



Planning your Homeschool for spontaneous  
fun and creativity.

by Julie Gilbert

[www.homeschooling-ideas.com](http://www.homeschooling-ideas.com)



**Homeschooling-ideas**

# Introduction

I heard the term 'planned spontaneity' years ago at a Time Management Course.

**I want my Homeschool to be free, spontaneous and creative. Yet I have come to realise that this requires careful planning.**

Life is paved with good intentions. We intend to snuggle with our children to read that great book we brought home from the library. We intend to make a full size dinosaur in our back yard. We intend to help our middle child build a website. And sometimes we do actually manage some of it.

**But do you have a sneaking suspicion that you could be doing more? Yet still want to have lots of freedom in your Homeschooling?**

This e-book will help you marry the two worlds - Planned Spontaneity.

I have tried many planning approaches, and most of them take too long - or too much effort. I can't commit to a planner that will take me an hour a day to update. Or isn't flexible enough to cope with the constantly changing demands of my children.

**This method is simple. It's quick. And it is powerful.**

It is the method I use in my Best Homeschool Year Yet workbook and planner to help homeschoolers really pull together wonderful, inspiring and fullfilling homeschool plans.

*Ready to have your*  
**best homeschool year yet?**  
Step by Step guide [Click here](#)

I believe this method will help you get the most from your homeschooling - without taking up most of your day!

## **Please share this e-book**

Do me a favour and share this guide with your friends and homeschool group members. Simply post the following link on your blog, website, yahoo group or favourite forum:

<http://www.homeschooling-ideas.com/homeschool-planner.html>

Or, save this e-book to your computer and attach it to an e-mail.

# Birds Eye Overview of Planning System

When I began looking at planning my homeschool, I realized that although I had ideas of wonderful things to do with my children - I was not prepared enough to do them. All I had was vague ideas - not actionable activities.

The system I developed consists of one Someday/Maybe list, and two todo lists. Yup. That's it. I told you it was simple.

## **The Someday/Maybe Ideas – The Red List**

This is a list (or a notebook) where you brain-dump all the ideas you are carrying around in your head of things to try, see and do with your children. We get it out of your head and down on paper. We aren't promising to DO all of these things - but we have a note of them in-case we decide to do them later.

## **The Green List**

These are your 'ready to go' activities!. If your child saw the list and pointed to one of the activities on it, you could do it NOW. Not in a minute when you have printed it out. Not tomorrow because you just need to 'pick up some glue' - but right now. This list is going to make you feel like SuperMom. This is your game plan for homeschooling creatively and spontaneously. When you feel the family flopping into monotony and lethargy - you can spring into action and save the day.

## **The Amber List**

This is your work in progress list. It contains the things you would like to do next, but aren't quite ready to go. Maybe they need a little research, a pot of glue, or something downloading and installing. When the children don't need you, you are going to work on this list and move what you can into Green.

Some activities will take longer to move than others - but just keep slowly working away at them until they are ready to go. As you move things from the Amber list onto the Green one, you replace Amber activities with those from your Someday/Maybe list.

**Ready to find out more?**

# Filling the Pail

The first part of this process is to pull together all your thoughts and ideas. What are the things you want to get done 'someday'.

## **Make a Someday/Maybe Ideas Book**

You are going to need a notebook for this - preferably one that you can carry with you. This notebook is your 'hub' of future activities - your pot of inspiration. It will be the seeds that you will plant and grow later - and you need to keep filling it with useful and interesting ideas. Visiting a friend and they tell you of a great project they did? Write it in your book. Heard about a great book that another child has read - write it in your book. Pick up a leaflet and see a museum you haven't visited yet - guess what! Yes! Write it in your book. No idea is too mundane or exciting to miss out on being written down. If you think you are even vaguely interested in trying it - then write it down.

Now, start by thinking and writing down, all the things you would like to do as part of your homeschooling. You may want to keep separate lists for :

- Books you have on your shelf that you wanted to read
- Books to buy/borrow
- List of board games
- Ideas of activities you have read about that you would like to try.
- Any kits you bought that you haven't got around to yet.
- Places to visit.
- Lapbook or Unit study ideas
- Craft activities
- Science experiments
- Websites to visit with your children.

Still stuck? Sign up for [Homeschooling-ideas Newsletter](#) for a regular months worth of creative ideas and activities to try in your homeschool.

Browse your shelves and cupboards for activities left abandoned or unused. Think about what regular emails or newsletters you get that contain ideas or experiments you thought you would like to try. Check out your emails and bookmarks - what online stuff did you mean to get around to. What is on your pinterest boards?

# Make a Tickler File

At the back of your notebook you may like to make a Tickler file. This is for all the ideas that can only be done at a certain time of the year. Label one page for each month, and write down ideas that you want to remind yourself about during that month.

For example, you hear that there will be an outdoor Shakespeare play put on at your local park in the summer. Write a note in the month that you need to buy the tickets. Want to plan a picnic? Put a tickler under the summer months. Heard of a science experiment to try when it snows - mark it down in the winter months.

This tickler will save your 'main' list from getting clogged up with ideas that can't be done because it is the wrong time of year - and give you a thrill every time you get to a new month - and find you already have a list of ideas to try.

The tickler is also a good way to start building up rituals within your homeschool. Decorating a seasons tree once a quarter, can give you all a sense of continuity and belonging.

Once a month, when you are building up your Amber list, check your tickler for extra ideas that you can add to the mix.

# Making the Amber List

Now we are going to start planning out a little of your homeschool future!

## **Remember - failing to plan is planning to fail!**

Take a look at the someday/maybe list and pick out a few things that you would like to get to in the next few weeks.

What would your children really enjoy? You don't need a massive list here - just some things that would make a real difference to your homeschool if you managed to get at least some of them done. They can be big or small!

Write this list out, either in your notebook - or in the worksheet provided at the end of this e-book. These are the things we are going to do - and now we just need to get them ready. **When we are totally prepared to do these things we will move them onto the Green list.**

One of the reasons we feel unprepared, is that we THINK we are ready to go ahead with an activity - but there are still some steps we need to take before we are really ready to go. We haven't broken the activity down into the smaller actions we need to take.

## **Example One**

You have seen a lovely coloring page that you think the children will like to try.

Step 1 - Find the website you saw it and print out the pages you like.

Step 2 - collect together (or make sure you can find) felt-tips or pencils.

Green Light - this activity is now ready to go!

## **Example Two**

Making an Animation

Step 1 - Find the software you need and download it to your PC.

Step 2 - find the camera and tripod.

Step 3 - Make sure the batteries to the Camera are charged.

Step 4 - Find the lead that connects the camera to the PC.

Step 5 - Do a little test to make sure you understand how it will work and can show the children.

Step 6- note down some ideas of animations the children could take, or have some examples ready to show them in case they need inspiration.

Green Light - you are ready to go.

**OK - I know that you don't really need a todo list to print off a coloring sheet for your kids.** But how many times have you gone to do it, and realized you can't find the website, or the printer won't print! Really, it was just so you can see how this works.

Too often we make a list of things we would like to do - and lump together activities at all stages of completion. This makes it difficult to see exactly what we can do RIGHT NOW - and what we need to do a little more preparation for.

You probably don't need to write down every tiny step. Just keep an activity on the Amber list until it is absolutely ready to go - and then move it to green.

You can see that - when you have ran through all the steps to get the activity ready - you will be able to spontaneously embark on this activity when opportunity strikes!!

**Sometimes an activity is ready to go immediately.** Reading a chapter from Alice in Wonderland (providing you know where to lay your hands on the book) - is already at a green light stage. But reading to the children for 20 minutes today is not - which book or books will you read? And where are they? When you know this - you can green light the activity.

I know this all seems really obvious! But working through changing an activity from Amber to Green will make an enormous difference. You will be able to see where and why activities get stalled - and feel much more prepared and in control. Whenever the children look to you for an activity - you will be ready to go.

Once activities start moving to the Green list, you can start 'filling the gaps' with more ideas from your someday/maybe list. This keeps the flow of ideas going, and you will never run out of things ready to go.

**You may find it helpful to set up a file, box file or tub to store the components of an activity while you are getting it ready.** Pulling everything together will make it easy to start the activity at a moments notice.

Your Amber list is your todo list. This is the todo list of homeschooling preparation activities that you can work on when your children don't need you.



One of the irritating things about homeschooling is your children get involved with something - you hang around for a while to make sure they are getting on it with it. You finally go off and start doing your own thing - BAM. They suddenly need you!!

Sound familiar? Try to train yourself to start work on the Amber list as soon as they look busy. **Small minutes of time will add up in a big way.**

## Thunderbirds are Go!

**Your Green List is your opportunity to leap into action at any time.** How you implement it is up to you and your children. If you are more autonomous, then you may use it to help your children when they are bored or unmotivated. Or you may wish to set aside a time every day when you go through the list and do some of the activities.

As you do something on your Green list, then **make a note of the date.** This gives you a record of what you have been up to. As you finish an activity, try to have a new one ready to replace it with from your amber list.

**Of course, you still have to DO the things on the list.** But I think seeing that an activity is really ready to go will motivate you to look for an opportunity to suggest it to the children.

# Oops... But what about....

## **Repetitive tasks.**

How can this system cope with repetitive tasks?

You will need to take a look at the task and see if it is ready to go each time it is to be done - or if it needs some preparation. For example, reading your way through a book, or working through a workbook is probably ready to go. Just keep it on your green list until it is complete. Each time you work on it, add the date to the start/end time, to give you a record of when you have worked on it.

Other repetitive activities may need some work, and will be on both the Amber and Green lists. So you may have Science Experiment 1 and 2 ready to go on the Green list, but be working to plan experiments 3 and 4 on the Amber list.

## **It's Still Sitting There.**

If you find an activity just sitting on the list and not getting done, ask yourself why.

Have the children moved on and no longer have any interest in this activity any more? Is it too complicated/boring/time consuming? Maybe the time is just not right for this activity.

**It is better to shift activities off the list than leave them there to make you feel bad about not doing them!**

If you really still want to try to do the activity, leave it on the list for another few weeks and see if it gets done. If you think it is time to drop it, then move it back into your ideas book. Maybe it will come in handy as an idea another time.

# Make it work for you

So, you have a green list ready to go. **How do you implement it?**

Well, it really is up to you. I have talked about planned spontaneity - I want to be able to produce a project that will interest and enthuse my children when I feel it is appropriate to do so.

Maybe you want more structure than that. Maybe you will schedule a time during the day to work on your planned activities.

You could use your list for

- Boredom bashers - ideas to bring out when the children are bored.
- Time fillers - got a spare half hour? No problem.
- Holiday Projects - as a way of breaking up your term time.
- 1 Hour Homeschooling or Workpocket schedules. - See my homeschooling-ideas about [scheduling](#) for more details.

**It is up to you - the main thing is to be ready  
- and enjoy that feeling of being prepared!**

## Amber Activities List

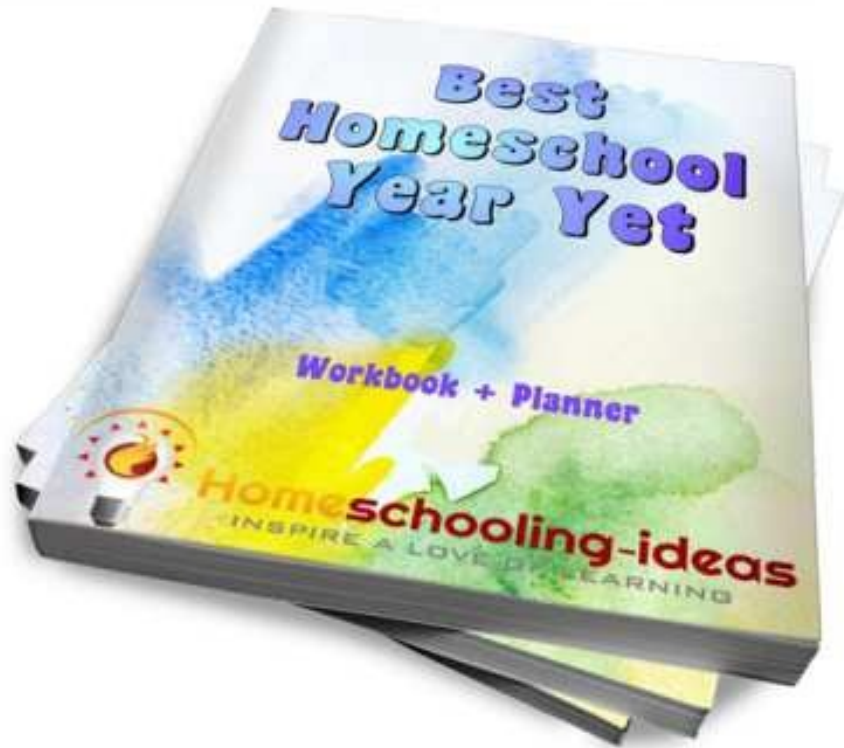
List the activities that you would like to try in the next few weeks (or so!). What steps do you need to take to get these activities ready? When you have done all the steps needed, give the activity a green light and move it onto your Green List.

Activity	Steps to take	✓
Ready to Go?		
Ready to Go?		
Ready to Go?		
Ready to Go?		
Ready to Go?		
Ready to Go?		

# Green Activities List - Ready to Go!

	Start/End
Activity : Notes :	
Activity : Notes :	
Activity : Notes :	
Activity : Notes :	
Activity : Notes :	

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**best homeschool year yet?**



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*I look forward  
to seeing you there!*



Thanks for reading! Now pass it on.

I hope you have enjoyed 'Planned Spontaneity' and found it useful.

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**Thanks! I appreciate it.**