

Mentoring Your Children to Success

By: Donna Vail



“Effective leadership is putting first things first. Effective management is discipline, carrying it out.”

– Stephen Covey

WHETHER your homeschool is set up for self-education or classroom method its imperative that you stay well connected with your children and their academic progress. Practicing this one habit will benefit you and your student in multiple ways as you will be fully aware at all times where your child is in his studies, you will have the confidence that your child is learning and also know when change is necessary. For the student this process will give him added confidence to realize that he is learning a lot, the process will build his communication and presentation skills, keep him accountable to do the work, and build a healthy partnership between you.

As homeschoolers your interests and involvement can abound which means at times it can be hard to track everything you are doing and unfortunately this means things can fall through the cracks. Creating accountability for your homeschool is imperative so you can access all of the learning you are building and empower your student to success.

I'm often asked, “How do I know they're doing the work?” What you need are tools to help streamline the process and assure you are taking care of it all. We use a tool called An Inspired Education's (AIE) Parents Weekly Review for Success. It is used once a week during a casual mentor meeting where you and your child review all work that has been completed for the week. A more formal and lengthy mentor meeting where you and your child have more in-depth discussions will take place every 4-6 weeks.

Here's what we cover during our AIE Parents Weekly Review for Success:

Four Basic Needs: Physical, Social/Emotional, Mental and Spiritual. Considering these four needs each week will ensure you are meeting and balancing their basic needs. While some of these we don't even have to think about like shelter and food, pausing and considering these needs can mean focusing more on a

child's need that would otherwise slip such as acceptance, creativity, stimulating challenges and contributing. Be sure to include ways some of these needs can be met outside of your home and by being active in the community.

Top 3-5 Values: Having your child's top 3-5 values in front of you each week assures you are considering all of your responses and suggestions in accordance with their values. Honoring your child in their highest values will propel him to success as well as give you intelligence to better relate with each other. Everyone lives by a set of priorities, a hierarchy of values that determines how the world is perceived, how you will respond. Just by looking at what is in your living space, what you spend the most time on, what you spend the most money on and what is most fulfilling reveals individual values. When you have these in front of you for each child you can link their studies to their values making learning more meaningful and fulfilling.

Academics: A basic checklist here of all that should be completed each week will keep all your bases covered. Our list includes Weekly Inspired Intelligence Record, Math Time Sheets, Math Lessons, Math Home study Tests, Math Graph Recorded, Reading Progress and Goals, Vocabulary, Book Exams, Writing and Other Studies. Again, always keep it unique to your child's needs. Having this list ensures you've checked everything and all is accounted for.

Household Services: Accountability is needed from both you and your children when it comes to household services/chores. Are you holding them accountable for their responsibilities or letting them slip? Are you doing it yourself when they don't? This part of our review is a quick status check to identify areas of improvement with the household responsibilities each child takes care of to serve the family. It's important that everyone contributes to the functions of everyday family life and that responsibility is mastered through these practices.

Priorities, Projects and More: This section is an area where you can list specific projects each child is working on and keep abreast of progress. If the child is doing any volunteer work in the community, it could be listed here as well.

To make the process even easier you can download the worksheet at <http://www.aninspirededucation.com/parentsweeklyreview>

Print a copy for each child. On the form there are four columns where you can make notes, one column for each week. Once this sheet is completed the following week will be a full mentor meeting where you go into greater detail. Using this worksheet will provide clarity and serve as an accountability tool, which is the number one key to success in all areas of life.

Keep files of these weekly reviews so you can use the notes for the full mentor meeting every 4 to 6 weeks. Holding weekly reviews will help you be on top of your homeschool responsibilities and know exactly where your children are in their learning and if there are any additional needs, but more important is that it helps each child know where they are fueling their love for learning.

"To love rightly is to love what is orderly and beautiful in an educated and disciplined way." -Plato

Parents Inspired to Action: Determine a day that is good for you and your children to have a weekly review together. Schedule each child to have individualized private meetings.

Establish a file for your weekly reviews so you can access them for the full mentor meeting every 4 to 6 weeks.

If you are not quite sure how to be a mentor consider being mentored. Every highly successful person has a mentor, no one does it alone and your children's education is worth it.

Children Inspired to Action: Include your children in the weekly review. Have them pull the completed work from their Self-Educator's Study book and file them in the designated record keeping system for short-term and long-term portfolio.

As you implement this new way of doing things give your children time to adjust to the new plan. Support them in using it and adjust where needed to respect everyone's unique work and living habits.

Meet privately with your child giving them undivided attention. This is important individualized work that deserves individualized counsel. ▲



Donna Vail is the Founder of An Inspired Education, a company devoted to empowering families around the world to a lifestyle of true freedom through homeschooling, inspiration and entrepreneurship. Donna and her husband have homeschooled their six children for the past 16 years and now help today's homeschoolers find their way. For more about her company, visit <http://www.aninspirededucation.com>.