

# *Suggested Daily Home Rhythm:*

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**Upper Elementary and Lower Middle School: students should have the following items at home to reach goals of learning diligence, independence, and organization**

## **Math: Daily**

Be sure that math facts are mastered: double, triple, and onward digit addition and subtraction, multiplication tables, long multiplication, long division, etc prior to 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

If you are having trouble, back up and take your time moving forward. The house is only as strong as the foundation.

Use 3-D manipulatives and drawings for dyslexics and others with learning difficulties.

Teach the Why as well as the How. Singapore math (up to level 5) is the best we have found. Taught alongside The Life of Fred for fun or for struggling learners is wonderful fun. That being said, they are NOT the only two that work, but the ones that worked well for us and the students we have taught and tutored.

**Reading: Daily for 20-30 minutes –minimum!**

Life is so very easy for us that our children no longer are required to work alongside in order to fulfill family chores which makes carving out time for rest and relaxation a silly concept. Instead, we are having to carve IN time to do our lessons. When reading was an indulgence it was a lovely privilege, but now reading is the chore that becomes ‘work’.

Our options are to create hollow work to fill our children’s day in order that reading might once again be seen as luxurious downtime. OR we must create a daily habit of promoting one of the pillars of education/culture/leadership.

No amount of ‘convincing’ will work when your child has the option to play with a sibling, be mollified by a screen, or play in any other manner that does not require the effort to be still alongside the effort to focus woven with the requirement to comprehend. Reading is not as simple as we adults make it out to be. It is dreadful mastering oneself to the point of realizing the refreshing beauties that books lay at our feet.

**Quality matters when it comes to books.** Classic books are difficult because they are created to be read THREE! times!! First as an introduction; Second to become familiar; Third to enjoy.

Brain Candy (books that draw you into the next chapter and are easily mentally ingested) have a place in life, but think dessert rather than meal.

A good book inspires you to make a change, accomplish, join in, and improve. Brain candy inspires you to be entertained. Nothing wrong with either, but teach your children the value, time, and place of each style of literature.

**Grammar, Spelling, Handwriting: Daily for 20 minutes, BUT NOT ALL IN ONE DAY.**

**Omit these little darlings and miss out on neurological connections**

**Grammar:** The best daily use book we have found has been Dawn Burnette’s Daily Grammar Practice. This small booklet has all that you need for a year of grammar! If you are not well versed in grammar/diagramming sentences, consider purchasing the Teacher’s book.

Grammar supports understanding and ability in all other subjects including math (can we say, “word problems”) but especially in foreign language, understanding historical papers/documents, and such. Grammar also connects neurons in ways unable to be replicated by other subjects.

**Spelling:** rules (another download) are invaluable to decoding, reading, and writing. Everyone should know at least the basics. This is best taught before grade 3 but is never too late to learn.

**Handwriting:** like grammar, creates neurological pathways otherwise missed out on. It teaches the brain to slow down, pay attention to detail, and express beauty through form and communication. Best taught at later years alongside a parent who is also working on improving his/her handwriting. Do small lessons, complete, pass around the table, circle the 5 you like the best and one or two that needs improvement, return to owner, improve, and toss in a notebook or even garbage. The beauty was in the journey.

**Science:** 2-5X week; less if woven with another subject such as literature or composition

Choose several books and textbooks that draw on the imagination, explain what is going on politically, and offer opposing theories. We must understand that which we do not agree with in order to defend that which we believe.

You can study any science at this point with no need to follow through on a single topic until high school. Enjoy this time of freedom to study broadly!

Teach them to take notes beginning simply with chapter title, page numbers, bold words, and topic titles toward advancing/maturing into defining the terms in their own words, further researching difficult concepts, and illustrating parts to wholes or vice versa.

Science and art go hand in hand. Teach how to utilize the fun of color—high light, various colored markings/symbols, colored illustrations

Personal notes are NOT a time for neatness. You will dampen your student's spirits if you insist upon professional quality in their notes. They will need to take notes quickly yet efficiently. Focus on efficiency and creating a method of shorthand, circling items to connect with related items with lines/arrows, numbers, Roman numerals—anything that makes sense in their mind. There will be a time for neatness and mastery of proper note-taking methods. It is called High School. Grin.

**Nature Walk:** 1-3X week as a luxury rather than a demand; best if parent joins in

Go outside daily to move about slowly using skills of observation. The power of observation is overlooked as wasted time but many detail skills are heightened by one's ability to observe the 'big picture'.

Having to sketch something of interest gives purpose to a 5 to 15-minute period of observation. Rather than set this expectation from 0 to 60, work slowly up and join them in mind, body, soul, and purpose. It will make it all the more palatable for them if you are 'suffering' with them and you might rediscover a joy that has lain dormant.

Spend time over a full week adding detail, researching further information, color, and go back to re-observe or find another of the same to observe in a different place/manner.

There is a download companion Nature Study Suggestions to be used alongside several lovely books.

**History:** 2-5X week; less if woven with another subject such as literature or composition

Using a separate history text at this age often leads to a myopic vision rather than the desired worldview. My point is that if you only study in what you believe from a standpoint of America the Great (which it is), you will miss that other cultures/nations/religions have their viewpoint as well, and your children will not know how to defend their beliefs due to not understanding another's history/culture/point of view from any other vantage point than their own.

Consider using many sources, texts, books, and sites rather than a single book. You can study any science at this point with no need to follow through on a single topic, such as physical science or biology, until high school. Enjoy this time of freedom to study broadly!

Historically based literature is a wonderful way to weave curriculum, meet the needs of two subjects with one source, and give various viewpoints. When weaving subjects, be sure to extend the time expectation. Literature may be 20 minutes/day, but when woven with another subject, increase it to 40 minutes/day.

Read alongside, aloud to one another, ask questions/narration (tell back) and definitely excitedly have discussions. History can be so very dry, but if you are excited by what has occurred in the past, they will become curious to learn more.....which will be great leading into possible dry high school/college history classes/texts.

For younger children, as you read aloud it is wonderful to have them draw pictures of that which you are reading. Chapter by chapter, picture by picture, you will create a personal history book.

**Timeline:** This can be quickly done using Veritas Press of Classical Conversation timeline cards or self-created using cut-outs, print-offs, and drawings pasted along a ribbon on the wall.