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## How To Choose Curriculum

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### Homeschooling a struggling learner

Have you been agonizing over selecting your homeschool curriculum, or is the curricula you have been using not working? We understand. In fact, one of the most frequently asked questions we receive in the

Struggling Learner/Special Needs Department is, "What is the best curriculum to use with my child?"

There is no simple answer to this question. In fact, there is no one-size-fits-all curriculum that will be the magic bullet for a child with special needs. Rather, what makes the biggest difference is a loving and diligent parent-teacher coming alongside the child and teaching him at his level of functioning. It is not just the materials that make the difference, but the methods of instruction and how the materials are adapted to best suit your child's specific needs. It is important that you use methods and materials which accommodate your child's learning style and specific learning needs.

There is an abundance of homeschool curricula, supplementary materials, and programs available. Therefore, choosing the right curriculum can be difficult. There are many things to take into consideration. We encourage you to be flexible as you research the many options, and allow this journey to be enjoyable for you and your child! Some things to consider include:

- Your child's learning style.
- Your child's specific special needs and challenges.
- Your teaching style.
- Your budget.
- Ages, stages, and number of children being taught.
- Your home environment.
- Your opinion on the use of technology in your home school.
- Your family's core values, worldview, and beliefs.

Sometimes families begin homeschooling using a complete curriculum package. However, if your child has a special need, such as a diagnosed learning disability, special measures must be taken. One should not assume that simply because his child is at home experiencing parental love and one-on-one instruction that those two things alone will boost the child's educational performance. (Of course parental love and one-on-one instruction are two of the many benefits of homeschooling children--those with special needs in particular.) However, most children with special needs will also require special teaching techniques and tailor-made and adapted curriculum.

Parents who are homeschooling struggling learners /children with special needs may find the structure or workload overwhelming and the pace to be too fast in traditional curricula. Your aim is that your child achieve his potential, and you, the parent-teacher, may find that using only standard school textbooks will not allow for your remediating your child's deficiencies. It may become necessary for you to use one publisher's math text or program, a different publisher's reading, and yet another publisher's program for spelling.

Specialized techniques and incorporation of multi-sensory methods may also be warranted. A wise teacher once imparted to me (Faith) at a teacher training workshop, "If a child isn't learning through the way I am teaching, then I must change the way I am teaching." This can be difficult for us as parent-teachers because we tend to teach the way we learn best and that may not be the way our child learns best!

Choosing curricula and designing your homeschool to meet your child's special needs is challenging, but we know you can do it! Don't be afraid to ask around. Remember to be a keen observer of your child, and try different materials and approaches. We, the special needs coordinators are available to talk with you over the phone or via webmail at [www.hsllda.org/contactstaff](http://www.hsllda.org/contactstaff).

The special needs coordinators can help parents with specific teaching strategies, selecting materials, and provide helpful resources. Also, we encourage you to contact a local support group or an online message board. And remember, you can always try something different next year if you don't like what you did this year.

Finally, and most importantly pray! God will give you the wisdom, guidance, and resources when you ask Him.



**This resource is provided by the Home School Legal Defense Association's Struggling Learner's newsletter as a service to the homeschooling community.**

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