

## What is meant by the term 'deschool'?

Deschooling is stepping away from academics for a period of time in order to decompress from the pressure and stress of your child's school experience. This time is used to restore an interest in learning and create new habits of how to learn.

Taking a break from formal academics, even for a short time, can fly in the face of reason since many parents pull their kids from traditional school settings because their kids are 'behind' academically.

### **Why Deschooling Helps**

The pressure on kids with learning struggles to keep up with their peers can take a significant toll on a child's confidence and desire to learn.

Here's why I recommend taking a period of time to deschool your dyslexic child:

**Calms anxiety:** Kids with dyslexia and other learning differences often battle anxiety whether they're homeschooled or in a public or private school. Anxiety can significantly impact a child's ability to learn. Taking the pressure off for a time can help kids feel less anxious and more in control of the direction their education is headed.

**Boosts confidence:** Being measured against peers that don't have learning differences day after day can cause kids with dyslexia to lose confidence. Believing that you aren't intelligent is one of the most devastating myths about dyslexia that are hurting our kids today. Taking a break from formal academics to spend time on interests and relationships takes the focus off of your child's areas of weakness and onto areas of strength.

**Increases interest in learning:** Most kids with unremediated learning differences in the public or private school have developed a fixed mindset with regards to their ability to learn. Continual failure to meet teachers' expectations leaves many kids believing that, not only are they not smart, but that they cannot learn. When kids take time away from formal academics to focus on their interests for a time, they experience real life learning and interest increases.

**Allows time to focus on the parent-child relationship:** Studies of successful dyslexics revealed that the one thing that had the biggest impact on their success was the presence of one caring adult. Taking time to show your child that you are on their side and that you want what is best for them will help them to relax and trust you on your new homeschooling journey!

## How to Deschool Your Child With Dyslexia

**Talk to your child.** Let your child know that you are taking some time away from formal studies to relax, heal, and enjoy life together. Encourage them to discuss things that they liked and disliked about school.

**Take a break from formal academics.** While this may seem counterintuitive for a child who was 'behind' in school, trust the process. Taking a break to restore a child's interest in learning will help them to learn more effectively once you get back to the books.

**Go exploring.** Begin to nurture your child's interests by getting out of the house and taking trips to places of interest such as zoos, museums, national parks – anywhere that is of interest. Allow your child to choose where to go. There is a lot of freedom in homeschooling. Take some time to enjoy your freedom to create your own schedule! Notice how much learning actually takes place on outings like these.

**Get connected.** Find a local homeschool group and more importantly, find a dyslexia support group where you can ask questions and get encouragement when needed.

**Read out loud.** Yes, even to your teens! The benefits to reading out loud to kids are many, but for the dyslexic child, it is even more powerful. Without the pressure to do the reading themselves, their enjoyment of reading and of a good story are increased – not to mention the increase in vocabulary and understanding of more complex grammatical structures.

**Do life together.** Cook, garden, clean out their rooms, visit family and friends. Kids who are used to being around other people all day can feel lonely or isolated when first leaving school. Spending time with friends and family can help with this. Filling our kids' days with meaningful interactions can help them feel productive and begin to tap into a new rhythm of life.

## Deschooling for Parents

As important as it is for kids to have some time to deschool, parents benefit from some time to deschool as well. Most parents only know school in the traditional setting. Creating a 'school-at-home' is a common choice among new homeschoolers. I strongly encourage you to take some time to learn about different homeschool methods, learning styles and curriculum choices before getting started.

Use the following pages to make an assessment of your child's interests and strengths.

LIST YOUR CHILD'S HOBBIES:

LIST THEIR CURIOSITIES (within the last year, maybe interested but unexplored):

HOW DO THEY SPEND THEIR DAYS AT HOME?

DESCRIBE THEIR COMPUTER & VIDEO GAME SKILLS/INTERESTS:

FAVORITE THINGS TO WATCH ON YOUTUBE:

FAVORITE TELEVISION PROGRAMS/SHOWS:

HISTORY MUSEUMS OR HISTORIC REENACTMENTS:

SCIENCE/NATURE MUSEUMS OR INTERESTS IN SCIENCE:

INTEREST IN THE ARTS? ATTEND PERFORMANCES OR ART  
MUSEUM SHOWS?

COMMUNITY FESTIVALS OR ACTIVITIES ATTENDED/INTERESTED IN:

HEALTH ISSUES - THEIR OWN/FAMILY MEMBERS/ PETS:

NUTRITIONAL/COOKING INTERESTS:

CLASSES/COURSES TAKEN: ( CO-OPS, REC CENTER, ONLINE )

SPORTS INVOLVEMENT: ( INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP )

TRAVEL (PAST OR PLANNED):

CURRENT EVENTS: (POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS, LOCAL COMMUNITY ISSUES)

COMMUNITY SERVICE / VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES:

JOBS / WORK: (INCLUDE JOB DUTIES OR SKILLS )

Add anything unique about your child that didn't fit in the above sections.  
Include any projects that they've worked on independently or with others...

Ways your kids are learning even without schooling...

## READING

- Reading books, stories, articles that interest them
- Reading "good literature" in comic book format
- Reading graphic novels for fun
- Watching classics in video format
- Seeing relevant historic sites that correlate with their reading - adding depth and interest.

## SPELLING

- Seeing the written word on signs, boxes
- Texting, emails
- Using Red Squiggle lines on misspellings

## WRITING

- Keeping a journal
- Thank you notes
- Postcards to relatives
- Texting, emails, and chats
- Reading other writing, researching online
- Mechanics of writing can be strengthened with drawing, fine motor skill manipulating

## MATH

- Minecraft and other computer games
- Games: board, dice, and card games
- Measuring
- Estimating for size, quantity, and distance
- Cooking
  - Measuring cups
  - Substitutions
  - Conversions
  - Estimating pan size
  - Temperatures
- Serving food - dividing portions
- Comparing containers: gallons,  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallons, quarts, and pints
- Banking
  - Interest
  - Managing money
  - Savings
- Travel
  - Gas and MPG
  - Distance
  - Using a map
  - Calculating how long until arriving
- Shopping
  - Percentages
  - Comparisons
  - Discounts
  - Budgeting
  - Price/unit
- Time
  - Counting/rounding
  - Fractions ( $\frac{1}{2}$  hour)
  - Roman numerals
  - Count by 5s

- Money
  - Making change
  - Combinations
  - Greater/lesser
  - Taxes
  - Paychecks
  - Budgeting
  
- Grocery Shopping
  - Budgeting
  - Finding 'deals'
  - Using coupons
- Sports statistics
- Menus
  - Price comparisons
  - Amounts
  - Discounts
  - Sharing
- Math in music
  - Rhythm
  - Reading music
- Building toys
  - Legos
  - K'NEX
  - Blocks
  - Pattern blocks

## Real Life Algebra

- How much time is left for sleep or break?
- How much balance is left on my phone?
- What is the best offer available?
- When to start from home to reach the park on time?
- How much to eat for breakfast to maintain a balanced diet?
- Which is the shortest route to reach a place?
- How can I reach it with minimum cost?
- How long to wait at the signal?
- Determining if I can walk or drive through a narrow lane or not.
- How much to pay for the groceries?
- How to split the work to accommodate everything in 24 hours?
- How many times some person has spoken to or fought with me?
- Where to invest to get more profit?
- How many pills have to be taken?
- How much water have I had since morning?
- Is it the 50th or the 60th anniversary or birthday?
- How many days left for the next vacation/appointment/game?
- How to balance the expenses with the money that is available?
- What is someone's age?
- How many answers more to reach 20?

## HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY

- Travel - short day trips to see historic sites or reenactments
- Watch interesting documentaries and movies about historic events
- Watch fictionalized stories from history and discuss the differences and why they have been portrayed that way.
- The History Channel.
- National Geographic Channel or website.
- Read historical fiction and discuss what was going on in those time periods.
- Live historical reenactments in the community.
- Theater or opera productions.

- Roadside historical markers.
- Globes, maps, and specialty stores with these.
- Discuss world events and locate them on a map.
- Play online games from Nat Geo.
- Car GPS. Use maps and mapping apps.
- Identify where friends and relatives live on a map.
- Discuss the distribution of where humans live on the earth and why.
- Weather and climate for different regions.
- Watch natural disaster videos.

## CIVICS

- Elections are a great way to learn about Civics. Local, state, or national elections. Discuss candidates, issues, platforms.
- Discuss the party system.
- Talk about voting how it works and the Electoral College.
- Discuss how media Outlets have political leanings.
- Discuss the Bill of Rights.
- Discuss the balance of powers among three branches of government.
- Discuss Supreme Court. How did they become judges? What cases do they hear? Watch movies about them.
- Community service projects.

## SCIENCE

- Go to a nature museum
- Hike trails in your city, observe seasonal changes in nature
- Go to science museums. Listen to docents, take mini-classes, or use the head sets.
- Go to a planetarium
- Watch the NASA website when astronomy events occur
- Watch the sky changes. Get the Night Sky app .
- Read about discoveries and inventions of nteres
- Make a volcano
- Do dry ice experiments
- Go to a pet or feed store

- Learn about local agriculture - go to a farmer's market or local farms
- Grow a garden
- Compare leaf shapes
- Get a bird guide for backyard bird watching
- Learn about the life cycles of various animals in your world
- Access a microscope to look at cellular structures
- Mixtures - solutions - make potions
- Cooking
- Watch *MythBusters*
- Learn how the scientific method works and see how you apply it all the time when anticipating what comes next

From these lists you can see that your child can be learning through everyday experiences. During your time of deschooling, look for ways to be actively doing things that are of interest to your child.

Have conversations about learning, school, and homeschooling as you go. Discuss your child's goals and desires for their future and gradually pick up academics giving your child the support they need to feel successful.