

Laying a Good Foundation for Your Homeschool

Episode 232

Rachel Winchester:

Many of the people in the early homeschool movement were iconoclasts. They were people going against the flow in other areas of their lives. Education just became another part of that. In this episode, we return to Carole's library to discover some more books that shaped the early homeschool movement and gave parents the backbone they needed to do something countercultural. Something we all need to reclaim for this next generation!

You're listening to the homeschool made simple podcast! This is a podcast to help you homeschool simply inexpensively and enjoyably.

Carole Joy Seid has been helping families homeschool for several decades. And I'm Rachel Winchester, a fellow homeschool mom of three.

Today, we're talking about the essential books every parent needs to read. Don't worry, all the books mentioned in this episode are listed on our website. You don't have to feverishly write down titles.

Alright, let's jump right in!

Carole Joy Seid [00:00:00]:

Then, let's talk about some of the early childhood things. So there is a book that I loved called *Teaching Montessori in the Home* by Elizabeth G Hainstock. And she did, I think, several books, but this one is the preschool years. And again, just bringing that kind of philosophy into our homes, not teaching the ABCs and the 1, 2, threes, but teaching the Montessori principles of how to cut an apple, how to how to carry a chair, how to sort shapes in order, how to tie a bow, button a shirt, you know, all the things that Montessori, Maria Montessori taught to the World War 2 refugee children on the streets of Italy, when they these children were abandoned and were homeless and their parents had been killed in the war. And they didn't have basic life skills. And that is what Maria Montessori as a medical doctor was doing, teaching these kids things that you'd learn in any good home, but they didn't have a good home. So she's a a

huge influence on my life. And then, doctor Moore turned us on to the writings of David Elkind.

David Elkind, in that day, was a professor Let's see. He's been at a lot of different schools. I'm trying to remember where he was back then. At Tufts. Yes. He was at Tufts University, and, his best selling book was *The Hurried Child, Growing Up Too Fast too soon*. The hurried child. And that book really shaped, a lot of our philosophies and destinies in the early homeschool movement, because again, we're always countering the earlier is better philosophy.

And then he went on to write a book called *miseducation preschoolers at risk*. And he talks about the damage of early childhood education. And he's, again, I think he's Jewish. So, you know, he's not writing from, a Christian perspective, but, truth is God's truth. And that David Elkaim beautifully wrote in the defense of children and what was best for them.

Rachel Winchester [00:02:21]:

So And he kinda goes in more depth with Piaget about breaking down Yes. Piaget in theory so that you can understand the different kind of categories that Piaget had for children's development. Good point. And Ruth Beechick does that as well. I think those really getting that understanding of the theory Yes. Is so important to have.

Carole Joy Seid [00:02:43]:

That is such a good point, Rachel. And, you know, as we said off air, this is a generation that doesn't expect to necessarily do a lot of homework or research. And I wanna call the young families that are listening to our voice, back to doing their own homework. And, as a one of the teachers at Calvary Chapel used to always want us to write on the top of our paper as we took notes. The scripture from Acts, it says, be like the noble Bereans, and see if these things be true. And so he would always say, don't take my word for it. Go home and be like the noble Bereans and and write the scripture on the top of your paper because he didn't want his word to, have the weight, obviously, of the word of God. Always always check it out in the word.

And I say that to contemporary homeschool parents or just parents in general that are wondering what which way do we go with our kids. And, Rachel, having been in your life since you were in high school, you were like one of those noble Bereans, and you still are. And you always do your homework. And you've read almost all the books I'm talking about here. And it's because you don't take even my word for it as close as we are and as much as we respect and love each other. You still have gone out and done your own homework. And that's what is such a rich, you know, body of knowledge that you bring to the ministry is because you've read all the books and it's a lot of work. This isn't like reading, is it?

Rachel Winchester [00:04:22]:

Yeah. So it can be overwhelming sometimes. And I haven't read all the books because there are so many to read. But I think that was really a marker of that time as you're going through all these books. It's just these people weren't just saying, what's the best curriculum for teaching my kids how to spell? Or what's the best thing to teach biology? They were going all the way

back, and that's really what we all need to do is just go all the way back and say and I don't think that most people think, oh, I have a philosophy of education. Most people aren't walking around thinking about that in those terms and articulating it of, like, what is my philosophy of education? But that we really all do just like the things that we believe. I mean, anything. Whatever we believe works itself out into practice.

Carole Joy Seid [00:05:11]:
We all have a theology.

Rachel Winchester [00:05:13]:

Yeah. We all have that and that we really have to go all the way back because otherwise, we're gonna you might be having problems that are philosophical, that you're trying to put Band Aids on, but, really, there's a foundation issue. And so if you get to the foundation and build a solid foundation, then it helps with things further down. Maybe that problem would go away, or maybe you'd find a more lasting solution to that problem.

Carole Joy Seid [00:05:44]:

That's so good, Rachel. So, basically, that's why the first workshop in our basic seminar is called developing your own philosophy of education because it's foundational, like you said. And I like to say to parents, do your homework, be an expert on your children, have an apologia for what you're doing. You know, have a defense for the faith as as apologia means, a defense. Understand why. Well, I'm just doing it because everybody at church is doing it. No. That doesn't work.

You've got to understand your children and what's best for them so you're not blown by every wind of doctrine. That's why doing our homework is so important. And I know it's not like, oh, I'm just gonna read these at the beach while I eat a pop That isn't that isn't what we're talking here. But our kids are worth it. They're worth doing some of the work. Now some of these books are entertaining. You know, the Colfax books and stuff. They're very entertaining.

No no question. It's not all like, you know, going to the dentist. But it is really important to be feeding our soul so that we know why we're doing what we're doing. And God forbid, if we ever, you know, were taken before a court of law, what is your reason for doing this? I mean, the the law, when you read the Supreme Court, you know, judgments on these things, the Brown case, the Yoder case, the Society of Sisters, it was all based on religious freedom. That's what our laws are and freedoms to homeschool are built on, and we can lose them at any time. We have to know what we believe and why we believe it, and why are we doing this in the first place. So these books are important. I don't expect you to read them in a week or a day or even a year.

But I do expect you to be continually like, as a school teacher, you're required to do continuing education. That's what I'm calling you to do as parents. Continually educate yourself so that you can knowledgeably educate your children.

Rachel Winchester [00:07:45]:

Yeah. And it's so easy today to just go you can easily find so many people talking about homeschooling.

Carole Joy Seid [00:07:53]:

Yes.

Rachel Winchester [00:07:53]:

And so you really just have to choose the source. And I think that's why it's so important to hear these original sources that the homeschool movement had in the beginning And to keep going back to those. So that we can make sure our moorings are set.

Carole Joy Seid [00:08:12]:

Amen. Another author and and speaker that's been hugely influential in my life and a personal friend is is doctor William Sears. And my favorite of his books is The Ministry of Parenting Your Baby. And I'm sorry to say that it's a very hard book to find and it's out of print. But again, that's one save your pennies and and pay the big bucks for it. It is a precious book.

Rachel Winchester [00:08:40]:

Yeah. I got it when I had my 3rd baby. Yes. And I read it when she was in probably the 1st 6 months of her being born, which I had always done attachment parenting with my kids. But reading that book was just so encouraging, especially while I was in the throes of a newborn life because they're telling me I'm doing all the things that are giving my baby exactly what she needs right now. She needs me to just pour these things into her life, the love from my body, being near me, all these things.

And so it's just so encouraging to read when you're in the middle of that newborn stage because it's like a little, you got this. You're doing the right thing. This is worth it.

Carole Joy Seid [00:09:30]:

Keep going. Yes. Or if you've not really drunk that Kool Aid and not knowledgeable about it, it will I love to give it as a baby present. It's hard to find, but boy, I give it to my near and dear. And, it's so important. I gave it to some friends who are, college missionaries when they had their first. And I know that they were not raised this way. This was completely foreign, you know, information.

Now one of the books that the Sears also or maybe La Leche League taught me about is a book called Touching by Ashley Montague. And it is definitely not written by a Christian. So I just have to warn you about that. But the the section on children and babies and the importance of touch to the development neurologically, emotionally, every way way of a child. You see, when we create attachment with a child, that will affect our influence on them if we're going to then go on to be their teacher and their educator. So if your child and you are not

connected, you're not bonded, it's gonna be a very it's gonna be like 2 strangers learning to dance. But if you're one with your child, you and your husband or your husband and you, whoever's listening to this podcast, if you are one with your child as parents, then you have a platform of influence in your kids' hearts that just can't be duplicated by anyone, including a classroom teacher. So we're building on that foundation.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:03]:

Yeah.

Rachel Winchester [00:11:04]:

And for people who have broken attachment, I think that book was helpful to think about all the different facets of, like, where kind of all the streams that feed into that attachment. So then if there was you know, I had to have a c section or I did have a c section, so they weren't born in this. You can kind of see, like, where maybe things are are lower or where you could

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:28]:

Have struggled.

Rachel Winchester [00:11:29]:

Where things need to be healed

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:30]:

for something. You know?

Rachel Winchester [00:11:32]:

Like, where something was low and so okay. So I'm gonna, like, I'm gonna compensate by the touching, the holding, the, you know,

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:41]:

the new thing,

Rachel Winchester [00:11:42]:

how happy I was when the child was born.

Carole Joy Seid [00:11:45]:

Yes. And the adoptive families in our ministry. We have so many adoptive families. What a ministry that is. And how can I recreate that connection and that bond? And you can. You can do it. And so many of the books and the work of Karen Purvis and different people, how you can reconnect with children. I mean, these are books that many of my adoptive families really study because they tend to be very intentional and take things very seriously.

Another family that we cannot leave out as a huge influence on my life and I think in the life of the homeschool movement are Francis and Edith Schaeffer. And, I have a whole shelf here of

their books and their kids and son in law's and everybody else's books. But, probably the 2 books that impacted me the most as a young mom were The Hidden Art of Homemaking and What is a Family. Those 2 books, modeling reading out loud, modeling beauty in the home, modeling the idea that everything we do in the care and the nurture of children is sacred. Not just, well, what we do on Sundays is sacred, but everything else is secular. But that as the reformers taught us, everything is under the cross. And the way you arrange flowers on your table, give your child a bath, or read to them, sew their clothes, make, you know, furniture out of old packing boxes. Whatever it is that you're doing, is unto the lord.

Everything that we do is for his glory. You know, sola dei Gloria. And then Edith wrote a book called L'abri, which is the story of their ministry. And then she wrote a very, very expanded book called The Tapestry, which I love, the life and times of Frances and Edith Schaeffer. And it's not light, and it's not quick reading. But it models godly living in all of its facets and forms. And then everybody can know was the book that Frances and Edith created from the very first thing they did when they moved to Switzerland after World War 2, and that is they started working with children. And they started that work by teaching them the book of Luke.

And everybody can know is their studies in Luke for children. And that's how they started out, and it's a great place for us all to start out with going through the book of Luke with our kids. Such an important gospel and so accessible for children. And then Edith's daughter, Susan, I think she's her middle daughter, wrote a book, several books. But 2 of my favorite that she wrote would be For the Children's Sake, which is the retelling of the, philosophy of Charlotte Mason, a long dead educator, in Victorian times in the time of Amy Carmichael. And my favorite of her books is For the Family's Sake. And you like that book a lot, Rachel, didn't you?

Rachel Winchester [00:14:49]:
I do.

Carole Joy Seid [00:14:50]:
Tell me why.

Rachel Winchester [00:14:52]:
Yeah. It's just about creating a rich family life. And she talks about the traditions and just the culture that you're creating in your family and having intentionality with it and just the power of it.

Carole Joy Seid [00:15:09]:
Yeah. That's good. That's really good. Now, I love the whole religious quote education of children, and there are many books on it. But one of them that's really great is called Godly Play by Jerome Berryman, an imaginative approach to religious education. And there are several books using, kind of a liturgical, using little figures where you tell stories in very creative, imaginative ways and then you ask children, I wonder, I wonder, and then the show, you know, and then you ask the question and it's very quiet and contemplative. And it's just

such a wonderful way to teach children, their biblical stories and what they mean to them and bringing their imagination into the telling of biblical, the biblical scenario. And then, some books that really influenced me in terms of media.

One would be the plug in drug. That's kind of where it all started. The author of this book's name is Marie Winn. I imagine she's probably gone to be with the Lord. I I don't know if she has, but it wouldn't surprise me. She wrote the book like 30 some years, 30, 35 years ago. And then Neil Postman, who has gone to be with the Lord, wrote amusing ourselves to death, public discourse discourse in the age of show business. Oh, what a book that is.

And then another book back to the the connecting with our children that I recommend to so many of my families that I work with Rachel is a book called How to Really Love Your Child by Doctor. Ross Campbell. My friend well, I think I heard him on focus on the family many, many years ago, but, I know, pastor Chuck's daughter, Jeanette, also gave me a copy of this book. And it's a book that will just really give you tools in how to connect with your children. He is a, clinical psychologist in Tennessee and specializes in working with young children. And just so thoughtful. And his he just gives you such practical advice about, the power of touch and how, when a child is not getting a concept, if you put them on your lap and rub their back and look into their eyes, that suddenly, bam, they can get it. Or the power of, words of affirmation, the power of eye, contact. And how we can let a child feel loved with just some simple tools that really are, you know, it's not rocket science. But it's so helpful just to be reminded of those things.

Are you, you know, when you read your children, are you rubbing their back? Are you putting them on your lap? Are you letting them take turns? Each child who picks a book, then they get to sit on mommy or daddy's lap. And then the next child picks a book, and they get to sit. You know? And so just that the power of connecting with our children very, very deeply and from that, the fruit that comes. And then I'm gonna close with another book that was really instrumental in my life, an author, I should say, that was instrumental. She wrote quite a few books, but her name is Nancy Wallace. And she was one of the very, very early pioneers through the influence of John Holt. And it's called, her book is called Child's Work. But she wrote for mothering magazine and growing without schooling magazine and things like that.

And she was just a pioneer. She was not a believer. She also her first book was called Better Than School for how they fought and won the right to teach their children. They lived in Ithaca, New York near Cornell University. And then in child's work, she follows up. And her kids were called Vita and Ishmael. And, they were musicians and artists and mathematicians and writers, and they were very quirky. Particularly Ishmael is very quirky.

But her the parents got the kids. Like, they got them. They didn't try and make them something that they weren't and and let them blossom as who they were. And I loved her writing and, the story of her kids as they found their way in the world that didn't necessarily understand them or accept, you know, they if they'd gone to school, they would have been

probably, you know, insulted, labeled, ruled out. But yet because the parents believed in the kids and welcomed their gifts and their abilities and that they thought outside the box, They actually became incredibly exceptional people because their gifts were received and welcomed. And I think the Wallaces are a great example. And I think as believers, it's nice to rub shoulders with families that aren't necessarily coming from a faith perspective. And there are things they can teach us, and there are things we can love and teach them.

And it's a beautiful thing. And Dr. Moore always encouraged us to kind of cross the aisles and not just live in these little everybody is just like me bubbles, but embrace people that are different than we are, both for our benefit and for our children's benefit as well. So Yeah. That's a lot of reading that we've come up with for these innocent families. They're, like, hitting their head on the cement right now going, oh, my word.

Rachel Winchester [00:21:16]:

Yes. You don't have to read these by next week's episode. We'll give you 2 weeks

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:22]:

list. Right. Yes.

Rachel Winchester [00:21:23]:

Exactly. We'll give you 2 weeks Yeah. To read all these books. And send us a book report so we can know

Carole Joy Seid [00:21:30]:

exactly what you need. We love book reports. Not we hate them. That's right.

Rachel Winchester [00:21:38]:

Oh my goodness. Yes. And I think that a lot of these ideas are gonna be breaking boxes of educational ideas. And so they kind of need to be read a little bit at a time so that they can truly be digested because they will be, like, dismantling a lot of our concepts of what education ought to be. Because we think, oh, a high quality education means foot on the gas, hard academic, you know, high rigor. But that really, this is saying, no, you don't have to compromise your connection with your child in order to give them a really great, amazing, world class education. You actually want to use that connection as the conduit and the pathway to the education of that. Ishmael and these kids, they felt so loved and received that they could fully pursue and become who they were created to be.

And that's really what we're going for. And I think that's one of the things that makes this method hard is that we're not just stifling and putting kids into a box. And in some ways, that's easier if you just cut off some of the edges of children. Because sometimes they're a little difficult to handle. And you have to have discernment to say, is this something that is sinful? Is this just their personality? Is this a developmental thing? It really requires you to be attuned with the child, you really have to have exercise a lot of discernment and trust in God and

waiting on timing and, you know, moving forward and this dance is a

Carole Joy Seid [00:23:22]:

That's right.

Rachel Winchester [00:23:23]:

Not the easiest thing. And so I think a little bit of time.

Carole Joy Seid [00:23:28]:

Because if you're insecure, it's so much easier to use a formulaic approach. But as we do our homework, that's what gives us the backbone to stand when everybody else is blown. Wow. This has been fun. I sure am glad that the Lord sent you into my life. And we're just living the dream, aren't we? We are.

Rachel Winchester [00:23:53]:

Some people might knock on your door to get some of those books.

Carole Joy Seid [00:23:57]:

Yeah. That's a good rule of thumb. Don't ever loan your books to people. That's a good rule of thumb. Because what I say to people is would you ask your mechanic to borrow his screwdriver? These

Rachel Winchester [00:24:08]:

are tools.

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:10]:

And we need our tools, and we need to know where they are, not where someone's got the dog, you know, laying on it and the cat throws up on it. No. Because they don't value your books the way you value them. And so just say to them, I would love for you to come to my house anytime

Rachel Winchester [00:24:25]:

and and

Carole Joy Seid [00:24:25]:

look through my resources. Absolutely. But I'm sorry. My tools don't leave the house. Yeah. You can say it with a smile, but don't let them go out the door. So good.

Rachel Winchester [00:24:37]:

Oh, thank you, Carole. Thank you, Rachel.