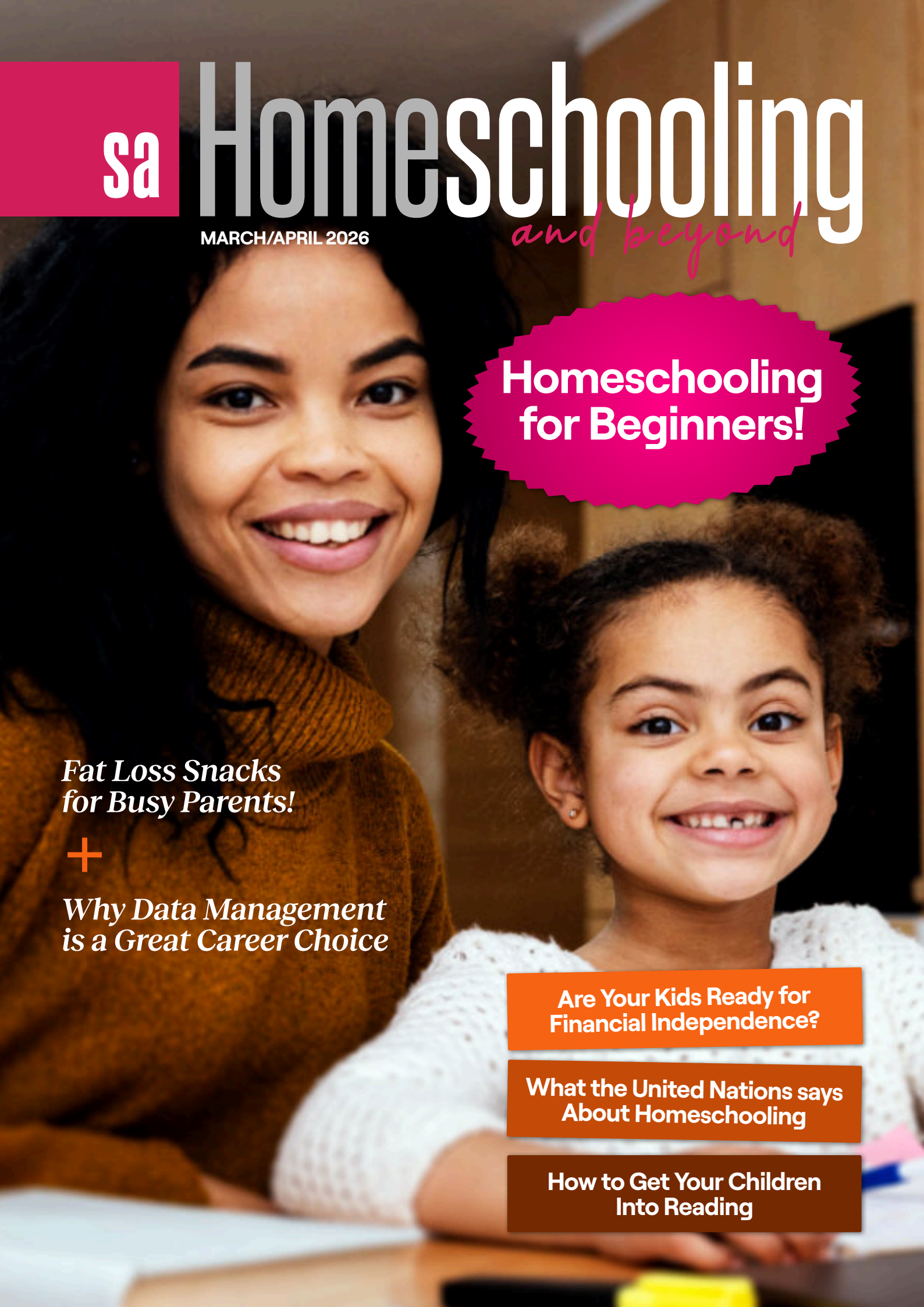




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Homeschooling

MARCH/APRIL 2026

and beyond

**Homeschooling
for Beginners!**

***Fat Loss Snacks
for Busy Parents!***

+

***Why Data Management
is a Great Career Choice***

**Are Your Kids Ready for
Financial Independence?**

**What the United Nations says
About Homeschooling**

**How to Get Your Children
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Homeschooling for Beginners

If you are exploring homeschooling, you are likely wondering about everything from legal requirements to socialisation. This is a normal part of the process. Let's answer some of the most important questions every parent considering homeschooling may have.

By **Anel van der Merwe**



The United Nations Report on Homeschooling

Executive Director of the Pestalozzi Trust, Karin van Oostrum, explains how the new UNESCO report on homeschooling will shape global policy debates and compares it to South Africa's policies.

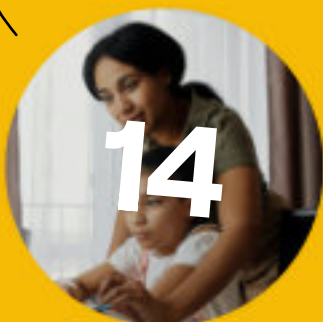
By **Karin van Oostrum**



How to Teach Your Children Financial Independence

In a world that is constantly evolving, there is no greater gift a parent can give a child than the ability to be financially independent. This guide, with insights from industry experts, outlines five key skills that can set your child on a path to a lifetime of financial security and success.

By **David Botha**



How Homeschooling is Reshaping Education in South Africa

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How to Cultivate a Love of Reading in Your Children

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Why Data Management is a Top Choice in South Africa

In today's ever-evolving digital landscape, where data is the new currency, the demand for skilled data management professionals is increasingly apparent. Nora van Schalkwyk explores the opportunities in this field and why it is a solid choice for young people entering the job market.

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Healthy Fat Loss Snacks for Busy Parents

Online fitness coach Dorian Apollos lays out a realistic fat loss snack system for parents with busy schedules.

By **Dorian Apollos**



How are we already into the second term of 2026? Seems like just yesterday we were scrambling to prepare for the 2026 academic year. My daughter is at stage six of the Cambridge curriculum and this is her second year of online homeschooling.

Where I was far more prepared for my older kids when they decided to go online for high school, I had to make some serious adjustments for my youngest. I felt like a beginner again.

I looked into our archives and dusted off a wonderful piece by Anel van der Merwe on Homeschooling for Beginners which we

updated for those of you who have also recently begun on this daunting journey.

The Pestalozzi Trust's Karin van Oostrum also contributed a very insightful opinion on a recent report by UNESCO on Homeschooling. While some of her ideas are a little controversial, it is a great review of some global trends.

Another issue that I faced in the last three months was my older daughter's departure for University. Many of the anxious conversations with her were about finances and whether she would be able to survive life in the small town of Makhanda. So I figured a refresher course, provided by David Botha, on preparing our kids for financial independence was definitely needed.

Among the other bits of advice in this issue is one I felt I needed. A fat loss healthy snack regime by our new contributor, parent fitness coach Dorian Apollos. Hope you enjoy our latest offering as much as I did putting it together.

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Homeschooling for Beginners: A Guide for Parents



Choosing homeschooling is a major decision. Ardent homeschooler, Anel van der Merwe, answers the most common queries that parents have when starting their journey, from legal registration to choosing a curriculum.

1 Must I be a qualified teacher to homeschool?

No, you do not need to be a qualified teacher. This is a common concern, but research has found no link between a parent's formal qualifications and their child's academic performance in a homeschool setting. In fact, studies show that direct parental involvement is the single variable that positively affects a child's performance. Even parents who have not completed matric can successfully homeschool their children up to matric level. Your dedication and engagement are what matter most.

If you are exploring homeschooling, you are likely wondering about everything from legal requirements to socialisation. This is a normal part of the process. Let's answer some of the most important questions every parent considering homeschooling may have.

2 Where can I find resources and support?

Finding support as a new homeschooling parent can seem daunting, but there are plenty of resources available with a little research.

- [The Gauteng Association for Homeschoolers](#) is an excellent online resource for finding curricula, classes, and local support groups.
- [The Homeschooling Association of SA](#) provides guidance, support, and hosts yearly conferences and events for families.
- **Local Communities:** Reaching out to other homeschooling parents in your community is one of the best things you can do. They can offer invaluable advice and real-world support.

3 Do I need to register with the Department of Education?

Under the South African Schools Act, parents have the right to homeschool their children. However, the law requires you to register with the Department of Basic Education (DBE). The process and requirements can vary by province, so it is a good idea to check the specifics for your area on the Department of Basic Education's website.

This is heavily disputed however, by the Pestalozzi Trust, the South African legal defence fund for home education. According to the trust, Section 51 of the BELA Act, which governs home education, raises major concerns for homeschoolers. They believe that the act is not consistent with the Constitution and undermines the right of parents to direct their children's education. For those who are uncertain, the trust provides paid members with legal assistance advice on what their legal obligations are.



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Homeschooling for Beginners: A Guide for Parents

4 Will my child be properly socialised?

This was once the most common question about homeschooling, but in recent years, most parents have realised it is not an issue. "Socialisation" is about more than just sitting in a classroom with 30 other children of the same age.

There are many ways for homeschooled children to interact with others and develop social skills. These include:

- Participating in team sports.
- Joining community-based classes for art, music, or drama.
- Arranging playdates and gatherings with other homeschooling families.
- Volunteering or participating in community service.

"Studies show that direct parental involvement is the single variable that positively affects a child's performance."

5 How do I choose the right curriculum?

This is probably the number one question new homeschoolers ask. With so many options available, choosing the best homeschooling curriculum can feel challenging. The key is to find a program that is a good fit for both your teaching style and your children's learning preferences and academic goals. You want a curriculum that will keep your children engaged, motivated, and excited to learn.

Before committing, consider these points:

- **Your Teaching Style:** Are you structured or more flexible?
- **Your Child's Learning Style:** Do they learn best through reading, hands-on activities, or visual aids?
- **Your Goals:** Are you aiming for a university exemption or a more vocational path?

Do not be afraid to try different programs, and take advantage of the free trial periods that many curriculum providers offer. Finding the right fit is a journey, so take your time.

6 What about matric and getting into university?

Homeschooled pupils have several pathways to obtaining a matric certificate. The two most popular academic options are the South African and Cambridge curricula.

- **South African National Senior Certificate (NSC):** Pupils can complete the NSC through various curriculum suppliers that are registered with the DBE.
- **Cambridge International:** An increasing number of families are opting for the Cambridge International pathway. This involves two stages: the IGCSE (roughly equivalent to Grade 11) and AS Levels (roughly equivalent to Grade 12). This qualification is recognised by the South African matriculation board and can be used for university admission.
- **American GED:** Another popular alternative is the American GED, which is also accepted by many South African universities with certain requirements.

Anel van der Merwe is a veteran homeschooling parent of 15 years and a consultant for new homeschooling families in the Western Cape. She is passionate about empowering parents to create a thriving home education environment.



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The United Nations Report on Homeschooling: What It Means for Families

Executive Director of the Pestalozzi Trust, Karin van Oostrum, explains how the new UNESCO report on homeschooling will shape global policy debates and compares it to South Africa's policies.



"The report acknowledges that parents have the right to direct their children's education, but it also links this right to the state's ability to set minimum standards."

On 25 September 2025 UNESCO released its first major report on homeschooling, entitled *Homeschooling through a Human Rights Lens*.

This marks the first time that homeschooling has been examined at the international level in such depth, and it is therefore an important document. These reports are not binding in law, but they reflect and shape global attitudes towards homeschooling and will influence future debates in South Africa and on the global stage.

Recognition of Parental Rights

A central feature of the report is its recognition of parental rights. The report affirms that parents and legal guardians have the right to choose the kind of education their children will receive, echoing long-standing human rights instruments such as the Convention against Discrimination in Education and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The report also places children's rights within this framework, stating that children's voices should be heard, but always in the context of parental decision-making.

The report reflects the international law position that states can impose "minimum standards." It is mentioned that in South Africa we have freedom of curriculum choice. We must fight to ensure that these minimum standards do not infringe on the freedom of curriculum choice.

Placing the child's right to education within the context of the parent's right to choose is a positive development.

Why These Reports Matter

It is important to note that UN reports of this kind are not treaties. They do not bind states in the way that formal international agreements do. Indeed, current political realities mean that new binding treaties on education are unlikely.

Nevertheless, these reports are highly significant because they shape how governments, civil society, and academics think about issues. Where certain approaches become widely accepted in international policy discussions, they quickly filter into national debates and can become the assumed norm. This means such reports must be read with care. Positive affirmations of rights must be acknowledged and built upon, but where concerns or proposed measures threaten parental authority or family autonomy, they must be contested.

Key Homeschooling Voices

It is encouraging that voices from the homeschooling community played a prominent role. The Trust is proud that Mike Donnelly, a member of our Advisory Council, was one of the experts consulted. Other friends and colleagues, such as Ignasi Grau of OIDEL (the Trust is a member organisation of OIDEL) and Alexandre Moreira, co-drafter of the Rio Principles on Home Education, also made contributions. Their involvement ensured that parental rights were not overlooked in the drafting process.

South African academics, particularly those connected to the Abidjan Principles, played a prominent role. The Abidjan Principles favour a strongly state-centred model of education and emphasise regulation of non-state provisioning. Their influence is visible in the repeated references to oversight mechanisms such as registration, evaluation, and even inspection.



Key Themes and Areas of Concern

1 Parental Freedom

The report acknowledges that parents have the right to direct their children's education, but it also links this right to the state's ability to set minimum standards.

2 Oversight and Home Visits

The report mentions inspections and home visits as ways to monitor homeschooling. In South Africa, we can be very grateful this was removed from the BELA Act: home visits are not permitted in our law. Families must remain vigilant to ensure that this hard-won protection is not eroded in future policy debates. The Trust, therefore, urges all parents, whether members or not, to resist even voluntary home visits.

3 Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

The report promotes CSE and questions if home schoolers are receiving sufficient education in this area. In South Africa, officials have already stated that families who reject CSE should place their children in independent schools or homeschool them. This is, therefore, not an immediate threat for homeschoolers in South Africa. We must, however, vigorously challenge any promotion of state-determined sex education in home schooling.

4 Socialisation

The report repeats the longstanding claim that homeschooling may limit socialisation. The report also notes that socialisation may not be lacking. It seems that it is difficult to prove the level of socialisation that most home schoolers enjoy to policymakers who have a naïve belief in the positive benefits of socialisation in schools. We know that schools do socialise well but that it is often negative socialisation. A fundamental shift in outlook is needed.

5 International Differences

The report reviews legal approaches worldwide. In England and Wales, notification is treated as equivalent to registration, which is less intrusive than South Africa's current model. In Germany, by contrast, homeschooling remains illegal. These contrasts show the wide latitude states have and underscore the importance of defending South Africa's space for homeschooling.

It is worth noting, however, that the report also acknowledges that when parents homeschool, they often remove some of the most capable and engaged families from the conventional schooling system. This observation inadvertently recognises the strength of the homeschooling community, even while framing it as a concern for schools.

Reading the Report Carefully

Read the report here: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000395671>. UN documents are the products of committees, and as such they reflect compromise. Statements that affirm rights are usually consensus positions that few dispute, in this case the parental right to choose. By

contrast, areas labelled as "concerns" often indicate the real divisions. For home schoolers, these are the points that require the most scrutiny and resistance when they impact our rights.

Looking Ahead

The UN report will not change South African law. But it will influence policy debates in the Department of Basic Education,

in Parliament, and in academic circles in the future. The positive points such as the strong statement on the right to choose and the statements that freedom of curriculum choice exists in SA are important aspects to build on. It is crucial for the homeschooling community to engage critically with such reports: to reinforce the affirmations of parental rights and to oppose measures that expand state control.

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banner (weekly)

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How to Teach Your Children Financial Independence

In a world that is constantly evolving, there is no greater gift a parent can give a child than the ability to be financially independent. This guide, with insights from industry experts, outlines five key skills that can set your child on a path to a lifetime of financial security and success.

As a parent, you have the unique opportunity to integrate life's most important lessons into your daily interactions with your children. One of the most critical is financial literacy.

Here are five essential skills that will help prepare your child for financial independence.

1. Master the Budget

Turn budgeting into a practical maths lesson.

- **For Young Children:** Use three clear jars labelled "Save," "Spend," and "Give." When they receive money, help them divide it among the jars. This visual tool makes the concept of allocating money tangible.
- **For Teenagers:** Help them create a simple spreadsheet or use a budgeting app. Start by discussing their sources of income, like allowances or part-time jobs, and their typical expenses, such as data, entertainment, or school supplies. The goal is to help your child create and stick to a budget.

2. Build a Habit of Saving

Instilling saving as a habit is a gift that keeps on giving. Carl Coetzee, CEO of [BetterBond](#), recommends encouraging children to set tangible savings goals, like for a new video game or a family holiday.

Start talking about saving when they are young and introduce the power of compound interest as they get older. Coetzee advises, "Open a savings account for each child so that they can see their money grow". Many South African banks like [FNB](#) offer youth accounts. This simple step helps them get used to the idea of delayed gratification and lays a strong foundation for their financial future.

3. Understand Investing

"Teaching a child about investment is part of preparing them for the future," says Coetzee. While stock market investing might be for older teens, the core concept can be introduced early. Coetzee suggests using homeownership as a prime example. Explain that a home is more than just a roof over your head; it is an asset that typically increases in value over time and can contribute to lifelong financial security. This frames investing as a long-term strategy for building wealth.



"Use three clear jars labelled "Save," "Spend," and "Give." When they receive money, help them divide it among the jars."

SAVE**SPEND****GIVE**

David Botha is a financial planner and homeschooling father of two from Johannesburg. David is passionate about demystifying personal finance and empowering the next generation with practical money skills.

4. Cultivate a Strong Work Ethic

A strong work ethic and an entrepreneurial spirit are key to developing independence and resilience. With youth unemployment in South Africa remaining persistently high (the rate for job-seekers aged 15-24 was 62.1% in the first quarter of 2023, according to Stats SA), entrepreneurship is vital.

Didi Onwu of the [Anzisha Prize](#) notes that traditional jobs are scarce, even for those with an excellent education. She says, "it's in your children's best interests to have ongoing conversations about economic opportunities".

Encourage your children with:

- **Age-appropriate chores:** Create a chore chart that allocates less complex and easier tasks to younger children and more complex and heavier tasks to the older ones.
- **Entrepreneurial projects:** This is a perfect fit for financial literacy. They could make and sell crafts, offer babysitting services, or start a small gardening service for neighbours.

5. Practise Giving Back

Financial skills are important, but it is also essential to teach children about social responsibility. Dalit Shekel of [Relate Bracelets](#) advises parents to lead by example, perhaps by dedicating time or a portion of income to a cause the family cares about.

Have conversations about how their actions can positively impact their community. By encouraging empathy and generosity, you instill a sense of purpose that goes beyond financial gain. This can be as simple as donating old toys or volunteering at a local animal shelter.

It is never too early to start these conversations. The money skills and habits your children develop now can shape their future and enable them to thrive in a complex world.



How Homeschooling is Reshaping Education in South Africa

Every year, parents across the country face the challenge of securing a place for their child in a suitable school. Provincial education departments work hard to place every learner, but many schools are filled to capacity. This situation often forces parents to accept placements in schools that are not their first choice. As the nation seeks to speed up education and create greater equality, a powerful solution is gaining momentum: homeschooling in South Africa.

Alternative education, including homeschooling and online schooling, helps broaden the country's educational reach and takes the strain off the public system. The shift towards accepting these alternatives has grown in recent years, a trend accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. As South Africa's largest provider, Optimi Learning saw a nearly 60% rise in student numbers between 2020 and 2023.

Here are the main ways homeschooling and online schooling are helping to strengthen the right to education for all South Africans.



Amidst a major shift towards alternative education, Louise Schoonwinkel explores ways that homeschooling and online schooling are strengthening the right to education in our country.

1 Quality Learning, Anywhere

One of the primary benefits of homeschooling is its flexibility. It allows a child to receive a quality education from anywhere, whether on a remote Karoo farm or in a city apartment. This is a valuable option for families living in areas with limited school choices.

This flexibility also supports families who travel for extended periods for work. Children can continue their education without interruption and, if the family settles in one place again, they can re-enter a mainstream school seamlessly, provided their provider adheres to quality standards. Furthermore, this educational model is well-suited for children who are pursuing talents at a high level, such as professional athletes, musicians or young entrepreneurs.

2 A Clear Pathway to Matric

A common question from parents is about qualifications. While homeschooling is more self-directed and online schooling involves dedicated teachers and timetables, both can provide a clear route to matriculation.

Credible providers follow the same CAPS-aligned curriculum that all schools in the country use. CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) is the national curriculum set by the Department of Basic Education. This means that at the end of their school careers, these students write the same final exams as every other learner in the country and receive a National Senior Certificate upon successful completion. This provides a trusted alternative route to a matric qualification.

Louise Schoonwinkel is the Chief Commercial Officer of Optimi Learning, the largest homeschooling and online schooling provider in South Africa.

3 Greater Subject Choice

Homeschooling offers a wider selection of subjects than what's available in mainstream schools. In many schools, students in the FET phase (Grades 10-12) are limited in their subject choices due to the school's available resources.

With homeschooling, these limits don't apply. Students can take on extra subjects that align with their interests and future career goals, such as niche technology courses, additional languages, or specialised arts subjects that their local school may not offer.

4 Opportunities for Socialisation

The idea that homeschooled children miss out on social activities is a persistent myth. In reality, home-educated children often have more time and flexibility to participate in a wide range of extracurricular activities, where they can interact with a diverse group of peers.

Many families join local homeschool co-ops, sports clubs, and cultural groups. Children in online schools are also part of a class where they interact regularly with their classmates and teachers during lessons and group projects.

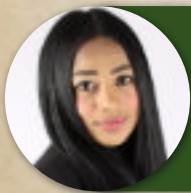
5 Clearer Regulation is Coming

To build greater trust and transparency, the South African government is working on a framework for online schooling. This move towards official homeschooling regulations are expected to require online school providers to register with the Department of Basic Education.

This development will give parents more confidence when choosing a provider. The framework aims to blend quality, structured learning with the flexibility of a home-based environment. When selecting a provider, it is important for parents to choose one that is committed to complying with these upcoming requirements. For the latest on educational policy, parents can refer to official sources like the [Department of Basic Education](#) website.

"Homeschooling offers a wider selection of subjects than what's available in mainstream schools."

How to Cultivate a Love of Reading in Your Children (Age 10-12)



Nalani Singarum, Academic Advisor at ADvTECH Schools, explains how parents and schools can create an environment where reading and a love of stories is valued and nurtured – and how this will not only help young people build positive associations with books and learning, but will set them up with tools for life.

Children between ages 10 and 12 are at a fascinating stage of life. They're no longer little kids, but they're not yet teenagers. They're starting to ask bigger questions, push boundaries, and search for who they are becoming. Amid all these changes, reading plays a powerful role, and parents should strongly encourage students to build their reading muscle during this time.

Research shows that children who develop a love for reading between the ages of 10 and 12 (even if they didn't previously enjoy reading books) tend to perform better academically later, as reading enhances multiple foundational skills essential for school success. These skills include a stronger understanding of subjects, better information absorption, and clearer expression of ideas

– making this a pivotal age group for transitioning from "learning to read" to "reading to learn".

"In contrast to content on devices, books give children a safe space to explore new ideas, test out possibilities, and imagine life through someone else's eyes. They also strengthen critical thinking, boost vocabulary, and build empathy - all skills that help pre-teens navigate school and friendships with more confidence," says Nalani Singarum, Academic Advisor at ADvTECH Schools.

"Most importantly, reading at this age lays the foundation for a lifelong habit. A child who enjoys books at ages 10 to 12 is far more likely to carry that love into their teenage years, when the pull of social media and other distractions becomes stronger," she says.

A 2024 study of children aged 10 to 12, by neuroscientists at Columbia University's Teachers College, found that reading on paper promoted "deeper reading" with better comprehension and processing of complex texts. It was noted that this age group is pivotal for transitioning from "learning to read" to "reading to learn", making physical books ideal for exploring ideas and imagining others' perspectives without digital distractions.

"Even where children at this age did not previously enjoy reading books, it is not too late to develop a regular and enjoyable reading habit," says Singarum.

"Regular reading during this key developmental period will support stronger understanding across subjects, better information absorption, and clearer expression of ideas throughout the child's life."

"A 2024 study of children aged 10 to 12, by neuroscientists at Columbia University's Teachers College, found that reading on paper promoted "deeper reading" with better comprehension and processing of complex texts."

Creating A Reading-Rich Home

Pre-teens crave independence, yet they still look to their parents for cues. The best way to nurture reading at this age is to show that it's valued at home - not as a school task, but as part of family life. Practical ways to create a reading-rich environment include:

- **Bedtime shifts:** Before bedtime, spend some time reading side by side. You each choose your own book, then share a favourite line or moment. It shows that reading is for everyone, not just a chore for children. (And no, reading on devices does not count).
- **Reading in everyday life:** Invite your child to read maps while travelling, menus at restaurants, or DIY instructions at home. These moments prove that reading has value beyond the classroom.
- **Word of the day challenge:** Let your child pick an unusual word from a book and challenge the family to use it naturally in conversation. Older children enjoy the competition and sense of mastery.
- **Treasure hunts with riddles:** Write riddles or codes your child must solve to find the next clue. Link some clues to favourite books for an extra spark.
- **Peer power:** Encourage your child to swap books with a friend or start a mini book club, to make reading become a social, not a solitary activity.

The Role Of Schools

Beyond the curriculum, schools (whether mainstream, online or home) play a key role in creating an environment where reading is valued and enjoyable, which helps students build positive associations with books and learning.

"Schools provide opportunities that motivate children to read. By creating a love of reading within a supportive learning environment, you complement and extend the encouragement children receive in the home" says Singarum.

She adds that it is valuable to have structured programmes, rather than just ad hoc reading opportunities.

"At ADvTECH, we have a reading programme called Booktacular, which is specifically designed to make reading meaningful and magical again. Through activities like Book Clubs that spark lively conversations, creative 'Book review in a bag' projects,

Literature Circles where every child takes on a role, and Visual literacy tasks that bring pictures to life, children discover that stories are adventures to be explored, not assignments to be completed."

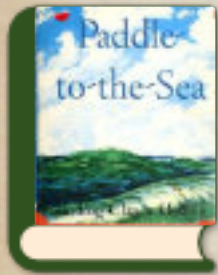
Parents can extend this spirit into their homes with small, joyful habits like these. When reading feels playful and purposeful, children are far more likely to carry that joy into their teenage years and beyond, Singarum says.

"Between ages 10 and 12, children are shaping their identities. They're learning who they are, who they want to be, and how they see the world. Books offer them mirrors to see themselves and windows to step into lives very different from their own."

As parents and teachers, when we nurture a love of stories, we're not only supporting school success, we're giving our young people tools for life."

Nalani Singarum is an Academic Advisor for the InterSen Phase at ADvTECH Schools, a division of ADvTECH, Africa's leading private education provider. She specialises in guiding students and parents through the crucial stages of academic development.





1

Paddle-to-the-Sea

by Holling C. Holling

Summary: A young Indigenous Canadian boy carves a small figure in a canoe and sets it on a journey through the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean. The book follows the canoe's incredible voyage, teaching geography and ecology along the way.

Themes: Perseverance, the interconnectedness of nature, journeys.

Homeschool Activity: Get a large map of North America and trace Paddle's route from Lake Superior to the sea. Research the different bodies of water and industries he passes.



2

Where the Red Fern Grows

by Wilson Rawls

Summary: An emotional and adventurous tale of a young boy named Billy and his two beloved hunting hounds, Old Dan and Little Ann, in the Ozark Mountains.

Themes: Love, determination, grief, the human-animal bond.

Homeschool Activity: This story is a powerful one for discussing deep emotions. Talk about the dedication it took for Billy to get his dogs and the powerful bond they shared. It's a great opportunity for a gentle conversation about love and loss.



3

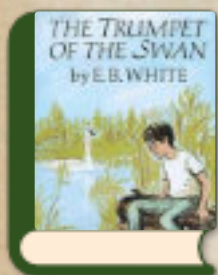
Little Britches: Father and I Were Ranchers

by Ralph Moody

Summary: The first in a series of autobiographical novels, this book tells the story of Ralph Moody's family as they move to a Colorado ranch in the early 20th century and learn the hard lessons of ranch life.

Themes: Hard work, family bonds, resilience, responsibility.

Homeschool Activity: Discuss the chores Ralph had to do. Create a "responsibility chart" for your own home and talk about how everyone's contribution helps the family succeed.



6

The Trumpet of the Swan

by E.B. White

Summary: Louis is a trumpeter swan born without a voice. To win the heart of his love, Serena, he learns to play a real trumpet, leading him on a series of adventures.

Themes: Overcoming obstacles, family, determination, finding your voice.

Homeschool Activity: Listen to different types of brass instruments online. Discuss how Louis used his unique talent to solve his problems.



7

Charlotte's Web

by E.B. White

Summary: This beloved story tells of the unlikely friendship between a pig named Wilbur and a clever spider named Charlotte, who devises a plan to save him from his fate.

Themes: Friendship, loss, loyalty, the cycle of life.

Homeschool Activity: Start a nature journal. Research different types of spiders found in your part of South Africa and learn about their life cycles and the amazing engineering of their webs.



8

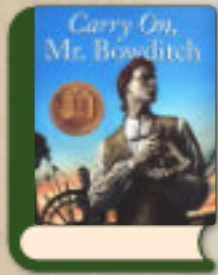
Laddie: A True Blue Story

by Gene Stratton-Porter

Summary: Told from the perspective of "Little Sister," this is a semi-autobiographical novel about a large, loving family living on a farm in Indiana in the late 19th century.

Themes: Family values, nature, integrity, faith.

Homeschool Activity: Start a family tree project. Discuss the values and traditions that are important in your own family.



4

Carry On, Mr. Bowditch

by Jean Lee Latham

Summary: The inspiring true story of Nathaniel Bowditch, a young man in the 18th century who, despite having little formal schooling, taught himself mathematics and astronomy to become a brilliant navigator who revolutionised sea travel.

Themes: Self-education, perseverance, the power of knowledge.

Homeschool Activity: This is a perfect story for homeschoolers! Discuss how Nat used books and real-world problems to educate himself. Try a practical navigation challenge using a compass or a map of your neighbourhood.



5

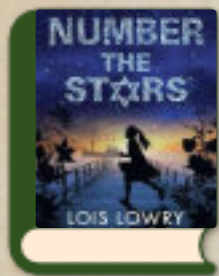
Adventures with Waffles

by Maria Parr

Summary: A heartwarming and hilarious story about the adventures of two best friends, Trille and Lena, in a small Norwegian village. Their escapades often end in minor chaos but always reinforce their deep bond.

Themes: Friendship, family, adventure, childhood innocence.

Homeschool Activity: Make waffles together! While you cook, talk about the meaning of friendship and share stories of adventures with your own childhood friends.



9

Number the Stars

by Lois Lowry

Summary: Set in 1943 Copenhagen, this historical novel tells the story of ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen as her family helps shelter her Jewish best friend from the Nazis.

Themes: Bravery, friendship, sacrifice, social justice.

Homeschool Activity: Use this book as a gentle introduction to World War II history. Research the story of the Danish Resistance and discuss what it means to be a good friend and citizen in difficult times.



10

The Hobbit

by J.R.R. Tolkien

Summary: The comfortable hobbit Bilbo Baggins is swept into an epic quest with a band of dwarves to reclaim their mountain home from a dragon. It's a story of a small person finding great courage.

Themes: Courage, heroism, greed, adventure.

Homeschool Activity: Draw a map of Bilbo's journey from Hobbiton to the Lonely Mountain. Discuss the moments where Bilbo felt scared but acted bravely anyway.

10 Classic Books for Kids

In a world of fast-paced media and fleeting digital content, the quiet act of opening a book can feel like a small rebellion. As homeschooling parents, we have the unique opportunity to guide our children toward stories that do more than just entertain—they build character. Sharing timeless, classic books for kids is not about nostalgia; it is about giving them a map to the human heart.

As author Sarah Mackenzie says, "When we read aloud, we give our kids practice living as heroes... As the characters in our favourite books struggle through hardship, we struggle with them". These stories provide a safe space to practice courage, virtue, and empathy.

A Starting Point for Your Homeschool Reading List

This following list is a great starting point for your family's reading library. Each book is a doorway to a different world, filled with lessons that resonate long after the final page is turned.

Education That Nourishes Mind, Body, and Spirit

At Classical Conversations, we believe homeschooling is more than academics, it's about shaping hearts, minds, and character for a lifetime of learning. Rooted in the classical model, our communities equip parents and encourage children to become curious thinkers, clear communicators, and compassionate leaders.

When you join us, you're not walking this journey alone. With Christ at the center, you'll find supportive families, weekly community days that inspire, and resources that guide you step by step. Together, we cultivate wisdom, nurture curiosity, and build strong foundations for faith and learning that last a lifetime.



Visit The Online Bookstore

Our online bookstore is stocked with trusted resources like IEW, All About Learning, and Apologia, along with a wide range of classical and Christian curriculum, literature, and enrichment tools. Each title is carefully chosen to support families on the Classical Conversations journey, helping you cultivate a love for learning at every stage.



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A Practical Pathway to Business for Young Learners

For many parents of home schoolers, the next step after school is not always clear. Some learners are not drawn to traditional academic routes, but they are motivated to build, create, and explore ideas more practically.

The Higher Certificate in Entrepreneurship offers a structured and accredited option for these learners. It is an NQF Level 5 qualification, registered with SAQA and accredited by the Council on Higher Education, which means it is recognized and can lead to further study. What makes this course different is its focus on real application. Students are not only introduced to business theory, but they are also guided through the process of turning ideas into something workable. This includes identifying opportunities, solving problems, and developing a business concept that responds to real needs.

A key part of the programme is learning through doing. Students work towards developing a full business plan and gain experience presenting their ideas in a structured way. Alongside this, the course includes 240 hours of industry engagement, giving students exposure to how businesses operate in practice. This helps build confidence and a clearer understanding of what it takes to turn an idea into a functioning business.

The course is also flexible. It can be completed in one year through contact learning or over one to two years through distance learning. This allows families to choose a pace that works for their situation.

This qualification suits learners who are interested in starting a business, those who want a practical introduction before committing to further studies, or those who prefer a hands-on learning approach. It also supports learners who may not follow a traditional university pathway but still want a recognised qualification.

Graduates can choose to start their own ventures, work within small businesses, or continue their studies at a higher level. The course lays a foundation in thinking, problem-solving, and practical business skills that can be applied across many contexts. For learners who want to take a more active approach to their future, this programme provides a clear and supported starting point.

For more information, [visit www.inscape.ac](http://www.inscape.ac)

Why Data Management is a Top Choice in South Africa

In today's ever-evolving digital landscape, where data is the new currency, the demand for skilled data management professionals is increasingly apparent. Nora van Schalkwyk explores the opportunities in this field and why it is a solid choice for young people entering the job market.



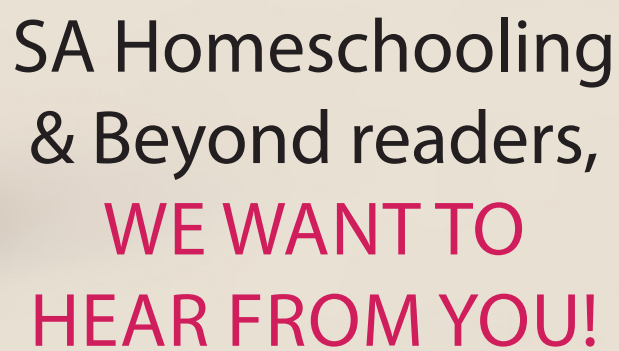
Nora van Schalkwyk is the Head of Finance and HR at Gabsten Technologies. She is passionate about identifying and nurturing talent within the South African technology sector, focusing on bridging the skills gap and guiding graduates toward sustainable and rewarding careers.

Guiding your homeschooled teen towards a fulfilling and stable career is one of the most significant tasks for any parent-educator. In a world of rapidly changing technology, you want to point them towards a field with long-term potential. While app development and artificial intelligence often get the spotlight, one of the most stable and in-demand fields, data management, remains the quiet foundation of the entire tech industry. A career in data management will always be a smart move for any young person planning their future especially given the current skills gap in South Africa, where qualified tech professionals are highly sought after.

Why Data Management Matters

The explosive growth of data has created a huge need for professionals who can manage it. Every time we use an app, shop online or interact with a service, data is created. Businesses collect these massive volumes of information and face the complex challenge of managing and protecting it.

This isn't just a technical problem; it is a critical business function.



sa Homeschooling
and beyond

Effective data management is essential for business continuity. With the rise of data breaches and privacy concerns, robust data practices are more necessary than ever. As a result, the role of a data management professional has become indispensable for protecting company information and ensuring compliance with laws like the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) in South Africa. This creates a landscape of IT careers in South Africa that are both stable and essential.

"Homeschooling offers a wider selection of subjects than what's available in mainstream schools."

What Does a Data Professional Do?

While AI and app development often steal the limelight, data management is the foundation upon which those exciting fields are built. Think of it as the difference between being the architect who designs a skyscraper and the structural engineer who makes sure it won't fall down. Both roles are critical, but one is less visible.



Key Functions

Data Protection, Backup, and Recovery: This involves creating systems to ensure data remains secure and can be restored after a disaster, cyber-attack, or accidental deletion. These professionals are the first responders in a digital crisis.

Archiving and Storage: This function involves preserving historical data for legal compliance and future analysis. It also means designing efficient storage solutions so that data can be accessed quickly when needed, which improves business efficiency.

Data Governance: This involves setting the rules and procedures for how data is used, stored, and protected and whether it complies with legal and ethical standards.

The South African government itself recognises the need for these skills. The country's 2025/26 Critical Skills List officially includes roles like 'Data Scientist' and 'Data Management Specialist'.

Building a Pathway to a Data Career

The era of data-driven decision-making has created an intense demand for skilled professionals who can manage and protect all types of data. For teens showing an aptitude for logic, problem-solving and technology, this is an excellent path to consider.

According to a recent report by PwC on workforce skills, "data analytics, data science and data engineering are all areas where demand consistently outstrips supply."

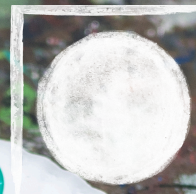
Practical Steps for Homeschoolers

Parents can help teens build a strong foundation for data management careers in South Africa right from their home classroom.

- **Focus on Core Subjects:** A strong grasp of Mathematics, Information Technology, and English is essential.
- **Explore Online Courses:** Platforms like Coursera and edX offer introductory courses in database management, SQL, and data analytics from top universities.
- **Encourage Practical Projects:** A teen can start a project like creating a database to catalogue their book collection or analysing statistics from their favourite sports team.
- **Seek Internships:** The field offers a great chance to work with diverse teams. Internships give a platform for hands-on experience, allowing individuals to refine their skills and adapt to industry tools.

A Career with Long-Term Benefits

Graduates are often drawn to the fast results that AI and app development seem to promise and often overlook the long-term benefits a career in data management can provide. By guiding your child's career choice toward this stable and growing field, you are helping them build a resilient and rewarding professional future.



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Healthy Fat Loss Snacks for Busy Parents

Online fitness coach Dorian Apollos lays out a realistic fat loss snack system for parents with busy schedules.

The Core Problem

You're not actually failing at fat loss, you're just caught off guard when hunger hits you suddenly. This lack of planning makes you grab whatever's quick. Usually, you'll reach for biscuits or crisps which will ruin any progress you may have made. Hunger ends up making your decisions for you and you lose control over your daily diet.

Prepare, Prepare, Prepare

Fat loss isn't about cutting snacks out of your daily life, it's about choosing snacks that keep you full, control your cravings while supporting your energy levels. Planning ahead helps you lose weight even on your busiest days and eliminates the stress of dieting. It allows you to succeed while managing work, family and even helps you stay on track during school runs.

The 20-30g Protein Rule

Every snack should have 20g to 30g of protein. Not only does it help to reduce your cravings, it keeps you full for longer and you'll lose weight faster. You should also keep every snack under 300 calories.

Zero-Effort Grab & Go Snacks

~ 1 Minute

- Protein shake (ready-to-drink or powder + water)
- Greek yogurt (plain or flavored)
- Cottage cheese cups
- Boiled eggs (store-bought or prepped)
- Milk or high-protein milk



Quick Combos to Keep you Full

~ 3 Minutes

- Apple + peanut butter
- Banana + protein shake
- Rice cakes + cottage cheese
- Greek yogurt + berries
- Protein bar (low sugar, high protein)



Prep Once, Eat All Week

~ 15 minutes

Preparation = stress-free snacks for the week.

- Boiled eggs (batch cook)
- Grilled chicken pieces
- Protein overnight oats
- Homemade protein muffins
- Smoothie packs (freeze and blend)



Busy Day Survival Snacks

These snacks are perfect for work or the car when life is chaotic.

- Chicken strips (pre-cooked)
- Deli meat roll-ups
- Tuna sachets
- Biltong / jerky
- Cheese sticks

What to Avoid

Snack foods with no protein:

- Chips
- Biscuits
- Sugary granola bars

Liquid calories with no nutrients:

- Sodas
- Sugary coffees

Daily Success Checklist

Ask yourself these questions every day.

- ☐ Did I hit my protein goals today?
- ☐ Did I plan my day ahead?
- ☐ Do I have snacks ready for tomorrow?

Pro Tips for Success

Always carry one emergency snack in your car, bag and office to prevent overeating later in the day.

Keep every snack under 300 calories.

Always include protein in your snacks.

The Top 10 Go-To Snack List

1. **Greek Yogurt + Berries:** High protein + low calorie = keeps you full longer
2. **Apple + Peanut Butter:** Fiber + healthy fats = no energy crashes
3. **Boiled Eggs:** Easy, portable, high protein
4. **Protein Smoothie (30 sec option):** Protein powder + banana + almond milk
5. **Cottage Cheese + Fruit:** Slow-digesting protein = less cravings
6. **Rice Cakes + Peanut Butter:** Quick carb + fat combo
7. **Handful of Nuts + Fruit:** Perfect on-the-go snack
8. **Tuna + Crackers:** High protein, super filling
9. **Dark Chocolate + Almonds:** Stops sweet cravings without overdoing it
10. **Hummus + Veggies:** Low calorie, high volume snack

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