

sa

Homeschooling

and beyond

DECEMBER 2025

8 Tips for a
Successful
2026!

**Avoid Black
Friday Blues**

+

**Sleep Your
Way to
Success**

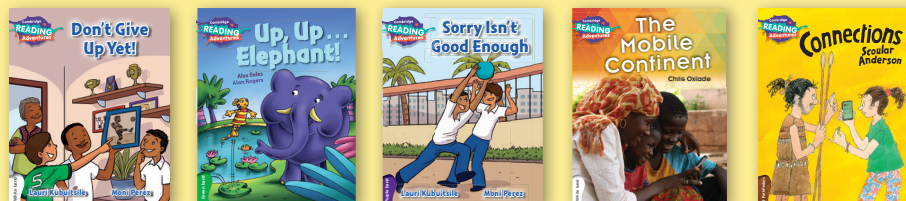
**What are the Best
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for Autism?**

Art & Critical Thinking

You Have to Stay Active

3 distinct reading series

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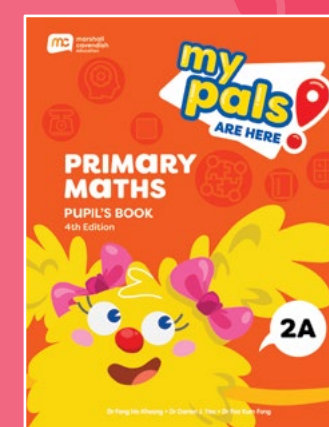
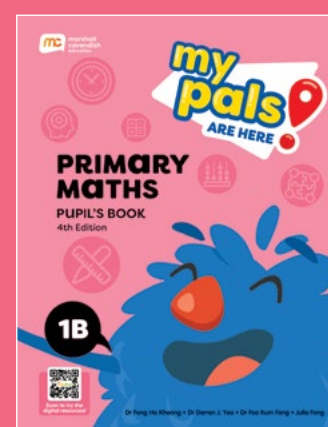
Engaging and child-friendly

The programme includes vibrant visuals, hands-on activities, and interactive digital tools that make math enjoyable and accessible for children learning at home.

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Designed for hybrid learning, it offers a blend of print and digital resources that are easy for parents to use, whether teaching one child or multiple.

Proven effectiveness

With its structured approach and high-quality materials, this series helps children become confident, resilient learners who can tackle real-world math problems.

10

Why Sleep is the Ultimate Study Hack for Your Homeschooler

We examine how sleep deprivation impacts memory and emotional regulation. We also provide age-appropriate sleep guidelines and practical strategies to establish healthy nighttime routines for your family.



16

8 Tips for a Successful 2026

Preparing for the new academic year doesn't have to be a panic-induced scramble. In this guide, we break down 7 essential steps for a smooth start to the new year.



18

What is Autism and What Are the Best Education Options?

Earl Joseph breaks down what autism actually means for learning and examines why homeschooling a child with autism is becoming the preferred choice for many South African parents seeking a low-sensory, flexible education.

22

Why Active Kids Learn Better

Sean and Antjie Brennan, owners of Smart Fitness, discuss the critical role of movement in a child's life. They break down why physical activity is essential for brain development and offer practical advice for parents struggling to compete with screens.



28

How Art Builds Critical Thinking Skills

Desirée Hugo, Academic Head of ADvTECH Schools, outlines how parents can transform simple art activities into powerful educational tools. When approached with intention, art becomes one of the most effective tools for developing critical thinking skills.



30

How to Navigate Black Friday

The SA Homeschooling Team exposes the hidden traps of this year's sales. Featuring insights from consumer experts and financial literacy advocates, we offer practical advice for South African parents to navigate the retail frenzy of Black Friday.





It's been a really long year and most of us are looking forward to that well deserved break. But before we leave, there is always a final push to the finish line. Some of us rush to complete that last report for the boss while others are desperate to get the kids over the academic finish line for the year. Whatever it is that's got you scrambling, it's always difficult to keep all the balls in the air.

Somewhere in the rush we need to figure out how to financially afford the holiday and then plan it. We need to consider next year's homeschooling requirements and how to keep our kids healthy and fit in the new year after a long and food-filled holiday.

In this month's magazine we tackle a few of these issues.

- Need to plan for next year's homeschooling journey? We provide you with 8 tips to get ready for 2026.
- Targeting Black Friday and end of year sales to save on next year's expenses? Let us help you navigate the frenzy and avoid overspending or being scammed.
- Worried about how your kids are going to stay in shape after the break? We've got you covered with a guide to physical activity for homeschoolers.

We also keep an eye on how to manage neurodivergence, particularly autistic children and what educational options you have for your autistic child.

With a jam-packed edition, you'll have plenty to read on your holidays. Let's all enjoy the break, be safe and return in the new year refreshed and ready to make sure our families and especially our children thrive. Happy Holidays from the SA Homeschooling and Beyond team!

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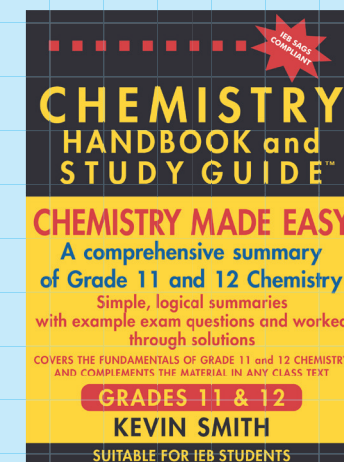
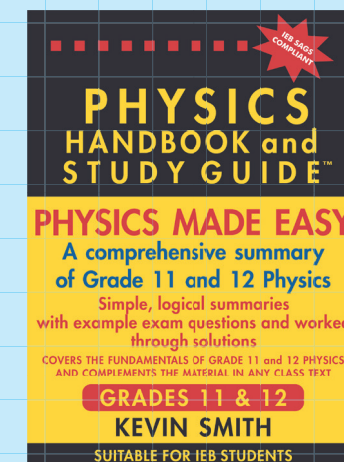
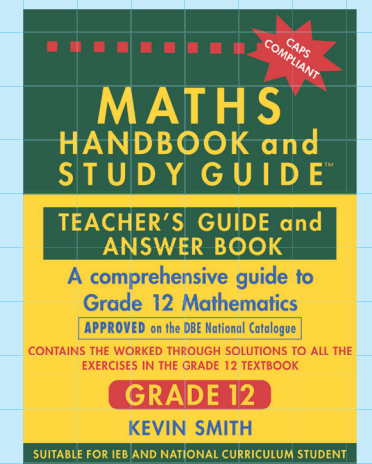
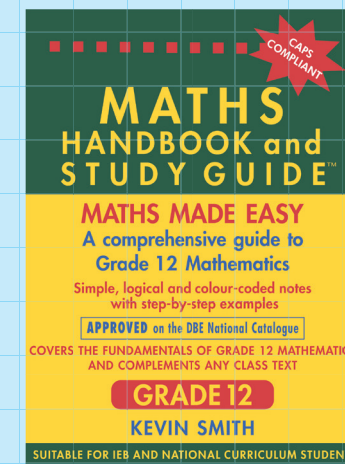
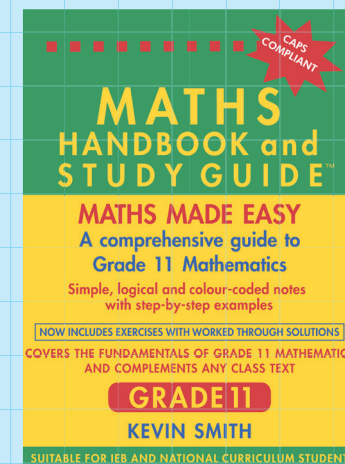
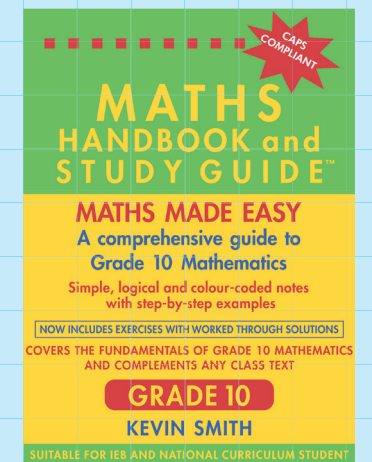
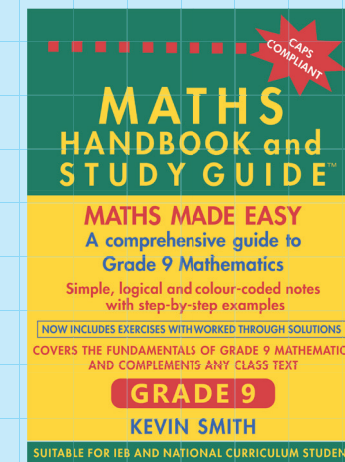
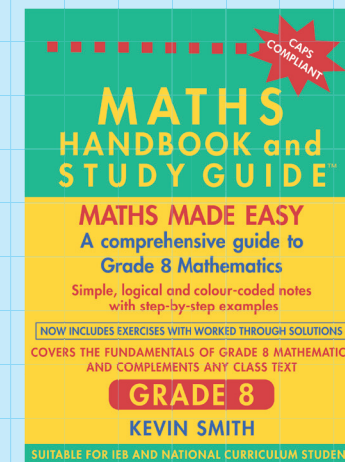
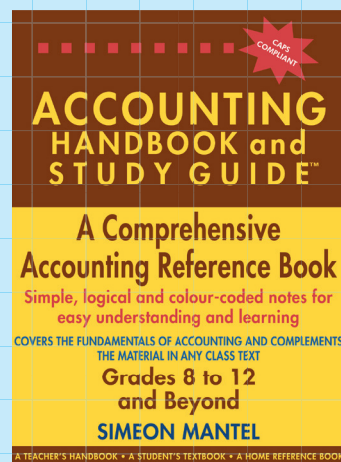
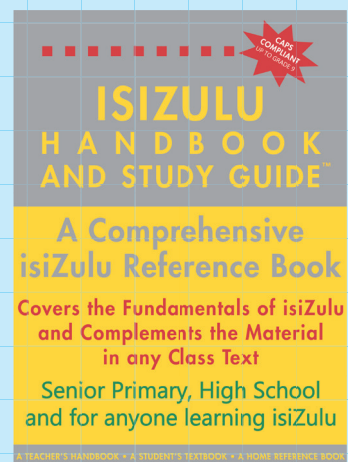
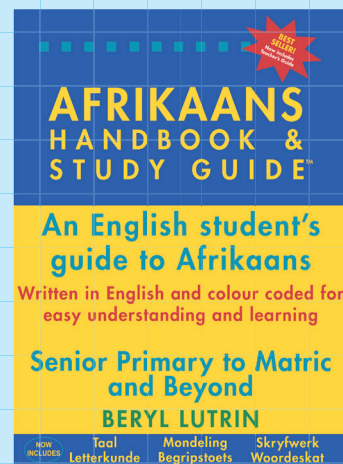
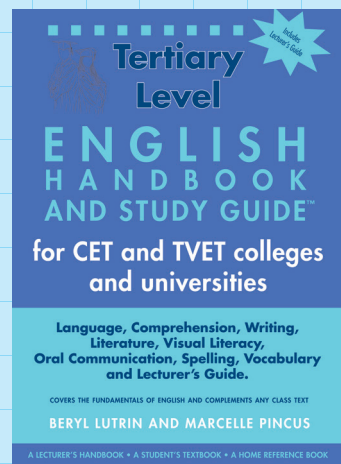
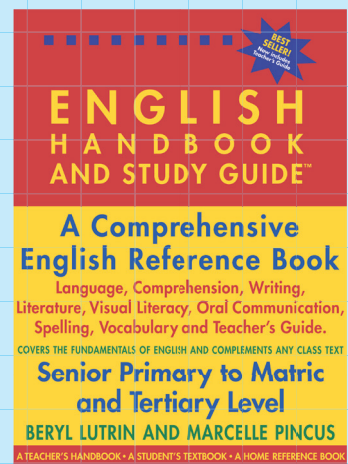
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Berlut Maths Series: Revolutionising Primary Education

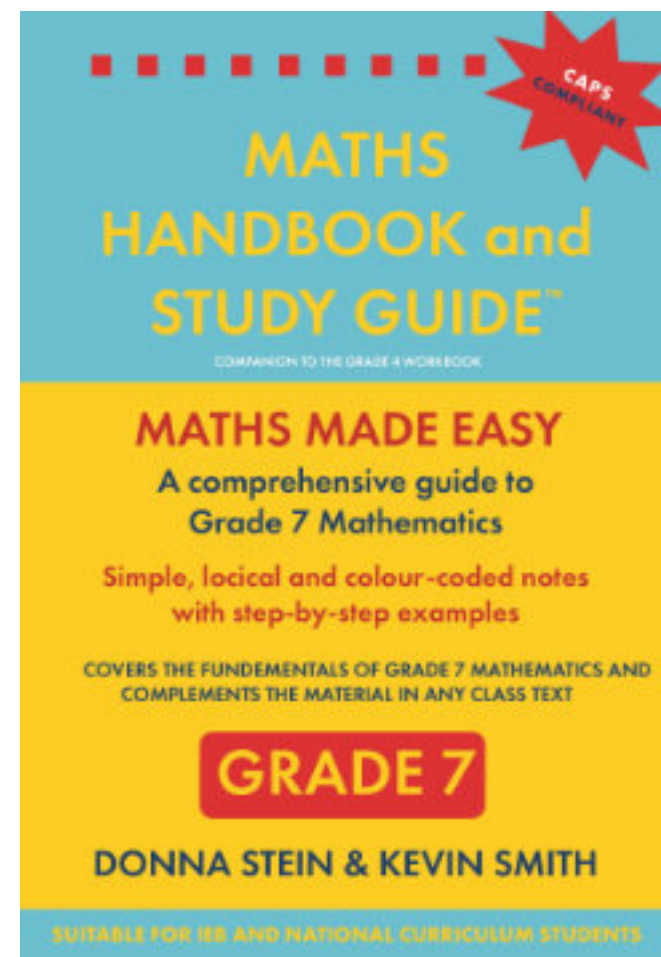
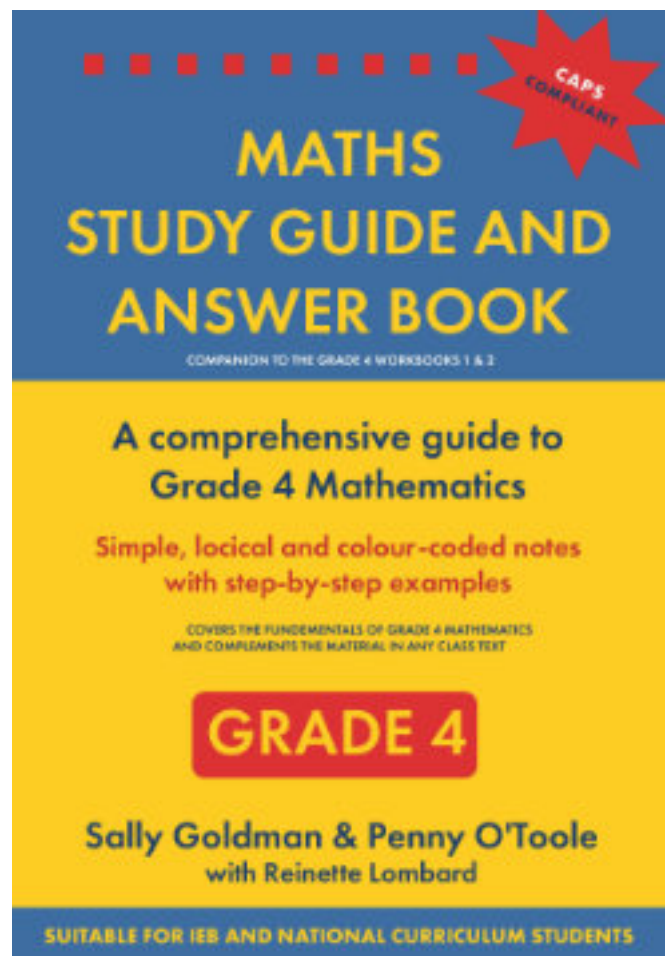
Since 1999, the team at Berlut Books* has been committed to revolutionising education with our best-selling study guides and handbooks.

Our study guides are designed to simplify complex subjects and support learners at every stage of their educational journey. We focus on making learning accessible, so every student can reach their full potential. The series is expanding, and in July 2026, we are bringing you the brand-new Berlut Maths Series for primary school learners.

What the Primary Series Offers (Grades 4-6)

The Berlut Maths Grade 4-6 series is a single resource that explains in detail the how and why of every part of the Maths curriculum. The series consists of 10 titles and includes:

- Detailed step-by-step explanations of processes, concepts, and methods
- Examples with solutions
- Tools to build solid foundations, without which higher learning can be a huge challenge
- Logical progression of concepts with cross-referencing



The Grade 7 Handbook and Study Guide

The Grade 7 Handbook and Study Guide provide comprehensive notes, eliminating the need for photocopying. It serves as an invaluable teaching tool with simple, visual, and logical presentations.

- It ensures students work at the required level, covering the FET Curriculum and CAPS documentation.
- Each chapter includes content, LO's, assessments, and exercises with full solutions.
- The book aims for understanding and proficiency in mathematics, offering step-by-step examples from basic to exam-level questions.
- It is user-friendly, practical, and suitable for classroom or independent study.



Why Choose Berlut Maths?

The Berlut Maths Series meets all SA curricula requirements. It supports non-specialist teachers, refreshes and consolidates fundamental concepts for students and empowers parents to assist their children. It covers basic to advanced concepts, fills gaps from missed lessons, provides challenges for top students, and is cost-effective compared to extra lessons.

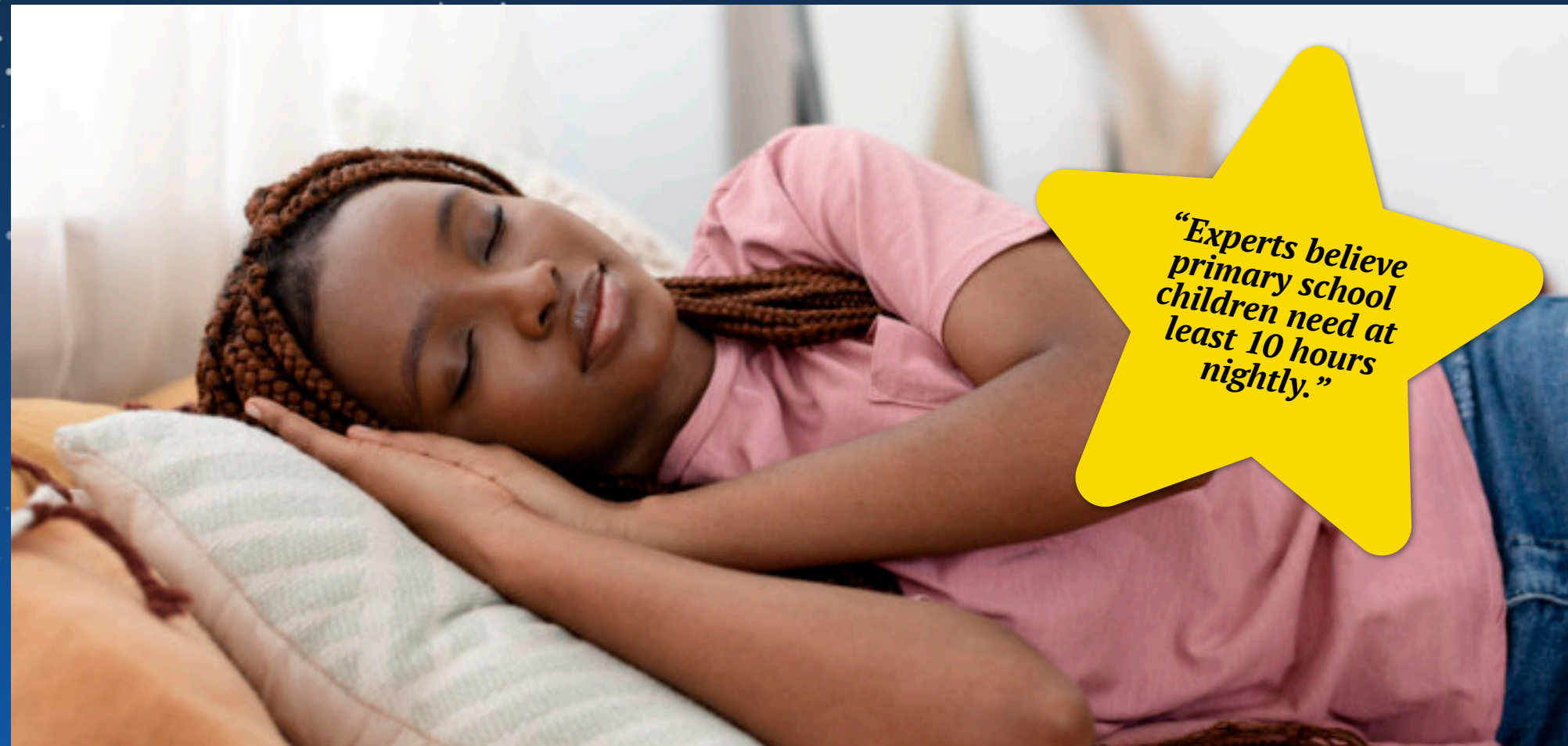


Benefits of Berlut Maths

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Why Sleep is the Ultimate Study Hack for Your Homeschooler

Earl Joseph examines how sleep deprivation impacts memory and emotional regulation, provides age-appropriate sleep guidelines and offers practical strategies to establish healthy nighttime routines for your homeschooling family.



You might teach a maths concept at 10:00, but the actual learning often happens at 22:00. Think of sleep as your brain's personal assistant. During the day, your child absorbs massive amounts of information. However, the brain analyses, sorts and stores this data into long-term memory only during sleep.

While we often view sleep as a period of inactivity, the body burns almost as much energy sleeping as it does when awake. For a developing brain, this downtime is non-negotiable.

The Brain's Night Shift: How Learning Happens

Several physiological processes occur once the lights go out:



Chemical Cleanup: During the day, a substance called adenosine builds up in the bloodstream, making us drowsy. Sleep breaks this down, resetting the brain for a new day.

Energy Refuel: The body builds up glucose reserves to ensure there is enough energy for the day ahead.

Growth: In children, the secretion of growth hormones happens exclusively while they are sleeping.

Without this reset, the consequences are immediate. Sleep deprivation creates a "frighteningly negative effect" on the brain. You might notice irritability, forgetfulness, turbulent emotions and a total inability to concentrate. If your learner struggles to recall a lesson from yesterday, they might not need a tutor; they might just need an earlier bedtime.

Sleep Recommendations for Children

How much rest is enough? While every child is different, the American Academy of Sleep Medicine provides clear guidelines based on health reviews.

- **Infants (4-12 months):** 12-16 hours, including naps.
- **Toddlers (1-2 years):** 11-14 hours, including naps.

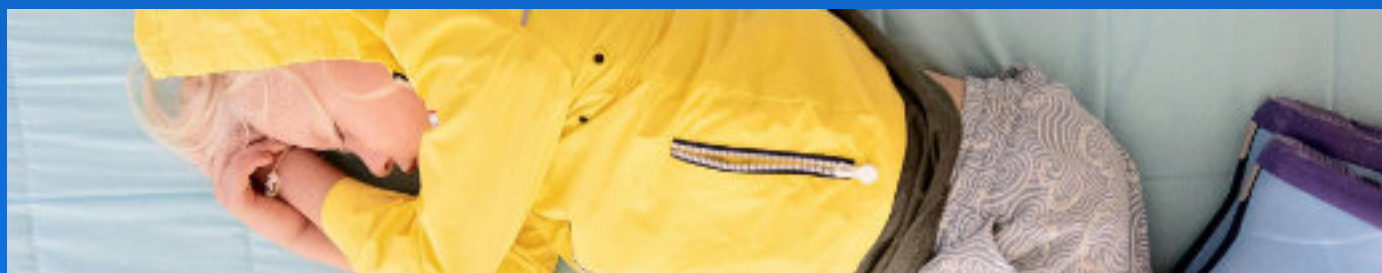
- **Preschoolers (3-5 years):** 10-13 hours, including naps.
- **Primary School (6-12 years):** 9-12 hours.
- **Teenagers (13-18 years):** 8-10 hours.

Experts believe primary school children specifically, need at least 10 hours nightly. Achieving this is often easier said than done, given the distractions of TV, the internet and gaming.

This is where homeschooling families have a distinct edge. Mainstream schooling often forces children into sleep schedules that contradict their biology, particularly regarding the "school run."

You have likely heard of "night owls." This is often a biological reality, not just a preference. Delayed Sleep Phase Disorder (DSPD) is common in young adults and teens and causes a natural shift in sleep patterns by two hours or more. A teen with DSPD might naturally fall asleep at 23:00 and wake at 08:00.

In a traditional school setting, waking that teen at 06:00 cuts their sleep cycle short. As a homeschooler, you can adjust your start time to 09:00 and allow your teen to get their full 8-10 hours. This flexibility supports their health and improves their attitude toward work.



Establishing a routine requires consistency. Bedtime should never become a battleground of tears and tantrums; it should be a time to feel cherished.

Here are practical ways to cultivate good habits:

- **Set the Scene:** Keep the room cool and dark. In South Africa, where summer nights are hot, a fan or open window (with safety bars) is essential.
- **Watch the Diet:** Avoid caffeine and heavy meals one or two hours before bed. Ensure they get a balanced diet and exercise during the day.
- **The "Power Down" Hour:** For younger children, plan a quiet hour before bed without TV or cellphone games. This is even more relevant during load shedding—use battery-operated warm lights or candles to create a naturally calming atmosphere.

For further reading on creating healthy environments for children, resources like the [Sleep Foundation](#) offer extensive guides on sleep hygiene.

Sometimes, a good routine isn't enough. If your child gets the recommended hours but still seems tired, there might be an underlying issue.

Five common signs of a disorder include snoring, difficulty falling asleep, problems staying asleep, daytime sleepiness, and unusual events like nightmares.

Common disorders include:

1. **Obstructive Sleep Apnoea:** Breathing pauses due to airway obstruction.
2. **Parasomnias:** Disruptive events like sleepwalking or night terrors.
3. **Behavioural Insomnia:** Difficulty falling asleep or maintaining sleep, often linked to bedtime resistance.
4. **Restless Leg Syndrome:** An uncontrollable urge to move legs due to uncomfortable sensations.

If you notice these signs, consult your GP or a paediatrician. Local resources, such as the [South African Society for Sleep Medicine](#), can help you find specialists in your area.

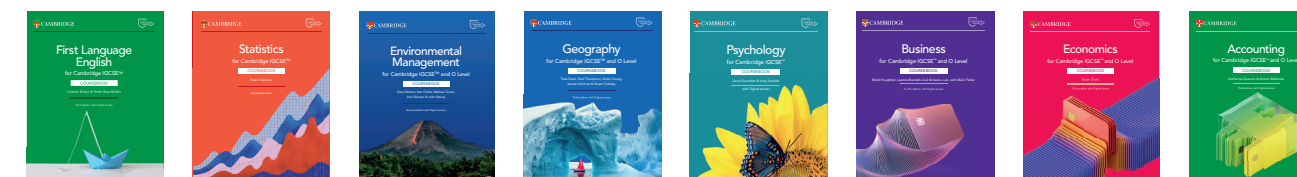
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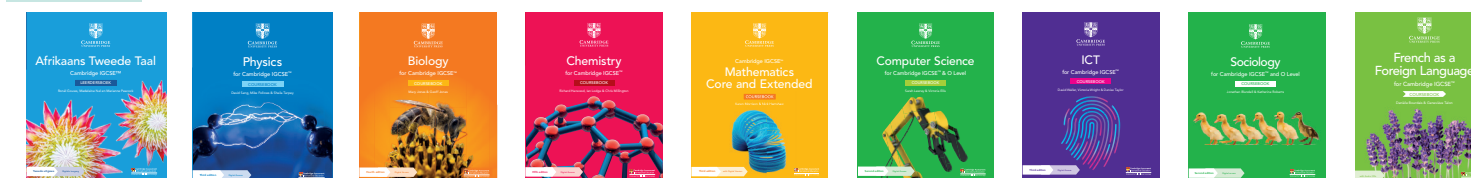
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Is the GED the Right Fit for Your Homeschooling Teen?

A Guide for South African Parents

As a homeschooling parent in South Africa, you've probably noticed how rapidly the educational landscape is shifting. More families are exploring alternative pathways beyond the traditional National Senior Certificate, and one qualification that consistently comes up in conversations is the GED. But what exactly is it, how does it compare, and what should you consider if you're thinking about preparing your child for it through online homeschooling?



"You can apply to study further at many private institutions, including well-known colleges such as Stadio and Boston City Campus."

The GED is an internationally recognised high-school equivalency assessment that originated in the United States. Instead of multiple school years and internal assessments, students are tested on four core subjects: Reasoning through Language Arts, Mathematical Reasoning, Science, and Social Studies.

For South African families, the key fact to understand is this: SAQA (the South African Qualifications Authority) has evaluated the GED and found the National Senior Certificate to be its closest comparable qualification, once a Certificate of Evaluation is issued. This gives the GED a meaningful position within the South African context, especially for students seeking an alternative to the traditional school system.

However, the GED route comes with specific study-pathway implications. You should be aware that:

- You can apply to study further at many private institutions, including well-known colleges such as Stadio and Boston City Campus.
- You will not be able to use the GED to enter a public university such as Wits or UJ.

These details matter deeply for long-term planning, so parents should always verify tertiary requirements directly with institutions and refer to the official information provided at ged.org.za.

Why Many Homeschooling Families Choose Online Learning

Choosing the GED often goes hand in hand with choosing online homeschooling. In recent years, a pattern has emerged: families gravitate to online learning for very practical reasons.

1. Flexibility

Online schooling fits around family life instead of dictating it. Children can study at times that suit their energy levels, family schedules, or even health needs.

2. Learning at a personalised pace

Homeschooling thrives on individualisation. Online learning allows students to slow down when needed or speed up when motivated, without pressure from a classroom pace.

3. Access to high-quality resources

Online platforms often give students interactive tools,

explainer videos, quizzes, and revision materials that are simply not available in textbook-only environments.

4. Reduced cost and logistics

No uniforms, no commuting, and fewer supplementary materials. Learning from home can ease the financial and logistical strain on families.

5. Comfort and safety

Parents value the stability and emotional safety that home-based learning can offer. With many families navigating social or learning challenges, the home environment becomes a calmer space for academic focus.

Preparing for the GED: What to Look for in an Online Course

Once parents decide the GED may be suitable, the next challenge is figuring out how to prepare. One such option available to South African homeschoolers is the **Learnalot GED Gateway programme**, described in detail at ged.learnalot.com. Parents who choose a structured course generally do so for a few reasons worth considering:

A personalised, one-on-one learning experience

A key attraction of the Gateway programme is its interactive AI

tutor that students can engage with any time, day or night. This constant availability can be a relief for parents who may not always have the time or subject knowledge to support every question.

Immediate feedback

Students preparing for the GED need ongoing feedback to correct misunderstandings early. A platform that gives real-time explanations and step-by-step guidance can significantly reduce frustration.

Structured schedules without rigidity

A well-designed GED course helps students stay on track by

offering weekly study goals, progress tracking and reminders.

Accessible help and human support

Although the Gateway course includes an AI tutor, there is also access to human mentors when a student needs reassurance or deeper explanation.

Explore all the programme details at ged.learnalot.com before deciding if the approach suits your child's learning style.

Is the GED the Right Fit for Your Child? Questions to Reflect On

Before committing, a few reflective questions can help clarify your direction:

- Does your child thrive in self-paced environments, or do they need external structure?
- Are they emotionally ready for exam-based assessment rather than continuous coursework?
- Are their post-school ambitions aligned with institutions that accept the GED?
- Do they prefer digital learning tools or handwritten tasks?
- Is your home environment conducive to consistent, focused study time?

Parents who answer yes to most of these questions will find GED an effective option for their kids.



Steps for a Successful 2026

Preparing for the new academic year doesn't have to be a panic-induced scramble. In this guide, the SA Homeschooling Editorial Team breaks down the essential steps for a smooth start to the new year. From organizing your space to legal compliance, here is your roadmap to success based on expert advice.

Reflect on the Past Year

Before you rush to buy new textbooks or organize files, take a moment to pause. If you homeschooled in the previous year, ask yourself honest questions before you start planning.

What went well in your homeschool? What areas could be improved?

Use this reflection to adjust your approach. If the morning rush was a nightmare, perhaps a later start time is needed. If a specific homeschool curriculum that South Africa offers didn't resonate with your child's learning style, now is the time to pivot. Honest reflection is the foundation of a better year.

Prepare Your Learning Space

Having the right environment is crucial for a successful year. However, it doesn't have to be a Pinterest-perfect studio. You need a space dedicated specifically to schoolwork where your child feels comfortable.

Key considerations for South African homes:

- **Lighting:** Ensure the desk is well-lit, preferably with natural light.
- **Load Shedding Prep:** Invest in a rechargeable LED lamp for the desk. Education doesn't stop when Eskom goes off.
- **Temperature Control:** January and February are hot months. Ensure the space is not too hot or too cold.

Stock Up on Essentials

Avoid the "Back to School" mall rush by shopping online or visiting stationery outlets early. Ensure you have the basics: books, exercise books, pens, pencils, rulers, and erasers. Don't forget the smaller items like Sellotape and Post-Its that always seem to disappear when you need them.

Pro-Tip: A wall map of the world or a revolving globe is always advisable. Ensure it is updated to the present age as geography changes fast!. Add a visible clock and perhaps some colourful, educational posters to brighten the room.

Create a Realistic Schedule

In order to make sure you are meeting your goals, it is important to come up with a realistic schedule. This is often where parents homeschool planning in South Africa get stuck, trying to replicate a traditional school day at home.

- **Be Flexible:** You don't need to ring a bell at 08:00.
- **Involve the Kids:** If you have older children, consider letting them give input on how they would like their day to look.
- **Visual Aids:** Put the schedule on the wall where everyone can see it.

For specific homeschool schedule ideas, look at block scheduling or looping schedules, which allow you to focus deeply on fewer subjects per day.

Can you believe the new year is almost here? Amidst the braais, beach days and festive joy of the December holidays, the thought of January might have slipped your mind entirely. Suddenly, the new academic year is looming, and you haven't bought a single pencil.

Don't panic. It is easy to get bogged down by the complexities of curriculum choices and legalities, but preparation doesn't need to be overwhelming. Whether you are following the CAPS curriculum or an international option like Cambridge, the principles of preparation remain the same.

Here is how to master your homeschool planning, South Africa style: relaxed, practical and ready for anything.

Don't Neglect Legal Peace of Mind

One aspect of planning that cannot be ignored is legal compliance. With the changing landscape of South African homeschool requirements, such as the BELA Bill, it is vital to be informed.

Ensure your record-keeping is up to date. Many experts recommend joining a legal defence organization to protect your family's rights. Membership with the [Pestalozzi Trust](#) serves as a shield for homeschool families, providing legal support and peace of mind so you can focus on teaching.

Plan Extracurricular Activities

A common myth is that homeschoolers are isolated. In reality, the opposite is true.

While your child doesn't have to participate in extracurricular activities, these opportunities can hugely benefit them. They allow children to gain knowledge and skills not covered in a typical homeschool curriculum.

South African options to explore:

- Local cricket or rugby clubs.
- Homeschool co-ops for group science experiments.
- Community service projects.

Delegate with Daily Chores

You are the parent and teacher, not the maid. Recruit the family to help win the war on daily dirt. Delegating responsibilities teaches life skills and ensures you aren't burnt out by March.

Assign age-appropriate chores:

- **Younger kids:** Tidying stationery and wiping the table.
- **Older kids:** Washing dishes or prepping lunch.

"Before you rush to buy new textbooks or organise files, take a moment to pause."

Make the First Day Fun

The first day back at school, including homeschool, is a big deal for kids and parents alike. With a little planning and creativity, you can make it fun and memorable.

Why not start with a special breakfast or a "field trip" to a local park or museum? Establish a fun tradition that your children will look forward to every year. It sets a positive tone and reminds them that learning is a joy, not a burden.

You Got This! These tips will certainly help you get ready for a successful homeschool year. Remember, the beauty of homeschooling is the freedom to adapt. Start slowly, breathe and enjoy the journey with your children.

What is Autism and What Are the Best Education Options?

Earl Joseph breaks down what autism actually means for learning and examines why homeschooling a child with autism is becoming the preferred choice for many South African parents seeking a low-sensory, flexible education.

For many South African parents, the diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) comes with a mix of relief and anxiety. Relief, because you finally have a name for why your child experiences the world differently. Anxiety, because you now face the daunting task of finding an education system that fits.

If you have spent months on waiting lists for special schools in South Africa or been advised by the Department of Education that [homeschooling an autistic child](#) was a better alternative, you are not alone. Recent data suggests that thousands of learners with disabilities remain outside the schooling system due to a lack of space. This reality forces many parents to ask: Is homeschooling a child with autism the best solution?



What is Autism, Really?

Before we look at educational choices, we must understand the learner. Autism is not a disease to be cured; it is a neurodevelopmental difference. It affects how a person communicates, interacts socially and processes sensory information.

Think of it less as a linear scale from "mild" to "severe" and more like a mixing board in a music studio. One child might have high verbal skills but struggle with sensory processing (loud noises might physically hurt them). Another might be non-speaking but have exceptional focus on patterns and details.

In a standard classroom, these differences can look like "behavioural problems." In a home environment, they are simply traits that need a different approach.

The South African Schooling Reality

South Africa supports inclusive education in policy (White Paper 6), but the implementation often lags behind. Parents usually face three main paths:

1. Mainstream Schools

Public or private mainstream schools can work for some autistic learners, especially those with lower support needs. However, large class sizes (often 30+ learners) create a sensory minefield. The social demand to "fit in" can lead to masking—where a child hides their traits to cope—often resulting in burnout or meltdowns at home.

2. Special Needs Schools

These schools offer therapy integration and smaller classes. They are fantastic resources, but they are scarce. Gauteng hosts the majority of these facilities,

leaving provinces like the Northern Cape and Limpopo with very few options. The waiting lists can stretch for years, during which the child loses valuable learning time.

3. Homeschooling

This is the fastest-growing option. Homeschooling a child with autism allows you to bypass the waiting lists and create an environment built around the child, rather than forcing the child to fit a system.

"Homeschooling a child with autism is not about becoming a teacher who knows everything. It is about becoming a facilitator who knows their child best."

Why Homeschooling Works for Neurodiverse Learners

Homeschooling offers specific advantages that a brick-and-mortar institution simply cannot match, regardless of its budget.

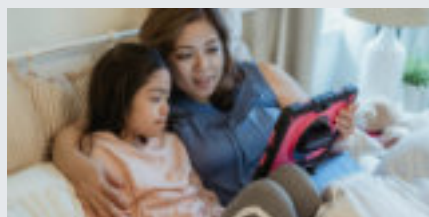
Control Over the Sensory Environment

Fluorescent lights, the ringing of bells, and the texture of school uniforms can make learning impossible for a sensory-sensitive child. At home, you control the lighting. You can choose comfortable clothing. You can ensure the room is quiet. When the brain is not in "fight or flight" mode from sensory assault, actual learning can happen.

Pacing and Flexibility

In a classroom, the curriculum moves forward whether the child understands the concept or not. At home, you can spend three weeks on a math concept if needed, or race through a science module if it captures your child's interest. This individualized learning plan is the gold standard for special needs education.

As an example, if your child has a special interest in trains, you can use that to teach history (the railway revolution), math (calculating speed and distance), and geography (mapping routes).



Practical Approaches for SA Parents

If you decide to take this route, you might feel overwhelmed by the "how." Here are practical steps to start.

Deschooling is Key

If your child has been in a school system, do not start homeschooling the very next day. Take a period to "deschool." Let them rest, play, and recover from the trauma of a system that didn't fit. This resets their nervous system and prepares them for a new way of learning.

Choosing the Right Curriculum

There is no single "autism curriculum." However, many SA parents find success with:

- Unit Studies: Learning about one topic across all subjects.
- Mastery-based programs: Where you don't move on until a concept is 100% understood (e.g., Math-U-See).
- Online options: Programs like CAMI or specific US-based apps can work, but be careful with screen time if your child is prone to overstimulation.

The Role of Visual Support

Many autistic learners process visual information better than auditory (spoken) instructions. Using visual schedules—pictures showing the order of the day's activities—can reduce anxiety significantly. It answers the questions: "What am I doing now?" and "What comes next?"

Finding Support in South Africa

You cannot do this in isolation. The fear of socialization is the most common myth about homeschooling. In reality, homeschooled children often socialize better because they do so in controlled, safe environments based on shared interests rather than forced proximity.

Connect with organizations like [Autism South Africa](#) to find local support groups. Additionally, legal defense trusts like the [Pestalozzi Trust](#) can provide peace of mind regarding the legal aspects of homeschooling in South Africa.

A Final Encouragement

Homeschooling a child with autism is not about becoming a teacher who knows everything. It is about becoming a facilitator who knows their child best. You are the expert on your child. By moving education to the home, you remove the barriers to learning and replace them with safety, understanding, and the freedom to grow at a unique pace.

It is not always an easy path, but for many South African families, it is the path that finally leads to a happy, learning child.



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Physical Education for Homeschoolers: Why Active Kids Learn Better

Sean and Antjie Brennan, owners of Smart Fitness, discuss the critical role of movement in a child's life. They break down why physical activity is essential for brain development and offer practical advice for parents struggling to compete with screens.

Many parents view exercise as a way to "burn off energy" so children can sit still and focus. While true, the biological impact is far more profound. Sean and Antjie Brennan, owners of Smart Fitness, note that regular, focused and measured physical activities trigger a rush of feel-good hormones that promote better moods and help relieve stress and anxiety in children. For a homeschooling parent trying to manage a busy schedule, a child with regulated emotions is much easier to teach.

Furthermore, cognitive development occurs during exercise. As children move, nerve cells in the brain multiply and form new connections. This biological process leads to improved concentration and better memory. If your child is struggling to retain a history lesson or a maths formula, a 20-minute run might be more effective than another hour of studying.

Why Active Kids Learn Better

Overcoming the "Grudge" Factor

We have all been there. You tell your child it is time to go outside, and you are met with resistance. "Let's face it, when starting out, exercise can feel like punishment to many of us, including children," says Sean.

This is especially true for children who are not naturally athletic. For kids who are seldom physically active and tire easily, exercise is an unpleasant experience they would prefer to avoid.

There are many factors contributing to this reluctance:

- **Perceived Incompetence:** A feeling among some kids that they simply aren't good at sports.

- **Digital Distractions:** Competition from video games and the internet.

- **Environment:** Closed playgrounds and outdoor facilities during past lockdowns resulted in many youngsters replacing monkey bars with tablets.

For South African parents, safety is also a valid concern. Many parents feel uncomfortable letting children freely roam the neighbourhood as they did generations ago, limiting opportunities for unstructured outdoor play.

How Much is Enough?

When planning physical education for homeschoolers, it helps to have a target. According to the Centres for

Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), children and adolescents aged six to 17 should do at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous intensity physical activity each day.

This should include:

- **Aerobic Activity:** Three days a week.
- **Bone Strengthening:** Activities like running or jumping three days a week.
- **Muscle Building:** Activities like climbing or push-ups three days a week.

For more detailed guidelines on age-appropriate activities, you can review the [World Health Organization's physical activity standards](#).

Practical Ways to Get Moving

You do not need a fancy gym or expensive equipment to integrate childhood development exercises into your routine. The goal is to build a habit, not to train Olympic athletes immediately.

1. Focus on Fun, Not Drills

With younger kids, keep the focus on fun and expose them to as many games, sports, and activities as possible. When kids do something they enjoy, they will want to do it, get better at it, and do it even more.

2. Leverage South African Outdoors

We live in a country with exceptional weather. Family activities such as hiking, guided walks around your city, or ball games increase the fun factor. Whether it is a Saturday Parkrun or a hike in a local botanical garden,

homeschooling sports can take place in nature.

3. Find Their Niche

Help kids find their niche by considering their interests, abilities, and body type. The options are many, from inline skating and bike-riding to tennis and swimming.

4. Be the Role Model

This is often the hardest part for parents. Kids look to parents for guidance, support, and encouragement. It is important to set a good example, so do not groan about your own exercise, make it a priority.

The Long-Term Impact

The effort you put into establishing these habits now pays dividends for decades. Improved self-esteem quickly results as children master difficult skills. Additionally, correct core exercises in childhood establish better posture and spine health, preventing the "teenage slouch" often carried into adulthood.

As Sean notes, "If you don't make time for exercise, you'll have to make time for illness".

By prioritising kids' fitness activities alongside algebra and grammar, you are setting your children up for a healthier, smarter and happier life.

Text Sean and Antjie Brennan

SA Homeschooling & Beyond December 2025



Miranda Lagane, founder of CAP Kids and Early Childhood Development specialist, explains that understanding how your children learn allows you to become a more intentional teacher, plan more purposeful lessons and make your child's learning journey more personalised and effective.

According to research, there are three main types of learners: visual learners, auditory learners, and kinaesthetic learners. More often than not, children don't rely solely on one learning style. Instead, they tend to learn in a variety of ways, often combining two of these styles to absorb new information and deepen their understanding.



Visual Learners: Seeing is Believing

Visual learners need to see something in order to understand and retain it. Incorporating pictures, diagrams, visual representations, and concrete examples can significantly improve a visual learner's ability to grasp new concepts. There are various ways you can support a visual learner:

The learning environment should not be too visually busy, as this can be distracting.

- A few simple posters highlighting key elements of the lesson can be helpful.
- Provide your visual learners with plenty of books that include illustrations.
- Always use concrete or visual examples, especially when teaching subjects like math.
- Techniques like mind mapping or using coloured pens can help in organising information effectively.

Auditory Learners: Hearing the World

These learners absorb new information by listening. They may sometimes appear 'distracted' during a lesson, as they don't necessarily need to make eye contact or appear focused in order to take in what's being said. Auditory learners benefit greatly from being in a calm and peaceful environment. Some may even find it helpful to listen to soft background music while learning.

- Audiobooks and podcasts are an auditory learner's best friend, so download a few of your favourites and play them while you're travelling, or while your child is building with LEGO or working on a puzzle.
- Encouraging your child to discuss topics aloud or teach back the material can reinforce their understanding.



Kinaesthetic Learners: Learning by Doing

From my personal experience, I would say that most children, and even adults, fall into this category. Let's compare it to learning a new skill, such as swimming. In order to learn how to swim effectively, you need to get into the water and move. Simply reading about floating in a textbook won't teach you how to swim. This is exactly how kinaesthetic learners operate, they need to move in order to learn. When preparing your lessons, think of ways to incorporate movement:

Whether it's through active learning, recreating a science experiment, bouncing a ball while practising spelling, or simply making more time for more movement breaks between lessons.

- You can find creative ways to accommodate your learner's need for physical engagement.
- Activities like acting out scenarios, building models, or conducting experiments can also make learning more effective.



“Understanding how your child learns is one of the greatest tools you can have as a home educator”

The Greatest Tool for Home Educators

At the end of the day, understanding how your child learns is one of the greatest tools you can have as a home educator. When you tailor your approach to suit their learning style, you're not just helping them understand the work better - you're building their confidence, deepening your connection and making learning something they truly enjoy.

So take a bit of time to observe, explore, and experiment. You might be surprised by just how much of a difference it makes. For more educational resources check out the [Cap Kids Education Blog](https://capkidseducationalresources.co.za/blog/) at <https://capkidseducationalresources.co.za/blog/>.



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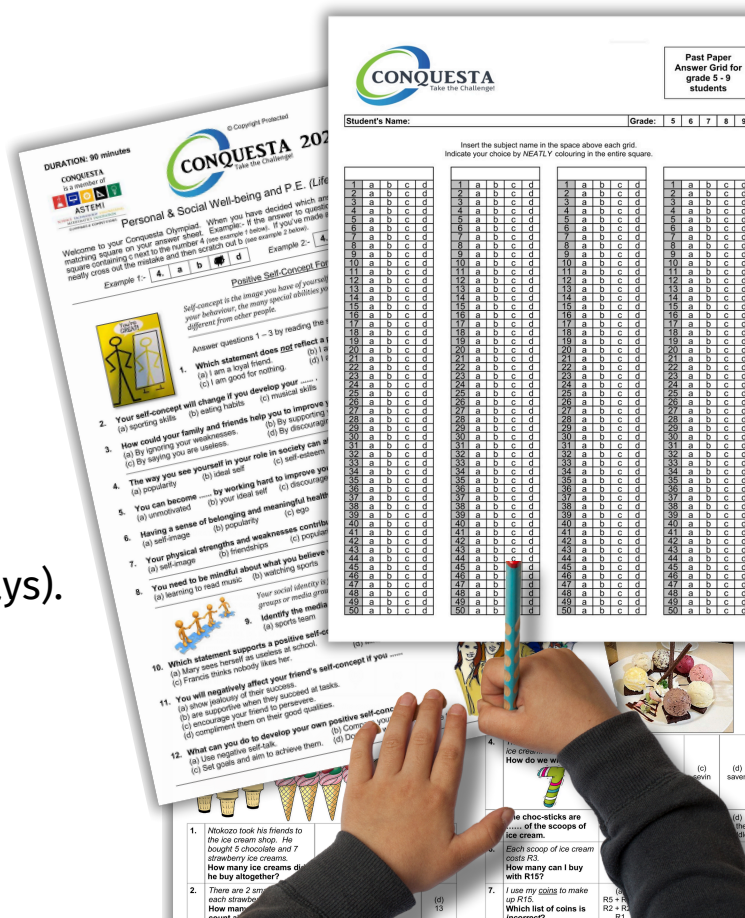
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Beyond the Fridge Door: How Art Builds Critical Thinking Skills



Desirée Hugo, Academic Head of ADvTECH Schools, outlines how parents can transform simple art activities into powerful educational tools. When approached with intention, art becomes one of the most effective tools for developing critical thinking skills.

FUN
MY FAMILY



The Power of Questioning

We all know the routine. Your child hands you a drawing, you say, "That's beautiful!", stick it on the fridge, and get on with making lunch. While encouragement is great, it does not challenge the child's intellect.

To build critical thinking skills, you need to change the dialogue. Spend more time discussing the construction of the drawing. This provides insight into your child's logic and helps them practise communicating their complex thoughts.

Try asking specific questions:

- "Why did you choose these specific colours?"
- "What is happening in this corner of the picture?"
- "Why did you decide to use this shape here?"

These questions open a window into their world. They force the child to verbalise their decision-making process. Suddenly, a pretty picture becomes a lesson in logic and communication.

Observation vs. Memory

One of the biggest hurdles in art—and in critical thinking—is the reliance on assumptions rather than evidence. "If you ask someone to draw a flower, they'll typically draw the one we all do from memory, with the circle in the middle, the little arches around the circle and a stem," explains Hugo.

This is drawing what we think we know, not what is actually there. To counter this, place a real flower in front of your child, perhaps with a magnifying glass. Ask them to draw exactly what they see. This exercise forces a deep dive into observation. They must notice the asymmetry of the petals, the texture of the stem, and the variation in colour. This skill - observing raw data before forming a conclusion—is the bedrock of scientific and analytical thinking.

4 Practical Ways to Integrate Art and Logic

You don't need a degree in Fine Arts to upgrade your homeschool art curriculum. Here are four practical strategies to turn creative time into a brain workout:

1. Focus on Open-Ended Projects

Avoid kits where the outcome is predetermined. Provide materials and let your child express themselves without tight guidance. This forces them to assess the tools at their disposal and use creative problem solving to achieve their vision. They learn that there are multiple ways to solve a problem, a vital lesson for future challenges.



2. Engage in Artistic Analysis

Expose your children to a wide range of art history. Lead discussions not just about what they like, but about the artist's intent. Ask, "Why do you think the artist made that choice?" or "What was the artist thinking?". This links visual processing with analytical skills.

3. Combine Art with Storytelling

Extend the art lesson by tasking your child with writing a story based on their creation. They must develop characters, plotlines, and settings derived from their visual work. This strengthens the neural pathways between visual creativity and verbal literacy.

4. Visualise Academic Problems

Art helps with "hard" subjects too. Just as we sketch out geometry problems, we can use art to visualise other academic hurdles. Ask your child to create a visual representation of a science concept or a historical event. This helps them brainstorm solutions and visualise abstract problems.

"By integrating art appreciation and analysis into your weekly rhythm, you are not just raising an artist; you are raising a thinker."

Note: According to the [World Economic Forum](#), creative thinking and analytical thinking are top skills required for the future workforce. Integrating these into your daily routine is not just about art; it is about career readiness.

The "Hundred Languages" of Children

This holistic approach aligns with the Reggio Emilia approach, a renowned educational philosophy. Loris Malaguzzi, the founder,

described the "Hundred Languages of Children" - the infinite ways children can express, explore, and connect their thoughts.

High-quality academic offerings consider this approach essential. By believing that children have multiple ways of seeing and being, we validate their unique perspective.

"Imagine believing that children have the ability to express themselves in more than one way. Now times that by 100, if they're given the tools and encouragement to extend their potential range," says Hugo.

Next Steps for Your Homeschool

In South Africa, where we have the freedom to tailor our children's education, we should not limit art to Friday afternoons. By integrating art appreciation and analysis into your weekly rhythm, you are not just raising an artist; you are raising a thinker. The next time your child picks up a crayon, remember: they are not just drawing; they are learning how to think.

How to Navigate Black Friday in South Africa

The SA Homeschooling Team exposes the hidden traps of this year's sales. Featuring insights from consumer experts and financial literacy advocates, we offer practical advice for South African parents to navigate the retail frenzy of Black Friday.

Everywhere you look, ads for Black Friday promise once-in-a-lifetime savings. For families operating on a single income or a tight budget, these sales can feel like a lifeline and an opportunity to stock up on stationery, tech and curriculum packages for the new academic year.

However, the "savings" are not always what they seem. While they promise massive price cuts, the reality often involves inflated original prices, impulse purchases that gather dust, and shipping delays that can derail your January start.

The Illusion of the "Was/Now" Price

One of the most common traps is the manipulation of the "original" price. Consumer journalist Wendy Knowler has frequently warned South Africans about this practice.

In a discussion regarding retail ethics with Relebohile Mabotja on 702, she warned that consumers need to be wary of "bait marketing," where a retailer raises the price of an item shortly before a sale, only to drop it back to its normal price in November, labelling it a "massive discount." This creates a false sense of urgency.

She noted that while the Consumer Protection Act (CPA) offers some protection, the burden often falls on the shopper to prove they were misled. Instead of trusting the red sticker, use local price comparison tools. Websites like PriceCheck allow you to track the cost of an item over time.

Logistics and the January Scramble

Timing is a critical factor often overlooked during the Black Friday rush. Logistics companies are under immense strain from mid-November through to December. Reports from previous years show that parcels expected in early December often arrive in mid-January due to the sheer volume of orders.

If you rely on these sales for essential "back-to-school" items, you risk starting your academic year without them. For critical items like textbooks or core curriculum workbooks, it is often safer to order in

October or buy from smaller, local suppliers who are not overwhelmed by the national retail frenzy.

Furthermore, budgeting often takes a hit from the "financial hangover" in January. If you max out your credit card on sales now, you leave no room for the unexpected expenses that always arise at the start of a new year like registration fees or sudden price hikes in groceries.



Staying Safe: Avoid Scams

The festive season is prime time for cybercriminals. As we hunt for bargains, our guard often slips. You might see an ad on social media for a high-end laptop at an unbelievably low price. The website looks legitimate, but it may be a "phishing" site designed to steal your credit card details.

Online shopping safety is non-negotiable. Here is how to verify a store:

- **Check the URL:** Ensure the site address starts with https:// and matches the brand name exactly (e.g. no subtle misspellings).
- **Look for Contact Details:** A legitimate South African business will have a physical address and a landline number, not just a generic email form.
- **Read Reviews:** Check platforms like HelloPeter or

Google Reviews for recent feedback. If a store has zero reviews or only five-star reviews posted on the same day, be suspicious.

According to recent reports from TransUnion, "account login" fraud is a rising trend in 2025, where scammers hack into existing retail accounts to make purchases. Ensure you change your passwords before the sales begin and enable two-factor authentication where possible.

Strategic Budgeting

The antidote to the Black Friday frenzy is a solid plan. Avoiding debt requires looking at your finances holistically, not just grabbing bargains as they appear.

Try this strategy for the upcoming sales:

- **The List:** Write down exactly what you need for the next academic year. Be specific (e.g., "Grade 4 Math workbook," not just "books").
- **The Cap:** Set a strict cash limit for spending. Transfer this amount to a separate account or a prepaid card. When the money is gone, the shopping stops.
- **The Wait:** If you see an item you didn't plan for, implement a 24-hour cooling-off period. If you still think it is critical the next day, and it fits in the budget, you can consider it.

Remember, the most valuable resource in your home is a present, unstressed parent, not a pile of discounted textbooks.

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STANDARD PACKAGE



8 billboard banners

8 learnerboard banners

8 1/2 page side panels

1 annual listing

2 midium rectangle

banner (weekly)

2 facebook post /reel

2 instagram post /reel

R8000

PREMIUM PACKAGE



15 billboard banners

15 learnerboard banners

15 1/2 page side panels

1 annual listing

4 midium rectangle

banner (weekly)

3 facebook post /reel

2 instagram post/reel

R15000

DELUXE PACKAGE



30 billboard banners

30 learnerboard banners

30 1/2 page side panels

1 post take-over

1 annual listing

1 native article

1 newsletter published

3 midium rectangle

banner (weekly)

Blurb of native article

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3 facebook post /reel

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