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Age Appropriate Chore Posters

printable posters for toddlers to tweens



by Donna Reish

Welcome to Raising Kids With Character and Character Ink Press' **Age-Appropriate Chores Poster Pack!**

There are a few things that I would like to share with you before we get into the actual posters.

Introducing the Poster Pack

- (1) They are organized in chronological order beginning with toddlers (yes, toddlers... the little cuties!).
- (2) Each age is divided with a page divider so that you can find the age list you are looking for more easily.
- (3) Each page may be printed off on tag board or paper in color or "gray-scaled" so that each poster is one-sided (if desired).
- (4) Each age may be two or more pages. Unlike our Age-Appropriate Chores memes (with only one list per age—pin them!), each age level has **two** chore lists in this complete poster pack:
 - a. Each one begins with **Working-With-Someone-Else Chores**. These are chores that, that age child may not (will probably not) be able to do on their own, but if they have help, these chores are appropriate. These are things to work together on—as you work with your child, modeling the job, they will learn them more quickly than if these tasks were saved until the child could do them alone. Always think "training" when it comes to children and chores.
 - b. Following the Working-With-Someone-Else Chores list, there is a regular On-Their-Own Chores list. These are chores that would be appropriate for that age child to learn to do. These chores could become their regular daily or weekly chores, as desired. They will still require training, but a child at that age can usually master them.

Ways to Use the Posters

- (1) You can print them off in color or black and white, three hole punch them, place them in sheet protectors, and put them in a binder (such as your planner or school binder). You can use them as check sheets to check off as each skill is taught/learned/mastered by your child(ren).
- (2) You can print them off in color and hang them up in a family learning area and use them to motivate your children—again as benchmarks for learning and mastery.
- (3) You can print them off in color and place each child's in his or her area in the school room or family room or bedroom door or bulletin board.
- (4) You can use them to create a master list for the year of skills that you want to teach. If you do this, be sure that you give each skill a date or month and some benchmarks and checks and balances to keep you moving forward in the chore training.
- (5) Print them off at the end of each school year with the posters indicating which chores the child has mastered and put in his school binder or file for that year.

Chore Tips

(1) Build chores into your daily schedule.

Once the training of the chore is completed, the fun part of actually having someone consistently and correctly do the job begins. This will work out much better if you have set up a certain protocol that is followed to be sure that the chores that you have taught are actually completed and completed when needed.

We personally had three chore sessions a day before each meal for twenty minutes or so. We learned this approach from Greg Harris in his early Christian Homeschool Workshop (twenty-five years ago!) where he taught us to attach important things in our day to something that is already in the schedule. It felt natural to add a chore session before each meal.

This worked well for us because we had one person, Mom in the beginning, fixing meals during that time. When we added a chore session to that, it meant that everybody was working at the same time on various areas. It also meant there was a a starting point and an ending point.

Some families prefer to simply have a chore chart in which all the chores are assigned and they just need to be done by a certain time of day. That is another approach. I liked all together because it allowed everything to be done at the same time. It was also easier than trying to track down everybody at 3 o'clock and asked if this was done or that was done. Of course, this can be overcome by creating a chore chart in which the child marks off or moves something after he does it. (Assuming the checking is in place—don't expect what you won't inspect!)

Whatever approach you decide to take for your chore schedule, be sure that the chores are done regularly. Check out my blog post about three times a day — laundry, dishes, trash. For us personally, we like to give the daily work to younger children. Daily jobs give the child the opportunity to practice that chore over and over again each day. In this way, the child gets better and better at the jobs. They are also very visible as in you can see if the dishes are done or the trash is taken out. Also, they are needed every day, and generally speaking, younger children are around every day whereas older children might go out to a job or sports or extra classes.

(Build chores into schedule, continued)

If you have not had a true routine set up previously, the first place to start is definitely the dailies. There is no reason to have the coffee tables all dusted when you can't walk through the living room. Likewise, it is very difficult to dust the room with clutter everywhere. In that way, I would begin training children on daily chores first and foremost. If each child just learned one daily task every couple of weeks, the daily tasks could be passed out, taught, and completed every day within a month's time. This would make the school day run much more smoothly and give the children a sense of accomplishment and pride to have completed such important jobs.

(2) "Give" entire responsibility when possible.

Speaking of a sense of accomplishment and pride, we found it much more effective to actually give a child a certain chore, certain area, a certain jurisdiction rather than passing out chores each day, using a job jar, etc. What I mean by this is that we taught a child to do a chore completely, and that naturally became that child's job.

So when a child learned to unload the dishwasher, unloading the dishwasher became their job. It wasn't something he helped with. It wasn't something he did on occasion. It wasn't something that he did if Mom wasn't there to do it. It became his.

This doesn't mean you do not change jobs and pass them out differently after a while. It simply means for whatever period of time you designated this task, whether it is washing, drying, folding, and putting away a load of laundry every day or unloading the dishwasher and setting the table for dinner every day, it is yours.

As your children grow in age and developmentally, you teach them more and more skills, and they are able to add more and more chore. I can remember my children anticipating each new season as they got to move up into "harder" chores—and their "lesser" chore moved down to a younger one. It was a rite of passage to move up into laundry and out of dishes or into assistant chef for dinner and out of laundry. When it comes to chores, keep in mind the biblical admonitions that "to whom much is given, much is expected" and "to add a little at a time, precept upon precept."

As an aside to this point, I can remember when our youngest was about seven or eight, and he learned laundry. It was so excited to move up to a bigger chore—and relished the thought that his dish days might soon be behind him. When the day came for him to take over two loads of fold up laundry from start to finish each day, he wanted to know who was going to take his dishwasher unloading and reloading twice a day.

When we explained that nobody was—he was keeping that and adding the fold up laundry, his little face was priceless. "You mean there's nobody taking my dishes now?" I told him that Daddy did dishes every day for the past twenty-five years, and he was much pretty doomed to dishes for fifty or sixty years if he was a good husband some day!

Of course, in addition to building skills and character in your children, this is a real boost to the family. Imagine, if you are not currently operating in this protocol of chores, that you have four children, ages six, eight, ten, and twelve. And tomorrow morning when you get up, and you are doing phonics and oral reading with your six-year-old, that day's laundry, dishes, trash, and breakfast preparations are all being done – completely, thoroughly, and consistently. What freedom this provides for a busy mother! And what family unity it builds when the family works together in this way.

Then, breakfast is over, and when you have a language arts meeting with the two older children, the eight-year-old and six year-old children clean the kitchen, load the dishwasher and run it, wipe the kitchen down, and sweep the floor. All that happened because the appropriate training took place, and chore sessions were implemented.

I really feel that giving full responsibility of certain chores to children is paramount in helping children become independent workers and responsible. It is easy to do something when you are asked to do it, but it is character building and life-skill-giving to be responsible for something solely.

(3) Create systems together.

One thing that makes it much easier for children to learn chores and household upkeep is for the children to work with you on developing systems. We as moms have a tendency to create the systems that we like in freezers, refrigerators, pantries, toy shelves, bookcases, kitchen cupboards, and more. And then when somebody comes in to do a chore or unload groceries or put something away, it is not done correctly. And we wonder why people keep messing up our systems!

In reality, rather than simply telling children where things go or how you would like things done, a lot of stress is eliminated when you include the children in developing the system. When I was about to reorganize the pantry, I would have at least one child working with me, if not more. As we organized the pantry, sometimes using ideas from the child, whoever was helping me was learning the system from the ground up. When it was time for the child to help put away groceries, it was easier to handle that job correctly. Also, the child learns valuable organizational skills including prioritizing space, utilizing areas to their fullest, considering sizes and stack- ability of products, and more.

When it was time to work on toy shelves, the entire crew and I would sit down and get busy. We would label the shelves together. We would discuss how the Legos will be stored. We made tubs of things together. And the next thing we knew, we had a workable system that the children could maintain. Thus, whenever the chore to "organize the toy shelves" was given, all of the children knew how to do that.

The systems can extend to the kitchen as well. If you always make biscuits and gravy or you always make pancakes, initiate a system for doing those jobs. Type the recipes up clearly. Always have ingredients on hand. Teach the children from start to finish how to handle those jobs thoroughly, and by involving the child in the system, is ready to take it on himself.

We have a tendency to think in the here and now. It would be easier for me to make the pancakes—and much faster—than for me to have a child help me. Or it would take more time to do it with the kids. However, we are not thinking long term when we think like this. We are not thinking of how much family unity and family efficiency we could have by chore training. We are not thinking of our children's futures—and how we can equip them right here and now, beginning with three year olds putting their room time toys away.

I believed in this from day one with my kids (thanks to thorough training from Dr. Raymond Moore and Gregg Harris), and my kids are all reaping the benefits of this approach today as they (seventeen through thirty-three) excel in their jobs, homes, marriages, and school. Skill-building, and life-skill-building specifically, is a huge part of parenting—and one that we should take seriously as we teach our kids to become diligent workers in home and school

(4) Balance of independent work vs. working with you.

In teaching children to become diligent workers, there is much training involved. However, there comes a point in the teaching of each new task where a job becomes that child's job. The child has been taught, and he is ready to take the diligence to the next level—responsibility.

Throughout the chore-training process, there are times in which intense training is needed to ensure that the child knows how to do the tasks that are going to be assigned. This involves a lot of working with Mom or Dad. Their modeling, instruction, patience, and encouragement will go a long way in teaching the child to complete the task fully.

So when is time to let the child go solo? How much time is too much working together? What jobs are good for the child alone, and what jobs are best done together with parents and/or older siblings?

These are tough questions, but I will leave you with these thoughts on the matter:

- a. Any job that is above the child's small or large motor skills should never be assigned as an independent job. It might look cute that an eight-year-old can trim the hedges, but it is unwise. Never give a child a job that is above his skill level, decision-making level, wisdom level, or physical capabilities.
- b. A job that is too dangerous or too difficult can still be done with the parent. This is how all internships and job training later in life will take place. The parent trims the hedges, and the child gathers the droppings and bags them. During this process, the child watches the parent work safely with dangerous equipment. He watches the parent make decisions about how far to pull the cord on an electric trimmer or how deeply to cut the branches. All of these insights will help the child in the future.
- c. Do all training in increments. Never assume that simply showing the child how to load the dishwasher as full as possible without over-loading makes the skill learned. Let the child watch you on the job as you explain it. Then work together on it.

- d. Continue working together on jobs that are discouraging to the child. Kids can get overwhelmed with too large of messes. Stacks of dishes can be disheartening for a little dish doer. Five fold up loads instead of the normal two in one day might just seem like more of the same to us—but to a child, the mountain can feel insurmountable. These are instances in which jumping in teaches the child many additional skills—prioritizing large work loads, organization, thoroughness, and more. It also encourages the child not to give up—and that you have his back.
- e. Daily jobs are good jobs to teach and then give to kids. They are repetitive. The opportunities to get better and better at them are plenty. They are predictable. The child starts to know just how long certain jobs take. They become second nature to the child. Dishes, daily laundry, trash, picking up, wiping down bathrooms, sweeping, and other daily tasks can be put into the daily chore schedule and completed without much effort when the work is divided among family members, and each child is fully equipped to complete their jobs.
- f. Be sure to always work together on new tasks. This includes seasonal things and other jobs that the child might not have opportunity to do often enough to get really good at them. Gardening, yard work, spring cleaning, freezer cooking, monthly cleaning and organizing tasks are all good "work together" jobs. We did these on what we called our "big work days." Everybody knew what that meant (and at the end of the day, we did fun family activities together!).
- g. Never give a child jobs with harmful chemicals (or again, dangerous tools). Use a spray bottle with dish soap and water to teach young children to spray and wipe down surfaces. Start a child's potato and apple peeling instruction with children's safety knives. Another nice thing about starting with daily work for kids' assignments is that they often just involve regular things that are less dangerous—dish soap, laundry soap, broom, spray bottle and cleaning rags, toilet brush (often no cleaner is needed for daily toilet maintenance), etc.

Balance the jobs you do together and the ones that are assigned. Always be teaching and training. And work together as a family to help build family unity. Chores are the foundation for diligence, resourcefulness, responsibility, thoroughness, and more later in life!





Age Appropriate Chores --- for Toddlers





Age Appropriate Chores



for Toddlers



working with someone else



- 1. Dust--with sock on his hand!
- 2. Pick up toys after play time
- 3. Put laundry in hamper
- 4. Set the table (keep dishes down low; plastic only!)
- 5. Feed the pets--depending on pet type, etc.
- 6. Make bed--fold blanket in his crib; put books or crib toys in basket
- 7. Clear table (may start loading silverware, not knives)



chores on their own



- 1. Books in book basket
- 2. Toys in toy basket
- 3. Play pen time toys in tub
- 4. Put napkins or silverware on table at each meal
- 5. Bath toys in basket after bath
- 6. Towel in hamper after bath









Age Appropriate Chores for Preschoolers





Age Appropriate Chores for Preschoolers

(ages 3-4)

working with someone else

1. All tasks listed in Toddler Years



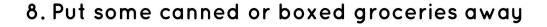
- 2. Water plants
 - 3. Work in yard--child-sized tools are so darling!
 - 4. Straighten his own room (teach him to go around room from bed clockwise or other system)

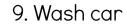


5. Straighten the toy room



- 6. Cook--pint-sized tasks: they love them!
 - 7. Carry in groceries









Age Appropriate Chores for Preschoolers

(ages 3-4)

chores on their own



- 1. Unload dishes--we gave this job one rack at a time
- 2. Set table (use those table setting placemats at first)
- 3. Clear table after meal--with an older "partner"
- 4. Put clothes in hamper each day
- 5. Put PJ's in drawer, pj bag, or pillow case each morning



- 6. Make bed--we taught our little to lie in the bed and pull everything up over his head and roll out of the bed while lifting a corner of the covers, then flatten it out
- 7. Pick up all trash in a vehicle and put in small plastic bag
- 8. Pick up trash or sticks in yard
- 9. Pick up after play
- 10. Fold and put away dish towels, hand towels, dish cloths, and wash cloths (graduating to full towels by fourth year)





11. Load rinsed dishes into dishwasher





3. Shelf low books

14. Make peanut butter sandwich, bowl of cereal, cheese and crackers, cold meat sandwich



15. Empty bathroom trash cans



16. Personal grooming: teeth and face*

17. Match up socks



- 18. Vacuum--with much instruction and supervision
- 19. Sweep--again, littles' tools are irresistible!
- 20. Clear table after simple meal, such as breakfast or lunch (with partner at first, then on his own at end of year four)







Age Appropriate Chores for Pre K & Kindergarteners







Age Appropriate Chores for Pre K & Kindergarteners

working with someone else



1. Weekly cleaning of his bedroom (see daily cleaning under own chores below)

2. Weekly cleaning of toy room (let him help you develop systems)





3. Put refrigerated grocery items away in proper places (again, with him knowing systems well after having worked with you)

4. Learn to run washing machine and dryer--with help and oversight



5. Help wash car



6. Help clean out car--gradually make this alone chore by end of sixth year



7. Help with baking, including rolling out his own dough, rolling balls of dough for rolls or cookies, stirring, chopping nuts (hit with rolling pin in zip lock bag)

8. Help with meal preparation, including learning to assemble salad with prepared ingredients, layering of ingredients for casserols, etc., making more elaborate sanwiches like subarmines.





9. Help prepare packed lunches

10. Start learning to cut and clean produce (with child's safety knife)--start with cutting lettuce with scissors, cleaning grapes, peeling potatoes as ready, slicing bananas for salad or smoothies, cutting and filling celery, etc. Work together on fresh food preparation, and you will be surprised what your six year old can do!





Age Appropriate Chores for Pre K & Kindergarteners

chores on their own



- 1. Unload entire dishwasher
- 2. Clean table after simple meals--teach to do this alone after breakfast and/or lunch





- 3. Fold and put away folded loads of laundry
- 4. Make simple microwave meals--oatmeal packets, reheating leftovers; hot meat and cheese sandwiches
- 5. Other simple food preparation--peanut butter and jelly meat and cheese plate; stemming grapes to be washed; boiled egg peeling (use old eggs--do not frustrate him!); layered salads for meals, simple lettuce salads and fruit salads, dishes that involve mixing things together in which you have opened the cans, etc.





- 6. Make beds throughout house (if sheets are already on them; not changing of the bedding)
- 7. Dust room entirely alone (again, after having it as a "help" job for a while)

{pre k/kindergarten chores :: chores in their own, continued}

8. Straighten a room at end of day (i.e. "jurisdiction" in easy room, such as toy room (in which he knows where everything goes) or a seldom used room that does not require much daily upkeep)

9. Pick up yard





11. Gather laundry from baskets in each person's room and put in correct bin in laundry rom (i.e. whites, darks, hang ups, etc.)

12. Clean bathroom or kitchen sink each day

13. Weed small areas of flower beds or around shrubs





14. Water flowers and/or garden

15. Any/all chores from the Toddler and Preschooler lists

Goals & Notes

- A. Goal: End of sixth year, consistent routine of morning routine and one or two daily chore sessions.
- B. Goal: One or two daily chore sessions with exact same chores that become "his."
- Goal: One varied task each day (M-Fold up load; T-Vacuum living room; W-Clean inside car; Th-Trash from everywhere out to cans; F-Clean veggies)
- D. Always be teaching new chores/next season ones after some are mastered
 - Daily chores because he's a member of the family! He is valuable to your family...let him know it!



Extra chores for money (i.e. cleaning out car or weeding)







Age Appropriate Chores



for Elementary Ages (7-10)















Age Appropriate Chores



for Early Elementary Ages

working with someone else

1. Weekly family cleaning days—use this weekly cleaning time to teach more and more skills to this age group



- 2. Unload and put away all groceries
- 3. Continue helping with baking, giving more and more responsibilities, such as shaping loaves, mixing cookie dough (and learning to make cookies, brownies from a mix, etc. all by himself)
- 4. Learn how to operate stove and oven by himself (after having worked with you in the kitchen for previous few years)



5. Continue with meal preparation, working towards giving anything to the child as his own as is possible (cold meat sandwiches, meat and cheese tray, salad, pb & j, etc.)



- 6. Gardening together—more responsibilities, such as snapping beans, etc.
- 7. More produce cleaning and preparation—including strawberry stemming, apple peeling, peach peeling, carrot peeling, etc.
- 8. Work on using kitchen appliances, such as blender, mixer, electric skillet, crock pot, and griddle—wait on food processor, deep fryer, or other more dangerous appliances.









9. Car washing



10. Helping with big cooking for your family or for others in need, such as potato peeling; crushing nuts, cereal, crackers, etc; cubing meats and/or cheeses; shredded boneless chicken; layering simple casseroles; stirring large mixtures; dumping ingredients from a simple list, such as the cottage cheese, egg, Parmesan cheese, etc. for lasagna; shaping things, such as meat balls, salmon patties, etc;

11. Learn to mow, depending on age and maturity of child, your equipment, etc.



12. Help scrub kitchen appliances, such as fruit bin from refrigerator, inside of microwave, etc. with direction and oversight

13. Help clean out buildings, shed, garage, etc.



14. Window cleaning



15. Packing for trips—teach child to make an ongoing packing list and how to organize packed items



Age Appropriate Chores



for Early Elementary Ages



(7-10)

chores on their own



- 1. Clear table, do dishes, and clean kitchen after a meal—start out with one of these alone, then two of them, and by the end of this age period, shoot for child being able to do all of this for the evening meal
- 2. Fold up loads of laundry from start to finish, including putting away properly



3. Prepare simple microwave or oven casseroles, such as hamburger stew (with hamburger, frozen veggies, soups, etc.); tuna casserole, chili, chicken stew (with chicken breasts cooked in crock pot then frozen veggies, soups, etc. all stirred together and baked); etc.



- 4. Cut up and make complete lettuce and fruit salads, including peeling and cutting fruits
- 5. Mop with safe (not strong) cleaners
- 6. Clean bath tub and/or shower (again, only if using not-too-strong cleaners, such as those available from Don Aslett's Cleaning Center or other safety cleaners
- 7. Be responsible for keeping an area weed-free in the summer, such as around shrubs against the house









8. Be responsible for either breakfast or lunch a few times a week (This works best if you choose four to six menus that you teach the child to make well and consistently.)

9. Clean out shed or porch

10. Vacuuming corners and furniture with hose

11. Dishes from start to finish (except for challenging pans that they left to soak for someone older)

12. Daily bathroom cleaning (See Don Aslett's "3 Minute Bathroom Cleaning," which we taught our children to do daily.)



13. Rake yard



- 14. Take garbage out
- 15. Learn to make a few dishes from start to finish that become the child's "specialty"
- 16. Simple, "daily" type of refrigerator cleaning/organizing

17. Clean mirrors

- 18. Babysitting and child care skills under your supervision (with adult still in the home)
- 19. Packing of book bag, activities' bag, etc.









Age Appropriate Chores for Tweens













Age Appropriate Chores for Tweens



working with someone else

- 1. Make a freezer entrée, learning to double and triple ingredients, such as meat loaves, enchilada casserole, hamburger stew, taco meat, etc.
- 2. Learn to operate some other outdoor equipment, according to maturity and difficulty of tools



- 3. Teach ironing, beginning with square, small items and moving onto more difficult ones
- 4. Start learning to operate grill, including how to cook various meats to proper temperatures, etc.
- 5. Teach any cooking methods that you have not taught previously, such as crock pot, griddle, broiling, grilling, etc., with the goal of the child being able to grill burgers, broil chicken breasts, assemble crock pot meals, fry eggs on the griddle, etc., all on his own by the end of this time period



- 6. Work together on cleaning out and organizing freezers (again, do not leave child unattended to defrost freezer)
- 7. Teach proper cleaning of appliances, instructing child to unplug first; not fill things with water that should not be (i.e. some electric skillets); not to stick metal in electric appliances, such as toasters; etc.



{tween chores :: working with someone else, continued}

8. If child cannot maintain certain systems, such as toy shelves or linen closet, etc., work with him on these until he could be given a certain area to maintain (not that he would be given many, but knowing how to set up an organizational system and maintain one is a skill he should start to learn).



- 9. Learn to pack for trips, refilling toiletry bags, figuring underclothes needs, making packing lists, etc., by packing with you
- 10. Help scrub kitchen appliances, such as fruit bin from refrigerator, inside of microwave, etc. with direction and oversight
- 11. Help clean out buildings, shed, garage, etc.
- 12. Hang up loads of laundry; teach him how to operate on permanent press; how to remove from dryer and hang on hangers quickly to avoid wrinkles; etc.
- 13. Teach proper phone etiquette, including taking clear messages
- 14. Teach how and when to change sheets (not just daily bed making)



- 15. Teach some simple mending, such as buttons and re-sewing hems that have fallen out
- 16. Learn to do other outside cleaning, such as lawn furniture, grill cleaning, etc.
- 17. Learn more advanced baking, such as biscuits, bread, frosted cakes, etc., with you



Age Appropriate Chores

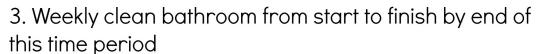
for Tweens

chores on their own



1. Cleaning car alone, either inside or outside (Do not allow child to run car vac at the same time he is cleaning outside of car. It is important to teach kids that water and electricity absolutely do not mix.)

2. Mow small yard alone







- 4. Dust entire room, including ceiling fan with feather duster; moving things to dust; carefully dusting frames, etc.
- 5. Entire vacuuming job, including corners, under sofa and furniture etc.
- 6. Evening meal complete from start to finish
- 7. Weekly cleaning of refrigerator, including scrubbing shelves and door units
- 8. Full responsibility of own bedroom now (daily, weekly, monthly—though you will likely still need to help with seasonal, especially seasonal clothes rotation, etc.)
- 9. Babysitting for short periods of time as many children as can handle; not infants unless napping for sure
- 10. Prepare packed lunches
- 11. Clean windows

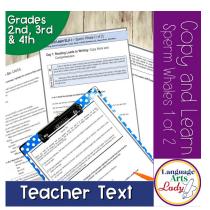
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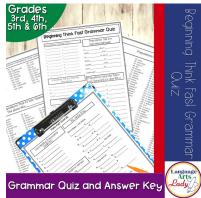


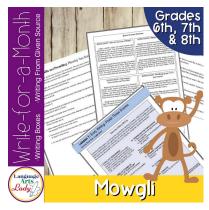




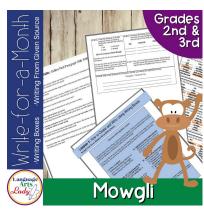


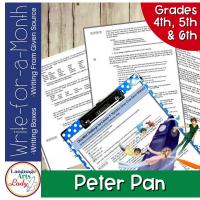


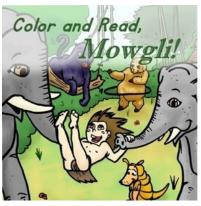














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Donna Reish, mother of seven grown children and thirty-two year homeschool veteran, is a prolific curriculum writer, blogger, and teacher from Indiana. She graduated from Ball State University with a degree in Elementary Education and did master's work in Reading Specialist following that. Donna began writing curriculum for a publisher out of Chicago specifically for homeschoolers twenty years ago. Following the completion of those thirty books

over ten years, she and her husband started a small press publishing company writing materials for homeschools and Christian schools. With the surge of digital products, Donna now writes curriculum books that are digital downloads (both secular and faith-based products), bringing her total curriculum products to 120 books of 50,000+pages. Donna tests all of her books with 50-80 in-person students each year locally before they are published--and this is her real love: Seeing the faces of students who achieve language arts goals that they never thought were possible using her creative, incremental approaches and materials. Donna teaches parents, teachers, and teacher parents, about grammar, language arts, writing, reading, learning, and more at her teaching website, *Language Arts Lady Blog*, and through her videocasts/podcasts, *How I Teach*.

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