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ISSUE 4 2021

Homeschooling

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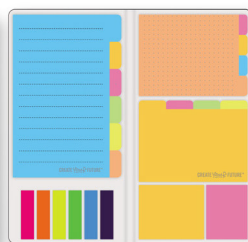
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Ed's note

As I write this, the rain is pouring, the wind pumping and it's all beginning to feel a bit wintery. And winter always puts me in mind of warming food, indoor adventures and the calm dormancy of my garden as it starts to hunker down in preparation for spring.

Which is why we've given you loads of great indoor – and outdoor – activities in this issue, from seasonal family gardening advice to fun crafts, a fabulous recipe and lovely books and giveaways. We've not forgotten the essentials, though, and I hope you enjoy expanding your homeschooling knowledge with all the educational articles, personal stories, ideas for gearing up your teens for adulthood and tips for keeping your cool when things don't go to plan.

Happy days!

Shelagh

Editor

Contributors



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Remedial therapist and a mom with a special interest in early reading development and teaching readers from ages five to nine, online and in person. In addition to reading lessons through Raising Readers, Marian offer homeschooling parent talks, workshops and multi-sensory literacy kits to help you raise your child to read.

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A South African first! A 3D virtual online school

IVA Global Online School (www.ivaschool.online) has brought a unique and highly engaging 3D virtual school to South Africa. John Luis, CEO and founder of IVA Global Online School says that no one needs to wonder what the school of the future looks like anymore as IVA Global Online School is the school of the future, leading the way in progressive and effective online teaching and learning.

How do you create a school of the future?

This subject is one often discussed and written about. Some believe you must transform the learning environment while others say to focus on pedagogical change. "Changing the learning environment has proven to evoke learner's interest and ultimately increase engagement. The revolutionary 3D virtual learning world allows learners to see, experience and learn things that would otherwise not be possible," says John Luis.

Learning environments

With decades of teaching experience, John Luis has always kept abreast of the educational landscape and has keenly followed and monitored how technology has impacted teaching and learning. "Ultimately what we are striving for is a learning environment that

increases student engagement and transforms educational outcomes to align more closely with real-world expectations of school-leaving young adults," he states.

In IVA's 3D virtual learning spaces, students and teachers are represented by avatars walking through a school campus and taking up their seat of choice in a virtual classroom.



The design of classrooms varies from, on the one end, a traditional classroom with chairs, four walls and school desks while on the other end, learners find themselves learning on a beach or even a roof top.

The virtual environment provides myriad ways in which to keep students engaged. For example, the furniture in a virtual environment can be altered by a touch of a button and students find themselves having to move from collaborative spaces to lecture mode spaces within seconds. This would never be possible in a physical environment. The result is a much higher degree of student engagement.

Teachers can ask learners to break away in groups to do certain activities and groups can instantly teleport themselves to any part of the school. As a result, one lesson can take place at different places on the Isle of IVA, the name given to the virtual school which is an island in the middle of the ocean.

The virtual world allows the learners and teachers to have private conversations with other learners in an area of their choice, inside the virtual school campus. "Often, I go for a ride in my speed boat with students for a one-on-one chat," says John Luis. "We boat to a place in the middle of the ocean, have our conversation and then head back to the island when done."

IVA Global School – A School of the Future

As technologies advance, we can expect that these 3D virtual online schools will continue to lead and transform the educational landscape. The world has changed, learning has changed and learners have changed, and IVA Global School certainly stands out as a School of the Future.

For more information, email info@ivaschool.online, contact the school directly on +27660514760 or visit www.ivaschool.online

Lessons that parents taught children a generation ago about career and financial success are worlds apart from the wisdom parents should be imparting to their children now. Five industry leaders share what lessons for success they feel children should be learning now

Lesson 1: Being an entrepreneur is a viable career option

Didi Onwu, Stakeholder Relations

Associate: Anzisha Communications



Years ago, we were taught to look for a job at a company where we could spend years. It's

different today: you simply can't rely on lifelong employment. The career trajectory now is far less linear than it was and, while traditional careers in law and medicine remain viable, parents also need to encourage their children to see entrepreneurship as an option.

With the youth population growing at a faster rate than jobs are being created, entrepreneurship will play an undeniable part in growing many economies across Africa. Secondary and tertiary schooling used to be gateways to formal employment, but the reality of the contemporary labour market is



Entrepreneur, property mo

that there simply aren't enough traditional jobs to absorb the young population, even for those with an excellent education.

Adverse economic conditions, along with a mismatch between the skills taught in schools and those demanded by

employers, have worsened youth unemployment, so it's in your children's best interests for you to have ongoing conversations about where economic opportunities lie. Entrepreneurial skills are foundational to success in an ever-changing environment, so it's vital to start preparing young people for that future now.

Lesson 2: Owning property is a step towards personal wealth

Carl Coetzee, CEO: BetterBond





Buying property can create wealth over time. With bonds typically having a 20-year repayment

period, it stands to reason that young adults should buy property as soon as they have a stable job and can save enough for a deposit. Yet, with the average age of Better-Bond's first-home buyers being 36, parents could do more towards educating their children about why property is a sound investment.

All signs show that SA's youth are ready to embrace becoming young investors. Absa's recent Homeowner Sentiment Index reflects that aspirant buyers aged 18-24 are currently the most optimistic about the merits of

investing in property. They also have the highest positive sentiment about property investment in current market conditions, underpinning the traditional belief that property is a safe investment option, especially during challenging economic times.

As a parent, you should be talking to your children about property trends. Help them recognise the value of investing in a stable asset class such as property, explaining how they can expand their asset portfolio over time. It's likely to be one of the most valuable long-term financial lessons you can teach them.

Lesson 3: Always be open to innovation and new opportunities

Aisha Pandor, co-founder and CEO: SweepSouth



As a co-founder of a start-up, I've learnt that one of the most important elements of building

a business is having an infinite mindset, rather than a short-term outlook. It's a notion that parents can instil in their children, explaining how such businesses exchange short-term goals for those of making a lasting, positive impact on the world. By doing so, you could be helping to shape your child into a future leader with vision.

Parents also need to instil grit and determination in their children, especially during such tough economic times. Show them how to empathise with people from all walks of life – a skill that will stand them in good stead when they go out into the world and need to build successful relationships with people on different levels.

I believe it's vital for children to be taught about entrepreneurship from a young age. If your child is so inclined, teach them what you can about the basics of starting a business. Build on their innate curiosity by encouraging them to be open to new opportunities, and to stay agile, opportunistic and innovative in all they do, especially in the way they respond to events in times of uncertainty. These important concepts will be invaluable to them later in life.

gul, innovator, investor...?

'In our credit-mad society, parents should teach children that credit has a role to play in a responsible financial plan, but that it should be managed carefully.'



Lesson 4: Teach children about tax and investing for wealth

Brett Mackay, Investment Consultant and Group RA Manager: 10X Investments



Teach your children about financial concepts like investing for wealth and taxes. Set up

a tax-free savings investment for your children as soon as they're born and, ideally, aim to invest as close to the maximum annual allowance of R36 000 as you can manage, ensuring you aren't losing a disproportionate amount of the growth to high fees.

When your children are old enough, talk to them about this account. It will allow you to introduce them to financial topics such as investing for wealth, reading the small print, compound growth and keeping an eye on costs.

Discuss taxes and what to expect when they start working one day. Some people never understand taxes, why we pay them and why certain expenses – such as saving for retirement – attract tax relief. It's a real pity that many taxpayers never get the leg up that tax incentives give because they don't engage with them.

In our credit-mad society, parents should teach children that credit has a role to play in a responsible financial plan, but that it should be

managed carefully. They should understand the difference between big, value-adding purchases, such as an education, a home or even a car, and nice-to-haves, like dinners out and new clothes.

Lesson 5: Staying safe online

Mich Atagana, South African Head of Communications and Public Affairs: Google



Technology is an integral part of any modern family – and, as children receive their first

devices and embrace a digital-first approach to their education and leisure, parents should play an

active role in ensuring their online safety. That said, safety on the Internet is far from guaranteed, especially for children.

Talking openly to your children about the dangers of the Internet is a good start, but it shouldn't end there. Parents can, for example, use Google Families to manage their technology ecosystem and set digital ground rules for their children with Family Link. These simple and easy-to-implement strategies will go a long way towards protecting their children from potential harm, while also maximising their potential for learning and creativity. These apps are available for Android and iOS devices.

Future entrepreneurs need to be:

1. Curious: encourage your children to question how businesses function, how money is 'made' and how investing works. Don't let them think this is just for adults.
2. Independent: don't do everything for them. Letting them learn by their mistakes is far more powerful than doing it for them.
3. Goal-driven: if your child wants a new tablet or bike, encourage them to set the goal and work towards it by doing more than just the expected bed-making, eg dishwashing or dog-grooming.
4. Conscientious: 'work' doesn't just mean doing a job, it means finding reward in doing it well. Let your children know that you know they can exceed their expectations.
5. Aware of opportunities: is there a need in your neighbourhood that your child can fulfil? Think babysitting, gardening, shopping for an elderly neighbour or dog-walking. Even if they don't get paid for these tasks, the essence of 'work' is still there.



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Your **feedback is essential** in helping us put together a magazine which delivers on-point content relevant to your homeschooling experiences and support needs and **helps you navigate** your child/children's education with ease and confidence.

You are the **core** of the publication, so let's live and learn together.

Email our editor, Shelagh Foster,
at: shelagh@isikhova.co.za.



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LIVING AND LEARNING - TOGETHER



Getting spelling right

Spelling and reading are two sides of the same coin. Spelling is sometimes referred to as encoding and reading as decoding. Decoding is breaking the word into its parts and encoding putting the word back together.

Marian Bailey explains how it all works



Vital to both these processes is a deep understanding and awareness of how the sounds, letters and combination of letters make phonemic awareness. Being able to spell well is not based on having a good visual memory, but rather on the ability to hear the sounds in the words in the sequence they occur and understand the sound properties of the word – does it have a prefix or suffix, or one syllable or two syllables? – then match the written letters to the oral phonemes (sounds).

Nearly 50% of English words are predictable, based on sound-letter correspondences alone (eg slap, pitch, boy). An additional 37% of the more common words are almost predictable, except for one sound (eg knit and boat). Only 4% of English words are truly irregular and may have to be learnt through whole word methods, such as tracing and saying the letters while the word is being memorised. (Source: www.readingrockets.org)

From the above, it is evident that, just as we teach sound patterns systematically for reading, we must teach spelling patterns systematically too. For example, teach that we use -ck; -tch; -dge after one short vowel in a one-syllable word. This way, a child will not make mistakes like *duc* for *duck* or *brige* for *bridge* once this spelling pattern is internalised. Spelling patterns can be reinforced using sound cards during the visual drill. Hold up the -ck sound card. The child says the sound /-ck/ and then reiterates the -ck spelling pattern. (For more information on



the Raising Readers sound cards and blending board, contact me at the address below.)



Speak first

Spelling practice should be oral before any written work is done. When you are getting ready to practise spelling, try the **say, echo, sound out, write** format.

For example: say the word *shop*. Your child says the word back to you (echoes the word) *shop*, then they sound out the word /sh/ /o/ /p/. At this stage, it is a good idea to use a manipulative to sound out



the word. Get in touch with me for some ideas. Once your child has found the sounds, he or she can spell the word by finding the right letter or combination of letters to match the sounds and writing out the word *shop*. If your child is struggling to isolate those sounds, use sound lines. The word *shop* has three sounds; that means three sound lines. What is the first sound we hear? /sh/. The second sound is

‘Make spelling practice fun by encouraging your child to help you making a shopping list, writing notes to each other on sticky notes, whiteboard messaging, keeping a daily journal or writing emails to family or friends far away.’



/o/ and the third or final sound is /p/ sh o p . This multi-sensory method integrating visual, auditory and kinaesthetic will improve spelling and help your child get it right from the start.

Another way to practise spelling is to incorporate sentence dictation into a literacy lesson using the **listen, echo, count** format: the parent says a sentence; the child repeats the sentence counting the words on his/her fingers. The parent dictates the sentence slowly. Children are encouraged to use their non-writing hand to tap out words they are struggling to spell or to use manipulatives (such as counters) to sound out the word.



Make spelling practice fun by encouraging your child to help you make a shopping list, write notes to each other on sticky notes, whiteboard messaging, keeping a daily journal or writing emails to family or friends far away. Often children use invented spelling. This should be encouraged if they are trying to spell a word sound by sound, as it means they are focusing on the internal structure of the word and not making random guesses.

To buy:
eggs
milk
bread
cereal

As you teach spelling patterns systematically, spelling errors will decrease and spelling confidence will increase.

Some do's and don'ts when it comes to spelling practice:

Do

- Move from oral sounds to the printed letters.
- Use a whiteboard.
- Use manipulatives (counters, fidget popper, pom-poms).
- Practise words with sound patterns already learnt and busy learning.
- Analyse words according to sounds, syllables and parts.

Don't

- Give your child a list of spelling words to learn off by heart.
- Include words with spelling patterns your child has not yet learnt.

Feel free to contact me for a list of spelling patterns to teach systematically!

If your child is struggling to learn to read or spell and you would like support, email: marian@raisingreaders.co.za for one-to-one reading lessons that uses a structured, explicit and multi-sensory approach, parent workshops that show you how to use the structured literacy approach and literacy products that support this approach.



New ADvTECH school offering set to revolutionise online education

Opening its virtual doors to learners from Grade R to Grade 9, from January 2021, ADvTECH's new online offering, Evolve Online School (Evolve), will change the face of online schooling in South Africa.

'In this rapidly changing society, the one-size-fits-all method of teaching no longer makes any sense,' says principal Colin Northmore. 'Evolve starts by answering the question: how can we make learning an adventure for each child?'

Evolve combines a user-experience focus with a trendsetting curriculum mapping system, developed at MIT, to personalise each child's learning experience. Using the latest research, each child's learning journey will be designed based on exclusive subject and skill maps.

Students will be placed within subjects according to their abilities, letting them progress faster where they're gifted and work at a more deliberate pace to master content they find more challenging. The result is that each student's learning experience is tailored to their specific needs and they're encouraged to grow at a pace that suits their ability and enthusiasm.

'There'll be a strong focus on foundational, social and emotional learning skills. Our team of life coaches will focus exclusively on these skills. Our children are growing up in a world very different from the one in which



we grew up. Things that we, as adults, deal with and take in our stride, they're already facing at a very young age. Our life coaches will play a very important role in teaching students how to deal with issues such as stress and anxiety, and help them develop coping mechanisms, resilience and a growth mindset,' adds Northmore.

Evolve will make use of the following:

- **Diagnostic testing** to determine the exact level of proficiency of a student before

placement and during the educational journey.

- **Asynchronous learning** so that learners can move through content at their own pace and according to their own proficiency. Students will also have direct access to their teachers, who'll facilitate extra activation classes.
- **Synchronous learning**, where our students will also be able to attend live interactive classes, making this a true online school.
- **Socialisation opportunities** with academies, studios and day camps monthly so that students can meet other 'Evolvers' and get green time to balance their screen time.

Now enrolling for 2021.

The school will cater for Grades R-9 from January 2021. Grades 10-12 will be phased in from 2022. ADvTECH is Africa's largest private education provider. Its schools division includes iconic brands such as Crawford Schools, Trinityhouse and Abbotts.

Visit: www.evolveonline.co.za for more information or email: info@evolveonline.co.za.

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Healthy Soil = Healthy Plants = Healthy People

Getting ready to grow



There's little that brings a family together like gardening: pottering about in the fresh air; natural lessons about the earth, plants, the seasons, life... And the most successful gardens all start in well nurtured soil

Although it's tempting to leap right in with your plants, it's far better to get the basics right to keep the garden in a healthy state than to be constantly fighting disease.



How to get started

1. Healthy soil: Soil needs compost matter to feed the complex eco-system of beneficial soil life, such as bacteria and fungi that protect our plants' roots and digest nutrients. These nutrients are a source of food which are taken up by the plant. Compost is a reservoir for water in the soil for the roots to drink from and builds a soft, friable and oxygenated soil for roots to penetrate. Make your own compost, or earthworm bin from

kitchen scraps, but if space is restricted buy organic earthworm castings or a good-quality compost and apply to new garden beds or before laying or seeding lawns. If already planted, apply a thin layer of compost or earthworm castings to your plant beds or lawns every three to five months, which will be taken up into the soil.



2. Nutritious plant food: Plants, like people, need a well-balanced diet for optimal health. So with planting, to prime a healthy soil, add a fully formulated organic fertiliser that contains all the nutrients in correct proportions for plant uptake, make use of VITA Grow 2:3:2(16) at 100g per m². For conditioning existing beds planted with flowers and shrubs, fertilise with VITA Fruit & Flower 3:1:5(18) at 100g per m² and for lawns and leafy gardens apply VITA Green 5:1:5(16) at 100g per m². For your edible gardens use VITA 6:3:4 (16) at 100g per m². The VITA range of fertilisers is applied once every 4 months. Water lightly after application and then continue your regular watering program.

3. Strategic watering: Water is a scarce and expensive resource, so it is important to optimise its use in the garden. Catch and store rainwater from the roof in tanks; re-use bath and shower water by using this greywater on the garden or pot plants (make sure to use natural, bio-degradable soaps and detergents). Well composted soils absorb and retain water and regulate soil temperatures, allowing plants to thrive. Mulch to



protect soil from water erosion and prevent evaporation by planting ground covers, or covering soil surface with shredded mulch, straw, gravel, wooden stepping-stones, or an indigenous meadow mix or grass seeds on extensive areas.

4. Banishing poisons: For your family's health and the full enjoyment of the natural garden environment, there is no reason to use nasty poisons. They are a short-term solution to pest and disease problems on plants, but leave a lasting legacy of

imbalance and are a deadly blow to any garden's ecosystem. Bees, ladybirds, butterflies, birds and garden creatures like frogs, geckos and lizards, which naturally control most pests in the garden, are killed or their food source is destroyed, so there is sadly no reason for them to make their homes in this hostile environment. Select an organic pest and disease solution from your local garden centre, to control most problems without using poisons.

It's time to get stuck in, homeschooling families; to prep your soil and gardens for the season ahead!

'A healthy soil = healthy plants = healthy people, pets and a living ecosystem, which all adds to a wonderful environment in your garden.'



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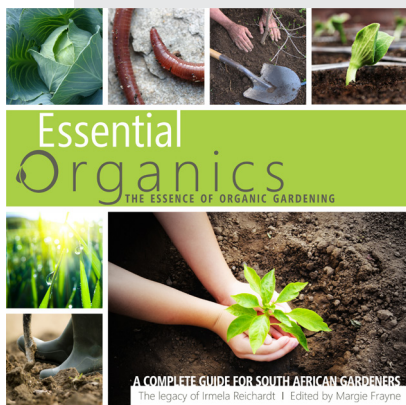


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- 1 x Fertilis 5dm,
- 1 x Talborne Seedling Food 1kg.

These are wonderful environmentally-friendly and certified organic products, which, of course means healthy soil = healthy plants = healthy people! Talborne have also included a copy of *Essential Organics* – a comprehensive book on how to create and manage an organic and environmentally friendly garden.

www.talborne.co.za



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Their really smart bottle top waterers with fine rose spray (for seeds and seedlings); a packet of Franchi Sementi Zucchini seeds; a fantastic 12-pack selection of Linda's Original Seeds, which are all heirloom, and a Vermicast Shaker of pure earthworm castings.

www.soughtafterseedlings.co.za

ENTER NOW: Send your name and contact number to sahomeschooling@isikhova.co.za with 'WIN' in the subject line.

Closing date: 15 July 2021



There are always ways to solve learning challenges. Co-founder and Managing Director of BrainAbility South Africa, Dalena van Westhuizen, explains the issues in relation to cognitive skills and the role they play in the learning process



When learning is hard, life is hard

I'm so excited to start this journey with you; firstly, explaining the core brain skills that form the basis of how we process information and then, in upcoming *SAH* issues, exploring different learning frustrations and disabilities to give you research-based study tips, explain twice-exceptional (2e) kids and look at executive functions, as well as exercises to strengthen memory and concentration.

What are cognitive skills?

These are the core skills the brain uses to think and learn, and explains why certain tasks are easier or more difficult than others. Brain skill strengths and weaknesses can even explain learning style preferences.

We use cognitive skills to learn, read, remember, concentrate, make decisions, etc. In other words, brain skills are responsible for how you take in, process, store and recall information. They are also the skills that make up your IQ.

Let's look at the core cognitive brain skills and their functions:

Attention plays a role in everything we do, especially during the learning process.

Although there are many different types of attention, there are three major categories/types of attention spans:

- **Selective attention:** The ability to stay focused and on a task, despite auditory (noises) or

visual distractions. If this skill is weak, you'll easily be distracted.

- **Divided attention:** This enables you to remember information while doing two things at once. If this skill is weak, you'll have difficulty multi-tasking, make frequent mistakes, etc.
- **Sustained attention:** This helps you stay focused and on task for a specific period. If this skill is weak, you'll usually have lots of unfinished projects because of jumping from task to task, an inability to concentrate for a sustained period, etc.

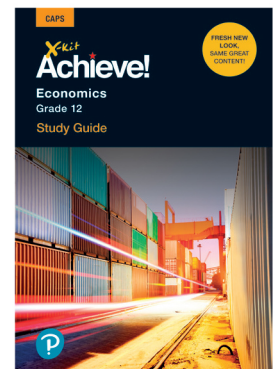
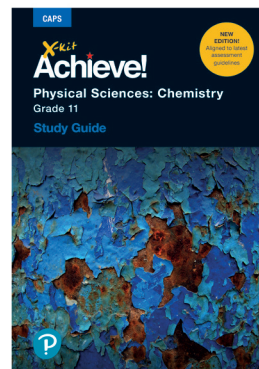
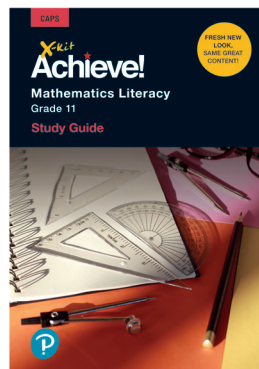
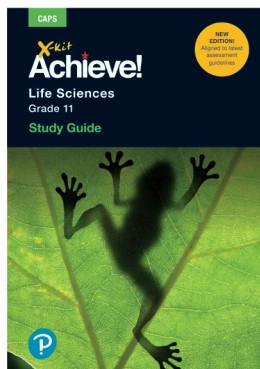
Working memory refers to the temporary storage and manipulation of the information necessary for complex cognitive tasks – eg

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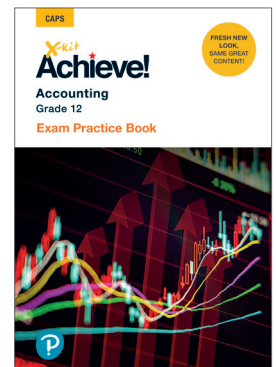
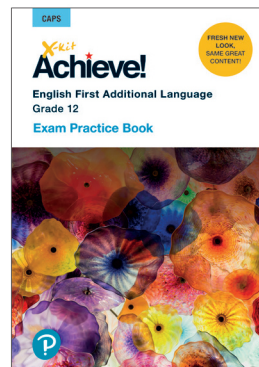
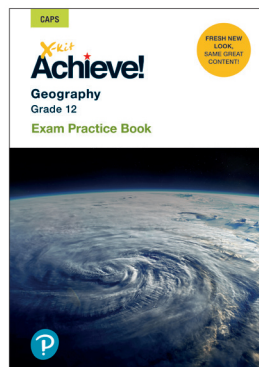
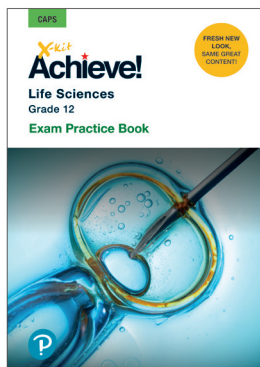
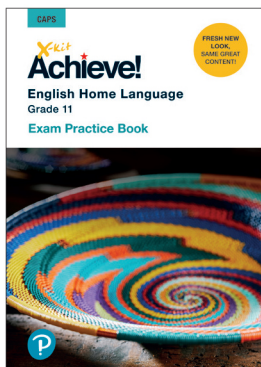
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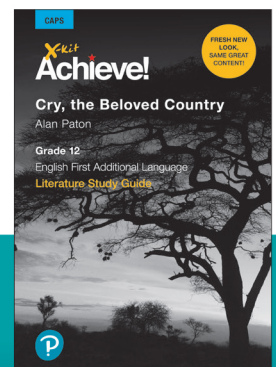
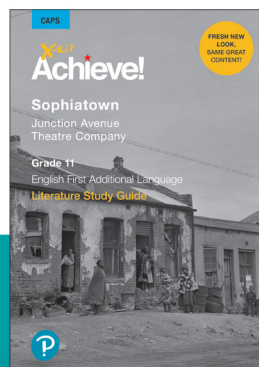
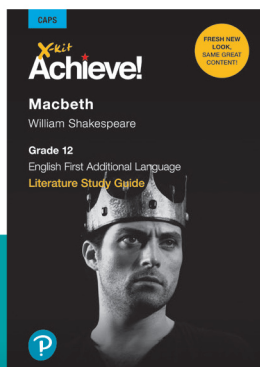
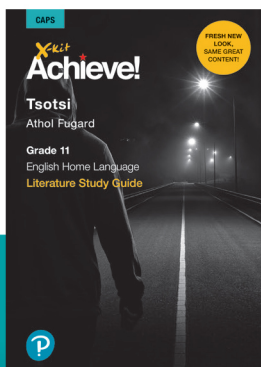
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Processing speed refers to the ability to perform cognitive tasks quickly – an important skill for complex tasks or tasks that have many steps, eg if you're dividing two numbers in your head, but the processing is slow, you might have forgotten an earlier calculation before you're done and will have to start all over again. You took longer to do the problem than your ability to remember.

Short-term memory is the ability to store and recall small amounts of information about the current situation. Someone with short-term memory problems may need to look several times at something before copying, have problems following instructions or need to have information repeated often.

Long-term memory is the ability to recall information when needed that was stored in the past. This



is essential for spelling, recalling facts for tests and exams, and comprehension.

Auditory processing refers to the ability to perceive, analyse and conceptualise what is heard. This is critical in reading and spelling because it includes hearing, identifying and blending sounds, as well as sounding out words. It also affects concentration.

Visual processing refers to the ability to perceive, analyse and think in visual images. This includes visualisation, which is the ability to create a picture in your mind. Pupils who have problems with visual processing may reverse letters or have difficulty following instructions, reading maps, doing word maths problems and comprehension.

Logic and reasoning enable you to reason, form ideas and solve problems. They play an important role in the ability to transfer knowledge/information and find starting points in processes.

Why do cognitive strengths (and weaknesses) vary?



‘The ability to learn new things, keep up with change, think on your feet, remember more and for longer... can be changed and improved.’

New Inform



Knowle

We all have different strengths and weaknesses within our cognitive profile. In other words, a child might have strong visual processing skills, but have a weak working memory or auditory processing skills.

What is cognitive brain development and why is it important?

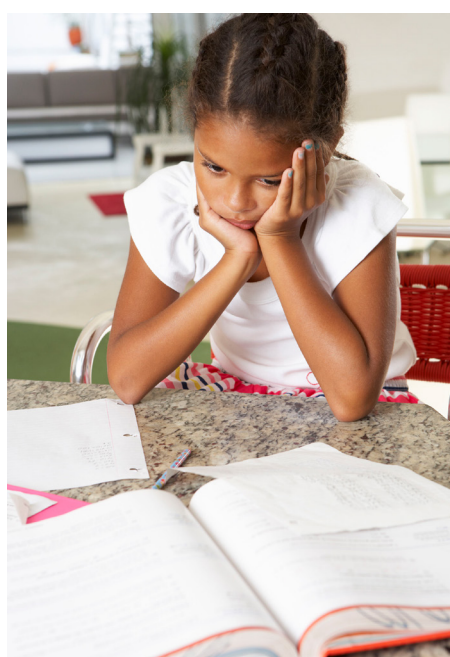
Your cognitive profile influences all your experiences in school, at home and – eventually – in the workplace. Because cognitive skills all work together, even one weak skill can make learning (and life) harder than it needs to be.

That is why even intelligent kids may sometimes struggle with certain tasks. Research has shown that 80% of struggles with reading, memory, attention and learning are typically caused by weak cognitive skills – a condition common in children and adults which is often overlooked.

How easy or difficult learning is depends on our cognitive strengths and weaknesses. However,

catching up (if needed) and keeping up can be difficult and frustrating if there's a combination of weak cognitive skills within your cognitive profile.

Neuroplasticity is a scientific term used to describe how our brains are malleable and can be developed at any stage or phase



of our life. That means that the ability to learn new things, keep up with change, think on your feet, remember more and for longer – and the speed at which you can do all of these things – can be changed and improved.

Simply put, it means your child doesn't have to be stuck with a cognitive weakness. Whether they're an average or gifted pupil who simply wants to give their learning skills a boost or still struggling

despite all the tutoring and/or therapy they're receiving, weak cognitive skills can be strengthened and improved with systematic, intensive brain skill development exercises.

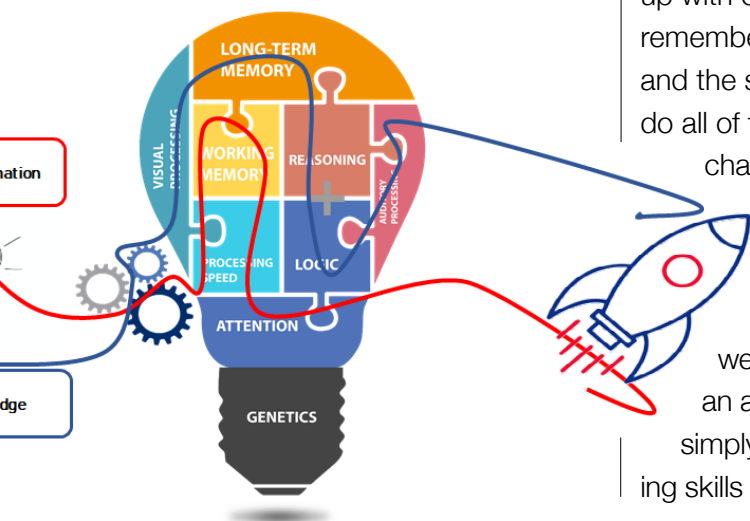
If a child is struggling with learning, reading, attention or memory, is it possible to find out why – and how can brain training (brain skills development) help?

It's possible to find the 'why' behind these struggles – and surprisingly easy. I often work with parents who've done dozens of assessments to find out why their child is struggling with learning, reading, attention or memory, without finding any real answers or solutions.

Start with a brain skills test (cognitive test) from an organisation specialising in brain skills testing and development. The information will provide you with insight into your child's specific cognitive profile and act as a guide on how to best support him/her.

At what point should you have your child assessed if you believe he/she isn't developing at the same pace as other children?

As a mom and a professional, my advice to any parent would be to have the right assessment done as soon as possible. You want to make life a little easier for your child – and to do it without delay.



Homeschooling heroes share their tips

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed almost every facet of life, including education. Most parents have had to homeschool their children at some stage, especially mothers. Impaq thanks and congratulates these supermoms who have had to juggle employment, housework, and parenting. Mothers Sophia Saib and Lisa van Rensburg, both of whom have decided to homeschool full-time, share why you don't need to be a teacher to homeschool.

Saib, who left the corporate world to pursue education when her second daughter was born, says, "With COVID-19 currently, we decided as a family [that] homeschooling would be the best option. Now I can't see us ever wanting to go back to mainstream [schooling]." Van Rensburg, who is also a teacher, says, "We decided to do homeschooling because I just felt it would be safer and I would be able to give my children the education they needed."

Both mothers agree that through homeschooling, they can now give their children the one-on-one attention they need. They also note that with homeschooling, their children can learn at their own pace while still following a lesson structure



that works for them – "Each child is unique, so we play around with a schedule that works for us", says Saib. The mothers also enjoy the comfort that comes with homeschooling, and no longer having to worry about the

time pressures associated with traditional schooling.

As former teachers, Saib and Van Rensburg know a thing or two about teaching. Here are some of their tips:

- Stay organised: have a schedule and stick to it, but make it fun.
- Encourage your children not to compare themselves to others.
- Reward your children when they do well (reward charts are a good recommendation).
- Motivate your children to participate in extracurricular and social activities.
- Choose a curriculum provider that includes guidance and support.

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Get creative & WIN!

SA homeschoolers! We're thrilled to announce our 2021 Children's Creative Writing Competition.

This is a wonderful opportunity for your child to showcase their writing skills and creativity in an exciting and fun way. Entries can be either fiction or non-fiction and there's no specific topic.

The competition will run from this issue through to Issue 7.

The winning piece from each age group below will be published in the subsequent issue (we will amend any minor spelling or grammar errors). Each will win a terrific book prize from Jonathan Ball Publishers, our competition partners.

A grand 'surprise' prize for each age category will then be selected and announced in Issue 9.

SAH's 2021 Children's Creative Writing Competition

HOW TO ENTER

There are three age categories:

- 8-10 years
- 11-13 years
- 14-17 years

The submission must not exceed 400 words and should be written either in a Word doc or the body of the email. This competition is open to subscribed readers only. If you've not yet subscribed, please email: sahomeschooling@isikhova.co.za with 'subscribe' in the subject line.

Email sahomeschooling@isikhova.co.za with 'Creative Writing – Your Child's Name' in the subject line, along with the following in the body of the email:

- Your full name
- Contact number
- Your child's name
- Your child's age
- Title of written piece

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Getting creative with bits and pieces

Loo roll holders ✓ bits of ribbon or braid ✓ egg boxes ✓ old wrapping paper ✓ pasta ✓
There's no need to break the bank when it comes to getting crafty with your little ones

FLOWER GREETING CARD

What you'll need

- Dry farfalle (bow-tie) pasta
- Craft paint or water paints
- Craft glue
- A piece of card folded in two
- Cardboard from an eggbox lid
- A small piece of ribbon or raffia

What to do

- Take a handful of the pasta and paint them in whatever colours you choose. Leave to dry.
- Fold over the craft paper to make the card. You can even paint it if you like.
- Cut a vase shape from the top of the eggbox lid and stick it onto the card.
- Make a bow from the ribbon or raffia and glue it onto the 'vase'.
- Once the farfalle is dry, arrange like flowers above the vase.



TIP

If you – or your child – has a steady hand, draw in 'stems' from the vase to the pasta flowers.



Hooked on creativity

Our wonderful art director Joanne and her children do crafting from recycled oddments most weekends.

I've always been creative and the first recycled craft I remember from when I was a child was a card I made from a cereal box and shells. I stuck googly eyes onto the shells and made a small shell family on the card for my dad. He kept it on his desktop PC for more than 25 years and only removed it when he retired a few years back.

As an artistic mother of two, I always wanted my kids to be creative and crafty and understand you don't need to spend money to make something beautiful, nor do you have to buy expensive toys to keep them busy. My

son wasn't always keen on my (often Pinterest-inspired) ideas and got bored halfway, leaving me to finish the project. To be honest, I didn't mind, and loved the creative outlet.

We often used to spend weekends out and about, exploring different restaurants or play areas to keep busy. When Covid-19 hit and places shut down, we found ourselves stuck at home. The usual games and toys became a

bit monotonous. We started saving all recyclable bits and pieces and spent weekends crafting beautiful art and games. We're still doing it and the inspiration is endless! My daughter is always a little more keen to get messy than my son, but in the end, what they produce – with a little help from Mom – is always incredible. Of course, their masterpieces get put up in our rooms to admire – until their next favourite artwork comes along.

BABY BUTTERFLIES



TIP

If you want your butterflies to fly, staple a length of string, twine or ribbon to the inside top of the butterfly.

What you'll need

- Toilet roll holders
- Glue
- Coloured card
- Felt tip pens

What to do

- Paint the toilet roll holders different colours, inside and out.

- When dry, draw on the face.
- Fold the card in two and cut out the wing shape. Then open out the card.
- Add any designs to the card – either with paint or crayons.
- Glue the 'body' of the butterfly to the wings and allow to dry.

PAPER FIGURES

What you'll need

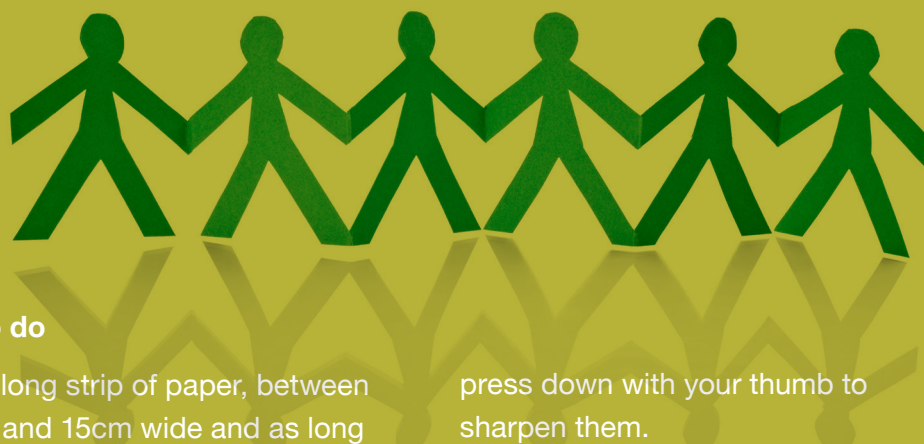
- Leftover wrapping paper – patterned or plain
- A pen or pencil
- A pair of scissors

TIP

If it's been a while since you've made paper chain figures, first practice on newspaper.

What to do

- Cut a long strip of paper, between 10cm and 15cm wide and as long as you'd like the chain to be.
- Accordion (zig-zag) fold your paper, making the folds as wide as you want each paper figure to be. Ensure the edges all match up and press down with your thumb to sharpen them.
- Draw your design onto the top fold. The arms of the figure should reach all the way to the edges of the top fold.
- Cut away the paper that isn't part of the figure. Unfold and *voila!*



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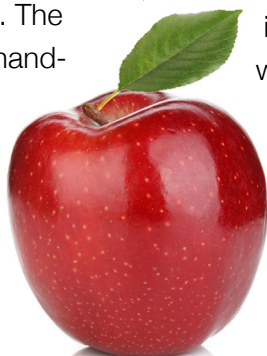
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Homework or own work?

While homeschooling might mean less off the dreaded (by parent and child) rote homework, it doesn't mean that independent study and learning shouldn't be encouraged, writes **Brett Garner**

On my first teaching day as a high school mathematics teacher many years ago, a student in my homeroom handed me a card in a sealed envelope. She was soft-spoken and, by all accounts, a diligent pupil. 'Please open it now,' she insisted politely.

The card was adorned with an embossed picture of a stereotypical shiny red apple on a desk. The inside contained a single hand-written definition that was to change my approach to teaching in an instant: 'Homework: Because seven hours of school wasn't enough.'



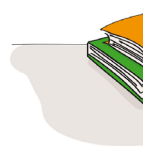
Decades later, I remain sceptical of most forms of homework foisted on pupils, whether at home or in the classroom, often by well-meaning adults intent on developing discipline or cementing knowledge.

Don't get me wrong: I'm not opposed to homework *per se*, but I am conscious that much of what's dished out in the guise of homework simply reflects someone's inability to get through what was intended for the seven hours referenced above.

Commenting in an article for the National Foundation for Educational Research,

Caroline Sharp, who's written extensively about research on the place of homework in schooling, shares this introduction on <https://studylib.net/doc/18458476/should-schools-set-homework%3F>:

'Everyone has a story to tell about homework. Most of them are stories of boredom, frustration and lame excuses. Just occasionally, someone might recall a positive experience when homework was interesting and even fun. Every day, parents ask their children whether they have done their homework: it's such an accepted part of schooling that people rarely question whether schools should set homework at all.'



The comment is equally true in a homeschooling environment, particularly when families have made a transition from traditional schooling to home-based learning.

Verni Mumford, a past junior school principal of the popular online Cambridge curriculum platform CambriLearn, sees measurable value in assigning homework tasks. According to her: 'The positive effects of homework relate to both academic achievements and non-academic achievements.

'Overall, homework encourages discipline, teaches better time management and keeps a learner's mind sharp. It grants learners extended periods of time to comprehend and understand topics that they would have lacked during school hours and gets parents involved with their child's life.'

Mumford's view is echoed in the Western Cape Education Department's formal homework policy, which states: 'The intention of homework should be to reinforce

and extend classroom learning and consolidate basic skills and knowledge and, ultimately, should extend to developing a routine of independent home study.'

Herein lies the rub – homework and independent study go hand-in-glove. Homework is not simply finishing what wasn't finished during the formal academic time set aside for classwork – it's what happens over and above that.



Sharp's research highlights further important points. Most pupils consider homework to be important to learning; their main complaints about homework concern inadequate or conflicting deadlines and tasks that make little contribution to learning.

She goes on to highlight that pupils' attitudes to homework are

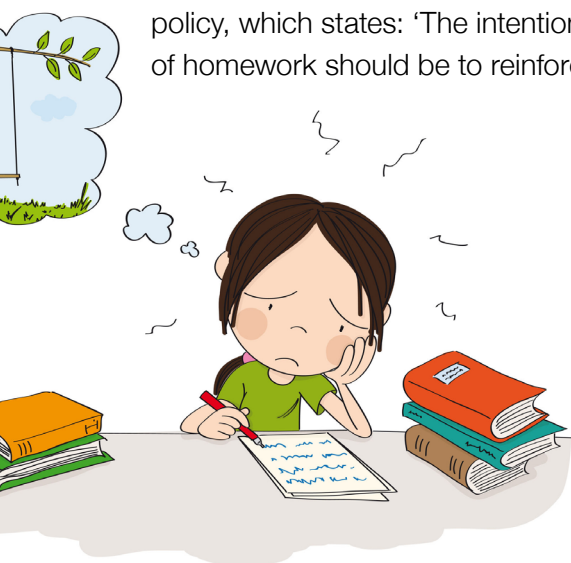
related to characteristics such as cultural background, age and gender (eg generally, girls are more prepared to spend time on homework than are boys).

I'm convinced of the importance of homework to facilitate independent study. The challenge lies not in convincing pupils to want to do homework, or even the need to justify homework; the challenge is finding appropriate homework tasks to make pupils want to dive in and learn more. In the words of the Cambridge curriculum, the challenge is to 'inspire a love of learning'.

Unfortunately, there's no 'Ten Things to Do to Make Homework Fun' list. Each child is going to respond differently and the response may change day by day.

I can, however, share one piece of advice that works: use the conversation about the role and importance of homework as an open door to engage with your child. Ask your child about the additional activities that should form part of your homework culture and then go ahead and do your homework together.

'Much of what is dished out in the guise of homework simply reflects someone's inability to get through what was intended for the seven hours.'



8

tips for
keeping
calm



Irritable children and a ratty you? Cabin fever? Personality clashes? Don't panic! We're here to help you calm the troubled waters

1 Stop. Whether it's work overload or an ongoing argument about whose turn it is to feed the dog, stop what you're doing and call a five-minute break from working, talking, or doing whatever it is that's rocking the boat. When the five minutes are up, go to step two.

2 Put your head down. Your autonomic nervous system regulates processes such as your heart rate and breathing. Inverting (having your head lower than your body) helps reset this system. The easiest – and most fun – way of doing this is the yoga pose called 'downward-facing dog'. Hold the pose for up to 30 seconds.



3 Breathe. Count as you slowly inhale, hold, exhale, hold – and repeat. Or make it more fun by blowing bubbles. Let's face it: it's impossible to blow bubbles and still be grumpy!



4 Drink water. One of the first symptoms of dehydration is agitation, so a sudden onset of irritation could indicate thirst. Plus, the very act of slowly sipping a full glass of water helps you regulate your breathing.

5 Stretch. Emotional or mental tension invariably leads to physical tension – and the reverse is also true: gentle, yet focused stretching eases muscle tension, which in turn lifts your mood. It's not a bad idea to do stretches with your children at least once a day.

6 Play with playdough or plasticine. Any kind of focused hand activity helps relieve stress, but there's something about squidging and moulding dough or clay that both relieves pent-up annoyance and helps calm the mind.

7 Chamomile tea may help reduce anxiety, as it contains high amounts of antioxidants proven to reduce inflammation, which may also reduce stress and tension. Chamomile is safe for children of all ages.

8 Did you know that **probiotic foods** like yoghurt may promote mental health and brain function by inhibiting free radicals and neurotoxins, both of which can damage nerve tissue in the brain and lead to anxiety? Feel free to add your favourite chopped fruits, nuts or muesli, but be sure to buy – or make! – yoghurt that contains those probiotics.



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Inside story

SAH chats to Uda de Wet – mother of one, and administrator of Facebook group SA Home Schoolers – about her work and the immense challenges of homeschooling in South Africa

What is your background, career-wise?

I started my own music studio when I was 16, teaching violin, viola and music theory. Three years later I was employed by a private school and taught violin there for a few years. At the same time, I finished my diploma in ballet teaching at the Dance Academy of South Africa, teaching part-time at the studio. During the evenings, I also assisted with classes in self-defence (my real passion at the time).

I'm now married to my best friend, Friedrich, and we have a lovely nine-month-old daughter. I no longer teach, but do freelance work (admin, etc) from home. Most of my free time goes into the home education community.

What has been your own experience of homeschooling?

My family was one of the first



homeschooling ones in South Africa. Neither my sisters nor I ever attended a school (except as teachers). My parents were two of the founding trustees of the Pestalozzi Trust and I spent much of my youth driving all over SA with them to do workshops, seminars and expos on home education. Our dinner table conversations were about court cases, law and the practical problems for which fellow homeschoolers wanted advice. Consequently, I know a decent bit about the legalities of home education and its basic practicalities.

My husband and I definitely plan to homeschool our daughter and any other children we may have.

When did you get involved with the social media aspect of homeschooling?

Although I'm not the founder of the SA Home Schooling Group, I

offered to help a couple of months in, as it was growing rapidly and becoming too much for one person to manage. Its other administrator founded it in the middle of last year.

I'm also an administrator of another homeschooling group, Educating@Home SA, and a couple of other private groups.

What do you see as the current greatest challenges to South African homeschooling families?

A. A confusing legal environment

The legal framework for home education in South Africa is a mess. There are contradictions between provincial regulations and the national policy, parts of the policy and some of the procedures infringe on homeschooled kids' constitutional rights and the documents often aren't coherent internally. Moreover, the legal framework isn't based on research and doesn't reflect the

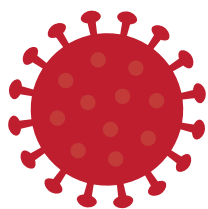
way people are actually home educating in SA.

The Basic Education Laws Amendment [BELA] Bill, which will probably replace our current SA Schools Act soon, has several serious flaws. Among other things, it discriminates against families with a low or no income, there are questions about the constitutionality of some clauses and it isn't research-based. Under the BELA Bill, homeschooling as we know it will be impossible.

Thus far, the voices of the home education community have largely been ignored when they've provided feedback on the Bill. However, we continue the fight. The Pestalozzi Trust will fight it all the way to the Constitutional Court, if necessary. Currently, the trust – together with the associations, organisations and individuals in the Liberty in Learning Coalition – is running a campaign to alert the provincial MECs to the problems with the BELA Bill.

B. An influx of newbies in the homeschooling community

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought a sudden influx of newbies into the home education community. On the one hand, there are new homeschooling families, many of whom were thrust into it by circumstances and haven't done



any previous research on it. On the other hand, there are people who've been trained for school education and now suddenly see the homeschooling community as a business opportunity. Neither group is aware of the vast differences between home education and school education. The second lot consider themselves to be experts in home education and dole out advice to



the first lot, when they're actually newbies themselves. The first lot also think the second lot are experts and go to them for advice. When it doesn't work out, they either blame themselves or they blame homeschooling in general. It's simply a case of the blind leading the blind.



And, of course, everyone is suddenly a self-professed expert on the legalities of home education, though – as stated earlier – the legal situation is a bit of a mess, so when families accept someone else's opinion on legal matters as reliable, they can come into conflict with the authorities or allow their children's rights to be infringed upon.

I always tell new homeschoolers to ensure they seek advice from a parent who's already been homeschooling their own children for at least two to three years. And never to seek legal advice from social media; not even from experienced homeschoolers. If necessary, they should consult a lawyer who's experienced in educational, administrative and constitutional law.

C. The lack of quality, low-cost or free material in official languages other than English

Research has shown that it's essential for children to learn in their mother tongue, preferably up to the age of 15. The level to which your mother tongue has been developed in many cases creates a cap for other academic disciplines.

This is perhaps the most serious challenge faced by both parents and children; one that will hopefully be addressed sooner, rather than later.

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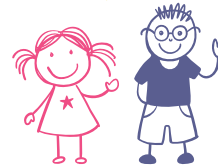


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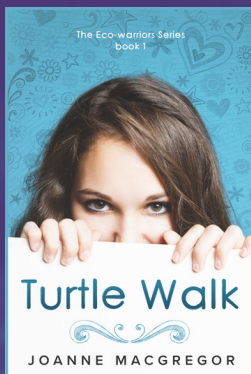
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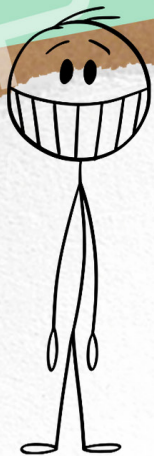


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Put your feet up

From tips for working moms to homeschooling an only child, **the Homeschool Lounge YouTube channel** has a wealth of locally relevant, informative and reassuring videos to enrich your experience.

Pinboard

Quick bites of info and handy links about homeschooling matters, freebies and opportunities



Free books!

- Book Dash is a South African social impact publisher of free books for very young children. Its vision is that 'every child should own 100 books by the age of five', before they enter school. Book Dash gathers creative professionals who volunteer to create new, African storybooks that anyone can freely translate and distribute. To find out more, visit: www.bookdash.org/books
- If you're struggling to explain these Covid-19 days to your kids, **this is the place to go!** These delightfully illustrated and carefully worded little books are free to download in PDF format.

Red tape . . .

According to the Department of Basic Education, all homeschooling parents must register their children for home education. Go **here** for all the information. Registration is free.

. . . and 'green tape' too

2021's Term 2 workbooks can be downloaded free from the DBE site **here**. Available in all official languages.

Web of wonder

- Looking for a teen-friendly educational website to supplement your child's art, maths, science and critical thinking skills? Try www.sciencenews-forstudents.org
- From 'How to Save the Planet', 'Did you Know?' quizzes, 'The Life of Nelson Mandela' and more, National Geographic Kids (SA) is a terrific site to **explore**.



Food for thought, food for eating

It's all about strong women who change the world and another great woman who's out to change the way we eat (hint: yummier and healthier) in this issue



We're delighted to announce the **winners** of the SAH#4 Wanda book giveaway! **Congratulations** and happy bedtime reading to **Brenda van Schoor, Janine Friedman and Melanie Davids.**



WINNERS

1. *Vaandeldraers*

Wendy Maartens and Linki Brand (Lapa)

Whether Afrikaans is your mother tongue or a second language, these gorgeous books will both enhance your child's language skills and inspire them to be the best person they can be.

Torch-bearers; heroic women; inspiring women of South Africa. This amazing series contains the stories of 12 women who deserve to be celebrated; women who will inspire anyone. From well-known women like Thuli Madonsela, Caster Semenya and Vanessa Govender to more unsung heroines such as Grizelda Grootboom and Suna Venter.

With unique, colourful illustrations by Linki Brand, this series is a must-have for every young reader. The books can be bought individually or in a beautiful box set.

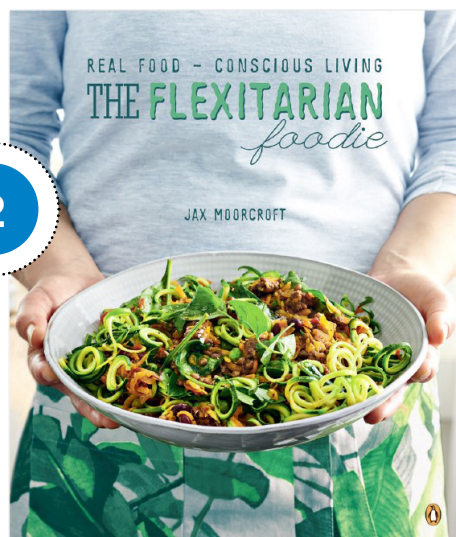
2. *The Flexitarian Foodie*

Jax Moorcroft

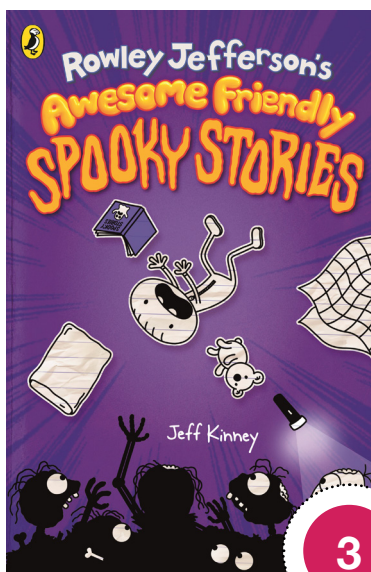
(Penguin Randomhouse SA)

If you're one of the many families trying to cut back on their meat consumption in favour of more plant-based options, this is the book for you – and your fussy family! Jax Moorcroft, mother of two, busy blogger and foodie enthusiast, is on a mission to create food sustainability awareness through the growing, cooking and serving of absolutely delicious family meals – with less meat. These recipes are affordable and fun, and her insights into food security are potentially life-changing.

See a sample recipe on page 42.



2



3

3. *Rowley Jefferson's Awesome Friendly Spooky Stories* (Penguin Random House)

Does your young reader like scary(ish) stories? Do they like to climb under the covers with a book and a torch, reading long past 'lights out!' time? Then this is the book for them. As the title says, it's simply awesome and friendly enough not to cause nightmares. The great Rowley Jefferson's latest offering is also perfect for reading aloud – and is sure to cause more giggles than frights for both parents and children.



Did you know?

A study published by the journal *Pediatrics* suggests that toddlers who read from a screen are less likely to interact with their parents than those who sit with a traditional book.

Researchers from the University of Michigan had parents read similar stories to their two- and three-year-olds in different formats, which included a traditional print book, an e-book on a tablet and a more enhanced electronic version with animation and sound effects. The interactions were recorded to determine and study the verbal and emotional interaction. It was established that the printed books generated more interaction between the parents and children and created more dialogue as the images and story were discussed.

www.novus.holdings

All books are available at selected CNA stores and most online and local bookstores. Prices vary according to where you shop. Happy reading!

Mystery meatballs

This is basically a cross between a falafel and a meatball. Because the pulses and veg provide most of the bulk and flavour, you can then drastically cut back on the amount of meat you would ordinarily put into a traditional meatball recipe, leaving you with a lot more wiggle room in your budget to buy less but better-quality meat instead.

What you need

250g grass-fed beef,
ostrich or venison mince
4 carrots, finely grated
1 cup cooked lentils
1/4 cup mince seasoning
3 free-range eggs
1/2 cup chickpea flour
1/4 cup coconut flour
1 teaspoon dried parsley
1 teaspoon dried oregano
1 teaspoon garlic flakes

serves
four



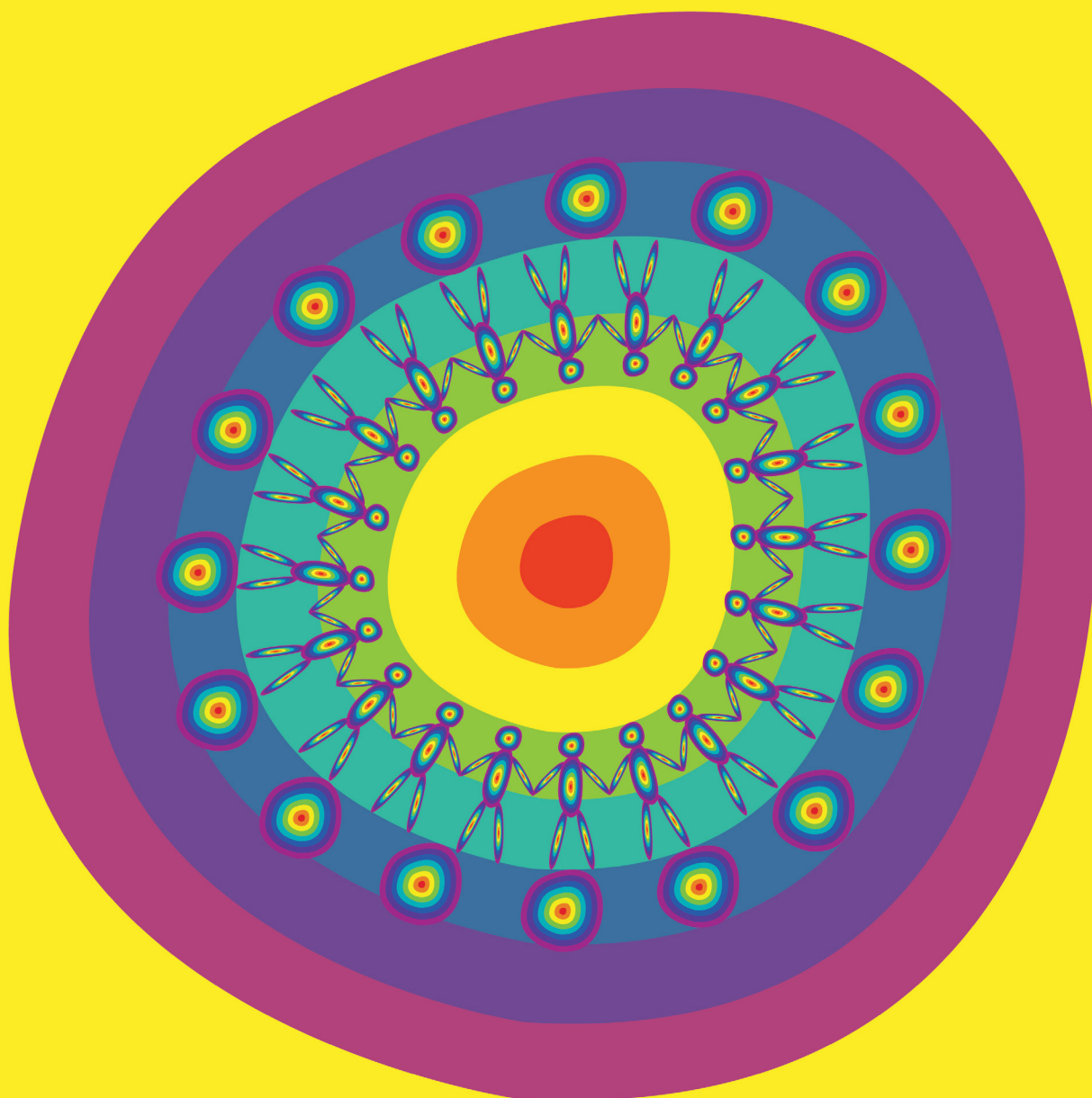
Olive oil for roasting
1 cup passata sauce
1/2 cup grated Parmesan, hard
cheddar or vegan cheese for a
dairy-free option

What to do

1. In a large mixing bowl, add all the ingredients (up to and including the garlic) and, using your hands, mix everything together until it can be easily shaped into balls. Roll the mixture into balls of your preferred size.
2. Drizzle a large roasting dish with olive oil.

3. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
4. Place the meatballs in the roasting dish and bake the oven for 30-45 minutes, depending on their size.
5. Pour the passata sauce over the meatballs and return the dish to the oven. Bake for a further 10-15 minutes to allow the sauce to thicken.
6. Sprinkle with grated cheese if desired and serve over a bed of roasted sweet potato mash or spaghetti.

Recipe: [The Flexitarian Foodie](#) (Jax Moorcroft)



Wall of Wisdom

You will know me
Not by the colour of my skin
But by the spectrum of my ideas
For I am Africa's child.
You will know me
Not by the name of my tribe
But by the poetry of my ideals
For I am Africa's child.

From *Child of Africa*,
Wayne Visser, 2017

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