

The Fluidity of Truth

Erin Scherger, Herndon

As parents, we know truth changes. One minute, your toddler loves peas; the next, they hate them. A well-loved story could have been demanded hundreds of times when it's suddenly discarded. One day, our pre-teens are best friends with the neighbor's kids; the next, bitter rivals. Childhood is constantly evolving; so why do we seem to expect there to be an ultimate correct answer for how to teach our children?

Gather a group of new homeschooling parents together, and inevitably there are questions.

"What is the best way to teach my children math?"

"My kid is going to start high school; what subjects should I teach?"

"My child is 2 years old; what's the best way to teach them to read?"

It is, of course, fine (even desirable) to ask for suggestions and advice; we provide some in every issue of *Voice* magazine! The plethora of homeschool-related blogs, methods, curricula, products, and information offers wonderful variety but can also be overwhelming. It can be reassuring to learn other people's experiences. But keep in mind that what may work for your friends, your favorite conference speaker, or that well-known homeschool blogger may not actually be effective for your child.

We may also believe that with experience, the answers become evident. Long-time homeschoolers may simply turn to tried-and-true curricula and methods as they plan their upcoming school year. But, just like that favorite toddler story, what worked for us 10 years ago, five years ago, or even just last year may no longer be relevant.

Because of this variability, we are required to periodically put on objective glasses with which to examine our homeschooled. But complicating the matter is the fact that our vision is limited by the groups we've joined as well as by our individual experiences. What we believe (whether we're aware of it or not) informs every choice we make. The community with which we surround ourselves naturally confirms our own biases. It's important to not give in to the pressure (subtle or overt) from others in our groups and in our communities and to take a close look at our own unique situations without blinders.

Even if 99% of all homeschoolers love something (curriculum, method, product), your child may not. It doesn't make your child (or you) a failure at homeschooling; it simply means that your family's truth is different. Friends and online gurus may offer well-meaning advice, but it does not make

them experts on *your* family, *your* children, or *your* situation. The writers for *Voice* are volunteers who hail from different parts of the commonwealth with different approaches and beliefs about homeschooling. Not only do we hope that you find community and encouragement within our pages, but perhaps novel points of view to consider as well.

One article takes a critical look at homeschooling research and our tendencies to look for scientific validation. One writer tackles the ever-popular question: "What curriculum should I use to teach my preschooler?" Another encourages us to record our homeschooling memories, not just for evidence of progress but because this time with our children is worth preserving. We take a look at each stage of schooling; you'll see for yourself how considerations change for each of us! Even the governing body of VaHomeschoolers does not stay static; read further to meet our new board of directors and our new executive director. There are exciting changes afoot!

It's time to get (not) back to school! We look forward to helping you acknowledge the authenticity of your own ever-evolving truth.

Erin Scherger is in her 15th year of a six-month homeschooling experiment. She lives in Herndon with her homeschooled high-school-aged daughter, her husband, and her hamster.

The shoe that fits one person pinches another; there is no recipe for living that suits all cases.

—Carl Jung

Voice

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Contents

FEATURES

4 **Family Photojournalism: Recording Our Homeschooling Lives**
by Michele Kendzie

10 **High School Planning: A Collaborative Approach (Part 1)**
by Sarah and Heidi Zmick

12 **So You Want To Teach Your Preschooler... My Story and Advice for Choosing What and How To Teach Children Under Age 6**
by Karen Shumway

19 **In Search of the Research on Home Education**
by Sarah Blunkosky, M.A.

DEPARTMENTS

8 **ROADS SCHOLARS Taking History for a Ride at the Keystone Truck and Tractor Museum**
by Mary Sandkam

15 **FAMILY LEARNING IDEAS Homeschooling Apps and Websites** compiled by Angela Tuell

21 **Homeschooling Holidays Through the School Year**
by DeeDee Sauter

22 **Playing with the Circuit Playground**
by Abigail Spigarelli

23 **Fall/Winter 2017 Virginia Homeschool Days** compiled by Heather Smithson

28 **Announcing Our New Executive Director**

30 **Learning To Fish** by Stephanie Elms

26 **Introducing Your 2017 VaHomeschoolers Board of Directors**

ON THE COVER

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