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This week, we're talking about better late than early. While this isn't a hard and fast rule and some kids are ready really early (My mom says I begged to read when I was two.), the truth is that pushing a little one who isn't ready doesn't do anyone any good. It simply leads to frustration for both mom and child.

Since I was an early learner and a public school teacher (with a specialty in Early Childhood Education), I was just sure that my little guy was going to be a regular brainiac by two. We had read to him in the womb and pretty much kept him immersed in an enriching educational environment from the moments we first held him in our arms. Yet as a toddler, a book was nothing more than a glorified frisbee to him. Hmpf.

So I thought I'd just be patient and I kept singing the nursery rhymes, doing all the hands-on things, and drilling the alphabet with him. He still wasn't interested in learning the ABC's with me. We passed ages 3 and 4 and I consoled myself with the fact that he was an active boy and sometimes boys are just slower to mature than girls. But once he hit five, the pressure was on. Here I was ... a certified teacher, who had been paid to teach other people's children and my own little guy simply had no signs of wanting to learn his letters, their sounds, or even how to write his own name. ugh. It was so discouraging (and humbling) to me. I tried not to let it show, but deep down I questioned whether I was capable of homeschooling if I couldn't even teach him his ABC's.

But I persevered (It was that whole God-calling-me-to-it thing and the fact that I was having SO much fun with him) and the fall after he turned six, I officially called it Kindergarten. And we made a little ABC book and the letter sounds began to click with him, so we started in on Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons. And by Christmas time, he was beginning to read and we skipped into first grade books, and he just took off from there.

I know that six isn't really that late. It just seemed like it at the time. I know children who were still struggling with reading at 8, 10, and sometimes even 12. But you know what? They are all reading now, no matter which method their moms used. And their moms will tell you, "Well when he was finally ready, he just sort of took off."

That's what we want. And homeschooling gives us the freedom to set our own pace in our own home. Embrace that freedom and let go of the pressure to do everything on-schedule. All our kids are going to have different strengths and weaknesses. The whole time I was stressing about my little guy not reading, he was developing awesome great motor and reasoning skills. Those are still his strengths today. Oh and enjoy this video. It will make you think.

Enjoy every minute!

*Nancy Carter*

THM Editor

Home Where They Belong  
Gena Suarez, TOS Publisher

When we become parents for the first time we have a grandiose idea of just how our children will be. We want them to become walking encyclopedias, dazzling friends and family.

When I was pregnant with Paulie I wanted to be sure to give him every advantage. I was already hard at work putting together worksheets and activities that would make him a Super Baby! Then he was born and I realized that this tiny blessing didn't need an academic plan ruling his life. He needed love, nurturing, and parents willing to introduce him to the world.

I've had the privilege of meeting Dr. Raymond Moore,  
<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=j46dz5bab.0.mlcyd4bab.v8kuxxbab.3265&ts=S0242&p=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.moorefoundation.com%2F> author of *Better Late Than Early*,  
<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=j46dz5bab.0.nlcyd4bab.v8kuxxbab.3265&ts=S0242&p=http%3A%2F%2Ftinyurl.com%2F37o37x> on more than one occasion. This great pioneer has taught me much about relaxing as far as teaching was concerned. He has proven over and over that the key to educational success is in waiting for our children to be ready and to let them explore the things they love - computers, baking, chess, climbing trees, whatever!

Parents relax! Children by nature don't become stagnate; they want to explore and they ask question after unceasing question about the world around them. When we give them the freedom to grow they will bloom!

-Gena

Homeschool Freebies  
Julie Nott, TOS Marketing Manager

I'll tell you what - my biggest fear in homeschooling was teaching my kids to read. After I brought our daughter home from private school after second grade, I went ahead and sent our kindergartner to school so they could teach him to read. I guess my thought at the time was to get that "reading thing" out of the way and I'll do the rest. Looking back that seems so silly.

I have now successfully taught two of my other kids how to read using the same book that Nancy mentioned above - *Teach Your Child To Read in 100 Easy Lessons*.  
<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=j46dz5bab.0.olcyd4bab.v8kuxxbab.3265&ts=S0242&p=http%3A%2F%2Ftinyurl.com%2F2me6n9> One son learned earlier than the other. Go figure - they're different kids.  
<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=j46dz5bab.0.plcyd4bab.v8kuxxbab.3265&ts=S0242&p=http%3A%2F%2Ftinyurl.com%2F35xff6> 15 minutes a day was all it took. And practice. Several homeschool moms I know found this book/method did not work with their children, whether it was a learning disability or a different learning style. I've had other friends who really enjoyed *Sing, Spell, Read & Write*. The price difference was a no-brainer for this frugal gal. I'm thankful the cheaper one worked for us. [grin]

If you decide to go with the *100 Easy Lessons* book, take a gander at this page on Donna Young's site <http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=j46dz5bab.0.qlcyd4bab.v8kuxxbab.3265&ts=S0242&p=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.donnayoung.org%2Fpenmanship%2F100ez.htm> where I found printable worksheets to use with each lesson. This saved me some time.

You might also check out this website.

<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=j46dz5bab.0.rlcyd4bab.v8kuxxbab.3265&ts=S0242&p=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cramschool.us%2F> Lots of free lessons that might even be helpful for those who are struggling in this area.  
-Julie

Schoolhouse Spotlight  
Dena Wood, Schoolhouse Store Manager

"Better late than early" doesn't mean doing "nothing" with your children. It simply means putting less emphasis and pressure on structured or workbook-style learning at an early age. There are still TONS of ways your children can learn in a relaxed and enjoyable manner.

Beginning with God,

<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=j46dz5bab.0.slcyd4bab.v8kuxxbab.3265&ts=S0242&p=http%3A%2F%2Ftinyurl.com%2F2wgjv8>

a highly acclaimed kid's devotional by a national best-selling and Gold Medallion award-winning children's book author is a great way to start the day. My children loved this! Memory Games, puzzles, blocks

<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=j46dz5bab.0.tlcyd4bab.v8kuxxbab.3265&ts=S0242&p=http%3A%2F%2Ftinyurl.com%2F2sffqm> & magnets

<http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=j46dz5bab.0.ulcyd4bab.v8kuxxbab.3265&ts=S0242&p=http%3A%2F%2Ftinyurl.com%2F33e2nv>

are great learning tools as well. And don't forget the best method of all, sharing a good book <http://rs6.net/tn.jsp?t=j46dz5bab.0.vlcyd4bab.v8kuxxbab.3265&ts=S0242&p=http%3A%2F%2Ftinyurl.com%2F3bqbxp> with your child.

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Mercy in the Morning  
Deborah Wuehler, TOS Senior Editor

Better Late Than Early? That can be a loaded question. I think my answer would be: Better to Start When They Are Ready.

When I first started homeschooling, my oldest were 5 and 3 and I was gung-ho! I had them sit at little school desks which opened up to store their workbooks. Yes, I made a 5 year old and a 3 year old sit at those little desks and "do school" and they were BOYS! They actually loved it as I sang songs and taught them in a fun way. Then, another baby came along and it started to become a struggle, a rushed "get it done now" experience instead of a relaxed learning environment. Especially with the oldest; I could see his potential, but all he could see was a stack of workbooks taking him away from his playtime. I kept pushing and he kept resisting. I actually killed his joy. Learning became a struggle from then on.

All that to say, looking back, I might have relaxed and waited a bit longer or made it a bit easier and more desirable for that 5 year old. Amazingly, though, that 3 year old little boy took off like a lightning bolt. He was ready.

Are they ready later? Don't worry, they'll get it. Are they ready earlier? Don't worry; they'll get it even if you start them later!

Better Late Than Early? Depends on which kid you're talking about. Some are early birds, some are late bloomers. All are your gifts from God to encourage in His world of learning.

-Deb

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Gena Suarez resides in Tennessee where she and her husband, Paul, homeschool their four children: Paul, Luke, Levi and Julia Rachel. They enjoy long country drives while listening to books on CD, hanging out with good friends, and staying up late. Visit her at <http://www.HomeschoolBlogger.com/TOSPublisher>

Jenefer Igarashi lives in the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee with her husband, Geoff, and their six children, ages 18 years to 3 years. Jen enjoys writing fiction and has won two awards from "Writer's Digest". The whole family enjoys construction projects, good books, and jumping on their trampoline. Come say hi to Jen on her blog at <http://www.HomeschoolBlogger.com/JenIg>

Nancy Carter, Senior Editor for HomesteadBlogger.com, is a homesteading, homeschooling wife and mother of three sons. She enjoys blogging with the other homesteaders at <http://www.HomesteadBlogger.com/HSBFrontPorch> and writing for The Natural Schoolhouse. Her family enjoys a lifestyle of learning on their farm in Kentucky.