

Tests and Records

One of the nicest things about helping our own kids learn to read at home is that we are free to NOT submit them to COMPREHENSION exercises when they read. Our kids do not view reading as an exercise in reading a boring paragraph in order to answer the five boring multiple choice questions at the end. They don't have quizzes to make sure they actually read the material assigned to them -- and I frankly never "assign" reading material, either. (I remember an English teacher in high school wistfully saying that he WISHED he didn't have to give these silly quizzes, but he'd found that no one would actually read the assigned books if he didn't.) Our kids don't do workbook drill on finding the main idea, or recognizing sequence, or getting meaning from context, or any other very official sounding "comprehension skills."

So what do we do instead? Well, we read together, and we talk a lot about what we read. We ALL bring up questions, we all wonder about the meanings of specific words, we all look up words together in dictionaries, we all make conjectures about outcomes, we all talk about who book characters remind us of. In short, we RESPOND to real literature, to anything we read, and we share our responses. And because the kids choose their own books (with suggestions from me, of course), they really read them for their own purposes. They are even free to stop reading a book if it really doesn't appeal to them after a bit -- a freedom most schools using a basal reading system just can't give.

Often times Jesse, now ten, reads books that I've recommended because I've read them before, maybe twelve years before in a children's literature course in college. He usually dives right in, perhaps because he knows I've given some decent advice about books in the past. Soon he is immersed in, say, the world of *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*. He's off by himself, curled up on the livingroom sofa, oblivious to the world, while I'm maybe busy doing more mundane things like washing dishes.

So how do I know he's "getting" this mature book with any understanding? First, I assume he wouldn't keep at it if he weren't getting something out of it. As John Holt liked to say, kids just don't suck at dry straws.

And I ask Jesse questions about the book. I don't look to a list of ten "canned" comprehension questions to check up on his reading, but I do question him. My questions spring from my genuine wonderings -- it's actually a HELP here to our conversations that I so often forget the details of a particular story. "Hey, Jess, isn't the main character in *Witch of Blackbird Pond* originally from some other place, some island somewhere? Somewhere with a very different lifestyle?" And so he tells me all about Kit being brought to New England from Barbados, and how much trouble she

has fitting in. And I may dimly remember that the title of the book has some other meanings, and ask Jesse what he thinks of it, and he tells me about the Quaker woman, the "witch" whom Kit visits. The whole tone would be different if he sensed I was just checking up on him, just nervously assessing his "skills." Instead we are discussing, sharing something together, both curious and alive to what the book can tell us. We are colleagues together.

The same thing can happen even if I haven't previously read a book that Jesse chooses. Maybe I'm like a newspaper reporter interviewing him about a book, as if it is an event he's witnessed that I want to find out about. He's the assumed expert, as HE'S read it, and I find I naturally have lots of questions for him:

- What type of book is it?
- Does it remind him of any others he's read?
- What does the title seem to mean?
- Is it told in the first person or the third?
- Does he think we should buy it for our home library, or recommend it to anyone else, is it THAT good?
- Is it like other books by the same author?

I'm not like an examiner, I'm just really wondering about this new friend of a book he's met.

And often Jacob, age seven, overhears these conversations. And then he begins clamoring for us to read Jesse's book as our next read-aloud. And so we ALL got to share in *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* this past Fall -- the books didn't just stay Jesse's sole property. Interestingly, Jesse told me several times that HE really enjoyed it when I read aloud these books he'd already been through, found he got even more out of them the second time around, was able to pay attention to other things besides just figuring out the story line. This shared reading also gave us a chance to look up intriguing words in the dictionary together -- and *Tom Sawyer* especially held a number that I wasn't quite sure of. The dictionary became a tool for better comprehension right in its proper context -- while actually reading and wondering about meanings. We had a chance to naturally discuss the book's themes and ideas and characters, again being colleagues discovering a book together.

Jacob is now delighting in reading all of Arnold Lobel's easy reading books -- *Frog and Toad*, *Mouse Tales*, *Uncle Elephant*, *Owl at Home*, and others. These are stories he already knows and loves, because I've read them aloud MANY times. How different from reading a basal reading "story" in school, a story that the teacher is scrupulously certain no one has laid eyes on before. (You have all probably heard the stories of the bright child in first grade who gets in trouble because he has READ

AHEAD in the reader...) The classroom teacher is ideally supposed to ask a number of leading questions of the circle of kids around her, questions to get them imagining what might happen in this unknown story, then questions to check up on how well they figured out what actually did happen, with perhaps a question or two about why it all happened. Sometimes it's even recommended that the kids have a sheet of paper to cover over the next part of the story so they don't get ahead during the lesson!

Well, I obviously can't do that with Jacob -- he already knows the story. So we skip all the questioning and are left with reading's REAL delight -- savoring a good story. We get to just laugh, just enjoy, just remember again how funny a certain story was. Oh, sometimes I "pretend" to ask Jacob questions about what he thinks will happen next, pretending I can't remember the story's events, but he knows I'm pretending and that maybe together we're pretending that we're reading it all for the first time. And to Jacob that just makes the story become even funnier.

Now, I don't think you could do this with a story that wasn't already a fine story -- re-reading demands quality. (Is THAT why the schools don't want the kids reading ahead in their official readers -- they might never be able to hood-wink the poor students into reading the meager stories a second time through?) Wooden writing won't do. Shabby illustrations won't do. Lack of character and humaneness and pathos and humour won't do. But Jacob has found Arnold Lobel, and who could be more wonderful?

Oddly enough, when the kids are faced with the usual comprehension drivel each year on achievement tests -- those boring paragraphs followed by the multiple choice questions that kids in most schools plow through on a daily basis -- they do just fine. Jesse now scores way above grade level in reading. The "personalized" computer print-out on his achievement test results even kindly suggest I ask his teacher(!?) to consider planning advanced supplementary work, as Jesse has already mastered all the skills expected for his grade level and then some. We do do a touch of preparation for these tests -- a few look-overs of sample test paragraphs and questions just so he will know the format of these types of tests. We talk a bit about "trick" types of questions, or strategies of sometimes glancing over the questions first before hitting the paragraph, or the need to keep moving quickly and not get bogged down in any one section. And he gets everything correct -- no "comprehension problem" at all.

Perhaps Jesse does well in testing in part because he is not "burnt out" on comprehension exercises. To my kids, these tests are like a novel game that we only play once or twice a year, and it's a touch intriguing for them to see how they can do. They know my feelings about these tests, but they also understand that it's part of a game they need to learn to play. And loving reading, reading widely, and having

someone to talk to about your responses to books seem to actually be the best preparation of all for these tests.

Interesting to remember, too, that these reading comprehension tests were originally designed just to quickly assess a child's rough reading ability. The short paragraphs of increasing difficulty -- and the boring questions -- were never meant as a model of what kids should be doing as their daily fare in school. It's another example of the test becoming the teaching method. We don't have to fall for that at home. Let's let our kids really read.

Homeschooled Children Score High

According to test results, homeschooled children generally score higher on standardized achievement tests than school educated children. Every state that tests homeschooled children has, thus far, reported that, as a group, they are doing average or better. The most thorough study of homeschooled children's test scores was conducted by Jon Wartes and the Washington Homeschool Research Project. They had access to the test scores of all of the children who were homeschooling under the present friendly homeschooling law in Washington State. They found that, as a group, homeschooled children score well above average (median scores in the 65 to 68 percentile range).

Homeschooled children scored particularly well in Listening, Vocabulary, and Word Reading, but lower in Math. Still, the average Math scores were above the national norm. Even children of parents who only have a 12th grade education scored, as a group, above average.¹

What do these test scores mean?

- Do they mean that home-education is more effective than school education? Not necessarily. It is quite possible that home-educated children would also do better than average if they were attending school. Research shows that, in general, children who are read to at home do better than average in school.**
- Do they mean that every home-educated child will score better than average on achievement tests? Not necessarily. Even though homeschooled children, as a group, score well on achievement tests, not every homeschooled child will score above average. First, not all homeschooled children start to read as early as children start to read in schools. These children will not be able to score well on tests until they become readers. Also not every child is above average. Many parents are teaching their**

children at home because they know that unique qualities of their children would prevent them from doing well in schools.

Nevertheless, in many states, the establishment requires home-schooled children to score well on tests or risk losing permission to continue homeschooling. As a result, homeschooling families find that they must prepare their children for taking standardized achievement tests.

Preparing for Standardized Tests

Most homeschooled children are faced at some time with standardized achievement tests, and parents wonder about how best to prepare their kids. The natural urge to help their kids have a positive experience is often coupled with anxiety, as parents are often told right out that their kids scores will be a chief determiner in deciding if the family can continue homeschooling.

It is interesting that tests *are* different, and parents really should ask to see exactly what skills are being looked at. I just looked over a 4th grade Stanford Achievement Test, and was surprised to see two pages devoted to choosing the correct syllabication of a given word. The 4th grade California Achievement Test has nothing on this "skill," it's not even mentioned once anywhere on the test.

Another difference: the Metropolitan and the Stanford both have social studies and science sections at the first and second grade levels, involving no reading at all, just picking out the right picture to answer the question. Some other tests seem to just focus on the "basics" for the first grade levels and just test math and reading skills. I was always glad that Jesse had his science and social studies scores (very high, top of the test) to balance out his 4th percentile reading score in first grade. His results in these other areas could show that he was a well-rounded kid who seemed to know a lot about the world and how it worked, even if he was just a beginning reader.

Then some tests (Metropolitan and California are two) face the child with reading paragraphs that go way beyond the child's grade level -- up to official fifth grade reading paragraphs for a first grader's test. The Stanford seems to just give a child a whole bunch of (usually shorter) paragraphs right on the child's expected grade level, or maybe one level higher. So the Met and the CAT would benefit a child who reads way above grade level, because he or she would be able to *show* something, but the poor kid who is just doing fine would feel like a failure when faced with half a dozen paragraphs and what seem like zillions of questions that are clearly too hard. The Stanford might be better for not intimidating a slow reader.

I also heartily recommend the *Scoring High* test preparation books published by Random House. Available from Learning at Home, PO Box 270-G, Honaunau, HI 96726. They really mimic the actual tests, helping our kids feel more comfortable in a standardized testing situation. I think doing too much of this kind of practice could be worse than a mere "drag," but a little bit can help a lot in letting a child (and parent) know what to expect. I know this spring Jesse really appreciated the chance to try out in advance what it will be like to use a separate computer answer sheet. (Before fourth grade, students usually mark their answers right in the test booklet.) If we can help make as many things as possible not totally new and therefore stressful, all the better. It was also useful for Jesse to try timing himself on sections of the practice test, as this is certainly something we don't do at all at home.

I remember one year in high school taking an official IQ test -- one of those affairs where hundreds and hundreds of students were sitting at those awful "elbow" desks spread in rows and columns in the school gymnasium, with instructions read over the loudspeaker system. I remember being pleasantly surprised, even delighted, by the test. Why, it was actually full of intriguing puzzles and brain-teasers, the sort of thing you might even choose to do on your own on a rainy day inside. Lots of visual puzzles of the type, "All of these shapes are *bleeps*, which of the next group of shapes is *not a bleep*?" Being a visually oriented kid, this was a delightful change from the usual verbal, read a boring paragraph and answer the three boring questions test. I was readily imagining to myself how *well* I must be doing, how high my IQ must be. But then, somehow, I happened to glance over at Michael Wolfe's answer sheet in the next row. Now, I wasn't the cheating type, and anyway he was too far away for me to actually see any of the answers he'd fill in on his computer answer sheet. What I did see that shook me was that he was at least 60 or so questions *ahead* of me, and I knew this kid was not as "bright" and certainly not as flexible a thinker as I fancied myself to be. It suddenly hit me like an iron weight that the test makers had not been trying to find a way for me to have a jolly two hours in the school gym doing delightful mental acrobatics. They were *testing* me. They didn't care about my almost laughing aloud when I discovered a solution to one of their problems. They cared only about right answers, and not only that, they cared only about my *speed* in marking those answers down on an answer sheet. I was using a bad "test taking strategy" to be taking time to savor and chuckle over some of the "good" questions, as you could readily do curled up with a book of brain teasers at home in the rainy day scenario. This was a test scenario. I remember then feeling only stressed by the test, all sense of fun stolen...

Jesse's Experience With Tests

I went to our school district to begin working out a cooperative arrangement when Jesse was just approaching six, official first grade age. This was NOT NECESSARY,

and I don't recommend this now to others unless you clearly know you have an exceptionally cooperative school district, as we did.

One of my important priorities was NOT submitting to standardized testing as an evaluation measure. Along with a written description of our educational approach in all subject areas, I included a proposal for evaluation -- basically that we would share with the district a portfolio and written description of Jesse's on-going work and activities.

I was taken aback when my superintendent's first question was about "participating" in the district's standardized testing program. I countered that I felt test results would not be necessary or useful to me as a parent/teacher, that I didn't feel these tests were accurate or helpful. He AGREED with me, and said he wouldn't INSIST we take the tests, but encouraged us to do so for two reasons.

1. We might at some point want to put our son in school, and the test scores could be used to show proper "placement."
2. Even though he realized results from these tests weren't all that accurate, just taking them on a yearly basis would give my son practice in test-taking, so that if he ever did need to REALLY take one, he wouldn't be as anxious about the experience as he'd know what to expect.

He also made clear that test score results alone would in no way be used to decide if we would be allowed to continue home teaching.

I said the only way I could possibly agree to standardized testing would be if I were guaranteed that testing be done individually. I would not send my child into the regular classroom among 25 children he didn't know, with a strange teacher, in a strange setting. My superintendent immediately agreed to that, saying that would be no problem at all. I finally agreed, partly because, as my husband pointed out, it was their only request, and they were being so very cooperative about everything else. They made it very clear that they did not want to interfere in any way with our day to day work with our son. They trusted us.

Testing has been given by two different elementary school guidance counselors, who have both been very friendly and supportive. I made a point of going to the school with Jesse to look over the building and meet each guidance counselor well in advance of the actual testing. Jesse doesn't have an easy time in unfamiliar settings, and really needed this orientation time to feel comfortable. I didn't ask to be present at the testing, because I felt Molly and Jacob were too young to be left, and too young to quietly sit in the testing room with me. Jesse understood this. He also knew exactly where we'd be in the building during testing, and was with us during breaks. One

guidance counselor even suggested we all go outside and play on the school swings for a bit in between test sections, and the kids all enjoyed having a whole playground to themselves!

Jesse has felt confident and good about the testing situation so far, something I'm much more concerned about than his "RESULTS," (which are, by the way, fine).

I do also give the district much more information about our on-going work than the bare numbers and percentages of the test score print-outs. I meet with the assistant superintendent twice a year to share what we've been up to. I literally bring a big box of stuff -- Jesse's records of books read, samples from collections, geodesic structures built, pictures drawn, lists of places where we've taken "field trips," samples of Jesse's writing, copies of magazines we subscribe to and use. I bring anything and everything I can think of that will help give a graphic, concrete picture of what we've been involved with. I'm also ready to describe specific learning situations -- how we once watched for an hour as a snake climbed up a huge maple tree in our woods, then read several books about snakes that night to find out what type it was, how then Jesse took two days to write up the experience, and how his story was later published in *Jibber Jabber*, a delightful children's newspaper put out by homeschooler Laura Duncan. In short, I'm not going to let test scores be the only way the district has of viewing our homeschooling.

Interesting, too, that although part of our initial agreement was that I would meet with the district twice a year to discuss progress, the district has NEVER called me to set up one of these meetings, and probably never would have or will. I call them; I set the appointment. I know some parents who initially agree either to meet with school officials who never call, or to file reports that are never asked for. So no meetings occur; no reports are filed. Tests usually aren't forgotten by school districts, though, and if you leave a district with test scores as their only means to judge what you're doing, it could backfire on you. I guess I also prefer going in on MY initiative rather than being "ordered" in. Maybe the old idea that the best defense is a good offense. I don't want any bad surprises or misunderstandings for any of us.

Here's another thing you may want to keep in mind when setting up arrangements for standardized testing with your school districts (a thing that most, but not all, Pennsylvania school districts require). Does your child usually read out loud or silently? This hit home for me when Jesse was close to 7, and considered an end-of-year first grader. We had scheduled his achievement testing with the very nice guidance counselor at the local elementary school, having no problems setting up individualized testing.

Jessie Schaeffer, a good homeschooling friend who is in our school district, was having a hard time working out the same arrangement for her daughter, Sunny, also 6 1/2. The guidance counselor at Sunny's respective elementary school claimed he certainly didn't have the time to give only one child a test, and that anyhow these tests were DESIGNED as group tests and therefore should ONLY be given in a group setting. Sunny had already had one bad experience going into a strange group of kids for "school ability" testing earlier that year, and Jessie didn't want a repeat. So she called me up, suggesting that perhaps Sunny, already a friend of my son, could take her test with Jesse. I readily agreed, thinking it could be a friendly experience for them, and make the testing situation a bit less boring. It seemed a great idea.

HOWEVER, in the middle of the night, I suddenly sat bolt upright; the problem with our new testing plan suddenly apparent to me. JESSE COULD ONLY READ ORALLY. This would make no particular difference in an individual testing situation, but reading aloud would certainly be considered highly distracting, if not outright CHEATING, when other kids were present. At home, it had felt very natural for Jesse to read aloud, as he was usually reading TO me or Jacob. He seemed to need the reality of actually hearing his voice out loud to be able to feel he was really reading. It was another half-year before Jesse began to really enjoy and see the point of silent reading, and do it a lot on his own. I knew I certainly couldn't expect him to make that sort of switch just for a test, and just in 2 weeks.

I called Jessie Schaeffer back the next day, and explained why we couldn't go through with the joint testing plan. She immediately said, "Oh, my goodness! I never thought of that! Sunny only reads aloud too!" Jessie finally worked out an individual plan for Sunny, and all went fine. This incident also made me wonder if some school children may be forced to read silently before they've had their needed time as oral readers. Maybe testing situations and "discipline" codes requiring silence are especially rough on beginning readers in schools. Anyway, it's certainly something to keep in mind when trying to figure out the best testing situation for your child.

Keeping Records

Keeping homeschooling records -- do you or don't you? Some parents can't be bothered -- any form of record keeping seems a burden, artificial, not really communicating what is most important about their homeschooling experiences. I've felt that way myself at times. It seems to take too long; it doesn't seem useful. But I've changed my thinking about it, and I'm going to try here to inspire you to think more about why keeping some sort of records can be of help to you in teaching your kids, share some of what I've heard from others about the types of records they've found useful and easy to keep, and what has worked best for me.

One reality is that it protects US and our children if we keep honest records of their work and thinking and projects and interests and skills. If your child doesn't test well, or if you don't give your child tests, records can be "proof" that education is indeed taking place. For many, keeping regular records is already a requirement for homeschooling. Most homeschoolers who have been able to work out decent agreements with their local superintendents in Pennsylvania are required to keep some sort of records, or turn in some sort of regular evaluations of progress. Some districts want no more than a standard report card with letter grades filled in dutifully.

I was glad that my own district came up with an anecdotal reporting form -- they really ask for what activities my children have been involved in, what their strengths and weaknesses are, etc. I'm sure my district would be very satisfied with a very brief summary, but I make it a point to spin these evaluations out -- I include just as much as I possibly can. I want my district to really understand that our kids ARE getting a wide, far-reaching, quality education. I tell about every fieldtrip, every social event for homeschoolers we've attended. I list all books read. I describe actual science experiments and questions the kids have raised about history and social studies. I describe their music, art and physical education activities. And I find that although this certainly takes some time to complete every nine weeks, it is a useful summary for ME to have. Really helps me and the kids take stock of where we are and what we've accomplished and where we may be missing out. When I have one of these evaluations filled out, I have no nagging sense that we might not be "doing" anything -- the sheer volume of it impresses ME as well as the school district. Why, I even admit to taking our last years' final evaluation report in to McDonalds and getting all the kids free cheeseburgers for all their many areas of "excellent progress." (No questions asked by McDonalds, either!)

At least one district now has it in their policy that parents must keep a daily log of educational activities, and make that log available for perusal. Unfortunately, they also specified the exact format of the record keeping, and some parents would probably feel uncomfortable with it.

Then there are the families who are quietly homeschooling without letting the district know about it. They usually realize they'd better have excellent records on hand if the "home/school visitor" (alias truant officer) quietly knocks on the door someday (it happens...). And many families who have children under the age of eight (compulsory school age in PA) are beginning to realize that keeping good records of activities and learning will help their case if they need to meet with school people eventually. This can be especially useful if the parent does NOT have obvious credentials to show. (Obvious progress by their child up to age 8 will show that they HAVE already been teaching very competently.) Ruth Newell shared at the Homeschooling Weekend this past summer that knowing that she had a whole stack of notebooks filled with detailed

descriptions of all their homeschooling activities for the last five years gave her plenty of confidence when she had to go in to meet with their district. She brought them all to the meeting, and could point to them and clearly let the school folks know that she was serious and conscientious. She was approved as a "private tutor" under Pennsylvania law with no problem.

Then there are the other reasons to keep records. They can help us feel more sure of what we're doing, let us realize more clearly that lots IS happening. I know that whenever I used to get in a rut of NOT writing in my various journals for a month or more at a time, thinking that I would SURELY just remember it all, those would always be the times when anxiety about not doing "enough" would surface. I would forget all the many things we might have accomplished -- all the questions, the experiments, the books we read, places we went, talking and discussing -- and look back in my blank journal and think that maybe we (sinking feeling) really hadn't DONE anything at all worth doing. Whenever, as right now, I'm in a good routine of writing in a journal/planbook daily, in fact all throughout the day, then I feel on top of things, more confident, more organized. And I think the kids respond to this too, and are more productive and organized themselves. I often tell them what I'm writing in my notebook about their accomplishments, and they are always pleased to know I'm keeping track of good things. It's a sort of memory book for us, a way of not forgetting good moments.

I think a lot of my initial difficulties with record keeping were that I hadn't yet found a format for record keeping that I liked. I scorned commercial planning books for a good while, and instead stapled together little booklets from scrap paper that I get from print shops. At one point I made a new booklet every month, and had each page labeled with the date (Jesse would help do this). I could stash the booklets in my purse, carry them with me anywhere, and I did write in them -- occasionally. But only pretty occasionally. I'd misplace them, forget about them, let many pages go by blank.

I tried organizing my booklets differently -- made little sections with subject headings, and tried to write several months worth of notes in one booklet. That didn't do it for me either. The booklets would get dog-eared and crumpled, they just didn't seem "official" enough to care about. The kids would scribble in them, I'd forget to write in them.

In a binge of "getting organized" I bought a standard teacher's plan book at the local office supply store and dug in. I of course used the little blocks for recording what we did, rather than for writing plans (I didn't plan much in those days... in any area). I used it a bit. A little bit. But it always felt so stifling, and so much was just left blank. Double page spreads of all those little blocks, with only two (maybe) filled in. And I

had nowhere to jot little notes to myself, make lists, put addresses, ideas, brainstorm. There were just those little blocks, page after page. I dropped it, too.

I tried spiral notebooks, more homemade books, and was finally in another funk of not writing down much of anything, when I suddenly found the planning book for me (don't get me wrong, it might not do it for you, but it found me at the right time...). I was at the Lancaster Home Education Curriculum Fair last spring and one of the teacher stores represented there had a plastic-comb bound PLAN-IT FOR TEACHERS -- A COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING TOOL, designed by a teacher, Richard Glaubman.¹ I've heard that it's commonly available in most teacher stores. Runs about \$7.00. I was home! This hand-lettered book felt comfortable to me, and useful -- AND I USE IT!!! I use it not only for keeping pretty detailed records of what we all do, but I use it for all sorts of planning and list making too. There are extras that weren't found in my other teacher plan book -- full page calendars I can fill in for each month (good place to see at a glance what trips and outings we've had), an overview of each month (with space for making LISTS of priorities for each week), pages for setting daily goals, sections for listing appointments, phone calls to make, and then a nice friendly page after each week's little "boxes" where you're invited to put down "notes about students," "problems, concerns, opportunities, and successes," "goals needing more attention," and "spin-off ideas." I actually use all these sections, finding it wonderful to have a place to jot down everything now. I even made the book more useful to me by buying a 3-hole punch, and punching holes in all the pages of the book so I could put it all into a ring-binder (I personally don't get along well with plastic comb binding -- pages begin ripping out on about day three...) Now I can add things in as I want, put in oaktag pockets to hold "memorabilia" and extra information, slip our piano practice charts in the back, etc.. I even PLAN more now what I want to especially remember to do with the kids -- and I find that HELPS us, it doesn't stifle us.

Now maybe all this new organizational and record keeping ability is a direct off-shoot of having four kids -- the more kids you have the harder it is to keep everything effectively on mental file (although come to think of it, I was not very good at that with only one...). It really begins hitting home that being organized is the only way of coping at all. Or maybe it's because my kids are getting older and it seems more necessary and more natural to be more organized about all aspects of our homeschooling. I can't say. But personally I'm hooked on record keeping now, and don't think I could do without it.

¹Jon Wartes, *Homeschooler Outcomes*, paper presented at the American Educational Research Association's National Conference, New Orleans, April 5, 1988.

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