask you about that. Mhmm.

Rachel Winchester [00:16:32]:

And they really love those. So

Carole Joy Seid [00:16:34]:

Okay. So those are the read aloud Bible stories by Ella Lindval, and Kent Puckett was the illustrator for the first edition. So tell me tell me about the favorite. That's one of my favorite books in the whole world. So it's published by Moody Press. So what of those stories, it's multiple stories in the each edition. What one have your children really connected with?

Rachel Winchester [00:16:59]:

They really love when he when Jesus walks on water or calms the storm.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:03]:

He Okay. Yeah.

Rachel Winchester [00:17:06]:

And we've read we've read Bartimaeus a lot. And we also, the last story is about the 10 lepers who were healed and one comes back to thank Jesus. And we've read that one a lot too.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:22]:

I love that book. I've never met a child who didn't love it and didn't stop squirming if you read that book. It's just an irresistible book, and these are books that are great for, you know, grandparent presence and shower you know, baby showers. Instead of some little tutu from Nordstrom's, buy them a book that they're gonna grow up with their whole lives and hopefully someday read to their own children. So the these are investment books.

Rachel Winchester [00:17:48]:

Yeah. We had them when I was little.

Carole Joy Seid [00:17:50]:

You did? Wow. Look at you, you little young thing. That's great. So, anything else, Jesse, in terms of as you're mentoring and discipling little people? People think, oh, they can't really understand this stuff. It's it goes over their head. Has that been your experience?

Jesse Winchester [00:18:09]:

No. I think I think they get it. I think they understand a lot more than we give them credit for, and I think if I think it's just been important from day one to talk to our children, like, speak to them like adults, but, you know, in a normal language, not baby talk and not just try to dumb things down, just explain something as it is and they grasp what they grasp, you know, until they grasp more. But our kids are very curious. And

so, you know, explaining a biblical truth or why the leaves turn orange, you know, it's kind of the same thing at this point. So, yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:53]:

It's it's challenging because our children can be so far ahead of us, and they ask such deep questions. And we really have to have our tennis shoes on every morning to run with them as they go because, woah, they're they're amazing. Yeah. So, Rachel, you and I talked a little bit about this idea of character development, habit development. Anything that you and Jesse wanna share about that?

Rachel Winchester [00:19:19]:

I think the whole idea of habit, I was reading I read some of Charlotte Mason's writing, and so she kind of talks about, you know, the first six years being a window of time before I guess that's her preschool, you know, would be Yes. 20 through six, you know? And so she kind of has this ideal of what that would look like for the children or what they need to learn in that time. And so that was really helpful for me. And so her emphasis is on nature and then habits. And so basically, if your kids can spend a lot of time outside and you can help them develop positive habits, then they're ready.

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:02]:

What what kind of habits? Like, what do you mean by habits?

Rachel Winchester [00:20:05]:

It's about habit of attention, like helping them learn to focus and to get something done. But even to like a habit of obedience, that really helps me to be more empathetic with my children of, okay. Some of this is just a bad habit of they've just gotten in the habit of digging in the pot over and over and over again. You know, they would go out on the front porch and just take all the dirt out of a pot that I was trying to grow weeds in. And I couldn't keep it alive because they kept pulling the dirt out. And I would spank them and I would punish them and I would do everything I need to do, and it didn't matter. They would just go right back to

Carole Joy Seid [00:20:47]:

it. So

Rachel Winchester [00:20:49]:

it just, you know, I eventually got rid of that. But also, it just helped me be more empathetic of this is just a habit that we've got to break. They've got to stop doing it, you know? They have habits of disobedience naturally. And so we just need to learn habits of obedience of when I, when we speak to you, we expect an answer. Yeah. You

to do what we say or to look at us or just, you know, kind of all the ways that we interact together are really habits that are formed, but we don't think about them like that, but that's what they are. And so just kind of focusing on, you know, Charlotte Mason basically recommends mothers to focus on one at a time and then just be really consistent, you know, even about the habit of cleaning up after themselves. Yes.

Rachel Winchester [00:21:42]:

No. And so reinforce, you know, that's, it's really hard to let your kids do the work that they are capable of doing because I have to think about it. I have to help them develop that habit of putting the toys away or cleaning up the driveway before data gets home or making their bed or all these things they're capable of, but it requires effort on my part to train them to do those things. So

Carole Joy Seid [00:22:12]:

but if you pay your dues now, you will reap for the rest of their lives. Right?

Rachel Winchester [00:22:18]:

Yes.

Carole Joy Seid [00:22:19]:

Yeah. So pay now or pay later.

Rachel Winchester [00:22:21]:

Yeah.

Carole Joy Seid [00:22:22]:

Alright. As we close, Jesse, talk to me about socialization. Aren't your children horribly antisocial or inept socially? You know, they're not with their other little two and three and four year olds. How are they gonna learn to be kind or respectful or hardworking?

Jesse Winchester [00:22:46]:

Yeah. So church is important. I think they, you know, they know everyone at church, but also being connected outside of the home, to the church. That's that's big. But then, I think they're outside a lot and we're fortunate to live in a neighborhood. So people walk by, people stop and, you know, hi, Benji and Lucy. They're, like, your and vice mayor of our town, basically. So, you know, we just teach them to say hi.

Jesse Winchester [00:23:19]:

Say hi once, don't say it 10 times. That's weird. You know, so, you know, say hi. Ask what is your name? Tell them your name. You know, just teaching them. I think

preschool is just kinda like human one zero one, you know, like, just learning to be a person. Yeah. There's work to do.

Jesse Winchester [00:23:37]:

There's people to say hi to, you know. So, yeah, with their social lives. We also have family nearby, so they they socialize with cousins and aunts and uncles and

Carole Joy Seid [00:23:46]:

Yes. So, of course, my question is facetious because your children are the most social children

Jesse Winchester [00:23:52]:

Right.

Carole Joy Seid [00:23:53]:

In America. But people would be like, well, how do you socialize your children? Who socializes your children? And the answer is you do. Right? How do they know all these things, Jesse? It's because you you and Rachel have taught them these things, and it's it's really common sense parenting. It's what people have done since the beginning of time. But you're doing a great job, and your kids are so secure, confident, happy. They're learning how to work, how to be respectful. They're learning manners. You are their best teacher.

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:23]:

But doctor Moore used to say, you are your children's first and best teacher. And that's what you and Rachel are doing in your home, and we're all gonna reap the benefit as they go forth into the world and bless people everywhere they go. So do you, have anything else you wanna share, either of you, with these young families that are kinda sweaty palms? They're like,

Rachel Winchester [00:24:48]:

I don't know. I was thinking about Jesse does a really good job of getting the kids, especially Benji, because he's very physical. And I think a lot of that is him being a boy and then also the type of boy he is has caused many times where I'm like, I don't understand you. And I need you to just, I send him outside a lot because he really needs that. But Jesse does a really good job of just bringing him. They cut grass together, bringing him into the projects that he's doing. And because Benjie is so eager to work and especially do the, you know, the men's work, you know? Yeah. That's right.

Jesse Winchester [00:25:33]:

Yep. A project that takes thirty minutes might take two three hours.

Carole Joy Seid [00:25:39]:

I know. I know. They're trying to be helpful, but they're more work more more trouble than their help. But in the end Yeah. It will yield fruit, won't it?

Jesse Winchester [00:25:51]:

Worth it.

Carole Joy Seid [00:25:51]:

You're doing a beautiful job, and it's so fun to watch you having known you since before you're even married and now seeing you as, a happy family of five. And, it's it's a real it's it's such a privilege to see the fruit of this philosophy that that you've really embraced and done your homework. You've done your research. You're the kind of people that take, you take your Christian lives very seriously. And so your parenting, you also take very seriously in a in a fun way. But, you you're not just gonna be like, yeah, whatever. But that you really have put your heart and soul into raising your children, and it shows. So thank you both so much.

Carole Joy Seid [00:26:36]:

Jesse, you wanna close this in prayer?

Jesse Winchester [00:26:38]:

God, thank you so much for, this time. Thank you for, just giving us the opportunity to talk about our most important job, raising our kids, and we thank you for that opportunity. Thank you that you have, blessed us with the family. Thank you for Carol. Thank you for my wife and my three kids. Just thank you for the privilege that it is to, come under you and, lead lead a family. So I pray for every family that listens to this that, they will be, blessed by you and that you will, just be with them every step of the way. Mhmm.

Carole Joy Seid [00:27:22]:

Amen. Amen.

Rachel Winchester [00:27:22]:

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