

## FSP

*FSP is an umbrella group designed to offer County/State recognized oversight to homeschoolers. It's our desire to support the homeschooling families of FSP as they implement "regular, thorough instruction in the studies usually taught to children of the same age in public school" (Maryland Code Ann. 7-301(a)). Support is offered primarily through offering seminars, classes, meetings, Science/History Fairs, book sales, and even testing opportunities.*

*For annual events please look at the FSP web site here: [www.familyschoolsprogram.wordpress.com](http://www.familyschoolsprogram.wordpress.com).*

*Your reviewer (an experienced homeschool mom) is also provided through FSP to fulfill county requirements for oversight and help answer questions you may have. Your reviewer will schedule an annual review with your family, and if you would like to meet with her for a mid-year review, please contact her directly.*

## Precept/Principle to Practice

*Recently Josh Harris explained, "A principle is a clear teaching or imperative from God's Word. A practice is a specific action or decision that seeks to apply a principle." He also emphasized that the way we put into practice principles differs. For more, please read "Reducing to One Practice" [http://www.covlife.org/meeting\\_notes/](http://www.covlife.org/meeting_notes/)*

**Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. –Proverbs 22:6**

As parents, it is our desire to honor God's precepts and principles. But we also recognize that training up a child in the way that he should go (the precept) will look different for each family (practice). We recognize and embrace the fact God has called different families to different schooling options – and homeschooling, private and public schooling can all be manifestations of God's will for different families. Thus, we seek to encourage, support and join families in our church with a wide variety of practices while also recognizing that we also have a special privilege to join with other families who have chosen to homeschool as we seek to apply God's precepts to daily life. Every homeschool looks different. We embrace differences and we encourage everyone to look for opportunities to be part of a community – and we encourage you to support others!

Homeschooling methodologies are as diverse as families. Charlotte Mason? Classical Homeschooling? Textbooks? Eclectic? Outside Classes? Inside Classes? There are a plethora of options for how to homeschool and each family has the freedom and flexibility to choose what best supports the gifts, needs, financial means and seasons of individual families. FSP supports parents as they seek to implement what works best for their own families, but we don't believe there is only one practice, or one effective methodology in homeschooling. Many families employ a variety of methodologies, join co-ops both in and outside our ministry, and participate in classes in a variety of contexts. Our desire is to support each family and to provide opportunities to learn, connect and partner with others each year.

## Maryland Requirements, FSP Requirements, Your Review

*We also seek to clarify and teach what is required in our state to homeschool, and we encourage each family to pursue academic excellence and provide accountability so that minimum requirements are met.*

- ☞ Many moms are concerned that they aren't covering "everything." Please know that although Montgomery County requires 8 subject areas; they aren't all the same, and most moms do a wonderful job of academic enrichment! The law is written to encourage "regular, thorough instruction" and the subject areas required by Montgomery County are listed below.

- ☞ Remember that you will have the strength and grace necessary as you seek to apply the Lord's Word to each day as you homeschool...

**2 Timothy 2:1 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus...**

- ☞ For any subject we (FSP Reviewers) look for any of the following:

1. **A formal curriculum (Bob Jones, ABeka, etc.)**
2. **An outsourced class or co-op (Adventure Academy, MCI, any other homeschool or online class).**
3. **Well documented evidence that regular and thorough instruction is taking place in a given subject area (note: health, music, and art require a different standard for "regular and thorough instruction" than do the basic subjects like math & language arts).**

- ☞ The following subject areas are listed on your curriculum form, and we'll check for these during a review:

- Bible
- Math
- English
  - Phonics (k – Grades 2/3)
  - Reading (Reading List, Book Reports, Book Log)
  - Literature (7<sup>th</sup> & Up)
  - Grammar
  - Composition/Writing
  - Spelling
  - Vocabulary
  - Penmanship
- History
- Geography
- Science
- Health
- Physical Education
- Music
- Art
- Foreign Language (7<sup>th</sup> Grade and Up)
- Other: Examples include Chess Clubs, Logic, Thinking Skills, Reading Comprehension,

- ☞ Field Trips

- ☞ Book Lists

- ☞ Internships

- ☞ Fun!!



## Record Keeping & Report Cards

*Keeping track of plans, completed work, and progress is extraordinarily helpful in the younger grades and essential in the older grades (esp. if your child is college bound). At least two report cards are required each year by FSP.*

### Sample of Record Keeping Items:

- ✂ Progress Reports/Grades/Report Cards: use a form (available on FSP site [http://www.familyschoolsprogram.org/?page\\_id=126](http://www.familyschoolsprogram.org/?page_id=126) or write a narrative for grades K-8)

- ✂ Curriculum Plans  
*The pink form you hand in at the beginning of the year*

- ✂ Curriculum Summary  
*Helpful for end-of-year review in elementary, helpful for transcript in upper grades.*

- ✂ Lesson Plans, Checklists, Rubrics

- ✂ Schedules

- ✂ Book Logs & Reading Lists

- ✂ List of outside classes, grades and credits (if applicable)
- ✂ List of awards or special honors
- ✂ Transcripts from community college or distance learning courses
- ✂ Scores for SAT's, CAT's, etc.
- ✂ Field Trip Lists
- ✂ Internship description and dates
- ✂ Household items like Chore Lists and/or menu plans

### ***Measuring Progress Isn't Just A Letter Grade (Although It Can Be)***

- ✂ Clear Goals can be translated into measurable progress. Add character components or strategies to progress report to help children both understand goals and work towards something achievable. Note: this can be particularly helpful for LD kids.
- ✂ \*For Younger Elementary Grades (esp. K-3) you can use: Excellent, Satisfactory, Needs Improvement, Unsatisfactory (see Appendices for sample report cards)
- ✂ Summary Progress Reports can be the primary way of measuring progress or Summary Progress Reports can be a supplementary way of measuring progress (this helps as a means of grace to encourage students who may be weak in a given area but are putting forth grand effort but not seeing significant progress)

**Easy Gradebook Download**

"Easy Gradebook Publisher's Description: An inexpensive easy to use gradebook for teachers. Supports categories, weights, points and drop the lowest. Reports entire gradebook, grading criteria and progress reports for students. Other features include class averages, extra credit, grade & student notes, curving, sorting, chart with statistics and custom reports."  
[http://www.soft32.com/download\\_26579.html](http://www.soft32.com/download_26579.html)

- ✂ Pass/Fail can be helpful when grading Bible, Drama, or other difficult to measure subjects.
- ✂ Learning Disabilities may need to be assessed differently, and with help.
  - For FSP, the Discovery Program is available: <http://www.covenantlifeschool.org/discovery.aspx?id=80951>
  - Learning Disabilities of America has helpful information on individual progress and what that can look like: <http://www.ldaamerica.org/>.
  - An Excellent Hard Copy Resource: For help in establishing strategies and setting goals, is the "**Pre-Referral Intervention Manual (PRIM)-Third Edition**," by Stephen B. McCarney, Ed.D., Kathy Cummins Wunderlich, M.Ed., Edited by Samm N. House



## **Objective Grading/Grading with Integrity**

- ✂ Use curriculum designed to test or grade objectively. Many curriculums include tests, quizzes, or assessment exercises.  
*Examples: ABeka, Bob Jones, etc.; Sing, Spell, Read, Write (Early Grades Language Arts); Shurley Grammar (Grammar, Vocabulary, Composition), Tapestry of Grace (History & More)*
- ✂ Provide a Letter Grade
- ✂ Weighted Grading: You can weight homework, tests, projects, reading assignments, class participation to derive an objective grade.
- ✂ Use Pass/Fail for hard to determine grades (or grades like Bible)
- ✂ Design Tests & Quizzes
- ✂ Research, Utilize or Create Rubrics (See Sidebar and Additional Handouts)
- ✂ Establish Clear Goals & Standards, Grade on the same.
- ✂ It's OK to drop the lowest grade. It's OK to allow make-up tests (these are typically averaged in, not dropped). It's OK to occasionally extend deadlines (but don't make this the rule, because then you may find that you have trained your child to delay.)

### **Progress Reports (Report Cards) Online**

#### **A to Z Home's Cool**

Long list of links for homeschool forms, report cards.

The link was so long, that it is easier just to type: "report cards," and press "search," to find their long list of links for homeschool progress reports.

<http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/index.htm>

#### **Cindy Downes (Oklahoma)**

Lots of forms, scroll down to find "report cards."

<http://www.oklahomahomeschool.com/forms.html#okhsforms>

#### **Nelson Stuff**

Click "forms," scroll down to find "progress reports."

<http://mysite.verizon.net/vzeqs0bu/id1.html>

## **Rubrics**

*"Heidi Goodrich, a rubrics expert, defines a rubric as "a scoring tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work or 'what counts.'" So a rubric...will list the things the student must have included to receive a certain score or rating. Rubrics help the student figure out how their project will be evaluated. Goodrich quotes a student who said he didn't much care for rubrics because "if you get something wrong, your teacher can prove you knew what you were supposed to do."*

*Generally rubrics specify the level of performance expected for several levels of quality. These levels of quality may be written as different ratings (e.g., Excellent, Good, Needs Improvement) or as numerical scores (e.g., 4, 3, 2, 1) which are then added up to form a total score which then is associated with a grade (e.g., A, B, C, etc)."*  
<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php?screen=WhatIs&module=Rubistar>

Rubrics are particularly helpful for harder to measure subjects like Projects, English Composition, and some Electives.  
*Note: 6+1 Writing Traits is an excellent standard for measuring writing, and many rubrics for this particular standard are online. Detailed 6+ 1 Rubric Here: <http://www.nwrel.org/assessment/pdf/Rubrics/6plus1traits.PDF>*

### **More Helpful Stuff**

For Picture Book Ideas, Project Ideas, Elementary Report Cards and samples of elementary cards, feel free to visit the "Nelson Stuff" website here: <http://mysite.verizon.net/vzeqs0bu/id1.html>.

**Lisa Donovan** also has several FSP seminar handouts, ideas for organization, ABC ideas and more.  
We hope to have many of these resources on the FSP website soon.

---

***As a parent who homeschools, it's easy for me to forget...***

*By Lisa Donovan*

1. The gospel: I need my Savior and need to look up to him throughout my days.
2. My husband. Remember to cultivate my relationship with him; pray for him; consider him; and bless him.
3. It's a privilege to get to be with my children and invest in them;
4. To pray about everything and be quick to pray for and with my husband and children;
5. Time flies by : savor this season...before it passes—cherish the advantages each season of life presents;
6. That addressing issues of my children's hearts is why I'm home schooling—not just to provide them with tailor-made academics;
7. Homeschooling really is a full-time job for parents as well as for children—choosing to home school requires planning time for parents in addition to instructional time. Why am I regularly surprised by this? Why not just embrace that this is a full-time job.
8. I'm teaching my children by example how I plan our days, seek God, consider my spouse, spend money, love others, address sin in my own life, and walk through adversity;
9. I may not have time for daytime activities with other moms (or babysitting) while we're doing school—just because I'm home doesn't mean I'm available. I must choose what would bless my husband and what would be best for my children;
10. I determine our daily schedules and it's meant to serve us and help us use the time God has given us. God directs our days though. There are no interruptions to His plans.
11. If something is not working, pray and make adjustments (to schedules or curricula);
12. To delight in God's grace in my children's lives. I can so easily be more aware of where they need to grow than how God is helping them.
13. There are lots of ways to home school. Whether my days include classes at home, co-ops, outside classes, online classes or a combination of options, let's celebrate how God is leading me, giving me grace, and doing the same for our friends (and avoid comparison/judging);
14. Bloom within my boundaries. None of us can do everything, but by God's grace, I can do the things He's called me to do (which means saying no to the things He's not called me to do).
15. God knows our children better than I do; He will lead us to what is best for them. Their times are in His hands...just as ours are. I can smile at the future because I know Who holds the future.
16. God's grace is sufficient...and perfected in weakness.