

UNSCHOOLING, NATURE STUDIES AND CO-OPS

SESSION NOTES

Reading the unschooling way is possible

- Daughter started reading between 6/7, found her hiding with a picture book. Realised she didn't want parents to know in case they stop reading together
- Just keep reading interesting books to your child
- Tip for finding good books - read the first 2 pages.. Leave aside for a bit. Ask: Do you want to know more? If yes, then buy.
- Surround them with books, show them how to respect and value books.. Love will follow
- If parents model reading, kids will pick it up.
- Read aloud revival - learning to read for pleasure is greater than academics, loved to read more
- Son went from basic books to chapter books in one month at an older age.

Writing

- Son started writing at 10, before then just doodling. At his own pace
- Copywork.. Can be typing, not just writing. Daughter wanted to copy the font. Lead to cursive writing on paper
- Don't box yourself into what you think should happen.. Let it develop naturally

Tips to learn Arabic

- Make it fun, exciting. Play I spy in Arabic. Have an Arabic only room, one has to leave this room to speak English
- Learn Arabic (e.g. do a course) together as a family.

Playing

- Use whatever resources you have
- 'Strewing' - leaving around open-ended materials, even things we'd normally chuck away - bottles, caps, egg trays.
- Respect what they're doing.. By not interrupting them, valuing them, not looking over them and checking what they're doing
- Prophet SAW endorses playing and laughing with kids, it's sunnah

- Play is vital.. Not just play in spare time
- Serious play.. Lego in corporate setting
- Sunnah learn swimming, archery, horseriding.. even for adults

Nature

- Teaching deen through nature. Natural experiences are spiritual experiences... Evokes gratitude and love for Allah. Builds relationship with Allah, before teaching the fara'id
- Nature studies becoming science studies. Rocks in the backyard.. Different types.. Acid experiments.. Researching rock places in locales.. Rock from stone age in Islamabad, kids loved it.
- Seasons of nature... Real life Caterpillars. Learning life cycle visually
- Also respecting seasons of life. Take time to rest too, can't be productive or produce fruits all the time

Co-ops

- Be the one to start one if there's nothing there and you want it for you, your kids & community. Hardest part is starting
- Nature walks.. Easiest thing to start. Keep showing up, even if no one else does. People will join gradually
- Can start small, bring what you have at home and just keep showing up
- Even in classes, prioritise free play (teaching to min)
- Kids quick to figure things out and tinker
- Co-ops are a community effort, what can I do to benefit my kids and other people's kids?
- Enough socialisation for kids & kids comfortable with adults

Unschooling lifestyle

- Respect and value for children and their interests.
- Connect with them on an emotional level and build stronger relationships
- Prophet SAW and Sahaba RA were not schooled the way we were.. Their living was learning

- Learning happens all the time, not just in the classroom. Don't compare your child to curriculum goals.. Observe what they're doing

- From Brave learner... You can learn anything from anything. Value your child's interests & find learning opportunities from there. Unschooling becomes easier when you get confident in this

e.g. Daughter got interested in movie Frozen, brainstormed with husband, identified learning outcomes of geography, weather etc from this

- Come up with Creative ideas.. But see where they are, the child's pace.. Introduce it slowly.

- Let them explore, while you provide a stable, rich environment. let them be kids

Value of Boredom

- Child being bored is good.. Brain starts working, gets creative

- We don't have to entertain them all the time, learn to entertain themselves