

STARTING IN THE MIDDLE: TRANSITIONING FROM PUBLIC SCHOOL

A MENTOR MOM© CLASS

By Tina Nokes

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Transitioning from public school to homeschool can be eased if you sit down and talk with your child before starting the new homeschool experience. The hardest transitions will be with an older child that has doubts about homeschooling and leaving his/her friends. Below are some talking points to use as a guide for making a plan to make the new year a positive one.

- **Discuss the benefits of homeschooling.** (*Curriculum designed for your learning style, a relaxed environment, no peer pressure, no bad language, no bullying, flexibility to pursue talents/interests, more time for vacations, can sleep in later, no school lunches, etc.*)
- **Discuss what your child will be giving up by leaving public school.** (*Friends, playing on the football team, being in the drama production, band, riding the bus, P.E. with 30 other kids, clubs, etc.*)
- **Acknowledge the things that will be given up.**
Make a plan for replacement.
 - a. *Friends: you will join the local homeschooling group and make new friends. Also point out that even though your son or daughter will not see his/her friends at school, they will still be friends and can see each other after school.*
 - b. *Playing on the Football Team/drama/band/clubs: Suggest joining a city sponsored football team or look for a homeschool sports group. Look for a homeschool drama group, band group, various clubs. Most everything offered by the school can be replaced with an identical activity or something close. Help your child open their mind to other opportunities. For example, if there is no city-sponsored football team, would he be happy with ice hockey or basketball instead?*
 - c. *Riding the bus: This is something that may be missed by a younger child. Ask why they will miss riding the bus. Is it really that that was the only time she got to visit with her best friend? Help her see that she can have even more time*

after school and on weekends to visit. In other words, for all things missed try to get to the real need; it will then be easier to replace.

- d. *P.E. with 30 other kids: Look into homeschool P.E. or city-sponsored sports teams.*
 - e. *If you are unable to find a group or activity that fits your needs, consider starting one yourself with the help of your child.*
- **Ask your child what his/her talents/interests are. Make a plan for your child to spend more time doing this that he/she wasn't able to do with public school.** (*More time for piano composition, time to build a computer from scratch, time to write a video game program, time to work on golfing skills, time to rock climb, time to design clothing, time for creative writing, time to pursue public speaking competitions, time for part-time work or job shadowing, more time for service, time to travel as a family, etc.*)
 - **Write down your plan and give a copy to your child or post in a prominent place. Refer back to it as the year goes on. Evaluate it at the end of the year and make a new plan for next year.** (*Note: you may also want to include the academic plan too.*)

Tina Nokes lives in Vienna, Virginia and has homeschooled for nine years. The mother of four boys, she began homeschooling her oldest son shortly after he entered 9th grade. He has now graduated from college, and her second is on a mission in Japan. She enjoys teaching "Young Statesmen" a civic class for teens. Tina graduated from BYU with a degree in Advertising and has worked and done freelance work in advertising. She's also owned a retail store, rental properties, and a resume writing/employment coaching business.