



HomeschoolNYC Newsletter

Celebrating Child-led Learning

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September, 2013

When I think back to my childhood, to when the first day of each school year started to loom close, I recall a feeling of dread. The day would arrive with a sense of resignation and finality. Those school years are a blur of moving through corridors in a snake-like, size-order line. Any deviation from that line resulted in a threat or worse.

What does it mean to begin the school year to a homeschooler? Recently one of my students posted on Facebook that she couldn't wait for her classes to begin, they should begin NOW! TODAY! I quite agree.

If I were a teacher in a public school I would dread each year; the amount of paperwork and the crowded classroom and the test-riddled curriculum would only bring me stress. But as a homeschooled teacher I am yearning to return to the classroom. Every time I think about my classes I just want to sing and dance! Perhaps this is because, as a teacher of homeschoolers, I have the freedom to do what truly excites me, to find the spark that will ignite my students and set their creative intelligence aflame with ideas. That's when we sing and dance together!



[Laurie Block Spiegel](#)

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Starting the Year

**Child-led Learning & the
Four Levels of Teaching**

**The Privilege of Teaching
Homeschoolers**

**Starting the Not-Back-to-
School Year**

Paperwork Templates

**Event with Laurie at
Different Directions**

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Shaw**

To Choose or Not to Choose: Scheduling in an Over-Scheduled World

I dreamed my child was in school. The schoolroom looked like a composite of a cafeteria and an auditorium. There were long tables with attached benches, and long



racks of clothing. Children filed by in rows, going through an obstacle course that went over benches and tables up to the auditorium stage and snaked down through racks of clothing back to the cafeteria level. At every turning point a young, friendly teacher offered a helpful hand to any child who might stumble. The teachers repeatedly encouraged the children to select clothing from the racks and, as the line wound around, the children's dress changed, layer by layer, until almost all of the children had selected several items from various racks. My son, however, chose nothing. I stood on the side, observing him, and thought ... [READ MORE](#) ...

The Privilege of Teaching Homeschoolers



As a veteran teacher of homeschoolers, I continue to learn, and often take workshops with teachers. I seek out master classes and master teachers (writers, performers, artists) who will inspire me and offer me new ideas and techniques. Learning is a lifelong endeavor and we need to stoke the fires of our passions. These activities put me in a room full of teachers. For the time being we are fellow students; as teachers we all feel something in common. Yet when we introduce ourselves and say where we work, everyone is surprised to learn that I teach homeschoolers. Most want to know ... [READ MORE](#) ...

Starting the Not-Back-to-School Year



Students at the NY Historical Society

Every year NYC organizations and institutions advertise more classes for homeschooled kids along with their public "afterschool" offerings.

Here are some [local offerings created just for homeschoolers](#).

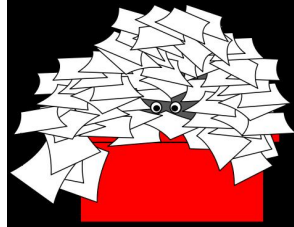
Check out [what's free or cheap in NYC](#) for an amazing list of educational activities from K-12.

[Recommended Field Trips in and around NYC](#)

[NYC Concerts for Kids and Families](#)

[Connect with other homeschoolers by joining a support network.](#)

Paperwork Templates and Outlines



As a service to homeschooling parents, I created templates or outlines for New York State required paperwork, and also for record-keeping. When I first started homeschooling, I created a schedule that imposed a structure on our days. That structure was loose and flexible, with most afternoons wide open, and we did our best to stick to it. Eventually I realized that our schedule was holding us back from doing more things outside of the home or on the spur of the moment. So we abandoned the planned schedule and traded it for a method of keeping track of what we had done. Now, instead of keeping up with a schedule, I was doing what I had always done, just trying to keep up with my kids. They led the way, and I championed, cheered, assisted, and helped with the clean-up. It was teamwork all the way, including the paperwork. My kids were encouraged to enter anything they had done in the appropriate box, and they were always on hand to help with the writing of each report. After all, none of this would have happened without them!

Here are [scheduling templates](#) to help you keep track of what you have done. Twelve of these pages will give you everything you need to write those quarterlies!

Here is a template for a [Letter of Intent](#).

Here are templates for [IHIPs for grades 1-6, 7-8, and 9-12](#).

There's more than one way to write an IHIP!
Here is an [unschooling IHIP written for a 5th grader](#).

Don't Miss This Event!

[2013 Grand Reopening Fundraiser](#) **Pot-Luck Dinner and Talk with Laurie**

Thursday September 19th, 5 - 8 pm
417 West 57th St.

Laurie will talk about child-led learning
and offer tips for staying organized and doing paperwork
while taking this approach.



There will be a question and answer period.

Bring a favorite dish to share.

Meet other families and share a story from your summer adventures.
There will be a sale table with hand-crafted items and copies of Laurie's book.

Minimum donation: \$5/person, \$20/family of four or more.
Child care and kids' activities in the library during Laurie's talk.
Child care fee: \$5/child, \$7/two.

All donations gratefully accepted.

Quote by George Bernard Shaw

"What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge,
and not knowledge in pursuit of the child."

~George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), Irish playwright and author

Education Uncensored

Here's what people are saying about Laurie's book:

"You made me laugh, you made me cry, and you inspired me. I can literally hear your voice, and love your storytelling and your wisdom and just the whole package. I'm stimulated and filled with ideas for my own teaching."

~ Dr. Bonnie Shulman, professor of mathematics, Bates College

"I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciated meeting you and reading your book. It is terrific, and for me, the best part was its New York perspective. I know no other book available to homeschoolers that so overtly references an urban perspective."

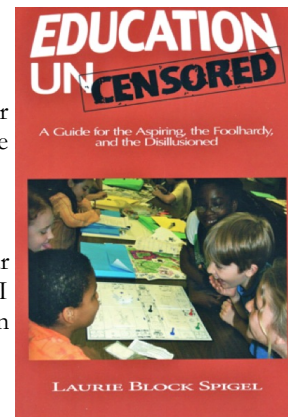
~ David Albert, author of *And the Skylark Sings with Me* and other books

"Laurie's evolution as a teacher and life-long involvement in the world of education has given her a profound understanding of the problems that plague today's schools. This book offers an insightful look at how an increasingly standardized system is robbing our children of their individuality and passion for learning. Additionally, it provides innovative how-to curriculums for anyone involved or interested in educating children."

~ Ellen Labiner, homeschooling parent and special educator

[Read excerpts here.](#)

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Send us your comments and suggestions! E-mail Laurie@HomeschoolNYC.com.

