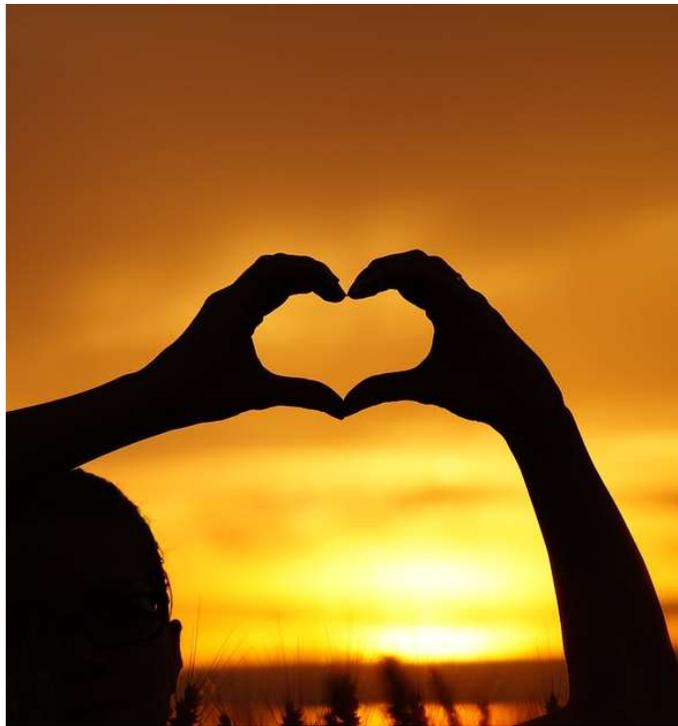




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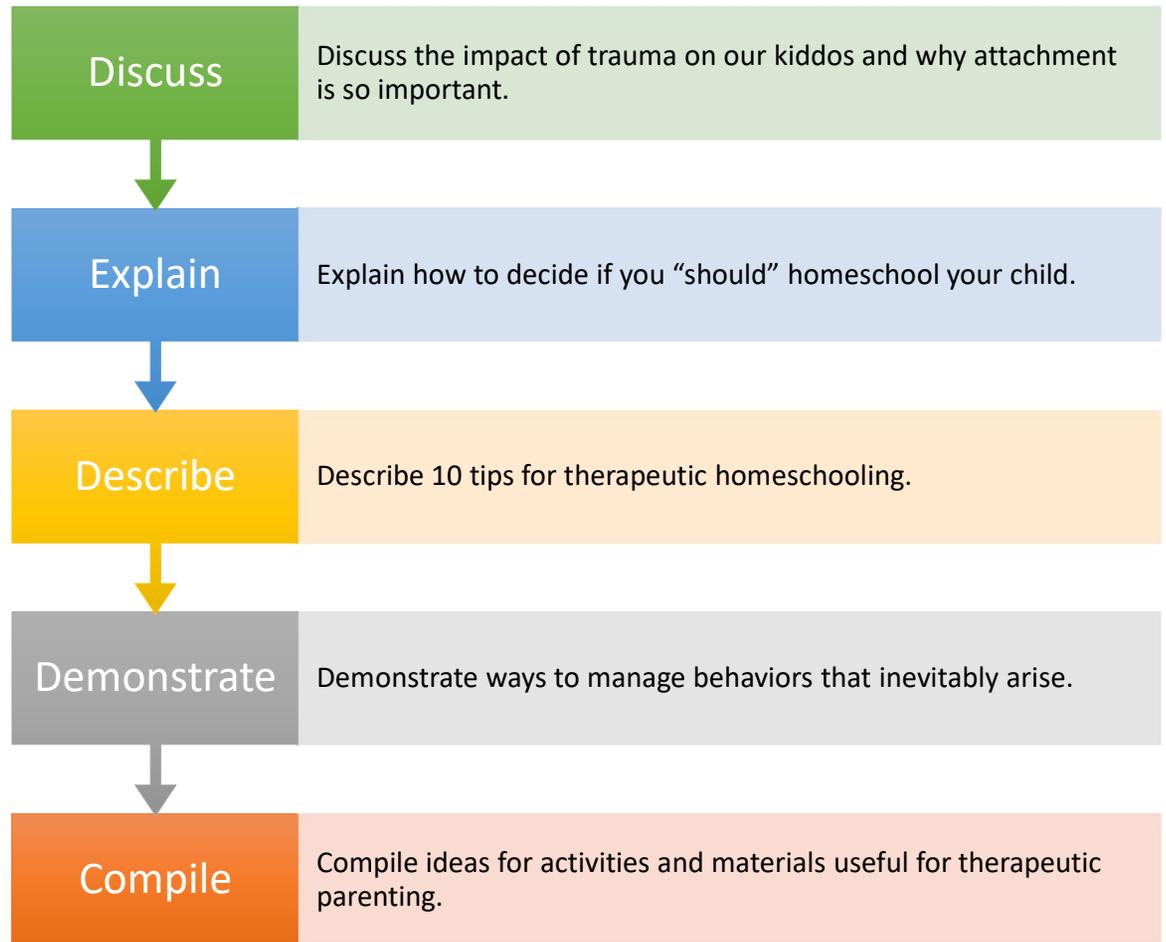


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Therapeutic Homeschooling

*A guide to helping children who have suffered trauma heal and learn through attachment-focused homeschooling.

Learning Objectives



My Story

How Does Trauma Affect Our Kids?

Difficulty Regulating

Fight, Flight, or Freeze

Trouble making friends

Fearful

Sadness

Anger

Difficulty Concentrating

Separation Anxiety

Sleep difficulties

Learning difficulties

Difficulty Attaching

Attachment

Healthy, strong attachment to a primary caregiver can enable a child to heal from trauma and develop healthy relationships.





What is Homeschooling?

From home base

Led by parents/caregivers

Not in the traditional public school setting

States have different requirements/rules



What is Therapeutic Homeschooling?

From home base

Led by parents/caregivers

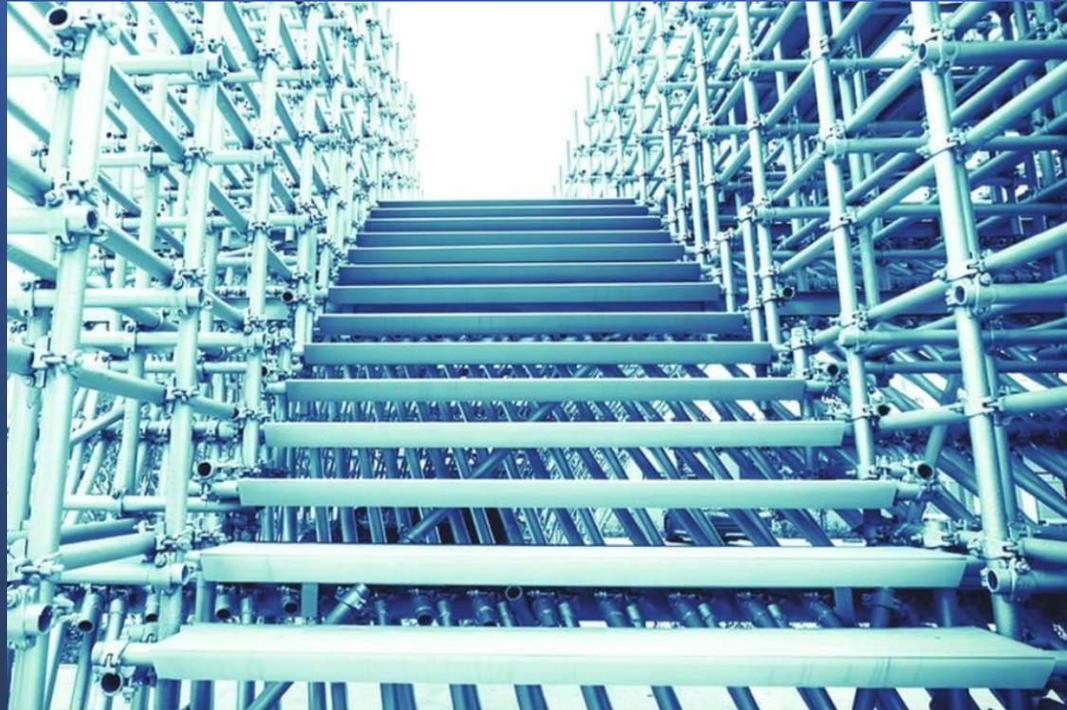
Not in the traditional public school setting

Based on the individual needs of the child

Focused on relationship and attachment

Implements therapeutic parenting techniques

Flexible



You cannot force a child's
healing process, only support it.

HEATHER T. FORBES, LCSW
WWW.BEYONDCONSEQUENCES.COM

Why Homeschool Kids with a History of Trauma?



Your child's
mental health
is more
important
than their
grades.



+

- HELPING CHILDREN WITH HOME EDUCATION: HOW HOME EDUCATION CAN ENABLE GOOD EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE
by Karleen Gribble and Rebecca English

International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies (2016) 7(2): 240–256 DOI: 10.18357/ijcyfs72201615720

“We propose that poor school outcomes for children in out-of-home care are a result of factors associated with a history of trauma. These factors include:

- Children exhibiting asynchronous social, emotional, and intellectual development resulting in difficulties with peer relationships and learning.
- Children experiencing poor stress regulation, which affects them negatively in the school environment because this environment can be stressful.
- School attendance having a negative impact on the relationship between caregiver/s and child, adversely affecting their attachment bond and recovery from trauma.
- The focus of school education on academic learning is not well matched to the needs of traumatised children.”



(Some of the) Benefits of Therapeutic Homeschooling

- Promotes attachment
- Promotes healing from trauma
- Promotes better learning
- Helps child learn to regulate
- Allows you to go at your child's pace
- Shrinks your child's world
- Lowers your child's stress
- Flexibility in all things
- Allows you to focus on your child's passions and interests

How do I know if I “should” homeschool my child?

There is no right or wrong answer.

Is your child “acting out” at school?

Does your child act “perfectly” at school and then come home and melt down?

Does your child hide under the table at school? Check out?

Does your child need more time with you?

Do you have the time and resources to homeschool? It can be done even with a working parent.

What does your gut say your child needs?

If you doubt whether you can do it, you can!





How Do I Homeschool? What Curriculum do I Use? Where Do I Start?

- While this presentation is more about the therapeutic parts of homeschooling and not the academic parts, here are some starter tips:
- Research your state and local rules.
- There is no one right way to homeschool.
- It completely depends on your child.
- Learn your child's learning style(s).
- Research curriculums that may work for your child; also ask other homeschoolers you know; join FB homeschooling groups.
- Remember, what's most important is that you connect with your child and that your child feels safe. This is not only most important, but your child also won't learn much if not feeling connected and safe.
- Start slow and simple. Read books together. Go on field trips. Watch documentaries together. Go for walks together. Do creative projects together.



MOST
IMPORTANT
OF ALL:

Tailor everything to
your individual child's
needs.



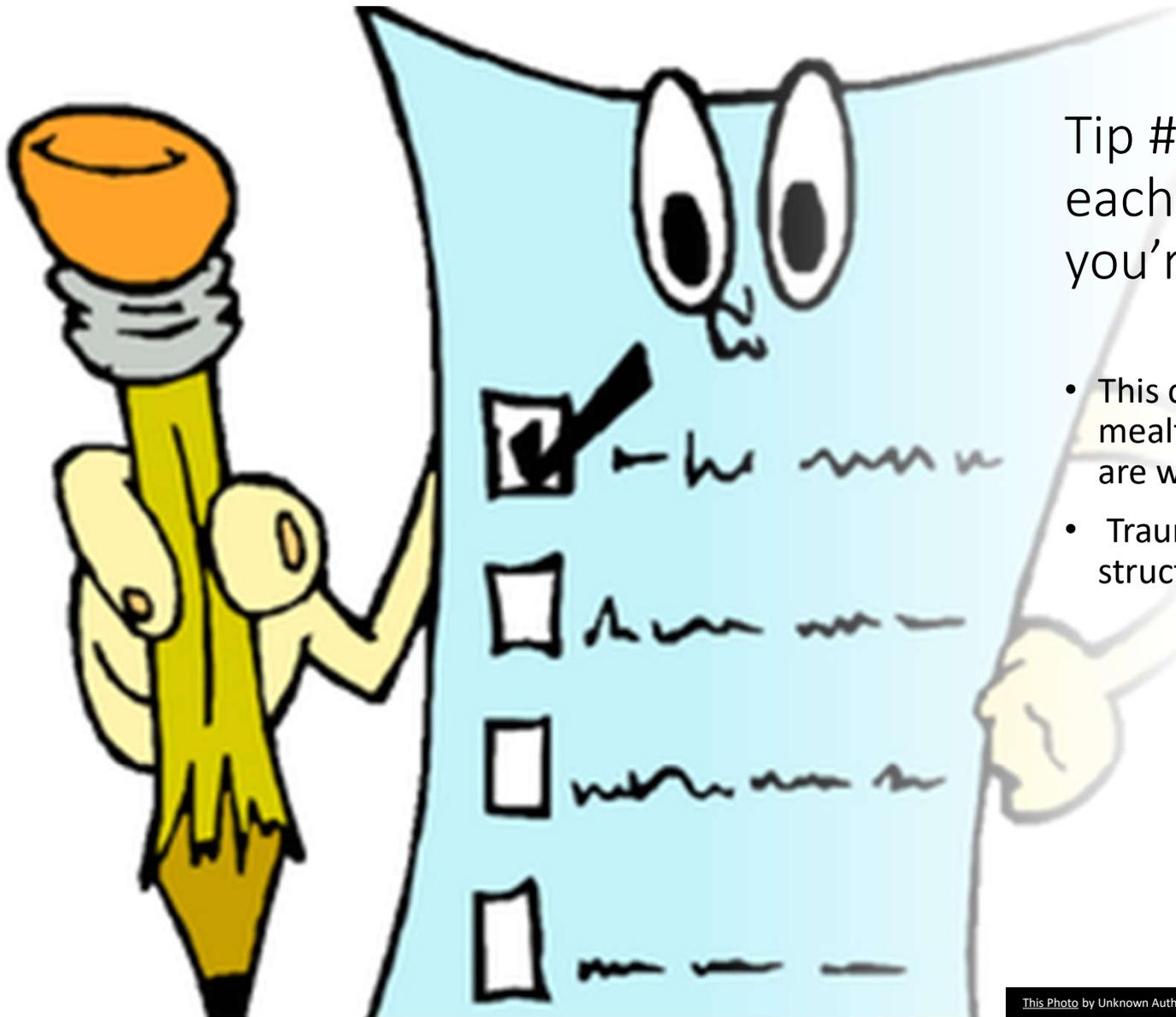
A child wearing a brown shirt, yellow pants, and pink rain boots is watering a small green plant in a garden. The child is holding a red watering can and pouring water onto the plant. The background is a blurred garden with other plants and a wooden fence.

Top 10 Tips for Therapeutic Homeschooling



Tip #1. Always keep the parent-child relationship as the priority.

- It's much more important that the child bond and connect with you and feel safe than learn something academic. So when in doubt, choose relationship. When something isn't working with homeschooling, drop everything and connect.



Tip #2: Have structure each day, even if you're unschooling.

- This can include regular mealtimes and the activities that are within these tips.
- Traumatized kids feel safer with structure.



Tip #3: Start each morning with rocking/snuggling/connecting with your child.

Yes, even older kids.

If your child doesn't want to snuggle, find something they enjoy that builds connection each morning.

Tip #4: Read aloud to your child while snuggling every day.

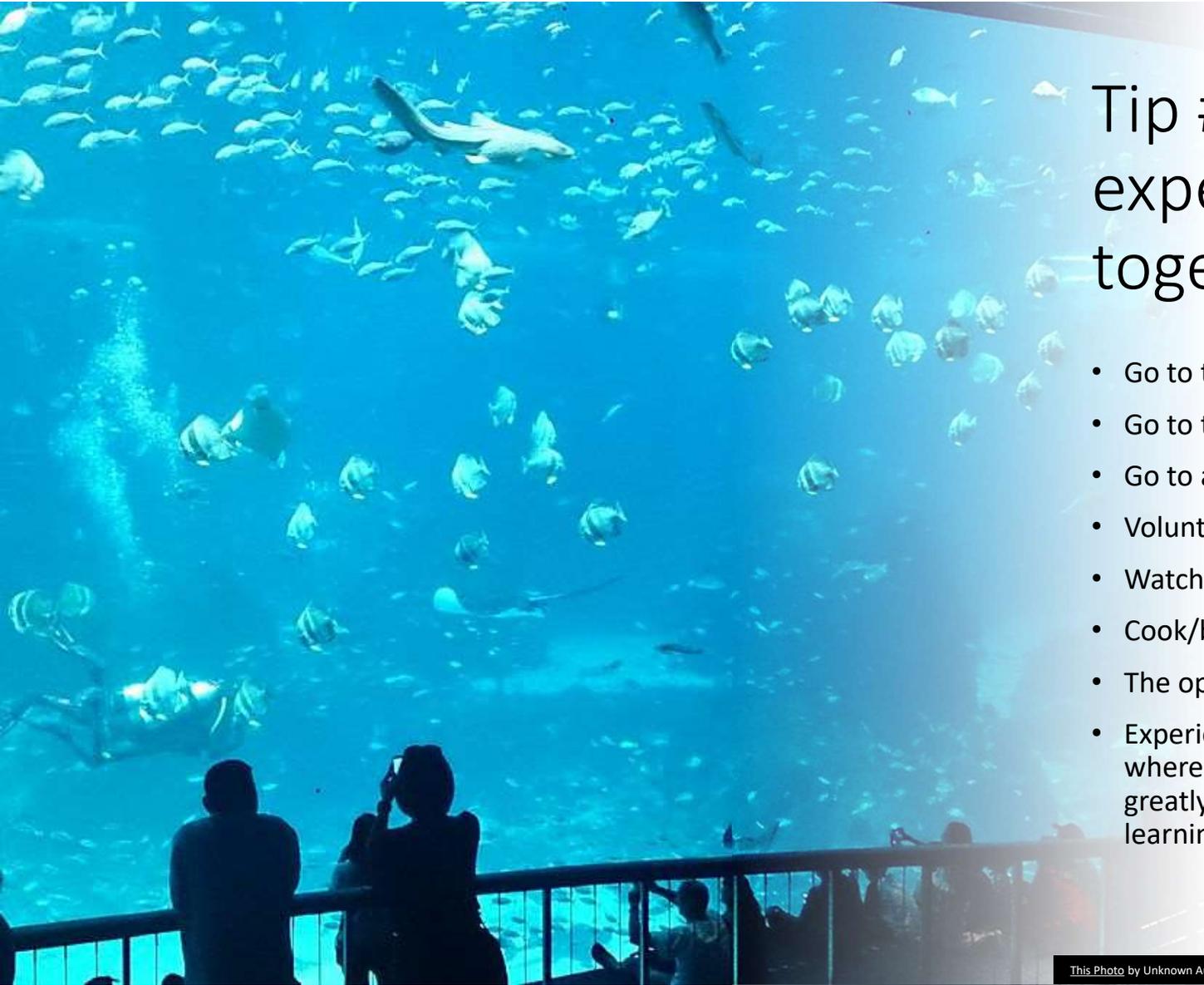
- Let the child choose (or at least have input into) what books you read.



Tip #5: Do “special time” every day with your child.

- The child chooses the activity and is in charge.
- All distractions are put away.
- A timer is set for 20-30 minutes.
- Remain present and engaged.
- No screen time allowed.
- Examples for activities include: playing with toys together, taking a walk together, playing a board game, creating art, going for ice cream, coloring...the options are endless. You may find that your child chooses the same activity over and over. This is ok.
- Special time is a very effective tool for connection, regulation, and preventing behavioral challenges.
- Key component of “Hand in Hand Parenting.”





Tip #6: Have experiences together.

- Go to the beach
- Go to the museum
- Go to an aquarium
- Volunteer together
- Watch a documentary
- Cook/bake
- The options are endless
- Experiences with just the two of you where you're present and having fun greatly promote bonding, and learning.

A young girl with dark curly hair is kissing a woman with long, wavy brown hair on the cheek. Both are smiling broadly, conveying a sense of joy and affection. The woman's eyes are closed in a happy expression. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting with warm, natural light.

Tip #7: Be playful. A lot.

- Dan Hughes' PACE:
 - Playful
 - Accepting
 - Curious
 - Empathetic

Tip #8: If your child is melting down, do not send them away.



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- Stay present, focused, empathetic, and close by.
- Do a time in instead of a time out.
- Build a nest for them out of blankets and pillows if needed.
- Use a weighted blanket if it helps.
- Bring out your calming basket.
- Stay with them for as long as needed.



Tip #9: Read books and articles about therapeutic parenting. Keep this approach throughout the day.

- Adoptive Parent Intentional Parent by Stacy Manning
- Therapeutic Parenting in a Nutshell by Sarah Naish
- Building the Bonds of Attachment by Dan Hughes
- The Connected Child by David Cross, Karyn Purvis, and Wendy Sunshine
- Anything by Heather T. Forbes

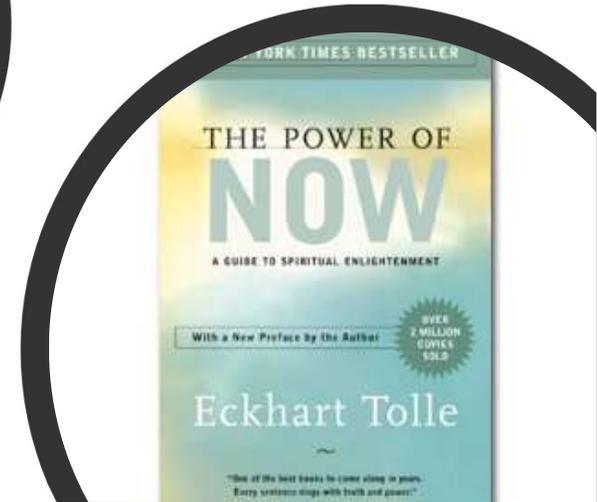
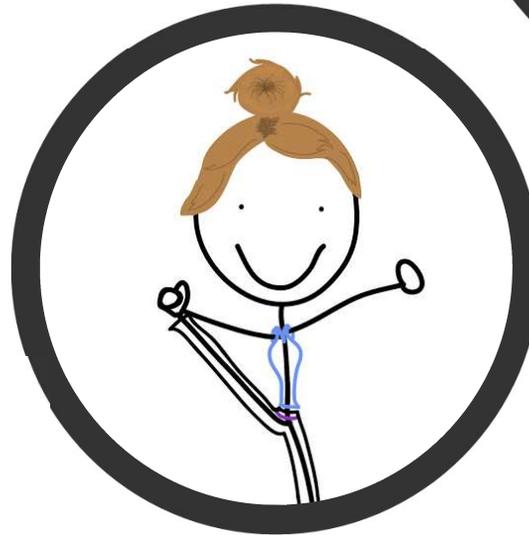


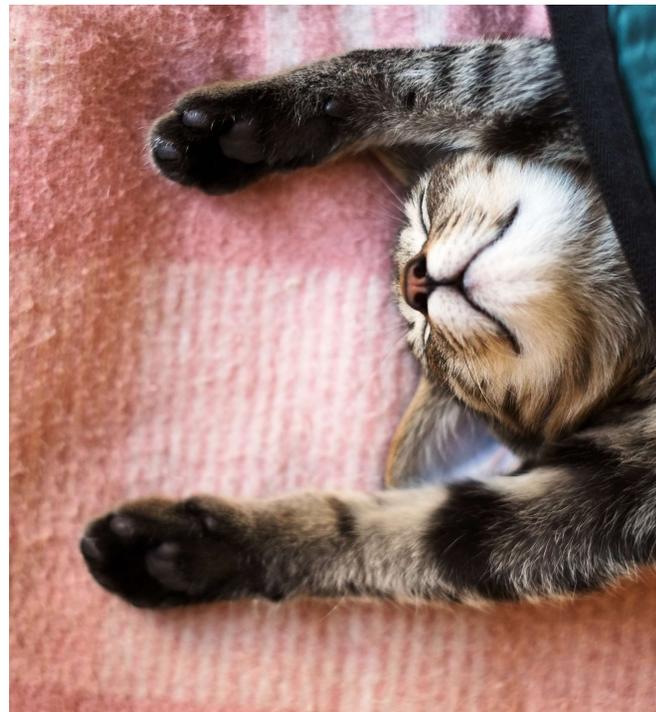
Tip #10: Practice “therapeutic academics.”

- Ideally, allow the child to choose what they will study so that they are given some say in their life, something they likely rarely had.
- This will also help keep the focus on your relationship instead of you always declaring what will be learned, which would likely cause conflict.
- Determine what, if any, subjects where your child is feeling bad about themselves. If your child is interested and willing to engage, focus on those subjects in a fun way that is also in line with your child’s style of learning.
- This will help boost their self-esteem, often very needed.

Bonus Tip: Practice self-care and forgive yourself. A lot.

- Therapeutic parenting is hard and requires a lot of time, focus, and patience, and almost “superhumaness.” Therapeutic homeschooling adds an extra dimension and challenge. But, of course, these kiddos are worth every single bit.





“Just Do Tai Chi”



Suggested Materials

- Pens and Pencils
- Paper
- Art supplies, such as paint, brushes, colored pencils
- Craft supplies
- Educational board games
- Activity kits
- Science kits
- The Thinking Tree journals
- Animals



Suggested Activities



- Read aloud/listen to books
- Documentaries
- Field trips
- Board games
- Science projects
- Plant a garden
- Pets
- Make slime
- Order various kits
- Play dates
- Coffee shop to do school work
- Nature walk
- Carry flash cards/trivia cards
- Have child create power point presentation
- Write a children's book together



- Color together
- Make 3D collages
- Bake/Cook
- Make food/art from different countries
- Build a pyramid when studying Egypt, paint a vase when studying Greece, etc.
- Volunteer together
- Write thank you cards
- Write grocery lists
- Go grocery shopping
- Teach important life skills
- Clean together
- Incubate eggs
- Have and take care of a hobby farm
- Needle felting
- Make things out of molding clay



Gratitude Scavenger Hunt



1. Find something that makes you happy.
2. Something to give someone else to make them smile.
3. Find one thing that you love to smell.
4. Find one thing you enjoy looking at.
5. Find something that's your favorite color.
6. Find something you are thankful for in nature.
7. Find something that you can use to make a gift for someone.
8. Find something that is useful for you.





Homeschooling “Additions”

- One of the beauties of homeschooling is that you can shrink your child’s world and help your child to feel safe. As your child is ready, you may want to add:
 - Playdates
 - Outside classes (art, language, science, history, etc.)
 - Online classes (Outschool is great)
 - Tutors
 - Sports
 - Music lessons
 - Nature programs
 - Homeschooling park playdates
 - Homeschooling groups/co-ops
 - Homeschooling schools

If full-time homeschooling is not feasible, you can:

- Apply these tips woven in with your child's current school situation. For example, daily special time, snuggling while reading, therapeutic parenting techniques, doing homework together in a therapeutic way, etc.
- Take mental health/sick/respice days from school with your child and apply these tips.
- Co-op arrangements with other families, where you share the responsibilities of homeschooling.



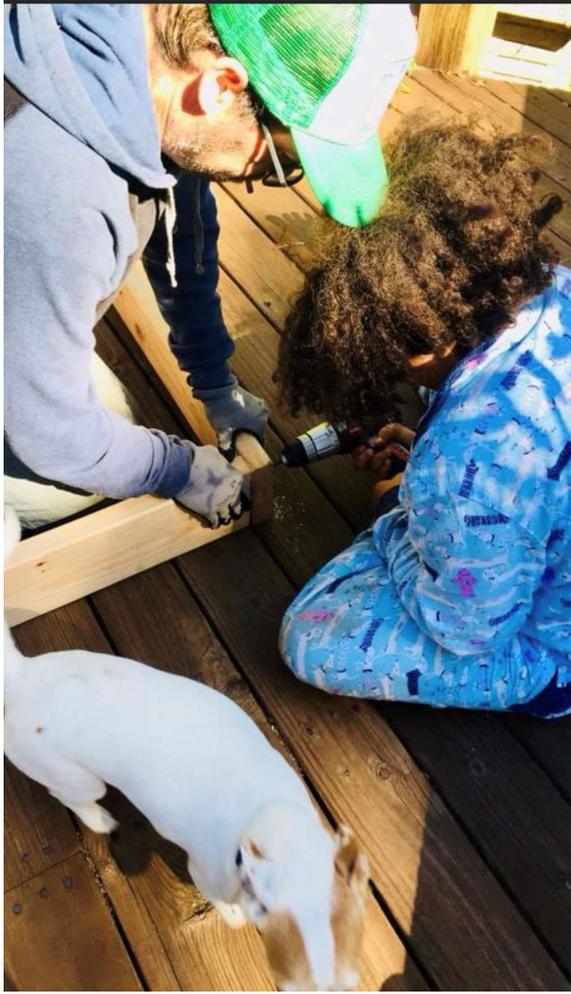


Following are some photos from our own homeschooling journey:





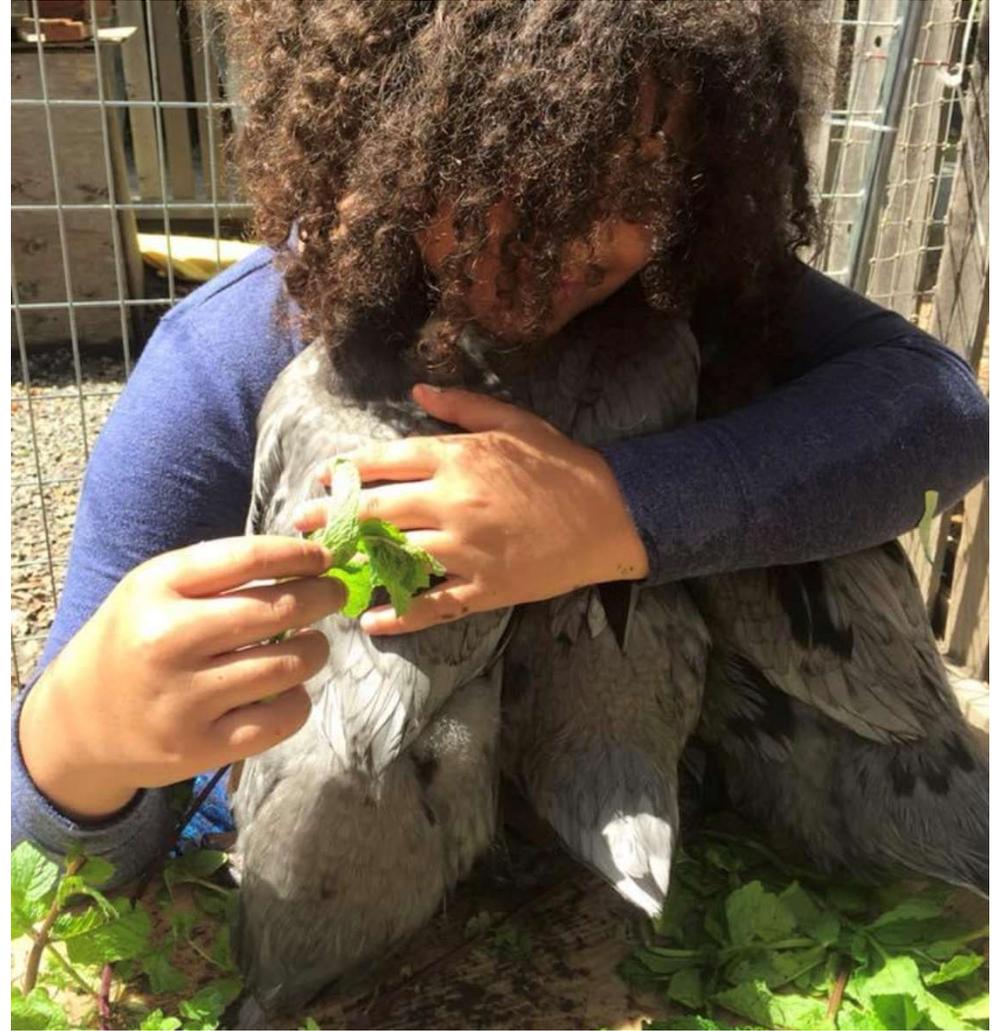


















Things that are good for me:

1. Nature
2. Time with animals
3. Ocean / beach
4. Family
5. Fresh air 21 FARM
6. Uma
7. Friends
8. Hugs
9. Cooking
10. Art
11. Movies
12. Little Gu
13. Water
14. Snugglin
15. Breathing
16. Food (hea
17. Wrestling
(safely)
18. Sleep
19. Art
20. Moving
my body







You Can
Do This!!



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