

CURRICULUM and RESOURCE GUIDE for TCA COTTAGE SCHOOL PROGRAM PARENTS

Dear Cottage School Program Families,

Our goal at CSP is to partner with you and support you in your homeschooling journey in any way possible. The purpose of this guide is to provide a variety of information. First, families occasionally desire to model their home school curricula after TCA’s full-time program; therefore, this guide includes a brief summary of TCA’s full-time scope and sequence. Second, families brand new to home schooling appreciate knowing some “tricks of the trade” and general resources for how to get started, where to find curricula and support groups, etc.; this guide offers several tips from seasoned home school families. Third, both new and experienced homeschooling families often ask us for curriculum suggestions in a variety of subject areas. While TCA’s Cottage School Program does not recommend or endorse any specific curriculum, program, or company, we are happy to share those resources that many of our families have used over the years—and resources that seem to prepare CSP students well for College Pathways, TCA’s non-traditional program for students in grades 7-12.

Please don’t hesitate to reach out to the Cottage School Program’s principal, Justin Peterson (jpeterson1@asd20.org), or assistant principal, Stefani Hille (shille@asd20.org), with any questions. You can also visit the CSP website, “Homeschool Resources” tab, for user-friendly lists of grade-level skills in each subject area.

Summary of TCA’s Full-time Traditional Program Scope and Sequence

TCA’s traditional program and CSP use the same phonics-based curriculum, *The Writing Road to Reading* by Romalda Spalding. Please note that CSP does not teach spelling past the second grade, and CSP does not specifically teach reading at any grade level. The traditional program and CSP also use the same writing curriculum, the *Institute for Excellence in Writing*, or *IEW*. Any literature used in CSP is from TCA’s approved literature list. This complete list can be found [here](#) should you desire suggestions for quality literature to use at home. Additionally, both TCA’s traditional program and CSP rely on E.D. Hirsch’s books, *What Your Kindergartener/First Grader/Second Grader/etc..., Needs to Know*, for guidance on all subjects. Please keep in mind that the only core subject that CSP teaches is language arts; all other core subjects (math, science, history) are the responsibility of our homeschooling families.

Kindergarten	Grades 1-2	Grades 3-6
Language Arts ~recognizes upper case letters ~recognizes lower case letters	Reading Grammar	Reading/literature Grammar
Decoding Skills	Writing	Writing
Spelling	Penmanship	Penmanship (except 6 th)
Handwriting ~forms letters correctly ~directionality	Spelling	Spelling
Grammar ~parts of a sentence ~capitalization	Phonics	Phonics (only in grade 3)
Geography	Math	Math
History	Science	Logic
Health/Science	History/Geography	Science/Health
Math		History/Geography
		Typing/basic word-processing skills, grades 5-6

Tips and Suggestions for Starting the Home School Journey (as shared by veteran CSP/home school families)

- It's all about relationships! Have fun while doing school and life. If you build a firm foundation of love, respect, and character, the academics will be in place by junior high/high school.
- Be organized! Keep a schedule and daily list of what needs to be accomplished. It helps to establish routines and evaluate time. Don't stress if you miss something as you can always do it the next day.
- Have an inviting school room or area. Everyone will want to be there! Bookshelves are a valuable organizational tool (and organizing books by category is helpful, too).
- Start early in the day and complete the hardest subjects first. If you wait, your student may get tired and not learn as well.
- Ask for feedback from your spouse, family, and friends as to what they see in your child(ren) and homeschooling. If something isn't working, try something else.
- When older children have mastered something, have them teach it to the younger children. It reinforces what they know and helps everyone.
- Do Language Arts and Math at grade level for each student, but join similar grade levels for History, Science, Bible, etc.
- Read quality literature and talk about it as a family. Start reading early and do a lot of it. Read aloud to your kids and have them read to you.
- Go through the curriculum at a pace that is good for your student, not necessarily the pace the curriculum "schedules" for you.
- Incorporate the use of technology but balance it with limiting the time spent on non-educational technology and media.
- Give your child tests so they are prepared for formal testing.
- Never turn down help, especially when offered for household tasks, caring for young children, etc.
- The curriculum you choose has to work for your teaching style and your child's learning style.
- Keep a "finished file" for students to store completed work when done. Grade these papers when you need to sit and wait somewhere.
- Have a set time each day to meet with each child for one-on-one skills.
- Give a weekly assignment sheet to each child so they know what is expected to be completed each day. Unfinished work becomes "homework" for that night. This prevents falling behind.
- Focus on what you've accomplished, not how much you didn't finish.
- Don't answer the phone during home school hours.

- List and categorize what you already have before making a big investment in curriculum. Consider making a color-coded card file for books on every topic (i.e. Music, Science, Art, etc.).
- Plan your year at the end of the summer. Thoroughly go through each book for each student and pencil in the dates to be completed. This will keep you on track throughout the year.
- Take the summer off as well as a fall break, Thanksgiving, winter break, and spring break. Remember to enjoy family life and feel refreshed for the daily homeschooling lessons.
- Go on family field trips, take the camera, and make lots of memories. Spend time outdoors and/or being active every day—including you!
- Use banker boxes to store papers/records each year. Just label a box with child's name, year, and grade level at the beginning of the year and drop papers/artwork, etc. into the box over the course of the year (simple filing method).
- Have a trampoline, dart board, and other physical items set up to focus energy while reciting Math facts, Spelling words, phonograms, etc.
- If you're homeschooling with a toddler or preschooler in the house, have a box just for them that is full of coloring books, painting, Playdoh, games, toys, etc. that they are only allowed to use during school. This helps keep them busy while you are teaching.
- Take time for yourself.
- Don't home school out of fear. Don't be dogmatic—embrace freedom!

General Resources

Homeschooling Support Groups (not necessarily endorsed by TCA)

- **Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA)** <http://www.hslda.org/>
- **Christian Home Educators of Colorado (CHEC)** <https://chec.org/>
- **High Country Homeschool Enrichment (HCEC)** classes & support group for home-schoolers (contact New Life Church) www.hche.org
- **Learning Adventures at Mountain Springs, Colorado Springs (LAMS)** www.lamsatmsc.wix.com/lams
- Look for support groups in your church

Local Educational Supply Stores (not necessarily endorsed by TCA)

- **School Crossing**, 4262 Royal Pine Drive, C/S, 80920 <https://schoolcrossingtoystation.com>
- **Mardel**, 5964 Barnes Road, C/S, 80922 <https://www.mardel.com>
- **Teacher's Pet**, 2415 Rand Avenue, C/S, 80905 (no website)

Suggested books by Homeschooling Parents and by TCA

- **Core Knowledge Grade-by-Grade Series** by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.: In one convenient volume per grade—from *What Your Kindergartner Needs to Know* through *What Your Sixth Grader Needs to Know*—the seven-volume Core Knowledge Series provides engaging, illustrated introductions to the important knowledge outlined in the [Core Knowledge Sequence](#). Each book suggests related readings and resources. The kindergarten and first grade books also include sections on how children learn to read.
- ***A Grade-by-Grade Resource Guide for Parents and Teachers***, edited by J. Holdren and E. D. Hirsch, Jr.: Want to know some of the best books to accompany the Core Knowledge Series? This annotated resource guide provides grade-by-grade recommendations (K-6) for books and other materials, all organized to follow the Core Knowledge Sequence outline of topics in Language Arts, History and Geography, Visual Arts, Music, Science, and Math.
- ***Core Virtues: A Literature-Based Program in Character Education*** by Mary Beth Klee.

Suggested Websites by Homeschooling Parents (not necessarily endorsed by TCA)

- **Cathy Duffy Reviews** (a website that specializes in home school curricula reviews and an excellent starting point for families new to homeschooling) <https://cathyduffyreviews.com/#>
- **Love and Logic** (a research-driven, whole-child philosophy used by both TCA and many of our home school families; the website offers a plethora of resources for both parenting and education) <https://www.loveandlogic.com/>
- **Pikes Peak Library District** (multiple resources, programs, and opportunities for home school families) <https://ppld.org/>
- **The Old Schoolhouse** (an online magazine for homeschooling families) <https://www.theoldschoolhouse.com/>

Curriculum Resources

Note: The following resources have been suggested by home schooling families. They are not necessarily endorsed by TCA. With literally thousands of curricula and homeschooling websites and resources available, we understand it can be overwhelming for families to know which websites/resources are best. The following suggestions have all come from CSP families, and they are also suggestions CSP administration has found to provide solid, research-based curricula and instructional approaches. These lists are in no way exhaustive. We provide them simply to offer a starting point and narrow down the scope of the curriculum search for our families. A link to the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) academic standards is also provided for each core subject area. Having a concept of academic standards will help you be aware of whether each child is learning at, below, or above grade level. The standards also give you an idea of broader concepts to teach, regardless of which curricula you use.

Suggested General Curriculum Websites

These websites offer resources in a variety of subject areas, and all have been found to be solid with good educational content. Some home school families choose a single company/organization for all their curricular needs while other pick and choose from a variety of suppliers. (Suggestions are given in alphabetical order, not ordered based on quality or preference.)

- Abeka—<http://www.abeka.com/>
- Alpha Omega Publications (offers Monarch, Switched-On Schoolhouse, LifePac, and Horizons curricula)—<https://www.aop.com/curriculum>
- Apologia—<http://www.apologia.com/>
- Bob Jones University—<http://www.bjupresshomeschool.com/>
- Classical Conversations—<https://www.classicalconversations.com>
- Core Knowledge—<https://www.coreknowledge.org/>
- Easy Peasy All-In-One Homeschool—<https://allinonehomeschool.com/>
- Sonlight—<http://www.sonlight.com/>

Language Arts—Suggested Curriculum (Click [here](#) for CDE language arts standards.)

While the Cottage School Program will cover your child's language arts curriculum and instruction (to include phonics, spelling, grammar, and literature appreciation in grades K-2 and writing, grammar, and literature appreciation in grades 3-6), we know that not all of our families may have all their children enrolled at CSP. Additionally, families may find that they want to supplement the CSP curriculum if a child is either advanced or struggling with the subject area. Therefore, we have listed below other curricula for language arts-related subjects. (Suggestions are given in alphabetical order, not ordered based on quality or preference. The websites listed above (see "Suggested General Curriculum Websites") are also good resources for this subject.)

Grammar

- **Daily Grammar** (free; offers both paper/pencil and online instruction by grade level) <http://www.dailygrammar.com/>
- **Easy Grammar** (used in CSP, grades 3-6) <https://www.easygrammar.com>
- **Shurley English** (very structured and systematic) <https://www.shurley.com/>

Handwriting

- **The Writing Road to Reading** (used by CSP, although handwriting/letter formation is not taught past the second grade; provides instruction in cursive; book can be checked out from CSP's Lending Library) <https://www.spaldingeducation.org/>

Literature

- Click [here](#) to access TCA's recommended and approved list of classical literature books. (Please note that this list is provided as a reference only. The books are not required reading for CSP students.)

Spelling—We STRONGLY recommend all families continue with spelling instruction in grades 3-6 as we only cover this in grades K-2.

- **Soaring with Spelling** (by JacKris Publishing; paper/pencil instruction) <https://jackkrispublishing.com/collections/soaring-with-spelling>
- **Spelling City** (online program; families can create their own word lists) <https://www.spellingcity.com/>
- **The Writing Road to Reading** (used by CSP, although spelling is not taught past the second grade; can be checked out from CSP's Lending Library) <https://www.spaldingeducation.org/>

Writing

- **Brave Writer** (based on child development, not faith-based, online instruction available) <https://bravewriter.com/>
- **Daily 6-Trait Writing by Evan Moor** (thoroughly covers composition skills, paper/pencil only)
- **Institute for Excellence in Writing (IEW)** (used in CSP, grades 3-6) <https://iew.com/>

Math—Suggested Curriculum (Click [here](#) for CDE math standards.)

Ensuring each child receives a solid foundation in math is critical, second only to developing reading/writing skills. We have found that the following curriculum suggestions prepare CSP students well for their transition to math at College Pathways. The lowest level of math that College Pathways offers is pre-algebra. Since math is cumulative, meaning concepts build on each other over time, persisting in consistent and daily math instruction is recommended for all homeschooling families (whether students attend College Pathways or not).

The following skills are needed for success in pre-algebra at College Pathways:

- Mastery of basic whole number operations—addition, subtraction, multiplication, division (including long division)
- Mastery of basic fraction operations—addition, subtraction, multiplication, division
- Mastery of basic decimal operations—addition, subtraction, multiplication, division
- Introduction to integers (including negative numbers) and solving equations
- Introduction to ratio, proportion, and percent
- Introduction to graphing
- Introduction to geometry
- Introduction to statistics and probability

The curricula mentioned below all have a history of preparing students well for the math courses at College Pathways. (Suggestions are given in alphabetical order, not ordered based on quality or preference. The websites listed above (see “Suggested General Curriculum Websites”) are also good resources for this subject.)

- **ALEKS by McGraw Hill** (a mastery-based online learning program) <https://www.aleks.com/>
- **Khan Academy** (good as a supplement to other curriculum) <https://www.khanacademy.org/>
- **MATH IXL** (a personalized learning approach based on mastery and real-time diagnostics) <https://www.ixl.com/math>
- **Math-U-See** (a mastery-based curriculum that offers both paper/pencil and online learning; uses manipulatives; may be good for students who struggle with math) <https://mathusee.com/>

- **Saxon Math** (offers both paper/pencil (can find books at several suppliers) and online (DIVE) learning; mastery-based; particularly good for long-term retention of concepts; word-for-word script for parents/educators; very thorough but may be a bit much for students who struggle; students should complete through the 7/6 course in order to be well prepared for pre-algebra) <https://diveintomath.com/saxon-math/>
- **Shormann Math** (for upper-level math (begins with Algebra I); mentioned here for CSP families who may be homeschooling older students or who have extremely advanced math students) <https://diveintomath.com/shormann/>
- **Singapore Math** (offers both paper/pencil (can find books at several suppliers) and online learning; mastery-based; also called Dimensions Math) <https://www.singaporemath.com/>
- **Teaching Textbooks** (a popular curriculum for home school families, but only recommended if you are intentional about advancing your students; it is suggested that you work a few grades higher than grade level as it's too easy otherwise; note this curriculum does not transition well to high school level math as students are not well prepared for more challenging math concepts) <https://www.teachingtextbooks.com/>

Reading

Click [here](#) to access the CSP document on teaching reading at home. CSP does not explicitly teach reading at any grade level, so families should find a specific and structured reading curriculum that works best for them. The “Teaching Reading at Home” document offers curriculum suggestions, instructional strategies, and the CDE academic standards for reading at all elementary grade levels.

Science—Suggested Curriculum (Click [here](#) for CDE science standards.)

(Suggestions are given in alphabetical order, not ordered based on quality or preference. The websites listed above (see “Suggested General Curriculum Websites”) are also good resources for this subject.)

- **Elemental Science** (classically-based curriculum, not faith-based) <https://elementalscience.com/>
- **InquisiKids Discover and Do** (not a curriculum but short, engaging videos of lab experiments; multiple grade levels available; videos are on YouTube and can also be purchased as DVDs)
- **Science in History series by Dr. Jay Wile** (Dr. Wile was the original developer of Apologia; excellent for teaching multiple grade levels; no online option; faith-based)

Social Studies—Suggested Curriculum (Click [here](#) for CDE social studies standards.)

(Suggestions are given in alphabetical order, not ordered based on quality or preference. The websites listed above (see “Suggested General Curriculum Websites”) are also good resources for this subject.)

- **Drive-thru History** (good as a supplement to a curriculum; faith-based) <http://drivethruhistory.com/>
- **Geography Songs** (memory songs by Kathy Troxel) <https://kathytroxel.com/>
- **Liberty Kids** (not a curriculum but a series of videos on YouTube; series on the American Revolution)