

Learning at Home

There are many different types of school but they all share the problems that arise from gathering children together in a classroom-based environment, and the only alternative to school itself is for a child to learn at home.

This solution may seem slightly out of step with the way that most people now live their lives but it is an approach to education that has been tried and tested over hundreds, perhaps thousands, of years, right around the world.

The object of primary education is to teach a child to read, to write and to be able to do simple arithmetic. This can be achieved by any parents in a few hours per day (for a few months at a time) at some point before a child is ten or eleven years old. It does not require five or six years of full-time school work.

The problem that really worries most parents is not so much how they can teach their child to read and write, but what they are going to do with them for the rest of the time if they do not go to school.

The fact that even the idea of having our children at home causes such alarm should make us realise that we need to do something to make our lifestyle more child-friendly. Common sense must tell us that there is nothing more natural than parents and children living and working together at home.

There are some basic points that you can follow when teaching a young child at home. (*See also Working With Your Child page 272.*)

- Avoid creating a school-like atmosphere in the home.
- Do not try to work the same hours as the local school.
- Restrict any reading and writing to the morning when you and your child are more wide awake.
- Establish a rhythm to your days.
- Try to spend some time out of doors every day.
- Involve your child in the things that you have to do.
- Always have some ongoing projects in hand.
- If your child wants to watch television, watch it with them. Do not use it as a babysitter while you get on with something else.

