

Rachel Winchester:

If you know you wanna homeschool, but your kids are still toddling around, you might be wondering what educational things you should be doing now. With so many people pushing early academics, we want to introduce you to an alternative approach that focuses on what will bond you with your children and give them the foundation they need for educational success. You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast with Carole Joy Seid. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. Carole has been teaching people her literature based approach to education for over 30 years now with great success. And I'm Rachel Winchester, a fellow homeschool mom of 3 kids, including 1 preschooler. Today, Carole and I talk about how to implement the Homeschool Made Simple approach in the preschool years through work, study, and service. Listen in.

Rachel Winchester:

Well, today, I am back with Carole to talk about preschool specifically, but we're doing an overview of what our philosophy of education is in a nutshell. And so if you missed the last episode, it was the overview and gave the whole vision. Then now we're gonna start to break down, okay, what does this look like in the different ages and stages of homeschooling? So we are back for more. Let's talk about, first of all, how old are preschoolers?

Carole Joy Seid:

Well, obviously, in America, that has a lot of scope for imagination. I would say until 7, I don't consider a child's school-age officially. So in the 4 Scandinavian countries, that would be their answer. Until 7, they are "preschool." You could include kindergarten in that. If you use a traditional and historic approach to kindergarten, which is a garden of children, which is cooking and cleaning and animal care and nature walks and singing with rhythm instruments. But if it's preparation for Harvard, which kindergarten has become, then we won't go there.

Rachel Winchester:

So I guess a technical note would be that, for instance, I'm in South Carolina, and my compulsory age for my state is 5, which there is a caveat where you can technically file a paper and it starts at 6 or whatever. But the compulsory age is 5. So depending on the age, you might be having to record or be schooling officially, but still being flexible as far as the way that's applied and implemented. Just because I have to educate my children at 5 years old doesn't mean that that automatically starts meaning we have to learn to read and all the rigorous academic stuff.

Carole Joy Seid:

Yeah. Normally, preschool, I would say, was maybe 3 and 4 and 5, and then kindergarten in my kingdom would be 6, and 1st grade would be 7. We don't do a lot of that in in the homeschool movement worrying about grades and ages and things, But that's just a general overview, and you're absolutely right. If you are investing time with your child, if you're reading to them, if you're working, doing life skills in your home, cooking and baking and gardening and sewing and all the things we do, and then the outdoor skills, you know, building a tree house with daddy and cutting down trees and pulling weeds and planting tulip bulbs. All those things are the components of a really expensive school system called the Waldorf School, which is approximately \$20,000 for kindergarten a year. So save your pennies if you want your child to go there, but they still don't have the student teacher ratio that you have in your home. It's all in speaking teacher-ese. So all you do is you go to home or whatever, OfficeMax, whatever those places are, and you buy in August a teacher's planning book.

Carole Joy Seid:

And every day, you write down all the life skill experiences that your child has had. We helped at the food pantry. We visited the widow up the street and brought her muffins. We painted our neighbor's fence as a surprise. Whatever it is, that is all quantifiable by writing it down. If you have to use teacher-y terms like community service and compassion ministry and life skills, you know, whatever it is, feel free. Home economics, woodshop, call it what you will, but have confidence in yourself that the education your child is getting is better than any education they could get anywhere because you are 1 on 1 interacting with your child. And if you have a large family, better still because you have all those older siblings now educating your youngers, which means they have, like, a student teacher ratio of 12 teachers to 1 student.

You couldn't afford that at any cost. And so your kids are living the dream, and you need to know it.

Rachel Winchester:

It's a good sized family right there.

Carole Joy Seid:

Yeah. It is. Why not? Children are a blessing, and the more, the merrier.

Rachel Winchester:

Very merry. So I wanted to just talk about the 3 legged stool. In the last episode, we talked about how an education is a 3 legged stool: work, service, and study. So give a general idea of what that looks like in the preschool years. I feel like a big motivation during these years is that I wanna give my kids a good start. Every parent wants to give

their kid a great start so that they have what they need for success in the future. So maybe you could talk about how that gets a little off course and then maybe the right course or the best course to get on.

Carole Joy Seid:

So first thing I would say is, of course, now that this is original, Dr. Raymond Moore would say, we don't do anything for our child that they can do for themselves. So the best start I know of is giving a child the freedom to work and serve in their own home and them getting a lot of kudos for that. Not for how cute or how smart they are, which they had nothing to do with, but the way that they're contributing to the family corporation, Dr. Moore used to say. And so they feel needed and wanted and depended upon, he would teach us. And I have watched that. Children get very bored with being fawned over and spoiled and catered to, but what they love is feeling like they're doing adult work at a young age and getting the approval of the adults in their lives from that. You know, I love to tell the story of a little girl. I think she's was Australian or New Zealand child.

I can't remember. 1 of those countries. And one day, her grandmother called her up. It was her birthday. I think she had turned 5. And the grandmother said, and darling, what did you get for your birthday? And the little girl said, oh, grandmama. You won't believe what I get. And she said, I I just have no idea what.

And she said, mommy said I get to make my bed all by myself. And the grandmother said, what? Are you sure? Can you do it? Oh, I can. I can, grandmama. Mommy's been working with me, and she said today, because I turned 5, I can do it all by myself. And there was this rejoicing over the phone from this little girl because she saw this as a privilege, not a punishment. And so raising our children with that expectation that contributing the family is a rite of passage. It's something to be bragged about. It's something to call daddy at work and tell him, you won't believe what little Matilda did today.

She scrubbed the whole bathroom, and you're gonna need sunglasses so you don't get retinal damage when you come home because it is sparkling. And her hearing that and what that does for a child and their self esteem and their sense of accomplishment, and they wanna grow up to do more and more of this because they learn what a pleasure it is to serve and to give instead of just to receive. So work is the key. It's a cornerstone.

Rachel Winchester:

Yeah. And I feel like, really, work is the emphasis in preschool between the three things, and, really, work ties into so much service at that age of just we participate, we are serving each other in our family. Why are we folding clothes again? Why are we emptying the dishwasher again? Well, we ate. You know? Like, helping them have that perspective, because we're all people. We're all human. Like we talked about before, they're not coming out godly, and none of us are naturally bent towards that. Oh, sure. I would love to serve other people. I would love to do this thing again and again and again, but that's such a big part of discipling them in these years.

Carole Joy Seid:

And then finding the joy and the pleasure that it brings, which doesn't logically compute. And yet once you experience it, you're like, I would rather do that than go to the Bahamas. When J. J. was a teenager, our youth group borrowed a kitchen. The church that we went to did not have its own kitchen, and so we asked a sister church if we could borrow their kitchen. And they did a lunch, I believe, or a dinner, I can't remember, for the homeless of which there were many in our community. And I remember the kids going, that was the best thing we ever did and nagging the leadership. When can we do that again? They didn't beg for, like, can we have another pizza party or another volleyball game or whatever mindless thing? But that one thing was the thing that stood out, and they talked about it and talked about it.

They knew the homeless people by name. They were all planning. We're gonna get this person tennis shoes. We're gonna do, like, they owned it and felt the satisfaction that they didn't feel from being served and fawned over. They felt it from having responsibility and being treated like they could make a difference in people's lives, and they did.

\*AD\* Rachel Winchester:

Here's the thing. If you're not experiencing peace in homeschooling, it's time to press pause and get fresh perspective. Giving your children an amazing education doesn't have to add stress and pressure to your life. Homeschooling can be enjoyable. How do I know? Because there is research that lets us know what works in educating our children. Doctor Raymon Moore coined the term better late than early to encapsulate what the research showed. An unhurried childhood will serve your kids well. And let's be honest, it's better for the whole family.

But in order to give your kids that sort of education, you're going to have to quiet the voices in popular culture and listen to the research. Listen to the stories of people who have gone before you. Learn the framework and get the tools you need to succeed. If you want to learn our literature based approach to education and get the book lists

that are the key to your success, join us in 2024 at a live event. You can learn more by visiting our website at [homeschoolmadesimple.net/seminars](https://homeschoolmadesimple.net/seminars). Now back to the show.

Rachel Winchester:

So just to give people some ideas of things that this age of children could do, I'll just share a few things that my children do because I'm in this age range. You know, my youngest is 3, my oldest is 8. So emptying the dishwasher in our home, putting the silverware away is like a rite passage. It's like the youngest gets to do that, and then the oldest is so happy to pass it on once the youngest is able to do it. But they're sorting and putting the forks and spoons away and all that, making their bed, like you said, cleaning up their room, cleaning up after themselves, sorting clothes, putting clothes away, that sort of thing, starting the laundry. Kids can do so much that we don't think that they can do. And then when you raise your kids to do these things, people are just blown out of the water by the things that your kids can do because they don't expect children to be able to do these kind of things.

Carole Joy Seid:

I know. And I believe it was Maria Montessori who said that children's play is what we consider work. They would rather work than play with a bunch of dumb plastic toys. They would give anything to bake or cook or do dishes. Any of the things that we might consider laborious, to them, that is play. But we send them to go watch Veggie Tales videos while we work like we're like indentured servants. It's like, wait a minute. They're dying to do this, and we're robbing them of the privilege of doing it.

So life skills are fundamental. And then, of course, in the early years, reading to them by the hour. And when we're working, we can memorize and recite scripture, poetry. We can memorize songs and hymns, and so we're making it fun. We're having contests. And I think a lot of times in the homeschool community, particularly, sadly, first born mothers, they tend to just do everything like they're in the army. You know? It's just joyless. And I always say to those moms when I'm consulting with them, I want your middle name to be fun.

And the husband always chuckles because that is the last thing that they're known for, But they have to work at it a little bit. But I'm like, get up in the morning and put on your bozo nose and get your, you know, cheerleading costume on or whatever. You're gonna just root for your kids all day. And it's gonna be fun, and it's gonna be positive instead of drudgery. It's all in how you present work to children whether they want to participate. And as Dr. Moore taught us over and over again, they want to work with you, never alone. In the early years, they need that encouragement and that

cheerleading, and they wanna be with you. And so what you say is, well, mommy and daddy work so if you wanna hang with us, come work with us because we can't just sit around and look in your eyes all day because we've got things to do, and you can be part of that. And then we are gonna brag about you and call grandma and tell me what you did.

Rachel Winchester:

My children are better behaved when they have really put their energy into working. And then if there's just fighting or arguing going on, then I'll rally the troops for a project that we need to do. And then even if it's just something that doesn't take very long, if we just work together and get it done, they can go and play and they can be friendly to one another. It just completely changes the mood.

Carole Joy Seid:

Yes. Because they go from disorder and chaos to order and structure, and it makes them feel safe, and it makes them feel like someone is running the asylum and that they are contributing, which gives them such esteem because they're not just kids. Now they're part of the corporation, and they know it. It really builds their security level, and they like each other more. Instead of the holidays or sometimes weekends, I know, they can feel so disordered and can create a lot of insecurity even with adults. You know, daddy just thinks it's a great idea to lay around and watch baseball. And mommy has, well, shouldn't we be going on field trips on the weekends? And everyone has their expectations. But when there's a plan and they know where they're going and where they're heading and that they have a key part in that plan, it just makes everyone feel like they belong in the universe, and it creates harmony instead of discord.

Rachel Winchester:

So you kind of mentioned, you know, you're reading a lot, and so, really, that's the basis of study during these preschool years would be reading great books and memorizing things.

Carole Joy Seid:

So reading great books, studying the Bible, and spending time in nature would be the 3 components, and then work and service. Those are the keys. We don't worry about the A, B, C's and the 1, 2, 3s as one of my clients calls them, but we're working on character. And character is formed through sacrifice and hard things. Character is not formed through academics, which a lot of cultures think it is, That, you know, your job is to be a student, so I'll be the slave in the kitchen and wait on you hand and foot because you've got to get into medical school. But that's not building character, and

that person is not gonna be a compassionate doctor unless something else comes into their life to form them spiritually. But it's when you give children an opportunity to sacrifice and to serve that you see this beautiful character coming up, and a child who knows how to work will teach themselves anything else they need to know. So, again, you're kinda winding up a clock that's gonna keep going even when you take your hands off of it, because you're creating a path for character development in your child that will serve them for life.

Rachel Winchester:

So those fundamentals of character are way more important than the fundamentals of math or biology or, you know, reading, grammar, that sort of thing.

Carole Joy Seid:

That's right. We're not doing school in the early years. We're doing life, life skills, which will then apply so beautifully when they get into formal academic work. And they'll be ready, and they won't be burned out. They won't be like, we've been doing this for 6 years. I've never gotten it yet. Why would I wanna do it again? Instead of waiting till you can teach to mastery when they're older because as Dorothy Moore used to say, "Give them success experiences every day." If they're too young for formal academics, they're gonna develop a resistance and a mental block against them because they were not successful.

But if you wait till they're going to be successful, they'll love it. John Saxon said, "We love what we are good at, and we're good at what we like." And so giving them things that they're successful at will actually pave the road to them wanting to do more and more of this as they go forward. And that's the key because academics are easy, but overcoming mental blocks, that's much harder.

Rachel Winchester:

Well, this is great, and I think that we've really given people a great vision for what preschool could look like. These are such sweet years, such really lovely years. And just to be knowing that we're laying a foundation that's gonna be built on and that we can lay something that's gonna be strong and last for for many years to come.

Carole Joy Seid:

The last thing that maybe we should touch on is the power of attachment and bonding in these years and how unfortunate it is that we think that some other adult or some other organization is needed in our children's lives during these years. But one of the first things that I read by Dr. Moore when I was trying to disprove homeschooling, He was saying that when a child is sent off to, say, a preschool or wherever, mother's day

out, whatever it is, that they wonder in their heart, "Why doesn't mommy wanna be with me anymore?" And I remember reading that and just feeling this pain in my heart because our son was 4, I think, at the time when I read that. And, oh, just having taught in Christian preschool and junior high, both of them kind of the same period in a child's life, where one minute they feel little and the other minute they feel big. So there were parallels with both groups, And I just remember reading that concept and thinking, as Dr. Moore used to teach us, home is the best nest, and parents are the best teachers. And not feeling that someone else can do a better job of this than a really loving, normal parent can do. They are the best choice. They're the number one desire for their children. They wanna be with you. And whatever you're doing, they wanna be with you doing it.

Rachel Winchester:

And maybe some parents listening need somebody to give them permission to listen to their intuition, to say that I really want to be with my child. I don't want to send them off. And that's not something that I have to ignore or push aside. I need to listen to that intuition because that's what's actually right. That intuition is God given for a reason because we are meant to be with our kids. And so just if anybody's listening who needs permission to keep their child with them, then I hope that this episode can be that for you.

Carole Joy Seid:

And you cannot believe, Rachel, how many parents tell me that they drop their children off and cry all the way as they're driving away. And just what you said, to listen to that still small voice that God has put, particularly in moms, but in dads as well, And not be intimidated by the experts because mommy and daddy are the expert on that child. No one loves them more than they do, and no one knows them better than they do. Getting that authority from heaven and then walking in that authority is so important as we parent our children, especially when they're little, when the experts intimidate us, and we don't feel that we're qualified, but we are. There's a season to keep them close, and there's a season to launch them out. Throw them out of the nest.

Rachel Winchester:

Exactly. So let's do it in the proper order, and then they'll be ready to fly when the time comes. We'll all be ready for them to fly when the time comes.

Carole Joy Seid:

So true. That's such a good point. I love that. You're smart. You're not just a pretty face.



Rachel Winchester:

Well, thank you very much. This is great, and I think it will encourage families.

You've been listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast with Carole Joy Seid. If you want to learn more about the Homeschool Made Simple approach, you can visit our website, [homeschoolmadesimple.net/ebook](http://homeschoolmadesimple.net/ebook) to get our free ebook about the 5 essential parts of a great education.

Thanks for joining us this week on the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. Be sure to join us next time as we help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. Blessings.