

Rachel Winchester [00:00:01]:

As homeschooling parents, we can have a lot of questions. Some involve the small details of educating our kids, while others are so big and scary they keep us up at night. In this episode, we are answering a few questions that we hope will help you homeschool with peace and confidence.

You're listening to the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply, inexpensively, and enjoyably. Carol Joy Seid has been helping families homeschool for several decades now. And I'm Rachel Winchester, a fellow homeschool mom and director of operations here at Homeschool Made Simple.

Today, Carole and I are answering questions we've recently gotten from listeners like you on the topics of spelling, legal protection, and if it's too late to cultivate a love of learning in your child.

We're jumping right into the conversation, so listen in.

Rachel Winchester [00:00:47]:

You don't mention a spelling curriculum. I guess this was from a seminar.

Is that because you don't recommend using one? And for children who read later or struggle with spelling, do they need a spelling curriculum or to know the spelling rules?

Carole Joy Seid [00:01:06]:

Yeah. That's another great question, and I would say yes and no. So I don't recommend spelling curriculum, generally speaking. But when I'm consulting, if a child is older, let's say 13 or 14, and still can't spell, then we do address that. But let's start with why generally don't. If you use sing, spell, read, and write, which I pray fervently that you do use with some adjustment. I don't do a lot of the writing, as many of you know, but I do, of course, the songs, the games, and read the amazing little readers that are horrible literature but are great reinforcements for the skill level. Having said that, if you have a foundational phonetic approach, you have really laid a phonetic foundation for your children, then spelling generally is something that is pretty much of a no brainer.

I mean, I don't know about you, Rachel, but I don't do spelling words every day. Do you? No. And yet, how do you know? You don't? What's wrong? So how do you know how to spell?

Rachel Winchester [00:02:08]:

Right.

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:09]:
It's because you're a what?

Rachel Winchester [00:02:10]:
Reader.

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:11]:
That's right. What our goal is is to make our children readers. And if they're readers, Ruth Beechick explains, they will be spellers. They will know grammar. They will know sentence structure. These things will come naturally without anyone having to force feed them simply because this is part and parcel of what you glean from seeing the written word day in day out, hours every day. But having said that, there are some children with maybe some learning challenges, and those children would very much benefit, I think, as they get older and it's not connecting and you can see it's not connecting from learning rules. And I think some of the rules are really helpful.

I before e, except after c, stuff like that. Mhmm. Absolutely. I mean, if you wanna go get a fun book at the library and and learn some of that stuff, I think that's great. But the English language is a very tricky language, and there's so many exceptions. And it becomes really cumbersome and not realistic. I don't know how much of it is taught and how much of it is caught. And I think your best bet is always going to be making your child a lover of books and a reader if you want them to be a speller.

I have a fun story. You wanna hear it about J. J.?

Rachel Winchester [00:03:27]:
Yeah. That's fine.

Carole Joy Seid [00:03:30]:
So when he was a little boy, his best friend went to a Christian school for junior high, and he decided he would like to try that, and we said that was fine. So he went for 7th 8th grade to a really sweet Christian school, very family oriented, and I worked as the librarian and read out loud to each class, they had library class, for those years, those 2 years. And his 1st year when he got there, he came home and he announced that he had won the school the classroom spelling bee that day. And I was kinda surprised because we had never done spelling. I had not planned on him going to school. This was kind of out of the blue this came about. So that night, he told us there was a spelling bee, and we went to the spelling bee. And it was a school wide spelling bee.

And long story short, it went on and on and on, and J. J. won. And I couldn't believe it because he was out spelling me. I was his teacher. But the point was that this was a little boy who read books 3 or 4 hours a day, you know, played basketball and read books. It's basically summed up his childhood.

And so when the next day, I went to school as the librarian, and one of the mothers came up to me whose son had won the year before. She was not a happy camper. Uh-oh. Just trying to be very polite. And she said to me, wow. Because I guess they'd given the kids a list, which I you know, we were brand new to the school. But I guess there was this list of the words that they needed to memorize for the spelling bee, which we had never seen. And so she said to me, wow, you must have really worked hard with him for this.

And I just kinda smiled and nodded because I didn't even know what to say, because I'd never worked with spelling and certainly not crammed for the spelling bee. But he won it for no glory to me. He won it because he was a reader, and he knew what those words looked like because he'd seen them all 1,000 and 100 at least times, and he instinctively knew. I also have to put in a plug for my one of my favorite movies, and it relates to spelling bees. And it's called Aquila and the Bee, a k e e l a h, Aquila and the Bee. And it's about a little African American girl who is just precious and gifted in spelling, and nobody has any confidence in her. She comes from kind of a tough school, tough environment, all that. But one of her teachers takes an interest in her.

I think he's actually the principal. She wins the school spelling bee, but she's kind of embarrassed because they make fun of anyone who's a brain in her school. But she is given this coach, and it's Laurence Fishburne. And he is tough, and he won't let her, quote, speak that ghetto talk. But at one point, he announces to her that now she needs to learn Greek and Latin if she really wants to win the national spelling bee. And she's like, I ain't learning that Greek. And then he goes, out, out, and he throws her out of the house. And she tries to do it on her own to prepare for the national spelling bee, and she comes back on her hands and knees and says, I'm sorry.

I'll learn it. And he's like, okay. And so and you can see in the national spelling day the kids saying, is that from the Latin such and such? And then they spell it, is that from the Greek? And I love this movie. I'm sad to say I don't think it's a true story. I wish it were. It's a lovely movie, and it will really encourage you to do English from the roots up, which is on my handouts from junior high, and then to do consider doing Latin for some of high school.

Rachel Winchester [00:07:09]:

And is there a specific spelling curriculum that you like if you want to do when they're older if you need something?

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:16]:

I personally have not used a spelling curriculum other than Sing, Spell, Read, and Write, which, of course, is the mother lode of spelling curriculums. But I know some of my families have used spelling power. I'm open to just about anything, but I think your best bet would to do English from the roots up in junior high or even earlier. And I suggest that you let your kids make their own 3 by 5 cards because they own it when they write it and create the card. And they put a green border around it if it's Greek and a red border around it if it's Rome or Latin, and then put them in a little ziplock bag. And let the children, like, as you're driving through traffic. You know, one calls out tropos, and everyone shouts out churn. And then what are some other words it's in? Phototropic.

And it can really become part of your family culture, And I think it's a great foundation for many things, word attack skills, and standardized testing, like vocabulary questions or spelling questions or preparing them for any romance or Teutonic languages. So you will never regret. My mother studied 4 languages, and she used to tell me in her nineties that Latin was the worst and hardest thing she ever had to study, but it was the best thing she ever did. And how she went on to study French, Spanish, and Italian, and how she thanked her junior high teacher who made her take Latin because it set her up for all of her language skills. Language just enriches our lives and how Greek and Latin will prepare us for the world of languages.

Rachel Winchester [00:08:49]:

That's great. That's helpful. Here's a quick one is how would I know what my state requires of me?

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We are taking a quick break from this episode to let you know about our ebook, 5 essential parts of a great education. We wrote this ebook to introduce you to the homeschool made simple method of homeschool. It lays out what we consider to be the 5 essential parts of a great education. And you can get the ebook on our website at homeschoolmadesimple.net/ebook. And did I mention that it's free? If you like what you hear in this episode, the ebook will build on the ideas we share here. Download it today, and begin deciding what matters most in your child's education. Now back to the show.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:32]:

So I would say go on the homeschool legal defense website, HSLDA, and they will have those restrictions on their website by state. And I highly recommend that you join the Homeschool Legal Defense Fund. It's not expensive, and it gives you legal protection if there's any legal hassles that you run up against, nosy neighbors reporting you or whatever, you know, the case may be. And it's also even if you don't anticipate any trouble, it's very important that we hang together so that as Ben Franklin said, we don't hang separately. So very important that we support one another. Every state is in a little bit of a different situation. Some of us are fat and sassy, and we think we just can sit back and and enjoy our freedom. But that freedom can be pulled out from under us very, very quickly, and we need to be ever mindful, organized, and united.

Rachel Winchester [00:10:31]:

So are there families in states that have more restrictions that use our method and things. Is it possible to do that?

Carole Joy Seid [00:10:39]:

Yes. I mean, there's people in every state in the union, and I think you've told me that people on every continent in the world listen to this podcast. So we have people in all different situations. Some of the European countries, it's illegal to homeschool your children in Germany. I believe in France. Everyone's dealing with things in a different way legally, and so, absolutely, in America, it is legal to homeschool your children in every state right now. But some states really have a lot of requirements. Other states have little or no.

And so it just depends on your state law, and that's why we need to be ever vigilant, keeping aware of legislation, bills that are being passed. And quite honestly, after COVID and so many people decided, oh, I'm just gonna homeschool, but they're really not homeschooling. Laws are going to be tightening like a noose around our neck, and we need to be very organized and very aware of what's going on because everyone has to go to the hospital even though only a small percentage of people are sick. And in the same way, legislating the home school movement, which has the highest literacy rates, the highest standardized testing rates, it's ludicrous to regulate our movement instead of putting that energy into the schools that are struggling and failing.

Rachel Winchester [00:12:03]:

Yeah. And the great thing about HSLDA is you'll get notice like, I get emails from them. I get newsletters or things in the mail of families that they've helped be able to homeschool through their grants or cases that they're working on to provide legal

assistance to people. So it just kinda gives you a sense of what's happening in the world and of home schooling at that time.

Carole Joy Seid [00:12:26]:

You're not isolated. You're in the know and in the loop, and that's very important as a homeschooler.

Rachel Winchester [00:12:32]:

Yeah. They have a magazine. They send a magazine, I think quarterly maybe or something. So that's really helpful too. And within your own state, you know, I know that within my state, I have 3 options. And one option, basically homeschooling through the public school system, but then choosing that less restrictive option of just that I have a lot of freedom. I have some really simple accountability to an umbrella organization. Even within the states, you can have options of how much regulation you want to participate in.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:06]:

Right. And I normally would say always choose the most freedom. You can find your own accountability elsewhere, families consider that that's what I am for them. But sometimes a family will come to me and they're like, we have to do this and this and this, and I'm like, according to whom? And then they'll say, well, we're in this, and I'm like, are you required to be in that restrictive of a no. We just picked this one. I'm like, why don't you look around and see if there's some other options that would suit your philosophy better? And very often, there are some.

Rachel Winchester [00:13:38]:

Yeah. I know that some homeschooling friends of mine, it's like they get feedback on the things that they've done on their record keeping and things like that. And I don't need that feedback or, you know, you to tell me, oh, I think you should do this differently next time.

Carole Joy Seid [00:13:53]:

That's right.

Rachel Winchester [00:13:54]:

Next question is, how do you heal when you've ignorantly put pressure and anxiety on a child who was a, quote, late reader, who now has anger, frustration, and stress over school as a result, or at least partly because they were labeled as immature and not smart when they were probably just a very intelligent late bloomer?

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:15]:

Well put. These questions are so good. What I would say to that sweet mom, I'm assuming it was maybe a mom, is don't panic, but definitely go into your unschool mode and unschool them. And the way that I would do that is I would read to them high interest books, things like *Little Britches*, for example, where they're begging for one more chapter, and then I would never require them to read. I would put them to hard manual labor, let them start their own business, let them heal in other areas where they could have immediate success and not pressure them. So when they're not being read to, I would play audiobooks, and I would remove screens to make them desperate for entertainment so that books become their avenue of entertainment. But I would not beat that horse anymore. It's been beaten long enough. I would just give them an opportunity to succeed in other areas as I read to them.

I just thought of a fun story. Years years ago, I was speaking in Wisconsin, and there was a mother in the audience. And she had a son that had never read a book in his entire life. So I said, well, if I had a child like that, I would read either the Frank Peretti Cooper Family Adventures or the Spirit Flyer series from John Bybee, published by InterVarsity Press. So I was talking about these books, and I said, these are foolproof books for reluctant male readers. And, normally, a reluctant reader tends to be a boy, not always, but tends to be. Well, so then I came back a year later, and I was talking about the spirit flyer series again.

And the woman stood up and said, can I testify? Can I just testify? And, yes, please. I had no idea what she was gonna say or who she was. And she said, well, last year, Carol talked about these books, so I thought, well, what can I lose? So I bought the books and I brought them home. And she said, so one day I'm walking I was baking a cake in the kitchen, and I heard water running in our house. And I thought, wonder what that is. My son would never take a shower on his own because he would rather die than take a shower. So she's walking through the house listening, listening, and she sees the bathroom door slightly open. She kind of peeks her head in a little bit to see if the water's on, and she sees that the shower is running.

And lo and behold, there's a hand sticking out of the shower, and in the hand is one of the spirit flyer books. And the kid is reading it in the shower because he was so into it. He couldn't even stop reading it Take a shower. And he said, I literally thought I was dreaming to see this happen like a little boy who had never read a book in his life. So what I had said is start the book, leave the guy, like, hanging from a cliff by a toothpick with dragons under them or, you know, whatever you're reading, and say, yeah. I've gotta go make dinner now, and just leave the book laying there. And that's what she had done. Another lady told me that she found her son in a corner teaching himself to

read because she had started one of those books, and he couldn't wait for her to come back.

So be savvy. Just say, no. No. I don't want you to read. No. No. No. I'll read to you.

And leave them desperate to break into that kingdom, and they will. But don't force a child like that to read. They've been forced to read enough.

Rachel Winchester [00:17:37]:

Yes. This is a similar question about a specific age, but more broad than just reading. Is there still hope for children that did learn to read early, did, quote, school at home, and had lots of screen time if we change course midway? My oldest is almost 11, and we have just begun to cut screens, read aloud often, and stop all the worksheets. I'm hoping I haven't done permanent damage and that my kids will have a love of learning going forward.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:06]:

What a lovely question and what a lovely heart. And the answer, absolutely. It is never too late. I have people who started homeschooling when their child was a junior or a senior in high school, and they've had beautiful turnarounds and results. So it is never too late. I love what she's doing, and I can't wait to hear her testimony. And give her 2 years, and she's gonna be sharing her testimonies with us, and I look forward to that.

Rachel Winchester [00:18:34]:

So encouraging. Because I know that, you know, you can sense in that question that she's just feeling doubtful and sorry. Just knows, like, oh, I I did things differently than I should have or, you know, I didn't know better. And so we all find ourselves at that place in some area of our lives.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:51]:

But but it's never too late. No.

Rachel Winchester [00:18:53]:

Definitely. Awesome. Well, I think these will be great helps to people as they listen.

Carole Joy Seid [00:18:59]:

Well, I love these people. It just shows you what thoughtful, tender parents we work with. People who put their children first and God above all, and why it's such a blast to do what we do because we're working with the cream of the crop. And every day I say,

I can't believe I get to do this. It is such a joy and a reward to get to love on these families because they inspire us.

Rachel Winchester [00:19:25]:

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Thanks for joining us this week on the Homeschool Made Simple podcast. Remember, Jesus' commandments are not burdensome. What he calls you to do, he will enable you to do. Blessings.