# Parent Educator Survival Guide

Helpful tips to consider for the first few weeks of school…

There is no single “right way” to approach homeschooling. Each family must find their own style. We encourage you to take the first 2 weeks or so of the school year to focus on developing your homeschool culture. Even established homeschoolers can find that a structure that worked well in the past no longer supports their current needs.

The information below is not meant to be an exhaustive list of possibilities. It is intended to inspire thought around several areas.

## Getting Set for a Successful Homeschool Year

1. Systems/Organization
   1. Create a routine that works for your family and sets your student(s) up for success.
      1. Does your family function better with a tightly scheduled day or a looser framework?
      2. Develop a “plan for the day” with your child. Also include your child in long-range planning.
      3. How frequent are your breaks and what do they look like?
   2. Establish a homeschool environment that works best for your family
      1. Are you a “kitchen table” family? A room with desks family? A blanket in the backyard family?
      2. How will you store and organize the materials you want to have on-hand?
      3. Are there places other than your home where you plan to work? Some families are primarily at home and others are often on-the-go. Libraries and parks can be a great change of scene.
      4. Remember that part of the beauty of homeschooling is that you can be “in the world” with your kids. Take advantage of all L.A. offers.
   3. Record your learning activities in the Work Journal Daily Engagement Log every day! Establishing an intentional time for the Work Journal is an extremely helpful habit to have. Families who put it off until later often find it to be much more difficult to recall information and it takes much longer to complete. Three minutes a day will do it.
      1. What did we do?
      2. How did we do it?
   4. Give yourself 5 minutes at the end of every day to reflect on your day. This is a habit that all successful educators we know include in their day. You might want to experiment with keeping a journal.
      1. What went well?
      2. Where were the challenges?
      3. If you were doing this again, what would you change?
      4. How can you use this knowledge going forward?

## Explore Interests

1. Brainstorm interests with your student(s) to inform your teaching
   1. Create a list of possible field trips that correlate with interests
   2. Create a resource map of our community (you determine the boundaries) that identifies possible learning resources such as museums, parks, theaters, stores, art galleries, libraries, veterinarians, medical/dental offices, non-profits, etc.

## Ideas for the first few weeks of school:

* Connect with at least one other FTIS family
  + 1. <http://davincik8.org/> 🡪 Parents’ Corner🡪 Core Yahoo Groups🡪 Join Ind. Study Yahoo Group
    2. Connect with other parents at one of the Parent Group Meetings at Del Aire Park
       1. 8/17/15 @ 1:00-2:00
       2. 8/18/15 @ 1:00-2:00

**If you tend to think about learning as interconnected, this example is for you:**

Link your learning (this example can be adapted for ALL ages):

* Visit Hopkins Wilderness Park in Redondo Beach (Did you know you can camp there?)
  + <http://www.redondo.org/depts/public_works/parks/hopkins.asp>
* First Visit: Identify the features of the four ecological habitats represented
  + Keep an observation log/journal
  + Compare and contrast the habitats
  + Go to the library to find books about the four types of habitat and research
  + Create a 2-D, 3-D or digital representation of the habitats (could be arts focused or something more like a brochure)
    - Connect with the park staff to offer your product for park use
* Second Visit: Focus on the Water Smart Garden
  + Explore the garden
  + What elements do you notice that are water smart?
  + Read the online brochure and watch the slideshow about the creation of the garden
* Research water cycle/conservation/drought in CA – there are many directions you can go with this
  + Where does our water come from?
* Explore the concept of volume. How much water is in an acre-foot? Physically compare gallons, quarts, cups, ounces, liters, etc.
* Learn about drought tolerant plants via books, internet, visits to Huntington Gardens, South Coast Botanical Garden and local garden centers
* Interview a botanist, water conservation expert, etc.
  + Learn about water smart gardens
  + Learn about their careers
* Plant a water smart garden at your home or in your community
* Create an informative/persuasive brochure, social media campaign, etc. to encourage others to plant water smart gardens and explain their value
  + Disseminate your product as much as possible
* Research the math behind all of this. Create charts/graphs/posters. Some examples:
  + How much water do we use for various purposes?
    - Personal/home usage
    - Farm usage
    - Industrial usage
    - Other business/organization usage
  + How much water would we save in a day/week/month/year if X changed?
    - By person
    - By household
    - By industry
  + What would the financial impact be of selected water conservation choices?
* What role has water played in the establishment and development of Los Angeles? Explore the history of the Los Angeles basin.

**If you tend to think about learning in discrete categories, these examples are for you:**

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| Writing:  * journal writing   -find journal prompts at: <http://www.homeschooling-ideas.com/journal-writing-prompts.html>   * Write a letter to a relative/friend/new FTIS buddy * Let your imagination run wild and write a sequel to a book you enjoy * Explore different genres:   + Cartoon storytelling/graphic novels   + Imagining animals at night   + Animal folk tale   + Pet sitter guide   + Collaborative story with a sibling or homeschool friend   + A day in the life of an ant   + Reflection: Why I Homeschool   + How to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (ride a bike, set up a Minecraft account, make a pizza, etc.) |
| Reading:  * Check out your local library   + get hooked on a fun series     - find a passage where you laughed, where you wondered, where you felt sad, etc.   + select 2-5 non-fiction books that relate to interests     - Discuss: What was interesting? What surprised you?     - Do something creative based on what you read * write a review of a book you read over the summer and create an illustration to go along with it. * make a postcard with an illustration and write about a book/story you read over the summer. Send it to a friend or relative. |
| Math:  * Visit a local Farmer’s Market, use your math skills when buying ingredients for a special dish and cook it together * track spending at the grocery store * create a budget for an upcoming family event (birthday party, vacation, field trip, etc) * create board games * create math manipulatives to use throughout the year   + visit: <http://www.mathcats.com/mathtoolbox/> |
| Social Studies:  * Interview a family member/friend about a certain topic (summer vacation, childhood, hopes and dreams, etc.) and create a book/audio recording/video recording/slideshow/scrapbook * Take a family walk around your neighborhood and create a map of your community: Notice the sights, sounds, and smells   + Older students might create a walking tour using Google Maps * Explore local museums   + Heritage Square Museum   + Natural History Museum   + Getty Villa   + LACMA   + MOCA * Explore the Discovery Education Techbook resource * BrainPop and BrainPop Jr. |
| Science:  * Explore local habitats   -Madrona Marsh, Hopkins Wilderness Park, South Coast Botanic Garden   * Utilize the online resource BrainPopJr (K-3) & BrainPop to explore science content * Explore the Discovery Education Techbook resource * Visit local museums/aquariums:   + California Science Center   + The Roundhouse on the MB Pier   + Cabrillo Marine Aquarium |
| Other   * Put on a play with family or friends * Enjoy a family game day/night * Find a way to help your community by donating your time to people, animals, or an environment/organization in need * Visit a local college campus |

## Free on-line resources to ignite, inform, and instruct:

* Janette and Ethel’s Digital Portfolio will be up and running by Aug. 17, please be on the lookout for the link via email. The DP is your go-to place for resources, information, calendar, and learning goals.
* Pinterest.com has a great deal of lesson and project ideas
* ***OUR CHALLENGE TO YOU***: *Join the FT IS yahoo group and share five or more websites or local resources that you are excited about.* If everyone does this, we will start off with a bank of over 200 resources!