



Planning Guide for Homeschool Parents

As a parent, you know that if you get behind in your tasks, it can make you feel stressed for the rest of the day. As a teacher, this also happens when we get behind in our plan for the year, which compounds more and more each month.

Inside this packet is a step-by-step plan for helping you set up your targets, manage you and your child's time, and minimizing distraction and cutting out the things that you really don't need.

We're going to create a tangible plan, or *Massive Action Plan* (MAP), that will guide your homeschool year for your child. When creating our action plan, we want to make sure your results are quantifiable and achievable, and that are interesting enough to make you feel that they are worthwhile to you!

The plan we're going to make is based on asking the right questions in this exact sequence:

- What do I really want?
- What's my purpose?
- What do I need to do?

These questions will help you get the information you need to create your MAP, which will maximize the results your child achieves and increases the sense of fulfillment for you both at the end of the year. You will not only reach important goals, but you'll also ensure that these goals align with what truly matters to you.

Let's get started!

Aurora

Planning Your Homeschool Year in Math & Science

Step 1: Define Your Goals

Instead of writing down “improve math skills,” be much more specific: “master decimal operations by the end of the year.” Identify why mastering specific skills (or set of skills for the entire grade level) is important and how it will benefit your child’s education.

It’s not enough to aim for improvement; you need a vision of how this achievement will impact your child’s learning journey.

Here’s another example: Instead of “complete 6 math lessons” (which is not specific enough), try writing “complete and master 6 math lessons, ensuring 90% or higher on all assignments.”

Consider how your child’s entire learning experience will be affected when your goal is achieved. For example, if you aim for your child to complete their daily math lessons independently on their own, what additional resources will you need to include? How will this change your daily schedule? These will factor in when writing your MAP.

Ask yourself:

- How much? (e.g., Complete the 5th-grade math curriculum)
- By when? (e.g., By the end of the school year)
- For what purpose? (e.g., To ensure my child is prepared for middle school math)

Now it’s your turn!

What do you want to accomplish this year?

How much? _____

By when? _____

For what purpose? _____

Step 2: Write Down Your Goals

The “*For what purpose?*” question is vital because it connects your values and emotions about your goals. If you can’t clearly visualize, verbalize, and write down why you and your child are pursuing a goal, the connection may not be strong enough to make it happen.

For example:

Goal: Complete the 5th-grade math curriculum by June.

Purpose: To ensure my child has a strong foundation in math, boosting their confidence and preparedness for middle school.

Now it’s your turn!

Goal _____

Purpose _____

Step 3: Develop a Sequence of Actions

Make your first action something you can easily do in the next ten minutes, just to get you rolling. The second action should take no more than the end of today (yes, today!) to complete. The third action is the one that will take a bit of work to do, and may even include multiple sub-actions. Example:

- *Action 1:* Print out the 5th-grade Grade Level Guide and fill in dates for weekly lessons.
- *Action 2:* Set up a daily practice routine that is fun and easy. Be sure my child understands my expectations and also how to use the math program, including tracking their daily progress.
- *Action 3:* Schedule regular check-in times to go over progress with my child and adjust the math lessons as needed.

Now it’s your turn!

Action 1: _____

Action 2: _____

Action 3: _____

Woohoo! You did it! You now have a MAP (Massive Action Plan) for this year!!

That's a lot more than most people do, by the way. Most folks just prop their child up in front of a homeschool program and say "GO!", hoping that their child will learn "something". (And their kids usually do learn *something*, but it's not usually the *something* they think it is!)

We're now ready to implement your MAP, so here are easy steps to solidify your purpose, focus on the results you really want, and get ready for action!

Step 4: Make Your Results Quantifiable and Achievable

Let's take a look at those goals again in Step 2. Instead of vague goals, set clear and measurable targets. For example:

- "Complete the 5th grade curriculum with 85% or higher average on review & tests by June 1st."
- "Ensure my child understands and can apply key concepts of fractions, decimals, and geometry."

Now it's your turn! Let's improve your goal(s) by making them clear and measurable.

Goal 1: _____

Goal 2: _____

Step 5: Connect Your Goals to Your Values

Think and reflect on why these goals matter to you. For example: *"I want my child to feel confident in their math abilities and be well-prepared for future challenges in school and life."*

Now it's your turn! **Why do these goals matter to me?**

Step 6: Plan for Growth and Change

This isn't a static, one-and-done plan for your child. It's dynamic, which means you must assess every so often and make sure it's working and you're still on track. Consider potential changes and growth opportunities like these:

- If your child excels, be prepared to introduce more advanced concepts, and move ahead to the lessons that fit where they are challenged with new material.
- Stay flexible and ready to adapt the plan (like slowing down, working with them, or having them attend small group private tutoring sessions) if your child struggles with certain topics, so they receive the support they really need.

Notes:

Action Steps: Look at Step 3 (page 3) at you action steps. Do the first one right now.

If your first action is something like this: “*Print out the 5th-grade math level guide and fill in dates for weekly lessons*” then STOP right now and go do it.

Next, block out the dates for your Academic Year Grab your calendar and mark the first day and the final date for your academic year. Typically, an academic year is 34-38 weeks over 9 months at the middle school level. Block out the holidays and personal days, and make sure you have about 34-38 weeks available for studies.

Schedule the Math/Science Blocks Use the Grade Level Guides to help you determine what to cover each week. Give students a cushion of at least 4 days for every month of content, meaning that they will have at the *most* 16 days of content for every 20 days of lessons.

Use these extra days for review, additional practice, or going over the content that they just are not understanding. Plan on one cushion day every week, so students will have four days of math content (1-2 days for science) with the fifth day as either a review, an activity, a short quiz, or a challenge.

Note: If you are also attending the live classes, be sure to write in the appropriate time in your time zone each week for right session.

One of your actions needs to be assessments, so you can track your progress!

Daily Review, Weekly Assessments and Unit Quizzes You will need a way to know how your student is doing on a weekly (if not daily) basis. One of the on-going math assignments we expect from students is tracking their own grades on paper (not on a computer). Students will be able to tell you which assignments they complete, what their current progress looks like, and if they need more or less time to finish their assignments. For science, trackers are available at the high school level; for younger science students, use the worksheets completed each week.

In addition, each day students will be able to tell you how they are doing with the current lesson. This can be very simple, like you (the parent) choosing 1 or 2 questions randomly from the workbook pages they completed the day prior, or having them teach you a concept they learned the day before. You don't have to grade it... they are simply letting you know that they can move on to new material.

During the year...

- 1. Allowing for Course Corrections** Sometimes referred to as *Vertical Alignment*, this is a way of determining where a student is coming from and where they need to be at the end of the year. The teacher must know what your child already knows while having an eye on the goal they are moving toward, and adjusting the pace according to what's happening right now.

Usually, parents plop their students down with a static, impersonal math curriculum without first figuring this part out, and the program has no way of adapting to your child's current abilities. Use the 2-page tests at the back of each workbook to determine what your child knows, and where they still need work within an area of math.

If you find that your child needs extra time partway through a math unit, adjust your schedule to allow for that time to happen. There will be times when the opposite happens: students seem to fly through concepts as if they learned it previously. Again, adjust your schedule so your student isn't bored or frustrated with math lessons that are too easy or hard.

- 2. Practical Applications make Learning Last** *Retention? Comprehension?*

The work students do must have value and be the right amount of work so students don't get lost in too many assignments. There are two things to keep in mind, and you need both for retention and comprehension.

First, *application*. For example, students that learn fractions will learn these concepts on a whole new level when they use them, like if they build the birdhouse, measuring using fractions, adding, and subtracting fractions, etc. If the students are only doing workbook work and worksheets, the retention is not going to be nearly as high as when we incorporate the application pieces. If you're not doing the intermediate and advanced labs of the program and only focused on workbooks, then the retention is simply not going to be there.

Second, *spaced repetition*. Space repetition does not necessarily mean every day, but periodically revisiting these concepts specially through applications will make the learning much more effective long-term.

If we simply add warm-up exercises and drill worksheets on top of current assignments, it will initially work... however, students will plateau before plunging, unless the application and correlation levels of learning are engaged. This means that the students must use what they learn about to really understand the concepts long-term. The Advanced Labs continue to build on the previous levels, revisiting and incorporating concepts as students' progress through the program.

- 3. Moving On... for Now** In real life, students are not going to master 100% of the material before moving on to the next concept. However, they will master 0% of the concepts we do not teach because they get stuck on something else. It can be good for students to put something on a back burner while working on another area (which is an important life skill itself!)

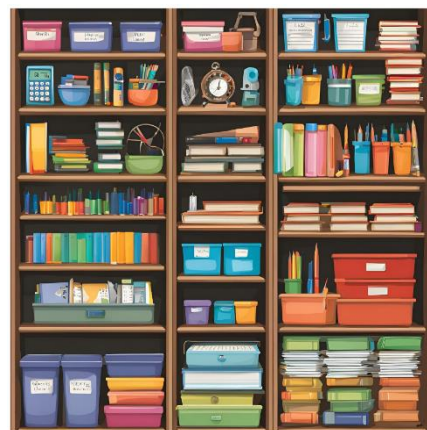
Setting up your Math & Science Learning Space:

Remember those goals you stated back on pages 3-4? Let's look at how to set up a learning environment that helps you meet those goals!

For example, if my goal was to **inspire curiosity and support kids doing their work independently**, I'll need to set up a "structured yet flexible" space where learning can thrive. It might look like this:

Physical Space Setup:

1. Designated Learning Area: Allocate a specific area in your home dedicated to math and science learning. It could be a corner of a room or a quiet space where distractions are minimized.
2. Organized Supplies: Arrange supplies such as manipulatives, calculators, rulers, equipment and books neatly in bins or on shelves with labels (it's important to have a home for each item). This helps in easy access and encourages independence in finding and using materials.
3. Comfortable and Inspiring Environment: How is your lighting in the room? I like to have a couple different options for comfortable seating. The wall space has posters of mathematical concepts (these can be printed and taped together), a multiplication chart, and maybe a whiteboard for problem-solving.



Setting up for Daily Work:

1. Setting Learning Goals: Make sure your child is onboard with the goals you set! Together, work to set out clear, achievable learning goals that excite you both, so they also take ownership of their learning journey. Print this out and tape it to the wall so it's always available for everyone to read each day.
(Hint: This is a great way to start out your lesson for the day!)
2. Varied Learning Activities: Print out a variety of activities for your child from the math program (activities, games, puzzles, experiments, labs, and creative projects). This variety keeps learning engaging and taps into different learning styles. For science, each week in the Live Class series has plenty of hands-on experiments, challenges and activities!



Curiosity and Independence:

1. Encourage Inquiry-Based Learning: Use open-ended questions and encourage your child to explore various solutions. When students make mistakes, given them time to think about what needs to change to find the right solution. Mistakes are learning opportunities, not a failure or hangup.

People that don't allow themselves to make mistakes do not learn nearly as much or as quickly as others that have this freedom.

2. Independent Work Stations: Create different "stations" or areas within your home where your child can work independently. These could include a desk for quiet study, a space for hands-on activities, and a station with puzzles or manipulatives, a table for games.
3. Freedom to Explore: Allow flexibility in learning schedules and topics of interest! Incorporate time for your child to pursue related topics they find fascinating beyond the curriculum.



Assessment and Feedback:

1. Regular Feedback: Set aside a time each day and/or week to connect with your child, even if it's only 10 minutes, where they show you their current progress in their personal tracker. Ask:
 - a. How did you do this week on your assignments?
 - b. How do you feel about this?
 - c. What can you do to make next day/week even better?
2. Assessment Tools: Use a variety of assessment tools such as quizzes, projects, and informal observations to gauge understanding. For example:
 - a. *How did you get this answer? (point to a problem they've recently completed)*
 - b. *Teach me how to (insert a math skill you want them to teach you)*
 - c. *Let's plan a project (Imaginary Road Trip – how much money will we spend on gas? Or... Shop with Me: getting the best deal on what we need on our next trip to the store) ... you get the idea!*



CHECKLIST for Planning Your Homeschool Math / Science Year

The following is a master checklist based on the examples provided in the packet. Feel free to change these checklist items to fit your personal Actions that you selected on page 3 in the blank spaces provided below., crossing out any that don't pertain to you.

- Print out this packet**
- Create clear, achievable learning goals for this year (page 2)**
- Create your MAP (page 3)**
- Complete Action #1 (example on page 6)**
 - Download Grade Level Guide for your student (select a lesson set)
 - Print out Live Class Teaching Schedule (if attending live classes)
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- Complete Action #2 (example on page 6)**
 - Block out dates and schedule lesson times on student's calendar
 - Write out an easy structure for kids to follow each day (e.g., watch Aurora's math lesson, do the workbook pages, grade and record on the tracker; for every 3 days they follow this structure, the fourth they get to pick a math puzzle, game or challenge)
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- Set up Learning Space (example on pages 8-9)**
 - Print out goals and post on the wall
 - Print out lessons materials (worksheets, workbooks...) for the week or month
 - Print out personal tracking record for student (for math) or worksheets (for science)
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- Join the Supercharged Science & Math private Parent Groups**
- Start work on Action #3**
 - Schedule daily/weekly check in time with student
 - Plan format for check in and share with student
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