

- Repetition and experiencing things deeply are very, very important for children of this age. Don't have a new story every day - the same story for one, even two weeks is so nurturing to children. It strengthens their inner soul forces and brings a peacefulness to them: remember, we're up against a sound-bite ridden, consumerist, hyperdrive society! Think how well your children will be able to cope with this when they are older if, in their early years, their lives are slow-paced, peaceful and reflective. So... if your child wants to paint everyday and all day, let her. Spend whole afternoons simply singing songs and nursery rhymes. Let her explore the old stump in your backyard all morning. If, during your morning walk, you pass some workmen digging in the road and your child wants to watch, hunker down and spend a good long time just watching. Think *soul nourishment* not *tasks accomplished*.
- Keep your child involved in things. It's easier to do the dishes without the 'help' of a 4 year-old but, in the long run, it keeps him involved in household responsibilities and is an important part of his childhood. Homeschooling is about family and living together - and that means everybody's got a task to do.
- Generally, the focused learning time - Circle Time, making crafts, artistic work - which will later become Main Lesson time, should be in the morning. This is because most children are more awake at the beginning of the day, more receptive to 'head learning'. And, again, by starting this pattern now you'll be laying foundations for later healthy forms. But, as in my 'Typical Day' scenario, this doesn't always happen. You might want to bear it in mind, though, especially after your child's sixth birthday.
- Don't forget to allow for seasonal and other factors to influence your schedule: holiday preparations and seasonal outdoor activities are important parts of your larger yearly rhythms and give meaning to the turning of the year.
- Most young children (and older ones in my experience!) need regular snack times to get them through the morning or afternoon. This is a good time to learn about sharing, food preparation and to give thanks for the food received. By taking a moment to lay out the food nicely and to say a simple verse, one goes a long way in establishing the healthy reverential attitude which is so important in the life of the young child.

The following are three sample schedules:

Schedule A

8.00 Household chores

8.30 Morning walk

10.00 Snack time followed by Circle Time and finish with a story

10.45 Creative play or project based on the story

12.00 Lunch preparation and lunch

1.00 Rest time

2.00 Outdoor or indoor play

3.30 Craft activity or painting

4.30 Read aloud followed by supper preparation