

# Homeschool Audit

This is an information-gathering exercise, not a to-do list generator. Don't worry about doing anything at all about your answers to these questions until you've emptied your head of all the unresolved questions and concerns rattling around. Simply getting all those loose thoughts and vague feelings written down on paper will calm your mind and let you think about your situation more clearly. This is about brain-dumping, not doing.

Brain dumps are a key strategy that I return to over and over again. If you start suffering from vague overwhelm or nagging unease, try a brain dump. This guide will lead you through a brain dump specific to your homeschool.

You don't need to answer every single question. Rather, read through them and let them trigger your concerns or help you notice specific trouble spots so you can zero in on tactics rather than feel a general frazzle about your entire situation.

## AUDIT YOUR SITUATION

- How many students 7+ do you have? +2 each
- How many kids age 4-6 do you have? +1 each
- How many 1-3 year olds do you have? +3 each
- If you were or are pregnant, or do have or will have a newborn to infant, add +2 for each.
- Add +1 each thing you're teaching separately.
- Add +1 for every out-of-the-house activity you have in a week, excepting church on Sunday.
- If you have been homeschooling less than 3 years, add +2.

- If you have no homeschooling friends you talk to weekly, add +2.
- If your extended family is antagonistic about homeschooling, +2.
- If your husband is not 100% on board with homeschooling and backs you up, add +8.
- If your husband works long hours and doesn't have much energy left to help with kid wrangling and/or housework when he's home, add +4.
- If you and/or your children have health issues or special needs, determine how many more points to add.

## AUDIT YOUR YEAR

- What did you study this year?  
What did your kids learn about from extracurricular or supplementary activities this year?
- What topics did they seem most interested in pursuing on their own?
- What kinds of activities did they do on their own to pursue an interest, skill, or hobby?
- What did you have on your agenda that they were resistant to learning or doing?  
What are some reasons why they might have been resistant?
- Are you happy with their progress in reading, writing, math, and interests? What pleases you most about each child's progress?  
What is your biggest concern about each child?

## AUDIT YOUR SCHEDULE

- What did you do this year that helped you keep your plan and your schedule moving?  
What were some roadblocks to keeping your plan and schedule?
- How did you plan out what needed to be done? How did you keep track during the day-the-day?
- Did that work? What was the hardest part?

- Did your kids know what was expected of them each day? How was that communicated? How did that work out?
- When did you want to start your day? When did you start most days?
- How did you gather everyone to get the day going? What was good or not so good about that method?
- Was there enough time budgeted to do the necessary work? Did you plan too much extra work or activities, making it hard to get the required work done?
- Do you feel you and the kids spend a reasonable amount of time with the work or does it take longer than you think it should? What are some reasons it takes longer?

## AUDIT YOUR STUFF

- Did everything you used regularly have a home?
- Was the kids' stuff accessible to them?
- Was it clear where and when to put it away? Was it simple to put away?
- What was the most common supply-related hiccup in your day?
- Did you always have the supplies you needed when you needed them? What were you missing most? Did each item have a specific home?
- How did the kids turn in their work or get help with their work? Did that flow work for you?
- Is there a lot of extra clutter in your house that drains or frustrates you when you enter rooms?

## AUDIT YOUR FLOW

- List the subjects each child has and the teacher-time and independent-time that each takes. Tally up that time.
- How do your children currently let you know they need your help? Do they interrupt? Do you forget?
- How much time do you spend in transition between subjects or students? What happens that draws out the transition times?

- Do your kids have work they know to do if they are waiting for you?
- Are you trying to get housework done during homeschooling hours?
- Do the kids play before their work is over?

## AUDIT YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

- Does conflict frequently escalate between you and a child or between two children? What sparks the conflict?
- How can you diffuse conflict that has begun?
- How can you help your child let go of the conflict?
- How can you avoid the conflict altogether? - change of logic, change of wording, change of tone, clarification?
- Do you have time and space regularly to talk with each child about what they like, don't like, and if they have ideas?  
Are you presenting your children with enough choice and freedom that they feel ownership?  
Are you presenting your children with so much choice and freedom that they are stressed out?
- How would you describe the usual tone of interaction you have with each child?

After completing this homeschool audit, you might feel simultaneously relieved that the vague exasperation you've been feeling has been identified and overwhelmed that there are so many changes you could make.

Instead of trying to completely make over your school day next year from the ground up, create a specific strategy for each one of the following three areas. Work out your strategies ahead of time, explain how it works to the kids beforehand, try it out for 2-3 weeks, and either tweak it or add another improvement from there.

## GIVE OWNERSHIP WITH RESPONSIBILITY.

Let kids 8-and-up - know the work to be done and the time frame they have for doing it. Give them control of their time by making clear free time available unless their work was not done on time and satisfactorily. Have the clearly stated, natural consequence that their free time is forfeit if they dawdle - they have control over how they use their time and you will not nag them (8-10 need gentle reminders and coaching, 10+ need to fail and suffer calmly administered consequences + privilege loss for blaming or disrespecting you for their time management). It will likely take half a year at least before you see fruit - stick it out. Children under 8 shouldn't be expected to manage independent work.

## KEEP TRACK OF ALL THE MOVING PARTS IN ONE, WRITTEN-DOWN PLACE.

Have a master list on one sheet or at least in one place that lets you keep track of who should be doing what when so you don't have to think about it or make decisions and give directions for every child every 10 minutes.

## GIVE EVERYTHING A HOME.

Designate clear and specific homes for the books and supplies that you use weekly. Make them easy to maintain. Lidless containers, jars for pencils in easy-to-reach places, hooks, and stacking organizers - all labeled - will make it faster and simpler for everyone to put things away.

In those designated homes, do not store anything that no one uses.

Require that their books and supplies be returned to their proper labelled place before they are done for the day, before they get a snack, or before some other desired part of their day. Color-coding also helps because you can tell at a glance who has left their stuff out.