

PROGRAMME

Proposal for 1993-94

philosophy

- * Children will benefit from being in a stimulating home environment. Education is recognised as a function that can be carried out effectively in the home.
- * Education is concerned with equipping children to live. The most important skills needed to be successful in an adult world are not necessarily academic skills. Although academic skills are viewed as important, higher priorities include the development of character, real experience with projects undertaken by adults (such as the running of a business) and the capacity to communicate and integrate with people of all age groups and not just those in the peer group.

A home environment, although not perfect, is suited for teaching these most important skills for life. In addition to that it is at least equally placed for imparting academic skills, particularly because of its ability to cater for the special needs of each child.
- * The skills children learn at school are adequately catered for in a home which encourages them to think, ask questions, and seek answers.
- * Children are not necessarily "ready" for school or for formal education at the recognised compulsory entry age. The didactic agenda of each child should be developed with due consideration to their respective personalities, needs and gifts.
- * Self esteem, essential to productive learning, is fostered in a caring home environment, where parents know each child and can apply this understanding to meeting their individual needs.
- * People learn well when encouraged to research areas relevant to their expressed interests and as integrated parts of everyday life.
- * Regarding social interaction, in a home education environment children have a much wider, more interesting and relevant structure than in a school environment. This includes contact with a broader cross-section of the community, as the children are involved in the daily activities of the family.

These people offer experiences and knowledge to a greater degree than is possible in school and in a way which is not artificially imposed.

Further to this children are not exposed to the negative influences of the peer group which accompanies school experience.
- * Real learning comes through real experiences and can not be confined to times of the day or even subject areas.



APPRAISAL OF JUNE TO DECEMBER 1992

Generally J is confident and able to stimulate himself across a wide range of subject areas. He asks for help or direction as necessary. I'll often make suggestions to look at particular content which maybe taken up or dropped depending on the interest it stimulates in him. When I feel that we have been leaning too heavily on aspect of the curriculum, we usually have a short burst of the lesser emphasised subject to keep it balanced (I have some commercial texts which we sometimes use for this, or do our own work.)

F has grown in confidence in her academic ability — a success due to the lack of comparison and competition. Her ability in language arts and maths are a result of her being interested and asking questions and I have tried not to push past her interest level, (while encouraging her to challenge herself) She maintains a heavy interest in expressive arts (particularly craft, drama and dancing.) and expresses herself through this even beyond my expectations as much as J does in the more cognitive areas.

F is distracted easily and needs help to concentrate on finishing a set task. In the future period, activities should be integrated in her program which will assist here.

Socially both children have no problems at all communicating with boys and girls of all ages, teenagers, and adults, many of whom have commented on their confidence and ability to communicate with them. F is more reserved when joining large groups which reflects her more sensitive nature but is overcoming this.

When studying a "theme" we do it as a family with J and F doing activities appropriate to their ability. Simultaneously there may be interests that they pursue alone.

Set down below are most of the areas covered this semester.

Initiated by	Topic	Main Subject Area
JAH	The Bush	Nat.Sc. Lang. Phys. Hist.
JAH	Bushrangers	Lang. Sci.
FCH	Astronomy	Sci. Sport. Lang. Sci.
JMH	Aerodynamics	Math. Geog. Math.
JMH	Electronics	Lang. Sport. Soc. St.
JAH	Mapping	Comp. Math. Craft. Sci &
JMH	Peanuts	Tech.
AGH	Chickens	
JAH	Christmas craft	
JM & AG	Computer	

As well as these we were involved in lots of 'one of' activities including paper mache, beading, carpentry, looking into berry production, gardening, bike riding. Some of these were done with other home-schooled children.



A. LANGUAGE ARTS

I will encourage J and F to write creatively. For this end and for personal enrichment, I will read aloud and encourage them to read poetry and quality prose.

Where appropriate, J and F will use written communication for reports, letters and researching. They will be encouraged to keep a journal of happenings (not necessarily daily).

Until F is able to express her ideas in writing I am happy to 'scribe' for her.

I will encourage J and F to use 'narration technique' after reading aloud sessions and personal reading.

I will teach F and encourage J to use a dictionary to increase their vocabulary, spelling ability, knowledge of meanings and word pronunciation and etymology.

We will encourage the use of known foreign words and phrases (German and very basic French) and an interest in other languages.

The library will be seen as a valuable resource and used as much as necessary for extending their interests, for fun and for research.

J and F will be exposed to other people, not just family and peers, and will learn to communicate effectively (as needed).

J and F will be involved in a Philosophy for Children program which will not only encourage them to develop their thinking skills but to communicate these thoughts logically to others.

B. MATHEMATICS

I will encourage J and F to learn about the world around them through real life maths experiences, using everyday instruments, eg cooking, building and playing. Examples include cup, spoon and tape measures, thermometer, rain gauge, scales, calendar, lego, duplo, tiles and computer.

I will use a maths text if appropriate to reinforce thinking skills learned and to give opportunity to do repetitive maths exercises when I feel this to be necessary

According to individual ability J and F will work on graphing and problem solving activities.

The computer is freely accessible. J and F will be tutored by their father and will have plenty of time to freely 'find their way around' on it.

A significant guide and resource for this part of the program will be the NSW Syllabus.



C. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

J and F will be motivated to look at, to appreciate, to observe nature and to take note of how we fit into this world. They will be encouraged to probe man's place and responsibilities regarding the natural world and the application of technology?

Open discussion will be promoted. J and F will be encouraged to think for themselves as opposed to relying on what more informed (or not so informed) people say. One way in which this will be achieved is by asking questions while reading to the children and being involved in other learning activities.

I want J and F to ask and seek answers to the following questions:

How does this affect me?

How do I affect this?

What responsibilities do I have here?

To whom am I responsible?

Some of the ways this could be achieved are by nature studies (eg life cycles and life habits, food chains, bird calls etc) or by visiting museums and other places of interest (eg Siding Springs Observatory or UNE Zoology Museum).

As in the past we will continue to do science experiments as interests indicate on work on projects, eg kite building, making a fire extinguisher, sundial, simple physics experiments, electronics etc.

D. HUMAN SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT.

J and F will be given opportunity to consider themselves and family in a diverse world. This will cause them to notice that 'our way' is not the only way and that we must make big decisions in life concerning values, morals and lifestyle. I will encourage to see that before God and man, we must find a world view which as far as possible embodies truth and a realistic way of interacting with others.

This could be done by studying different lifestyles and cultures, religions and world-views. This may involve using library books, talking with people and visiting museums.

Also as a part of social studies J and F will have opportunity to gain confidence in reading an atlas and maps, (weather, topographical).

By reading biographies and history books J and F will be encouraged to question our place in history and possible influence on the future.

E. CREATIVE ARTS.

J will continue drumming lessons and take part in a group or band on a regular basis.

F will continue Suzuki piano lessons. The children will be involved in craft in three

ways:

(a) Spontaneously. Craft materials will be accessible at all times for free play and creative expression.

(b) Planned. I will incorporate art and craft into the program both for fun and where possible as a part of a unit of study, eg clay work may be relevant if we were studying a past civilisation.

(c)Tutored. On occasions, as in the past, there may be opportunities to have lessons from an experienced person.

By using library books and visiting museums and galleries, J and F will be encouraged to appreciate the arts through history and across cultures.

I will encourage an appreciation of music, including classical music. Much of this will be done by borrowing



library CDs and tapes and using our own. We will also study the arrangement of an orchestra (books and teaching tapes, videos) and attend a performance by an orchestra.

F will attend modern dance lessons.

F. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH AND PHYSICAL FITNESS

I will encourage J and F to see that a healthy person has a healthy body, mind and spirit. Breaking this down, a healthy body comes from:

Eating well
Having enough sleep.
Keeping physically fit (bike riding, walking etc.)

A healthy mind comes from:

Reading good books
Talking to interesting people
Asking questions.

A healthy spirit comes from

Seeking God and being at peace with him
Reading God's word, the Bible.
Praying

I will encourage an active lifestyle, planning and creating opportunities for fun times of baseball, tennis, swimming and other sports. Some of this will take place by getting together with families with similar interests.

THEMES

Language:	The Home Schooling Club. Collating, photo-copying, writing and mailing.
Natural Science:	Soil, erosion, uses, profile/make-up, animals/insects. Planning a vegetable garden, companion planting, numbers of high/low yielding plants, where to do it, pests.
History:	Biblical history. Egyptian history. Development of writing. Famous people (eg scientists such as Galileo, Madame Curie).
Geography	Armidale and district. Mapping.
Research	Library visits. J usually spends 1.5 hours by himself per week at the library. Rather than having him 'vege-ing', every week I will plan a little research topic for him. This is designed to open up new interest areas and gain new knowledge in old ones. Examples include collecting recipes, chicken keeping, archaeology, sports, people, places, historical events, natural science, beginning of themes.
General	The kids want Friday to be baking day. Involves: Learning to plan and cook a meal. Reinforcing known skills. Running a business. J runs the chicken yard. This provides opportunity to introduce him to the rudiments of commercial enterprise, including simple measurement of profit, book-keeping etc. This also implies activities on the computer and developing maths



skills.

Outside the home J has learned the drums, philosophy for children, German and Sunday School. F has learned philosophy for children, dancing and Sunday School.

During this time I had a baby which gave ample opportunity to look at biology and social and moral issues (such as the value of life), the needs of a baby etc.

Moving to a farm gave opportunities for comparison between animal families and human families.

During the year we have read lots of children's books and poetry, including the Chronicles of Narnia, the Little House Books, Wind in the Willows, Charlotte's Web and Heidi.

