

CONSTRUCTIONS

STORIES AND LESSONS
FOR HOMESCHOOLING
DURING QUARANTINE

**MEANINGFUL AND WHOLESOME ACTIVITIES
INSPIRED BY WALDORF PEDAGOGY,
THE FOREST SCHOOL MOVEMENT
AND SLOW PARENTING.**

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION – ADVICE TO PARENTS

MANAGING HOMESCHOOLING AND WORKING FROM HOME

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

NATURE ACTIVITIES DURING QUARANTINE

SCHEDULE PROPOSAL

MORNING CIRCLE

GRATITUDE

SINGING

ARTICULATION – LANGUAGE GAMES

POETRY

WRITING GAMES – 1ST AND 2ND GRADE

GRAMMAR GAMES – 3RD TO 6TH GRADE

INTRODUCTION – ADVICE TO PARENTS

The important thing when you teach is the joy and creativity you put into it. This is what will enable us to reach the children. And their experience will be much more magical, and so will yours! Learning is magic, it is a treasure. It is good to carry this awareness in your heart. This calm and joyful enthusiasm is what makes all the difference for children and whether they will follow us or resist us.

When you recite a poem or dictate a text to them, do it with a clear voice and make an effort to enjoy it, find the joy in saying a beautiful text out loud. Then you will have made a huge gift to your child.

When you write a text that your child will have to copy, think that he or she is looking at you and that it is not so much what you do that affects them, but rather the way you do it. Writing can be a work of art and can give great joy if you approach it in that way. Try to have a fluid, relaxed arm and hand, penetrated by the pleasure of writing beautiful letters. Do the same when you draw a shape or paint in front of your child. Anything can become a work of art. This is where joy is truly born. Instead of a burden, this homeschooling time could become an opportunity for personal development and connection to yourself, through the practice of the arts of calligraphy, drawing, music, painting, poetry and telling or reading stories. All these activities can become for you moments of deep happiness, inner healing and centering. And if the grammar and all the learning also become an artistic wonder for you, then you will have won everything. Shared learning and artistic activity with your children, finding happiness in practices that do you good while teaching your children, the joy that comes from wonder, etc. This is what this document would like to help you with.

HOMESCHOOLING AND ORGANIZING WORK FROM HOME

Keep your kids busy in the morning. If they have been adequately nourished intellectually, artistically and emotionally in the morning, there are great things they can do independently all afternoon while quietly digesting their morning experiences. This will also enable you to have some good working time from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., with a few breaks to take them outside and to remind them of their household chores. If, however, they start the day without a clear direction in the morning, it will often give rise to the kind of excitement, arguments and irritation that come from idleness. Of course, if you are two parents at home, alternating with the children is good.

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

I have been working with children for eighteen years, including more than ten years as a primary school teacher and I have had the opportunity to discover several alternative approaches to pedagogy, including the marvelous pedagogy practiced in Waldorf schools and those found in the Simplicity Parenting, Slow Parenting and Forest School movements. During my practice as a teacher I have seen the fruits of a meaningful and simple approach with children and I would like to give you the opportunity to discover it as well. In the document that I am proposing to you there are several educational principles that for me have proven themselves. They include:

- Academic lessons given only in the morning with a maximum of two hours a day. This respects the needs of children under the age of twelve. (Experience has shown me that far from making children less efficient, it conserves their energy and allows them to learn better, more quickly and with more joy. Why not give it a try during quarantine?).

- An artistic lesson every day.
- Contact with nature, as much as possible.
- Learning in “blocks” of several weeks, concentrated on the same subject to allow an economy of forces. This way children can focus very hard on learning one subject (for example mathematics) for about a month, without being distracted by other academic lessons. Then the following month they focus on another subject. In addition, this “forgetting” for a month or more, paradoxically allows them to memorize what they learned better for when they come back to it. They set it aside so that it can be deposited more deeply into their unconscious being and their memory.
- Stories drawn from the treasures of the great legends and mythologies of all cultures to accompany children in their learning and emotional development.

The story that I have created to accompany the children throughout the block is related to the story of Moses crossing of the desert for forty years. Other legends from various cultures with the same theme of adaptation to drastically different living and life conditions will also be integrated.

This month I am offering a writing / grammar and world discovery block. The theme will be: Human and Animal Constructions. So there will be no math. If you are not comfortable with this approach, or if your child's teacher has given you compulsory exercises, nothing prevents you from replacing some of the exercises I offer with others.

If you also have children in secondary school and/or kindergarten, you can have them participate in the Morning Circle, reading, art lessons and story time. During the academic lessons, secondary students can do their own school work and kindergarten aged children can do free games.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- ✓ A beautiful notebook: ideally a large drawing quality notebook with white non-lined sheets (or sheets of paper assembled together if you do not have a notebook).
- ✓ A draft notebook (with lined pages).
- ✓ A fountain pen, a pencil, an eraser, a pencil sharpener, colored pencils.
- ✓ If possible: oil pastels, paintbrushes and water-based paint, modeling clay, wool.

NATURE ACTIVITIES DURING QUARANTINE

Quarantine at home is used to stop the spread of a virus but creative ways can be found to get children outside for some fresh air. For example, we can create a Facebook group with the inhabitants of the building to manage outside time so that children can go alternately out to play in the park or parking lot without meeting other families.

To strengthen the immune system of children and simply to preserve their well-being and mental health (and yours too), it is essential that they receive good air, that they receive sun light when possible and that they run and connect with nature each day.

With closed parks and quarantine restrictions, it may sometimes be difficult to bring children outside and then encourage them to play. If they are used to playing in a park, they may have trouble finding other ways to have fun outdoors, especially if many restrictions are in place. Going around the block is not necessarily the most interesting activity for children especially if they are not allowed to play, run, walk into a park, approach other children, or touch anything. However, it is so important for them to have fun outside without feeling too much stress from the adults around them.

Therefore a nature activity will be proposed for each afternoon with variations to suit different situations and according to what you can do.

When you:

- have access to a garden, a forest or another authorized natural area near your home.
- can only take a walk around the block or play in the parking lot.
- can not go out at all.

Please pay attention to your child's actual educational level. There is no point in giving them too difficult a task which would only discourage them. If your child is for example, in 3rd grade but seems to be struggling with 3rd grade exercises, it is because she is not yet ready for it, and it is better to give her 2nd grade exercises so that she develops a good foundation for future learning. When she is really ready, she will eagerly, joyfully and effectively take up her 3rd grade work.

Schedule proposal

It can be tempting to disregard all rhythm, but without it, things can quickly become frightening for children, especially so in periods of quarantine. The ideal is to keep the same tempo and rhythm every day. It gives the children a reassuring structure that also strengthens them. All academic lessons should take place in the morning as it respects the natural organic rhythm of the children and will allow them to be much more enthusiastic about the idea of working.

7:30 am - 8:30 am	Rise and Shine, Breakfast, Household Chores
8:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.	Morning Circle
9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Academic Lesson
10.30 a.m. - 11 a.m.	Recreation (if possible outdoors)
11 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Art Lesson and End of Morning Story
12:15 p.m. - 1 p.m.	Household Chores, Lunch
p.m. - 3 p.m.	Calm Time: nap or quiet activities in their room, allowing adults and children to take a break separately
3 p.m. - 5 p.m.	Nature Activity , Free Play (if possible outdoors)
5 p.m. - 6 p.m.	Household Chores, Dinner
6 p.m.	Free Play Indoors <i>From 11 years of age and older; possibly more school work</i>
7 p.m. or 7:30 p.m.	Bedtime story
7:30 p.m. or 8 p.m.	Bed Time (for children under 12)
<p><i>It is a good opportunity for children to participate more in household chores during a quarantine. It is a fundamental part of their development to feel useful and part of the small family community. Ideally each child is given a few tasks that he must accomplish each day for a whole month. This gives him the opportunity to do them better and better and will strengthen his will. After a month, he can be given new tasks.</i></p> <p><i>Examples of tasks: washing salad, cutting vegetables, sweeping the hallway or dining room, cleaning the sink, watering the plants, setting the table, doing the dishes, taking out the trash, cooking a dish, etc.</i></p>	

Morning Circle

(20 to 40 minutes)

GRATITUDE

Starting the day with gratitude is the best way to keep peace of mind and family harmony and it is even more necessary in times of crisis and adjustment.

You can light a candle or place a pretty bouquet of flowers on the table.

Take the time to say hello, joyfully and warmly.

And thank life for the gift of this new day.

Depending on the religious orientation of the family, this may be the right time for a prayer or a meditative poem. Or simply time to say thank you. Thank you for the sun, for the people we love, for the birds singing, for everything that moves us that day.

Here are some ideas for meditative non-religious poems.

Prayer of saint Patrick

I bind unto myself today
The virtues of the starlit heaven,
The glorious sun's life-giving ray,
The whiteness of the moon at even,
The flashing of the lightning free,
The whirling wind's tempestuous
shocks,
The stable earth, the deep salt sea,
Around the old eternal rocks.

Sun

O sun so bright
Thou giv'st thy light
And warming love
From heaven above
That life on earth
May come to birth.
May our yes shine
With light like thine
May our hearts know
Thy warming glow;
May our hands give
Such strength to live
That we may be
A Sun, like thee.

E. Hutchins

SINGING

Ideally you should listen to the song in advance and then teach it to your children. If you are not comfortable with that, do not hesitate to use the recording during the first practice attempts with your children.

Before singing, take the time to stretch all together, make faces to relax the jaw, vigorously rub the body and face as if taking a shower, etc.

Depending on your talents, you can add recorder practice or other instruments to this musical period.

Song of Spring, Maurice Carême

Recording

Cheveux au vent
Tambour battant,
Allons-nous-en,
A la rencontre du printemps.

Prenons nos trompettes gaiement
Et sonnons la mort de l'hiver.
La terre est comme un agneau blanc
Dans les bras nus de l'univers.

Cheveux au vent,
Tambour battant,
Allons-nous-en,
A la rencontre du printemps.

Des arbres, des toits, des auvents,
Il pleut des milliers d'hirondelles.
Le soleil verse sur les champs,
De pleins paniers de fleurs nouvelles.

The Springtime is Ringing

Recording



The spring-time is ring-ing; the birds are all sing-ing. The
shep-herd is play-ing his fine cla-ri-net, like
doo-dle, doo-dle, doo-dle, doo-dle, like doo-dle, doo-dle, doo-dle det.

ARTICULATION AND LANGUAGE GAMES

Choose only a few verses to do each day. The goal is to repeat the articulation poem several times, articulating well, then to do it faster and faster.

The best is to do it standing and in movement. For example, we answer back to each other, verse by verse, each time taking a step and an arm gesture towards the other, as if we were speaking to the other.

For the first few days, the children repeat each verse recited by the adult. Later, when the verses are well known, we can answer each other (for example: the adult says the first line, the children answer with the second, etc.)

Blow, breezes, blow!

Flow, rivers, flow!

Shine, sun, shine!

And grow, flowers, grow.

Billy Button bought a buttered biscuit.

Did Billy Button buy a buttered biscuit?

If Billy Button bought a buttered biscuit

Where's the buttered biscuit Billy Button
bought?

Blossoms beautiful and bright

Bursting into bloom

Bees and butterflies in flight

By the banks of broom.

Children chiding, chaffing chirping

Choking chimneys, cheerfully chattering.

Go, you grim and grisly bear

Growling in your gloomy lair!

Now the night is nigh its noon

Nimble gnomes beneath the moon.

Snow and ice and silvered hedges

Sleet and slush and slides and sledges

The vapours have vanished

That vaguely veiled my view.

Vivid, virtuous, vast and void.

Never be victim of villainous vices.

Watchful we will walk together,

Wander wide in wintry weather.

POETRY

Choose one or two poems to recite. (The remaining poems can be read to your children just for fun. Maximum one per day).

For recitation, stand in a circle with the children (or stand face to face if there is only one child).

Recite each line in a loud, clear voice. The children repeat each line.

You can add a gesture for each verse, by yourself or by creating it with the children. "Gestured" recitation is particularly suitable for children aged 6 to 9.

The Mischievous Wind

(Grade 1 – 3)

The wind is such a playful chap ;
Today he snatched my new spring hat.
He tossed it in the air so high
I saw it sailing through the sky.
I knew I'd never get it back –
Then, down he dropped it in my lap!

Christina T. Owen

Poplars

(Grade 1 – 5)

Seven lovely poplars
Swaying in the breeze.
Seven softly sighing
Tall and slender trees.

Silvered by the moonlight
Pointing to the sky:
Look, like leafy spears, they
Hold the stars on high.

Je veux être

(Poem in French : Grade 1 – 5)

[Video showing the movements](#)

Pur comme l'or
Ferme comme le rocher
Clair comme le cristal
C'est ainsi que je veux être.

Je viens du ciel
Qui garde mes pensées
Et je vis là, sur terre
Qui porte mes pieds
Et j'offre mon cœur au monde entier.

Je suis ici, avec ma famille !
Je suis ici, et là,
Quelle joie !

Thankful

(Grade 3 – 6)

The sun is in my heart
He warms me with his power,
And wakens life and love,
In bird and beast and flower.

The stars above my head
Are shining in my mind,
As spirits of the world
That in my thoughts I find.

The earth whereon I tread
Lest not my feet go through,
But strongly doth uphold
The weight of deeds I do.

Then I must thankful be
That man on earth I dwell,
To know and love the world
And work all creatures well.

A.C. Harwood

The Fairy Ring

(Grade 3 – 7)

Let us dance and let us sing,
Dancing in a merry ring,
We'll be fairies on the green
Sporting round the fairy queen.

Like the seasons of the year,
Round we circle in a sphere;
I'll be Summer, you'll be Spring;
Dancing in a fairy ring.

Spring and summer glide away,
Autumn comes with tresses gray,
Winter hand in hand with Spring,
Dancing in a fairy ring.

Faster, faster, round we go,
While our cheeks with roses glow,
Free as birds upon the wing,
Dancing in a fairy ring.

All about the open hills
Daisies show their pleasant frills,
Washed and white and newly spun
For a festival of sun.

Like a blossom from the sky
Drops a yellow butterfly
Dancing down the hedges grey,
Snows-bestrewn till yesterday.

Squirrels skipping up the tress
Smell how spring is in the breeze,
While the birds, they flute and sing:
"Build your nests, for here is spring!"

A Bird Came Down

(Grade 4 – 12)

A bird came down the walk:
He did not know I saw;
He bit an angle-worm in halves
And ate the fellow, raw.

And then he drank a dew
From a convenient grass,
And then hopped sidewise to the wall
To let a beetle pass.

He glanced with rapid eyes
That hurried all abroad,--
They looked like frightened beads, I
thought;
He stirred his velvet head

Like one in danger; cautious,
I offered him a crumb,
And he unrolled his feathers
And rowed him softer home

Than oars divide the ocean,
Too silver for a seam,
Or butterflies, off banks of noon,
Leap, splashless, as they swim.

Emily Dickinson

Sonnet 18

(Grade 5 – 12)

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling
buds of May,

And summer's lease hath all too short a date;
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course
untrimm'd;

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st;
Nor shall death brag thou wander'st
in his shade,

When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Shakespeare

WRITING GAMES (1ST - 2ND GRADE)

Generally, we spend several days on only one or two games that we play for 5 to 10 minutes. We move on to the next game on the list when the previous one is well assimilated.

If a child is in 1st or 2nd grade, all the children in the family can play the games on this page with him/her; the older ones will also enjoy them! Games are always more fun when many players are involved.

Letter on the Back

A letter is traced very slowly on the child's back which she has to guess.

After several letters, we exchange roles.

Foot Dictation

Tape a large white sheet of paper on the floor. The child, seated in a chair with a pencil or a brush between his toes, traces as best he can the letters dictated to him. First with the right foot (if he is right-handed), then with the left foot, then with both feet at the same time.

Words and Sounds

We say a word to the child. She then tries to find several words that start with the same sound as the word as well as several words that end with the same sound.

Miming Sounds

We choose a sound with the child. Then we mime a word that contain this sound. The child must guess what word it is. After the child has succeeded in guessing a certain number of words, the roles are exchanged.

Oral Dictation and Jumping

We say short words to the child which he must then spell. If he spells it right, he can jump forward, if not, he has to jump back. The goal is to be able to get all the way to the wall.

GRAMMAR GAMES (3RD - 6TH GRADE)

*Generally, we spend several days on only one or two games that we play for 5 to 10 minutes.
We move on to the next game on the list when the previous one has been well assimilated.*

Verbs

A child mimics an action.

The others (or the adult) must guess which verb it corresponds to.

Verbs and Nouns

The adult says a string of words. The child listens carefully and makes a sign each time she hears a verb (for example: one fist on top of the other);
when it is a noun, another sign is used (for example: point fingers).

The adult says the words faster and faster. The goal is to gain five points by making the right signs. You lose a point each time you use the wrong sign.

Nouns and Adjectives

We choose a noun together with the child.

Then we try to find at least ten adjectives that could characterize the noun.

Verbs, Nouns and Adjectives

Similar to the game "Verbs and Nouns", except we add a sign for the adjectives (for example: make the gesture of painting a surface with both hands, because adjectives give color to the world).

Nature of Words

Like the previous exercise, except we add signs as we go along.

Adverbs, for example: place your hand on your fist (which represents the verb).

Connecting words, for example: clasp both hands together.

Pronouns, for example: point one finger (same as for the nouns) while making a circle with a thumb and a finger on the other hand (because a pronoun is a small word which replaces a noun).

