

# HOMESCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE

YOUR WAY BUNDLE



The Neurodivergent Way

**BOOST PACKETS**

BY AMY BODKIN CONSULTING

# HOMESCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE

## – THE NEURODIVERGENT WAY –

**A CURRICULUM BOOST PACKET**

**BY AMY BODKIN CONSULTING**

**AMY BODKIN CONSULTING**

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# *Introduction*

## **HOMESCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE – THE NEURODIVERGENT WAY –**

Thank you for purchasing this curriculum guide. It will provide your children with a tailor-made curriculum from preschool to high school graduation.

I'm Amy Bodkin: Autistic adult, Consultant, and Homeschool parent. I have an Educational Specialist Degree (Ed.S.) with an emphasis in Neuropsychology, a Masters in Educational Psychology, and a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology with a minor in Mathematics.

Professionally, personally, and as a parent, I have a significant amount of experience with Autism and countless other diagnoses. All of these different angles of experience give me a very unique perspective and insight into homeschooling students with a wide variety of needs.

### **TO SEE A CHILD AS A BORN PERSON, NOT AS A DIAGNOSIS**

I have been greatly influenced by Charlotte Mason, a 19th-century educational philosopher, primarily because of her first principle "Children are born persons." Too often, children with needs that fall outside the average are viewed as "less than" because of their differences. Charlotte Mason makes respect for their personhood the foundation of their education. And I want all children to have an education that begins with seeing them as a person, not a diagnosis.

### **A SPECIAL NEEDS CURRICULUM**

I have been asked many times over the years to create a "Special Needs Curriculum." And I have refused every single time because it is not possible to create a curriculum that will meet the needs of every single student who has needs outside the average and still maintain respect for their individuality. It is the relationship we develop with our children that truly makes all the difference, not the books you read, the schedules you follow, or the fun hands-on activities you employ.

No matter what kind of vision you have for your child's education, the principles of Charlotte Mason, beginning with "Children are born persons," are fundamental to a "Special Needs Curriculum" that truly meets our students where they are and gives them the respect they deserve.

When I struggled to provide an education for my neurodivergent children, I ran into a problem. They were both so different that I would either have to adapt two different curricula or I would have to adapt one curriculum two different ways. And making adaptations can be exceedingly difficult because it is like trying to fix a tapestry... you never know which thread might unravel the whole thing.

About that time, I found the *Charlotte Mason Your Way Form Guides* at [A Charlotte Mason Plenary](#). These guides made all the difference because they gave me the tools to quit adapting and just start feeding my children what their minds were ready for. It was freeing both for me and for them.

I was so excited about the Form Guides that I contacted Rachel Lebowitz, the owner of A Charlotte

Mason Plenary, and told her “These guides are gold for special needs families!” She then asked what could make them better, and I responded with “If you approached it from a *developmental* perspective.”

I began consulting at A Charlotte Mason Plenary and wrote the Developmental Form Guide to accompany Rachel's original Form Guides. Since that time, I have branched out, but I still believe that Charlotte Mason's 20 Principles and these Form Guides are the best thing I have ever seen for truly meeting a child with special needs where they are.

### **A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH PAIRED WITH CHARLOTTE MASON'S PHILOSOPHY**

This Curriculum Guide includes:

- Developmental Form Guide
- Form 0 Guide
- Form 1 Guide
- Form 2 Guide

In Charlotte Mason's day, a student's curriculum was based on Forms rather than grade levels. Forms allow for more flexibility in meeting the educational needs of your child. Forms are elastic, allowing you to stretch or contract the amount and difficulty of work based on your child's ability and needs. As such, I believe Forms are the optimal way of organizing a special needs child's curriculum.

Each Form Guide covers:

- Developmental Guide = a guide for parents to understand how to make adjustments
- Form 0 Guide = all students who are not yet ready to learn to read
- Form 1 Guide = all students who are ready to begin learning to read (not usually until they can rhyme well)
- Form 2 Guide = all students ready to begin expressing their own ideas through text

Taking the developmental approach allows you to meet your child where he is rather than where he should be. So, while you can use the above descriptions to estimate which Form will suit your child best, the Developmental Form Guide will help you pinpoint more specifically what your child needs at this point in time by examining several different developmental categories. They are divided into six distinct developmental categories:

- Social-Emotional
- Communication
- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor
- Life Skills
- Cognitive

### **MEET YOUR CHILD WHERE HE IS, NOT WHERE HE SHOULD BE**

My advice for you, as a fellow homeschool parent is to stop and be grateful for the many wonderful things you have the privilege of getting to experience in this life – your children, the feel of a

summer's breeze, a robin's song, or warm food in your belly.

The second piece of advice I recommend is to not get caught up in this idea of trying to "catch up." Appreciate who your child is *today*, and only worry about giving him the physical and mental sustenance that is necessary for today. Believe it or not, if you just focus on who he is today, feeding him what he needs today, you will eventually get to where you need to be.

And if you can manage to release the expectations – your own subconscious expectations of what is "normal" and the expectations of others around you – I believe you will find a great deal of relief. After all, the goal is not to "catch up" or to "get through high school." The goal is to see your child as a person and provide him with needed sustenance.

### **SMALL EFFORTS = GROWTH**

When you change your focus from the lens of grades and ages to *development*, you can see your child as the person he is today and it frees you to be the parent you want to be. Even if you are struggling with chronic illness and other burdens, you can feel a sense of freedom by letting go of expectations. When we unshackle ourselves from the expectations that have been placed on us by society, doctors, therapists, teachers, books, and other parents, etc., we can find our way forward.

The only way you are going to get through whatever you find yourself facing is by allowing yourself and your child to be the people you were born to be. I encourage you to rethink the way life "has to be" and try to envision how it "could be."

Stop thinking about the "deficits" and what you "don't have to work with." Instead, start thinking about what you *do* have to work with, the wonderful people you already are. Create an atmosphere that allows you all to be who you were born to be, so you can stop trying to "fake it till you make it."

This process means starting at the point of your child's development where they are the most comfortable and confident, which usually coincides with the "lowest" score on a child's academic and/or developmental test. And this may also be the level you avoid thinking about because you feel such pressure to "catch up." Get comfortable relating there, on your child's "lowest" level, and doing a little work every day. Consistency, not Herculean effort, is what will win the day.

It's about teaching our kids that learning to nourish their minds, even if it doesn't look like other people, is worth it! They know better than anyone else how to help themselves learn best, we just have to be listening (with our eyes and our ears) and giving them options! Just like plants, when you provide consistent opportunities for sunlight and the right nutrients, you will see growth! Don't rush it because, as was said in the movie *The Princess Bride*, "*You rush a miracle, you get rotten miracles!*"

### **A BALANCED PERSON IS A HAPPY PERSON**

Speaking of rotten miracles, when a child ends up developing one skill in abundance over his other skills, we end up with some rather unfortunate consequences from imbalance. Van Gogh, Beethoven, etc., all were extremely talented in their fields, but if there is one thing you notice about some of the greatest people in their fields, it is that they are not very happy. People need balance in order to gain confidence and contentment. Our children need the same. Instead of trying to find the one thing that your child is gifted at, focus instead on helping your child grow to be a balanced person.

As you go through the Developmental Guide, try to determine where your child is developmentally in each subject, given the accommodations suggested. Then look at where your child is overall in all of the subjects. From there, begin with the lowest Form, and work to help your child strengthen his development in his weaker areas. As he gets stronger in his weak areas, he will gain greater balance in his development. And as I like to say, “A balanced person is a happy person.”

This does not mean that you have to keep your child from enjoying things that he is good at. It simply means that we are focusing on encouraging him in areas that he needs help in and letting him just enjoy the things he loves. This also does not mean that we are not presuming competence. Each Form offers a rich feast for a person of any age.

And when your child has advanced enough in a weak area that he is ready to start a new Form, don't add everything all at once. Take it slow, one thing at a time.

**YOU CAN DO THIS!**

In case no one has told you this today, you are doing an amazing job! Now, drop your shoulders, take a slow deep breath, and let's re-envision how homeschooling can look for both you and your child!

*Amy Bodkin*

Autistic Consultant and Public Speaker

P.S. For more information about Charlotte Mason's 20 Principles, see the list rewritten in “Amy's plain English” starting on the next page!

## CHARLOTTE MASON'S 20 PRINCIPLES IN PLAIN ENGLISH

REWRITTEN BY AMY BODKIN

PRINCIPLE #1: Children are full people and should be accorded the same respect we afford adults.

PRINCIPLE #2: All children have potential.

PRINCIPLE #3: We all have rules we must obey in order to live with others, BUT

PRINCIPLE #4: Those rules are limited by our respect for others as full persons, and we may not manipulate them in any way, whether by fear, love, suggestion, influence, or natural desire.

PRINCIPLE #5: Therefore, we have three educational instruments. Education is an atmosphere, a discipline, and a life.

PRINCIPLE #6: Education is an atmosphere: Children are most influenced by the atmosphere we provide. Who we are as people will have the most powerful impact on them rather than the activities and opportunities we provide them.

PRINCIPLE #7: Education is a discipline: We mindfully develop habits to help us achieve the things we want so we do not constantly have to think about every single decision.

PRINCIPLE #8: Education is a life: We are people: body, mind, and soul. We all need regular and balanced sustenance to continue to grow and remain healthy.

PRINCIPLE #9: Children are not computers to be programmed but rather whole persons whose minds need to not merely learn about facts and ideas but truly digest those ideas.

PRINCIPLE #10: As such, a child's only true teacher is themselves because they are the only one who can digest the various ideas presented to them. Anything less would be indoctrination.

PRINCIPLE #11: Once a child has developed his sensory and language neural pathways to a point that learning can take place through the use of language, his curriculum should be generous and take care that facts are not presented without their informing ideas because –

PRINCIPLE #12: "Education is the Science of Relations" = it is the connections we make between a wide range of subjects and ideas that are the true work of education. Therefore, a child should receive a wide curriculum full of physical exercises, nature lore, handicrafts, science, art, and many living books. It is not our job to teach him all about anything but to help him find threads that connect our world.

PRINCIPLE #13: In creating a curriculum, three points must be considered:

- (a) He requires much knowledge to sustain his mind.
- (b) The knowledge should be varied so the diet his mind feeds upon will be well balanced.
- (c) Knowledge should be communicated through language appropriate to him because that is the way in which ideas are shared.

PRINCIPLE #14: We have not truly gained knowledge until we have digested those ideas and reproduced our understanding of those ideas. This is why conversations with our children are so



important.

PRINCIPLE #15: We do not need to insult our children's intelligence by re-reading, summarizing, and questioning them to ensure their understanding. Present the material and allow them to make the connections that are there for them to make at that moment. No person's connections are better than those of another person's connections. They have been given a unique perspective with which to understand the world and that perspective is valid.

PRINCIPLE #16: We have two tools we can offer children as guidance: the way of the will and the way of reason.

PRINCIPLE #17: The way of the will: Children should be taught:

- (a) There are the things we want and there are the things we choose (or will).
- (b) Sometimes when we have difficulty doing something we know we should do, distracting ourselves with something quite different can help us gather strength to return to a difficult task.
- (c) It is often something entertaining or interesting that can be the best tool in turning our thoughts.
- (d) With a little rest, we can return to the task with more energy, and it is by this experience that we learn how to self-regulate ourselves.

PRINCIPLE #18: The way of reason: We teach children not to become too trusting of the scientific reasoning of the day because reason only (a) proves a mathematical proof or (b) creates arguments to back up any idea whether right or wrong.

PRINCIPLE #19: As children become mature enough to understand, they must be taught that their most important job is not to ask "Can we?" but "Should we?" To help them, we provide them with guiding principles and a wide range of ideas so that their choices are not based on a single perspective.

PRINCIPLE #20: Although much attention is paid to the development of a child's body and mind, we do not neglect the feeding of a child's soul – that part that is not the mind and not the body – because it is this that gives a person value, not how talented they are physically or mentally.

# DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDE

- THE NEURODIVERGENT WAY -



AMY BODKIN CONSULTING

# DEVELOPMENTAL FORM GUIDE FOR PREK – FORM 3

BY AMY BODKIN, ED.S.

AND RACHEL LEBOWITZ

AMY BODKIN CONSULTING

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## CATEGORY 1

# *Social-Emotional Skills*

### **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS FOUNDATIONAL**

The Social-Emotional Category appears first in this guide primarily because the emotional center of the brain (the limbic system) begins developing before the cortex. There is nothing more foundational to academic success than a positive social-emotional experience. This means that children can experience and be impacted by their emotions long before they are capable of remembering or discussing them; this goes for both what I will call contented and discontented emotions.

CM Subjects covered in this category include:

- Citizenship

### **CONTENTED VS. DISCONTENTED EMOTIONS**

Contented emotions tend to lead to better self-esteem, better relationships, better health, more productivity and success, more creativity, greater generosity, and better coping skills. In contrast, discontented emotions, like anger, fear, and frustration, tend to lead to the opposite. And this doesn't only apply to experiences in early childhood.

### **A NOTE ON MEDICAL RESEARCH**

A human fetus is capable of sensing pain as early as 8-20 weeks gestation as well as exhibit behavioral responses to both positive inputs like its mother singing and negative inputs like parents arguing by the second trimester. Until recently, researchers believed that while babies can sense pain, they did not experience pain as adults do, and so, until 1986, it was not part of the American Pediatric Surgeons protocol to use anesthesia for infants undergoing surgery. It wasn't until 1997 that a study was terminated because the researchers discovered that there were significant negative effects to circumcising male infants without anesthesia.

### **LONG-LASTING EFFECTS**

Also of note, the consequences of these early experiences are not short-lived. Not only can pain experienced but not remembered lead to a heightened sensitivity to pain, but it can also lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, a higher risk of Autoimmune Conditions, and challenges with sensory integration leading to both hyperactive and depressive behaviors.

Recent research in the area of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) has helped us to understand just how far researching these consequences can be. The ACE rating scale allows for a maximum score of 10, and for each point scored, your chance of being hospitalized with an autoimmune disease in adulthood goes up 20%. Someone with an ACE score of 4 is 460% more likely to face depression than someone with a score of 0. Someone with an ACE score of 4 is also twice as likely to be diagnosed with

cancer than someone with a score of 0, and only one-third of the population scores a 0.

### WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

But why am I telling you all of this? Did you need another thing to worry about with regards to parenting, let alone homeschooling? No, but it is important to be aware of just how powerful our early experiences are so that we can work to mitigate the consequences. Some of our children come to us with trauma already through foster or adoption.

Some of our kids experience trauma despite our best efforts to minimize the effects, such as those who have spent time in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Years ago, NICUs were bright and loud. Today, we understand the damaging effects of sensory overload. So we turn down the lights and noise and have instituted “kangaroo care” where infants enjoy as much skin to skin contact with their parents as possible.

Other examples of doing our best to minimize the effects of trauma might include supporting our child through a parent’s deployment, the loss of an important person in their life, or the impact of stressful familial relationships due to any number of variables.

And then we come to those things that just happen sometimes without us even truly being aware of their impact. These things happen not because we are bad parents but because we are human beings that continue to learn and grow. All parents have these things happen. It’s that one day out of 100 that you are just so tired and frustrated that you say something you wouldn’t usually say, and it turns out that one moment also happens to be the one moment your child was actually listening!

### THINGS WE CAN DO

But, there are things we can do to mitigate the long term consequences. First of all, we can continue to work on our own development and our own issues so that they don’t get passed down. That is one family tradition that does not need to be continued! Second of all, I highly recommend reading:

- *Childhood Disrupted: How Your Biography Becomes Your Biology, and How You Can Heal* by Donna Jackson Nakazawa
- *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* by Bessel van der Kolk
- *Charlotte Mason’s 20 Principles of Education*

Charlotte's 20 Principles focus on children being born persons deserving of the respect due to all persons, which means feeding them well body, mind, and soul. You really can’t do better than that by any child.

A Charlotte Mason Plenary offers a [Free Course on Charlotte’s 20 Principles](#) and a longer, paid [Companion Course on Charlotte’s 6th Volume, A Philosophy of Education](#), which describes her 20 Principles in greater detail.

### CHILDREN ARE BORN PERSONS

But how does all this play into a Charlotte Mason Education? First of all, I cannot emphasize

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## CATEGORY 4

# *Fine Motor Skills*

### NOT JUST MUSCLES

Most often, parents don't notice Fine Motor delays until children begin to reach school age. Before school age, it can be easy just to assume that a child is somewhat klutzy, not going to be an athlete, or just wants to remain "Mommy's little boy" for a little longer.

CM Subjects covered in this category include:

- Copywork / Handwriting
- Drawing / Painting
- Piano / Musical Instruments
- Handicrafts

On the next page, you can see a chart of developmental milestones for fine motor skills to give you an idea of what to look for and encourage.

When people do start thinking about Fine Motor Development, they often assume it is just a smaller version of Gross Motor Development. Under the skin, it pretty much is the same, and all of the information in the Gross Motor Category still applies.

However, Fine Motor development can also be more significantly impacted by Spatial development than Gross Motor development. Fine Motor skills involve more sensitive movements.

We very briefly mentioned the visual aspect of Spatial development in the Communication Category. But, the Fine Motor Category is where Spatial development as a whole can have a profound impact on some children.

### THE VESTIBULAR SYSTEM

Anyone who has spent any time around children knows that they love to move and bounce, and this goes for babies too. The only exception is babies who have spent time in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) because their brains can easily get overwhelmed by sensory stimulation.

The earliest sense to develop is one we don't pay much attention to very often because it delivers information at more of a subconscious level.

The Vestibular System is primarily located in the inner ear, and it connects the inner ear with neural pathways to the brain and the rest of the body. When you go for a jog, jump on a trampoline, etc., it is your Vestibular System that keeps the world around you from appearing like it is bouncing up and down!



FINE MOTOR MILESTONES	
0-6 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brings hands to mouth</li> <li>• Follows objects with their eyes</li> <li>• Reaches for toys with both arms</li> </ul>
6-12 Months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begins to grasp and hold one or two objects</li> <li>• Brings objects to mouth to explore sensory textures</li> <li>• Begins to self-feed</li> <li>• Begins to put small objects in a cup or container</li> <li>• Fisted grasp and Pincer grasp develop</li> <li>• Transfers objects between hands</li> </ul>
1-2 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claps hands and objects together</li> <li>• Waves goodbye</li> <li>• Can scoop objects with a spoon or small shovel</li> <li>• Scribbles with crayons on paper</li> <li>• Begins holding a crayon with fingertips and thumb</li> <li>• Can build a tower 3-4 blocks high</li> <li>• Begins to start cutting paper with scissors</li> <li>• Can turn pages in a book one page at a time</li> </ul>
2-3 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plays with clay or play dough</li> <li>• Can stack a block tower nine blocks high</li> <li>• Can turn doorknobs</li> <li>• Can pick up small objects with pincer grasp</li> <li>• Can complete three-piece puzzles</li> <li>• Scribbles</li> <li>• Make snips on paper with scissors</li> <li>• Will wash hands independently</li> <li>• Can screw lids on containers on and off</li> <li>• Can string large beads</li> <li>• Zips and unzips large zippers</li> <li>• Can use a spoon correctly</li> </ul>
3-4 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can draw a circle after being shown a model</li> <li>• Copies prewriting lines and shapes</li> <li>• Laces a card</li> <li>• Cuts along only a 1/8-1/4 inch deviation from the line</li> <li>• Can sort objects</li> <li>• Will fasten and unfasten large buttons</li> <li>• Can complete up to 25 piece puzzles</li> </ul>

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# Introduction

## FORM 0 GUIDE

Thank you for choosing A Charlotte Mason Plenary! And welcome to a Charlotte Mason education, a method that truly honors the child as a person and brings ease and joy to homeschooling.

This Guide is divided into two distinct Forms: Preschool and Kindergarten. The difference in what was recommended is significant. When choosing where to place your child, be sure to assess skill development. If you are unsure where to place your child, always start at a lower level and build from there. The guidelines for Preschool and Kindergarten come from Charlotte’s writing in Volume 1, and various Parents’ Review Articles, as well as from the later PNEU Programmes.

Caution is used when reading any PNEU Programmes that were published more than 10 years after Charlotte’s death, as we see how the Programmes started to stray from Charlotte’s original writings. In this case, I have relied on my many years of experience in reading Charlotte’s volumes, PR Articles, and other PNEU source documents, as well as my own experience as a homeschooling parent, to guide me on recommendations.

The information in this Guide roughly correlates with Preschool and Kindergarten:

**Preschool = Ages 3-4**

**Kindergarten = Age 5**

*“Nothing is trivial that concerns a child; his foolish-seeming words and ways are pregnant with meaning for the wise. It is in the infinitely little we must study the infinitely great; and the vast possibilities, and the right direction of education, are indicated in the open book of the little child’s thoughts ... The parents need only supply; the child knows well enough how to appropriate. The parents’ chief care is, that that which they supply shall be wholesome and nourishing, whether in the way of picture-books, lessons, playmates, bread and milk, or mother’s love. This is education as most parents understand it, with more of meat, more of love, more of culture, according to their kind and degree. They let their children alone, allowing human nature to develop on its own lines.” Home Education pg 5*

This Guide lists each subject in each Form, books that were used, notes on each subject, and scheduling information. My goal is to help you design a personalized “Charlotte Mason Your Way” curriculum that fits your family.

**There are 3 steps to this guide:**

**STEP #1: OVERVIEW OF FORM SUBJECTS**

**STEP #2: THE CHARLOTTE MASON YOUR WAY QUIZ**

**STEP #3: YOUR CUSTOM SCHEDULE**

**STEP #1: AN OVERVIEW OF FORM SUBJECTS:** This step will give you information on which subjects were taught and which books Charlotte chose for her students. The Preschool and Kindergarten Guides are a bit different in that formal studies were not recommended until age 6. But many parents find that their children ask for and benefit from a gentle introduction to “school” before formal studies begin.

My source information for this guide comes from analyzing many sources, including more than 10 years worth of Charlotte Mason’s original PNEU Programmes from 1920-1933. These Programmes list

the curriculum used by students in the PNEU Schools. Additional information comes from Charlotte's *Home Education Series*, *Parents' Review Articles*, and later Programmes.

All of Charlotte's Programmes are divided by Forms, which are like grade levels, but they allow for more flexibility in meeting the educational needs of a child. Forms are elastic, allowing the teacher to stretch or contract the amount and difficulty of work based on a child's ability and needs. For more information on Forms, please see [Understanding Forms in a Charlotte Mason Education](#).

In most subjects, I have listed information from Charlotte's *Home Education* series as well as books and other resources that were recommended. Whenever possible, each book will be linked to an in-print edition and/or a public domain version for your convenience.

I have included this information to help you in selecting your own books. Viewing the actual book that was used for a given subject will give you an insight into why the book was chosen, what makes it a living book, what makes it appropriate for this age range, and what to look for in choosing a more modern equivalent. I have also listed a few books that I personally recommend.

To see additional living books recommendations, please see the [CM SUBJECTS](#) page which includes the [Preschool page](#) and the [Kindergarten page](#).

Once you have completed the Form Overview, then move on to Step #2.

**STEP #2: THE CHARLOTTE MASON YOUR WAY QUIZ:** This is a fun exercise that will show you your strengths as a family. We want to identify those strengths and build a solid foundation on them!

You will use your results from the Quiz when you get to Step #3.

**STEP #3: CREATING YOUR CUSTOM SCHEDULE:** Your schedule is the machine that keeps your homeschool going. Once in place, it takes all the decision work out of your day – you simply move to the next thing on your schedule. A simple schedule is easily tweaked and improved. An overly complex schedule can be difficult to change and can become a burden. We want to keep it simple and stress-free! Less stress, more joy!

The entire process of Steps 1-3 will help set you up for ongoing success.

**READING CHARLOTTE'S VOLUMES AND LEARNING THE PRINCIPLES:** One more thing – I also want to encourage you to read Charlotte's original *Home Education Series* for yourself as well as study her 20 Principles. Her words are so inspiring and so helpful for developing the atmosphere of your home, the discipline you'll need each day, and the beauty of the life you want to cultivate. After all, education is "an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

One more thing – I also want to encourage you to read Charlotte's original *Home Education Series* for yourself. Her words are so inspiring and so helpful for developing the atmosphere of your home, the discipline you'll need each day, and the beauty of the life you want to cultivate. After all, education is "an atmosphere, a discipline, a life."

Start with Volume 1, especially since you have younger students, as Volume 1 was written specifically regarding children from birth through age nine. There is a wealth of advice and knowledge in it's pages.

I recommend **THE ANNOTATED CHARLOTTE MASON SERIES** published by A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY of course! The annotations and additional information really help you better understand Charlotte's words and historical context. You can purchase [HOME EDUCATION: ANNOTATED EDITION](#) (VOLUME 1) as a

paperback book or as a downloadable PDF on THE PLENARY website.

Other options for learning more about the Charlotte Mason method include:

- Free 20 Principles study: *Finding Your Way with Charlotte Mason's 20 Principles*
- Online Courses for Parents, including a CM 101 Course coming soon!
- Lots of free “how-to” videos on THE PLENARY YOUTUBE CHANNEL

And thank you for choosing A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY!



*Rachel Lebowitz*

A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY

– PAGES NOT INCLUDED IN SAMPLE –



CHARLOTTE MASON

your way 

FORM 1  
GUIDE

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*Charlotte Mason*

**YOUR WAY**

**FORM 1 GUIDE**

**A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY**

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***– SAMPLE PAGES FROM AMY BODKIN CONSULTING –***

# STEP #1

## *Overview of Form 1 Subjects*

### **HISTORY – HOME COUNTRY**

REFER TO VOL. 1, PART 5, CH. 18, PAGES 280-295 / VOL. 6, PAGES 169-175

Charlotte's students studied the history of their home country every year. All Form 1 students used a book about British history called *An Island Story* by H.E. Marshall. Choose a primary history spine for your home country. Options for good living books for American History include:

- a. *America First: Updated Edition* by Lawton Evans is an excellent history spine and it does not assume prior knowledge. Please use the UPDATED edition to avoid insensitive language in the original text (you can see the original text in the public domain [here](#)).
- b. *A History of the United States and Its People* by Edward Eggleston is also a good choice, but is not nearly as narrative as *America First*.
- c. *The Book of Indians* by Holling – If you'd rather start with an introduction to Native Americans, this book is lovely.

#### **FORM 1A**

Students also read *Tales from Westminster Abbey* by Mrs. Frewen Lord, which appears to be a mix of history about the church and biographies about people associated with the church. You can include a similar history or biography book for your Form 1A student.

See the [Form 1 page](#) for all subjects within Form 1.

Or see the [History page](#).

### **ORAL NARRATION / COMPOSITION**

REFER TO VOL. 1, PAGES 231-233 / VOL. 6, PAGES 190-192

All scheduled books are to be narrated except poetry.

For help with narration, see the video: [Beginning Narration](#).

Prepping the lesson can improve the quality of a student's narrations. Recap the previous reading, introduce any new people or places in the new reading (view locations on a map), and introduce vocabulary words that your student may not understand through context. For more information, see [Plenary Pointers: Prepping a Lesson](#).

### **TALES / LITERATURE**

REFER TO VOL. 1, APPENDICES C AND D (PLENARY ANNOTATED EDITION) / VOL. 6, PAGES 180-182

Charlotte deliberately chose stories which would inspire wonder and awe in young children.

Students began the study of mythology in Form 1 and continued reading mythology throughout the Forms. Knowledge of mythology is foundational to understanding Western Literature in later years.

See our [Literature page](#) for more options. Or see the [Form 1 page](#) for all subjects within Form 1.

#### **FORM 1B**

- a. Fairy Tales – read 3 fairy tales from Grimm's or Hans Christian Andersen's per term; *The Blue*

## STEP #2

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# *The Charlotte Mason* YOUR WAY QUIZ

CHARLOTTE MASON YOUR WAY  
FORM 1 GUIDE

A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY  
[WWW.CMPLENARY.COM](http://WWW.CMPLENARY.COM)

## STEP #2

### *The Charlotte Mason Your Way Quiz*

This quiz will give you insight into which subjects will set you up for success in your homeschool. If you are just getting started with the Charlotte Mason method, I recommend starting with a reduced schedule. In other words, don't try to do everything!

This quiz is also helpful in times of change or stress. For example, if your family has just welcomed a new baby, or if there is a prolonged illness or other ongoing life event, you might want to reduce your school schedule for a while. The results from this quiz will guide you in what to cut from your schedule during these times. The reduced schedule can help to restore a sense of well-being and accomplishment at a time when you will need it the most.

#### QUIZ INSTRUCTIONS

Please rate each subject below on a scale of 1 to 10. Please consider how much YOU enjoy teaching or participating in the subject. Then do the same for each one of your students.

Then add up your total score for each subject. You will use these scores in Step #3: Scheduling.

#### RATING SCALE

- Rating of 1 = I do not enjoy this subject or I have fear or anxiety about this subject
- Rating of 5 = I am neutral or I don't know enough about the subject, but I have no anxiety about it
- Rating of 10 = I love this subject!

Here is a short example from my home:

SUBJECTS	RACHEL (TEACHER)	STUDENT #1 (FORM 5)	STUDENT #2 (FORM 2)	TOTALS
HISTORY	9	8	5	22
LITERATURE - TALES	10	10	8	28
LITERATURE - SHAKESPEARE	10	10	10	30
POETRY	10	8	8	26
SCIENCE - NATURE STUDY	8	4	6	18
SCIENCE - SPECIFIC TOPIC	5	2	10	17
MATH	3	1	10	14

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CHARLOTTE mason

your   
way

FORM 2  
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*Charlotte Mason*

**YOUR WAY**

**FORM 2 GUIDE**

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# STEP #3

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## *Creating Your* CUSTOM SCHEDULE

CHARLOTTE MASON YOUR WAY  
FORM 2 GUIDE

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## STEP #3

### *Your Custom Schedule*

This is where we set you up for success in your Charlotte Mason homeschool!

DO NOT SKIP THIS STEP!

Please refer to the FORM 2 FREQUENCY AND LENGTH OF LESSONS chart to complete this step. This is where you will take your highest scoring subjects from the Quiz and build your custom schedule. Your quiz results will be your guide. Your schedule is going to be unique to your family and your circumstances. Embrace this process because it will establish a pattern of success for you. And we will build on that success throughout your school year.

You will notice that the subjects listed on the FORM 2 FREQUENCY AND LENGTH OF LESSONS chart are divided into three categories: Essential Subjects, Joy Subjects, and Other Subjects. Let's look at each one of these categories:

#### ESSENTIAL SUBJECTS

Essential Subjects are those subjects that must be scheduled regardless of your total score from the Quiz. Yes, I know, you were hoping to get out of those low scoring subjects! But these subjects are essential to a child's well-being and growth. Math and reading are essential and must be scheduled once every day.

The other essential subjects such as History, Tales, and Nature Lore are essential to the Charlotte Mason method. History is the core of the curriculum. Tales are meant to be inspiring for children. And Nature Lore develops a child's awe and wonder for the natural world.

#### JOY SUBJECTS

Joy Subjects are those activities which bring peace and relaxation. These activities have been shown to physically increase the level of oxytocin and decrease the level of cortisol in the body.

Cortisol is the stress hormone. Cortisol raises blood pressure, increases anxiety, and produces the "flight or fight" syndrome. Oxytocin, on the other hand, is known as the "love hormone" or the bonding hormone. Oxytocin lowers cortisol levels and helps us bond with others. Yes, we need more Joy Subjects in our homeschools!

These are the subjects which will save your homeschool day! They infuse peace and relaxation into us and into our students. And yet these Joy Subjects are the things that are usually the first to get cut from our schedules! We consider them as "extras" and "not necessary." I'm here to convince you otherwise! They are part of the joy and beauty of this method. Let them work for you!

Choose the highest ranking Joy Subject from the list to include in your schedule. Ideally, though, you want to have at least one Joy Subject PER DAY. If you plan to have a 5-day school schedule, choose the top five highest ranked Joy Subjects from your quiz. If you plan to have fewer school days per week, choose accordingly. Don't miss out on these opportunities for JOY!

#### OTHER SUBJECTS

Other Subjects make up the remaining work for the Form. Start with your highest-ranking subjects

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## OTHER RESOURCES FROM CMP

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Hi! I'm RACHEL LEBOWITZ, the owner of A CHARLOTTE MASON PLENARY. My husband and I have always homeschooled our two children using the Charlotte Mason method of education. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Houston where I studied Communications and Political Science. Before college, I traveled as a member of Up With People, a performing arts organization with a mission to transcend cultural barriers and create global understanding through music. After college, I spent many years as a Radio and Television Journalist. I currently live in Texas with my husband, two children, two dogs, and one guinea pig.

### THE ANNOTATED CHARLOTTE MASON SERIES

*Home Education—Volume 1*  
*Parents and Children—Volume 2*  
*School Education—Volume 3*  
*Ourselves—Volume 4*  
*Formation of Character—Volume 5*  
*A Philosophy of Education—Volume 6*  
Original Unabridged Text by Charlotte Mason  
Annotated by Rachel Lebowitz

### THE ANNOTATED PLUTARCH SERIES

*The Annotated Plutarch: Publicola*  
*The Annotated Plutarch: Julius Caesar*  
*The Annotated Plutarch: Pericles*  
*The Annotated Plutarch: Romulus*  
Original Text by Plutarch  
Annotated and Expanded by Rachel Lebowitz

### CHARLOTTE MASON YOUR WAY FORM GUIDES

*Preschool / Kindergarten (Ages 3-5)*  
*Form 1 (Grades 1-3)*  
*Form 2 (Grades 4-6)*  
*Form 3 (Grades 7-8)*  
*Form 4 (Grade 9)*

### CHARLOTTE MASON COURSES

*Courses for Parents and Students*  
*CM Philosophy · Science · Handicrafts · Foreign Language · Plutarch · Nature Study*  
*Composer Study · Picture Study · Folksongs · Study Skills · Special Needs*

*For a complete list of resources, or for more info about the Charlotte Mason method of education, please see the CMP website at:*

[CMPLINARY.COM](http://CMPLINARY.COM)

# OTHER RESOURCES FROM ABC

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## SPECIAL NEEDS MEMBERSHIP

*Find your community with us in our Membership Group!*

## SPECIAL NEEDS CONSULTATIONS

*One-on-one consultations for families and professionals*

## BOOKS

*Special Needs Kids Are People Too: Seeing the Possibilities Through a Neurodiverse Lens*  
by Amy Bodkin, EdS

## BOOST PACKETS

*POD: Planning, Organizing, and Documenting Your Homeschool*  
*Comprehension Skills Curriculum: Help for Hyperlexia*  
*Reading and Spelling Skills Curriculum: Help for Dyslexia*  
*Workshop: Supporting Special Needs Families in Your Homeschool Co-op*

*And more!*

*For a complete list of resources, or for more info about the special needs education,  
please see the ABC website at:*

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# Curriculum Guide Bundle

## **Easily Adjust any Homeschool Curriculum to Better Meet the Needs of Your Neurodivergent Student**

Developed by Amy Bodkin, Special Needs Consultant, and Rachel Lebowitz, owner of A Charlotte Mason Plenary

### **Need Help with Homeschooling?**

The Curriculum Guide shows you how to adjust any homeschool curriculum (or how to create your own!) to better help your student. Includes detailed information on child development and how to accommodate for differences in learning at any stage.

### Amy Bodkin, EdS

- Special Needs Consultant & Author
- Owner of Amy Bodkin Consulting at AmyBodkin.com
- Autistic adult with Dyslexia, ADHD, and Auditory Processing Disorder
- Educational Specialist Degree (Ed.S.) in Educational Psychology with an emphasis in Neuropsychology
- Master's in Educational Psychology
- Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology
- Former School Psychologist



### Rachel Lebowitz

- Expert in the Charlotte Mason method of education
- Owner of A Charlotte Mason Plenary
- Author, speaker, homeschooling expert



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