

What Your Elementary Child Really Needs to Know

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In the world today, it is impossible to teach or learn everything. Knowledge is currently *doubling* every few years. Teach so that your children will:

1. Remain excited about learning.
2. Grow in self-confidence.
3. Acquire a solid framework of basic skills and factual information.
4. Acquire a coherent Christian world view.

Some of God's top priorities (II Peter 1:5–8):

1. Faith. Know Jesus, trust and obey. (I Corinthians 2:2)
2. Goodness. Desire to do what is right and good.
3. Knowledge. Academics, training of the mind.
4. Self-control. Self-discipline, ability to focus and stick to a task.
5. Perseverance. Ability to set goals and achieve them despite discouragement.
6. Godliness. Development of Godly character.
7. Brotherly kindness. Focusing on what you can do for others rather than vice versa.
8. Love. Love the Lord your God. Love your neighbor as yourself. (Mark 12:30–31)
9. Productive work and a lifestyle which wins respect. (I Thessalonians 4:11–12)
10. Independence. Do not be dependent on anybody.
11. Physical education and health. Our bodies are God's temple. (I Cor. 6:19–20)
12. Integrity. Alignment of mind, heart and will in obedience to God. (I Chron. 29:17)

Know the answers to these questions and share them with your children:

1. *Where are we going?*
Clarify your philosophy and set specific long and short-term goals.
2. *How fast do we have to get there?*
Learning is not a sprint. Allow “wait time” and let God set the pace. Learning “pushed” into a child may do more harm than good, so be aware of readiness, and take full advantage of prime times for learning certain things. Be persistent and patient. Continue in the right direction at the *best* speed.
3. *Who's in the driver's seat?*
Don't let texts or tests “drive” the curriculum. Use them as needed or adapt.
4. *What's the power source?*
Student interest and motivation is the best power source. Request it in prayer and take advantage of it when you see it.

Remember: Expertise requires *mastery* of the fundamentals. Aim for quality.
An educated adult has a vast, interconnected *network* of knowledge.
Unorganized knowledge is worse than no knowledge.

Reading and Language

Decoding

- Alphabet. Upper and lower case letters.
- Initial consonants in words.
- Final consonants in words.
- Rhyming words.
- Consonant blends and digraphs.
- Sight words such as *the*, *was* and *you*.
- Short vowels.
- Long vowels.
- Variant vowels.
- Contractions.
- Compound words.
- Roots, suffixes, prefixes.

Comprehension

- Oral language. Summarizing.
- Directions: following, writing.
- Main ideas and details.
- Cause and effect.
- Making inferences.
- Elements of literature: setting, characters, plot, theme.
- Dialogue.
- Synonyms, antonyms.
- Figures of speech (metaphor, simile).
- Symbolism.
- Point of view.
- Critical thinking, fact/opinion, fallacies, propaganda.

Reference

- Types of literature: fiction, nonfiction, reference.
- The library.
- Parts of a book.
- Alphabetical order.
- Dictionary skills, index, other reference skills.
- Skimming and scanning.
- Outlining, note-taking.

Language skills (taught through dictation)

- Sentences and paragraphs.
- Homophones (special emphasis in 3rd grade).
- Capitalization (sentences, titles, proper nouns).
- Punctuation (ending punctuation, apostrophe, comma).
- Word building (roots, prefixes, suffixes).
- Letter form, outline form, bibliographic form.
- Correct word usage (*can*, *may*; *sit*, *set*).
- Quotations and dialogue.
- Grammar (defer in-depth, formal study to high school)
Fourth grade: Nouns, pronouns, adjectives.
Fifth grade: Verbs and adverbs.
Sixth grade: Prepositions, conjunctions, interjections.

Mathematics

Teach in every year of elementary school:

- Measurement: temperature, weight, volume, length.
- Word problems.
- Estimating answers and mental math.
- Money.
- Graphing (picture, circle, bar and, line graphs).

First Grade

- Place value: units / tens / hundreds.
- Greater than, less than.
- Count to 100. Number line to 100.
- Calendar. Know days of the week.
- Tell time to the hour.
- Recognize and name 2 dimensional shapes.

Second Grade

- Even / odd numbers. Count by 2's, 3's, 5's, 10's.
- *Master* addition facts to 10+10.
- *Master* addition with regrouping.
- Calendar. Know months of year, holidays.
- Tell time to half hour, quarter hour.

Third Grade

- Place value to thousands and beyond. Commas.
- Number line to 1000. Write numbers to 1000's.
- *Master* column addition. Adding by endings.
- *Master* subtraction facts to 20–10.
- *Master* subtraction with regrouping, including zeros.
- Tell time to 5 minutes, A.M., P.M.
- Cardinal and ordinal numbers.

Fourth Grade

- Place value to trillions and beyond. Write numbers.
- Rounding, comparing and ordering large numbers.
- *Master* multiplication facts to 10x10.
- *Master* multiplication (2 place) including with zeros.
- Roman numerals.
- Calculating elapsed time.

Fifth Grade

- *Master* division facts to 100÷10.
- *Master* division with 1 and 2 place divisors, zeros.
- Basic fractions. Add and subtract fractions.
- Decimal fractions. Place value. Add and subtract.

Sixth Grade

- Multiply and divide fractions and decimal fractions.
- Geometry.
- Graphing, plotting points on a grid.
- Statistics, ratio, percentages, probability.
- Integers, exponents, calculators.

“Bones” of the Curriculum

Create a structure and routine for “school days” including some or all of the following. As outlined, this allows 10 hours a day flexible time.

Body (Soma)

Adequate rest (8 hours)

Planning the day (15 minutes)

Exercise (20 minutes or more, preferably “fun”)

- For strength, flexibility, endurance and agility.

Eating (90 minutes or more)

- Eat together as a family and discuss what you’re thinking and learning. This is one of the *best* ways known to teach children to think.

Grooming (30 minutes)

- Showers, dressing, etc.

Chores (30 minutes or more)

- Whenever possible, assign two or more people to do routine work together, to allow for discussion, fellowship and cooperation.
- Consider listening to audiotapes while working.

Spirit (Pneuma)

Bible reading and study (10 minutes or more)

Scripture memorization (5 minutes)

Prayer and meditation (5 minutes or more)

Soul (Psyche = Mind, Heart, Will)

Vocabulary (5 minutes a day, 10 words a week)

- Take words from any books or any subject.
- Teach word roots, prefixes, suffixes, origins.

Reading aloud to children (15 minutes)

Silent sustained reading (15 minutes)

Silent sustained writing (10–15 minutes)

Spelling list (10 minutes, not every week)

- Master 1000 word core spelling list.
- Take additional words from personal writing.

Language and dictation (15 minutes)

- Review spelling and homophones.
- Teach and/or review suffixes and prefixes.
- Teach capitalization, punctuation, usage, parts of speech, sentence, paragraph, letter form, etc.

Math facts (5 minutes until facts are mastered)

Math skills, concepts, problems (30 minutes)

Maps (5 minutes several days a week)

Teach only one at a time of the following until mastered.

Phonics (10–15 minutes)

Penmanship (10 minutes)

Keyboarding (10 minutes)

Dictionary (locate 10 words in 10 minutes)

“Flesh” of the Curriculum

Allow for flexibility and “delight directed study” with cross-curricular units involving the whole family. Focus on one theme at a time.

Tips for Planning Your Own Units

- Choose unit topics based on your interests and those of your children. See back of this sheet for ideas.
- Alternate types of units (social studies, science, etc.).
- Set up a 3x5" file box with a divider for each unit you want to do within the next year or so.
- As you run across resources or have ideas for the unit, put them on 3x5" cards behind the appropriate divider. Pull these when you plan the unit.
- Children, especially older children, can help you locate resources, plan activities and gather materials.
- Look for opportunities to include all “subjects” in each unit. See list below. (It’s not always possible.)
- Choose key concepts and vocabulary to emphasize and teach to mastery. Prepare a test.
- Outline the unit (long-term planning), then do lesson plans by the day or week (short-term planning).
- Consider setting up contracts with individual children to direct their work and facilitate evaluation.
- The first activity in a unit should be having the kids generate a list of specific questions. Note the answers as you find them during study and research.
- Always get supplies ready the night before.
- Conclude each unit with an event to share projects, written work, and recitation with Dad or others.
- Start a scrapbook/portfolio for each child, with a divider for each unit. Include copies of contracts, written work, photos of projects and tests.

Look for Ways to Include These in Units:

- Goal-setting
- Planning
- Time management
- Maps, graphs, charts
- Time lines
- Measurement
- Math
- Literature (*all* types)
- Nonfiction books
- Biographies
- Reference, research
- Note-taking
- Codes
- Word studies
- Poetry
- Letter writing
- Story writing
- Report writing
- Essay writing
- Interviews
- Field trips
- Films, videos
- Discussions
- Oral reports, speeches
- Computer
- Projects, experiments
- Arts and crafts
- Music, drama
- Cooking
- Service to others

Ideas for Cross-Curricular Units

Bible Unit Ideas	✘ Westward Expansion	✘ Our State	Science Unit Ideas	Health Unit Ideas
✘ Creation to the Flood	✘ Slavery and the Civil War	✘ Flags and Symbols	✘ The Scientific Method	✘ Food and Nutrition
✘ The Patriarchs	✘ American Presidents	✘ Codes	✘ Classification	✘ Nervous System
✘ Moses and the Exodus	✘ Industrial Revolution	✘ United States, Northeast	✘ Seasons	✘ Senses
✘ The Promised Land	✘ Inventions	✘ Census Region	✘ The Ocean	✘ Circulatory System
✘ The Judges	✘ Technology	✘ United States, Southern	✘ Earth Science	✘ Respiratory System
✘ The Kings	✘ Transportation	✘ Census Region	✘ Geology, Rocks, Minerals	✘ Skeletal Muscular System
✘ Prophecy	✘ Communication	✘ United States, North	✘ Fossils	✘ Digestive System
✘ Job	✘ World War I	✘ Central Census Region	✘ Universe, Solar System	✘ First Aid
✘ Jesus' Life and Teachings	✘ Roaring Twenties and Great Depression	✘ United States, Western	✘ Space Exploration	✘ Dental Health
✘ The Apostle Paul	✘ World War II	✘ United States, Alaska and Hawaii	✘ Weather, Climates, Air	✘ Disease and Medicine
✘ Geography of Holy Land	✘ The Past 50 Years	✘ National Parks	✘ Light and Color	✘ Disabilities
✘ Biblical Angels, Demons	✘ Economics and Business	✘ Washington, D.C.	✘ Tools and Machines	Language Unit Ideas
Social Studies Unit Ideas	✘ Grocery Store	✘ Planning a Trip	✘ Ecology, Environment	✘ Literature and Authors
✘ World Religions	✘ Where Things Are From	✘ Passports	✘ Animals (insects, wildlife, birds, whales, pets)	✘ The Newspaper
✘ Ancient Egypt	✘ Geographical Regions (Jungle, Desert, Arctic)	✘ Cultures and Languages	✘ Electricity	✘ The Library
✘ Ancient Greece	✘ Careers	✘ Stamps, Postal System	✘ Energy	✘ Reference Resources
✘ Ancient Rome	✘ History of Money	✘ Planning a Trip	✘ Electronics	✘ Logic, Propaganda
✘ Ancient China	✘ History of Education	✘ Canada	✘ Properties of Matter	✘ Word Play, Codes
✘ Nordic Peoples	✘ History of Agriculture	✘ Mexico, Central America	✘ Creation v. Evolution	✘ Figures of Speech
✘ Aztec / Inca / Maya	✘ History of Words and Languages	✘ South America	✘ Heredity	✘ Poetry
✘ Mythology	✘ Musical Instruments	✘ Europe	✘ Metals	Additional Unit Ideas
✘ Middle Ages	✘ History of Art / Drama / Dance / Architecture	✘ Africa	✘ Acids and Bases	✘ Sewing and Crafts
✘ Renaissance	✘ Sports	✘ Asia	✘ Cells and the Microscope	✘ Cooking
✘ Reformation	✘ Aviation	✘ Middle East	✘ Gasses	✘ Consumer Education
✘ Age of Exploration	✘ Sailing and Navigation	✘ Australia, New Zealand	✘ The Food Chain	✘ Hosting Events
✘ Globes and Maps	✘ Great Disasters in History	✘ Communism	✘ Chemistry	✘ Time Management
✘ World Colonization	✘ Planning a Trip	✘ United Nations	✘ Plants	✘ Etiquette
✘ History of Great Britain	✘ Migration, Immigration	✘ Aviation	✘ Radioactivity	✘ Photography
✘ Colonial America	✘ Our Family History	✘ Entertainers, Artists	✘ Sound	✘ Woodworking
✘ Holidays	✘ Our Community, City	✘ Composers	✘ Water	✘ Printing, Bookbinding
✘ Revolutionary War	✘ Our Community, City	✘ Frontiersmen, Outlaws	✘ Waves	✘ Computer
✘ Law, Government, Politics	✘ Our Community, City	✘ African-Americans	✘ Famous Scientists	✘ Electronics
✘ America's First 50 Years	✘ Our Community, City	✘ Women in History	✘ History of Science	✘ Auto Mechanics
✘ Native Americans	✘ Our Community, City	✘ Women in History	✘ Careers in Science	