

navigating the world of  
homeschooling diverse learners.  
Featuring Peggy Ployer from  
Sped Homeschool,  
Annie Yorty from AnnieYorty.com,  
Leilani Melendez from Living with Eve,  
Stephanie Buckwalter from ELARP Learning,  
and Dawn Jackson from Dawn  
Jackson Educational  
Consulting and Tutoring.

With over 75 years of  
combined homeschooling expertise,  
experiences, and perspectives,  
this group is eager to  
share their wealth of  
wisdom to empower your  
homeschooling journey.

So grab your favorite mug, settle in,  
and get ready for insightful discussions,  
valuable insights, and practical tips.

Give your homeschool the  
power boost it needs to  
successfully educate the  
unique learners in your home.

Thank you.

Hi, everybody,  
and welcome to Empowering  
Homeschool Conversations.

Today,

we are going to talk about the top approach.

Let me start that over again.

Today,

we are going to talk about the top approach for homeschool success with struggling learners.

And my guest today is Don Jackson, with Don Jackson Consulting and Tutoring, and also one of the co-hosts here on Empowering Homeschool Conversations.

So

um so don I'm gonna have you give a little intro of yourself um before we get started um and and just tell our audience a little more about you that maybe they don't know um which would be great thank you peggy such a joy to be here with you I always enjoy it together um essentially after high school I pretty much wanted to be a journalist And I got a little job in a preschool birth to five

years old with kids with special needs.

And I was like at that time,

like they would call an

aide for the classroom.

Now they call it

paraeducators or paraprofessionals.

And it was an aide.

That was it.

And I loved the job.

So I changed my direction in

college to go to early

childhood education.

Which I absolutely loved as well.

From there,

I ended up teaching older kids

in a regular school and

then going full time in

special education.

I did homeschool my own

children as well and

created some curriculum

that was classical, classically based.

And you probably didn't know that.

And I sold that all the

things all the time.

No, there's too much.

And, um, the well-trained mind,

Susan Bauer,

she actually critiqued that

for me on her website.

And when she did that,  
it just went gangbusters.

So it was, it was really a fun break.

My daughter loved history.

So it was a historical  
timeline that was interactive.

And so,  
ended up going to the Chia  
conventions and all that  
and then meeting people from all over.

And it was just amazing.

So if anyone's listening, hello, it's me.

And it was, you really blessed me.

But people would come up and  
hug me and cry and just go,  
I love this so much.

My child loves it.

I don't know.

I didn't know you could be  
famous over creating some curriculum.

In the homeschool community, you can.

And so let's see what else.

And then since then, you know,

I do own a little private  
school that is specifically private.

helps families with the  
administrative side of

things with helping find the curriculum.

Kind of that umbrella school.

That umbrella school, basically.

Yeah.

And so we offer support on

many different levels, but

Yeah, it's a lot of fun.

And I'm still a teacher.

I'm now a teacher, regular,

because I have to pay the mortgage.

Right.

And I'm learning so many new things.

Life has changed significantly.

I haven't been in a regular

teaching job for many years.

And the face of that has

changed significantly.

And I don't know if we'll get into that,

but it's very different.

And I think that's why a lot

of people are moving to homeschooling.

I know probably a lot of our

listeners have just delved

into homeschooling this

year and are going, what am I doing?

And so we're going to really

walk you through how you

can really figure out

success for your student,

especially if they  
struggled in school and  
you're like coming home and going,  
I've never taught.

I have no idea what I'm doing.

Don't worry.

I came into homeschooling  
that way when I  
homeschooled for 19 years.

My kids somehow survived me.

We all learned together.

But but there there are some  
ways that you can really  
set yourself up for success.

And that's what we're going  
to talk about today.

And Don has a perfect  
background to help you lead through that.

So, um, so yeah, I'm,

I just appreciate you done.

And I'm so excited that you,  
you pour into our community  
in the mix of everything  
else that you're doing.

It's wonderful.

Yeah.

I'm happy to be here.

And it's been such a

blessing to meet some of  
the families and share some,  
just some tidbits.

Everyone, everyone is so, I mean, we,  
the team in general is amazing.

So yeah.

Yeah, absolutely.

I agree.

So let's,

I'm going to take this title and  
take it backwards.

So a lot of times parents go, well,

I don't think I have a  
struggling learner.

My child just, you know,

has trouble reading or, you know,

maybe it takes a little bit

longer with math or, you know, so why?

How do we describe a

struggling learner so that

people that are listening are going,

is this for me?

Is this discussion something

that's worth my hour of time?

Or is this just not my child?

So let's unpack that first,

just to make sure parents

understand that we're going

to be speaking towards them

and their homeschooling.

Yeah.

So defining a struggling learner, I think,  
is challenging because  
every child is unique and different,  
right?

Absolutely.

And their history is unique and different.

So you may have had a child  
that didn't get through  
first grade because they  
were out ill a lot.

They had COVID or whatever  
was happening in the world.

And they didn't get that  
constant input of education.

That's why you have to take  
those things into consideration.

You may have had just a  
couple of years where we're  
just kind of doing the  
unschooling method.

And then now they're in  
third grade and all their  
third grade buddies are  
reading at this level.

And they're doing math at  
this level and you're



talking to the moms and it's like, oh,  
we're in algebra and  
they're only in third grade.

Well, you can't do that.

You know,

you can't you have to look at  
your child's history,  
their learning experiences.

If you had more of a relaxed  
approach initially where we  
want to be out in nature, we want to,  
you know,

I actually work with a family like that.

Right.

I'm amazed.

I was worried a little bit at times.

The girl is evolving into  
her own beautiful gift.

And I had to like take a  
step back because mom was like,  
I don't want to push like that.

And I tend to do that a little.

I do a balance of both.

But just watching her  
naturally gravitate towards  
her giftedness and her strengths,  
it's just been amazing.

So if you are that parent  
that teaches like that,

but at the same time, you're going, eh.

he's not,

or she's not remembering the

vowel sounds.

And we just studied those

yesterday or the short A sound.

Right.

Those aha moments that you sometimes get,

even if you're not trained as a teacher,

he just doesn't distinctively know.

Exactly.

And if you're saying, wait a minute,

we've been counting to 10

for three weeks and he's

still not getting it.

Okay.

So that's a red flag.

That's a different story.

So at that point you have to,

I wouldn't like get worried

or panic because we've

taught kids learn differently.

So maybe you're teaching

them with just an auditory approach,

but they're really a kinesthetic learner.

So I would say get outside

with a big chalk and do the vowel sounds,

get some sand on a tray

where they're tracing their  
name and give them that  
tactile feedback in their learning.  
and fill in those pieces,  
or maybe they're a real visual learner.

Yeah,

so they're just not connecting with  
what you're trying to teach them.

And I think that that's  
probably a really good baseline of saying,  
you have a struggling learner.

If you just feel like you're  
talking to the wall,

Um, or things are going in,  
but they're not coming back  
out in any form.

And we know we're not  
talking about a child who's nonverbal,  
who maybe can't tell you,  
but maybe they're,  
they seem to be showing signs that,  
that they're actually  
understanding versus this  
is not sticking at all.

Um, and I feel like I'm just like,  
teaching and it's not,  
we're not progressing.

Um,

but you have to look at your teaching

style too, as a parent,  
because if you're just a strong verbal,  
I have strong verbal  
parents that just talk at  
the child and just, you know,  
they're teaching.

I used to be that way, actually.

I know when my kids would just be like,  
blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

Well, my oldest daughter,  
it was overwhelmed.

It became like overwhelming to her.

And I realized that is not the way I,  
she would just tune me out.

I remember one time we were  
driving the car and I was like, blah,  
blah, blah, blah, blah.

And she goes, are you talking?

Like, did you say something?

Like, I know she was,

but I know it doesn't sound  
very respectful,

but she was kind of like  
trying to make a point with me.

You know, I don't hear all that.

I'm not hearing all that.

And

So that was when I was

really thinking about the  
learning styles and just  
different distances.

It's amazing how your kids can teach you,  
too, things like that.

Well, yeah, you taught me a lot.

As long as you're listening.

Because I think my son finally said to me,  
Mom, you're telling me too much.

You could only process a  
little bit at a time.

But it took him a while to  
be able to verbalize what  
was frustrating him so much  
was that I wanted to dump  
everything right away,  
everything that I had.

And he's like, hold it.

I can take one little piece  
and I can take one there  
and then give me another little piece.

How old was he when he did that?

I'm just curious.

Oh, he was in his 20s.

Okay.

I mean,

we were done homeschooling by then.

I wish I would have known before,  
but yeah.

Same here.

I know exactly what you're saying.

And so that's why I'm

sharing that because if you're saying,

look, I'm trying to teach them every day,

but okay,

are you using all the modalities?

There's visual, auditory, kinesthetic.

Maybe parents don't even know about that.

That's correct.

So we can cause some of that

struggle ourselves.

Our child's just their

inclination on how they

learn best can cause

struggles if it doesn't

line up with how we're teaching.

And then there could be

other diagnostic things going on as well.

A child just might have dyslexia,

might have dysgraphia,

might have dyscalculia,

may have a slower processing speed.

You know,

there's all of these other things

that we take into consideration.

And maybe you're coming out

of the public school and

you've got diagnoses already in line.

And maybe you know what they  
are and how to teach towards them.

And maybe you don't.

So so it's like you said,  
every child is different.

And I think a lot of times  
when we when I've been at  
homeschool conferences and, you know,  
I brought a team of people  
with me to answer questions,  
the one that would make the  
team scream so much was  
when parents would come to them and say,  
so here's a list of  
diagnoses of my child.

So what should I teach them?

Right.

And, and really, as you know,  
it's not about the  
diagnostics of my child has autism.

My child has dyslexia.

That's going to point to a curriculum.

There's so much more involved.

We'll get into that in a while,  
but cause Don's going to  
share some pretty deep  
insight about that.

And I don't want to, don't want to just.

Yeah.

Oh, I expected a lot out of you.

But, but yes,

there's so many components

involved with it.

It isn't just,

if you get the right curriculum,

you're going to solve the problem.

Because that changes over

time and you learn to become eclectic.

You learn to become very

fluid in your teaching,

but you have to be

comfortable in that too.

Yeah.

Yes, you have to be kind of open.

And I want to say, too,

even if your child has a

specific diagnosis,

it's still different for each child.

You can have a slew of kids with ADHD,

and they're all different.

And it shows up differently

in every child.

You can have a child that just checks out.

Does it look like I'm paying

attention right now?

I'm looking at you.



Somewhere else.

And I know it in your eye.

I can...

find it.

I can hear it.

And I'm like, where are you right now?

Right.

And so you have to kind of  
realize one shoot, one thing does not,  
what is the saying?

One thing does not fit every child,  
you know,  
because it shows up differently.

And I will say this too.

We've had kids in our  
program that came in with  
all these diagnosis and IEPs

And after they were  
homeschooled for a few years,  
they would go back and get  
retested and they didn't qualify anymore.

And now they're working at their level,  
they're working with their  
interests and that  
individual or small group setting  
is huge for a lot of kids.

Yeah,

the top 10 accommodations that  
schools give is what we do

instinctively as homeschoolers.

That whole top 10 list goes away.

I actually have given a talk  
through the summer a couple  
times on that.

And people are just like,  
what do you mean?

because they're like,  
can I get accommodations  
when I'm homeschooling?

And I'm like, you've already done it.

You just naturally do it.

And I give the top 10 list.

And then I say,  
but then there's even more  
advantages that we have.

And that is why  
homeschooling works because  
we can customize it so much  
for the child instead of, you know,  
a classroom of kids where they're just,  
they just don't have the  
resources to do that.

They don't.

And it's sad, but

I mean,  
there are some amazing teachers out  
there and the, you know, there's,

the supplies are amazing.

They do a lot more visuals now.

They do a lot more training

through the computer.

So, and hands-on,

like I see a lot more of that.

So they are taking the

learning styles into consideration.

But again, if you have a child that's,

you know,

just still falling through the

cracks in that setting, you want to,

you know, kind of look at that.

And then there's, you know, the processing,

like visual processing,

auditory processing.

So a lot of people think, oh,

they have hearing problems.

If they have auditory,

that's not what that means.

It means the words that are going in,

the brain kind of shifts

them around a little bit.

And so like what you, I think,

I think I have a little bit

of that sometimes because

what happens is I'll hear something and

And my imagination will kind

of take it over here.

Like I'm trying to work through that.

Oh, and I get ideas.

I miss the rest of it.

Oh, yeah.

I'm already over here with

an idea about that.

Oh, I've got an idea.

And then if there was more,

then I have to say, well,

what did you say?

I'm aware of that.

Right.

And so in this situation,

I have to learn more.

maybe a training or something,

then I have to be vigilant

about staying focused.

Don't just jot it down, you know.

Right.

And I've seen that.

And I've actually one of the

women on that does kind of

consulting behind the

scenes at Sped Homeschool

for some of our clients

that we work with.

She's a diagnostician and

she said it is so hard to

test homeschoolers because  
kids who do have an  
official like diagnoses  
that would be diagnosed, you know,  
diagnosed.

She said they tend to be  
able to compensate much  
better than their public  
school constituents because  
their parents have taught  
them how to go around their  
deficits and use what they are good at.

And so I thought that was an  
interesting perspective  
because I've told parents  
that over the years as I've  
spoke to and I've said,  
if you go to a regular diagnostician,  
they might not catch it.  
because your child is so  
good at covering it up.

So, you know, we, we often see our kids as,  
um,  
oh, but they're,  
they're so bright or they can do this.

And then, and then there's that one thing.

And, and sometimes I, I did this was, well,  
they're just lazy because  
they're doing so good in

all these other things.

Right.

So why aren't they applying  
themselves in this one thing?

Right.

And that's,  
that's a hard thing to deal with too.

Cause you're like, oh,  
but they really are struggling.

Yeah.

Right.

Yeah.

That's something we talked  
about on one of the podcasts with  
ADHD in girls,  
because girls do compensate for, you know,  
they're, they're quiet, if they do,  
if they do get labeled or  
diagnosed with ADHD,  
which you guys know how I  
feel about that.

But if there's, you know, this hidden,  
they hide it.

Because they are usually very, you know,  
look very attentive, they're very nice,  
they're following all the rules.

So they get overlooked.

until some other points

often not until like fifth or sixth grade,  
which now they've lost a lot of support.

Maybe that they could have  
benefited from earlier, but it was,  
the teachers just kept, you know,  
this is a nice kid and  
let's just pass them  
through the squeaky wheels, get the oil,  
let's face it.

But the nice, quiet, inattentive ADHD girl,  
that's just living in her  
little mind and getting through the day.  
oftentimes get overlooked.

And then when sixth grade  
comes and now you have to  
have really good organizational skills,  
study skills, keeping notes,  
and they can't,  
they can't because it's overwhelming.

Then it starts to go, everybody's like, oh,  
what's going on with this child,  
you know?

Right.

Yeah.

So there's a wide range that  
we would say is struggling learners.

And so as a parent, you know,  
just realize if your child is not...  
keeping up with what they

should be keeping up with,  
then it should just be a red flag to say,  
you know what?

We're kind of struggling here.

You don't have to label them,  
but we're just struggling here.

And so now how do we reach  
homeschool success?

And so how do we label success?

I'd love to have a little  
discussion about that.

So what is success?

Well, you and I were talking about that,  
like what you thought it was,  
and I thought you had a good answer.

I think one thing you have  
to really be careful of is  
comparing your child with  
another child in your home  
or a friend's child.

Because you start, matter of fact, I just,

I was talking to a little  
boy today and he goes,  
my handwriting is terrible.

Look at her handwriting.

He was a sixth grader.

And I said,

That's her handwriting.



Your handwriting is special for you.

And I don't know how I said it to him,  
but somehow I said we each have, you know,  
a unique way of expressing ourself.

And then he just started  
writing like he he let it go.

And because, you know,  
that's what we naturally do,  
even amongst ourselves as grownups.

Yes, absolutely.

Yes.

You again, go to who is his child?

What's his story?

You know,  
if he hates math or he hates writing,  
he just hates handwriting.

How can I make this fun?

Like young children,  
I'll use watercolor and paintbrushes.

And just teach them to make  
their shapes of their  
letters and stuff with that.

Like say you want to teach  
cursive or you want to just  
teach the direction of letters.

I do it with painting.

Like you would teach Japanese painting,  
watercolor, right?

With a very delicate brush.

Using different strategies  
instead of take that pencil.  
Maybe they need a fat pencil.  
I have a five-year-old boy  
who only likes to write  
with a big fat Sharpie.  
You know, and I'm like, oh,  
he it's the it's the grip.  
It's the grip.  
He doesn't like the small,  
but he always wants that  
big fat marker and otherwise forget it.

Right.

And so those things matter.

Am I giving my child the  
grip that they need?

Am I giving them a bigger pencil?

So making accommodations  
kind of along the way.

also could change some of that.

But I think- I think it ends  
up being like the end goal.

What is your end goal?

And are the accommodations  
getting them to the end goal?

Is the end goal that they  
hold a pencil or that they  
always write with a pencil,

or maybe they can write with other things,

but are they writing?

Is that your goal?

Or, you know,

maybe they need to dictate a

story to you because that's

going to get the creativity

out that your actual goal is about.

Yeah.

And if that writing piece is

slowing them down and

frustrating them and

they're hitting the ceiling,

I would never make a child do that.

I would have them like speak

into a microphone,

into a tape or whatever.

you know, videotape them doing that.

And I know like we have that

freedom in a private school

where what does that look

like for that child?

What is, what do they want to make?

What do they want to do to

show what they've learned about?

It doesn't really have to be

the standard way.

It could be acting out in a

play or telling a story,

but I love that parents can dictate.

I mean, or, you know,

parents can write where the  
child dictates what they want to say.

And oftentimes if it's like

a second grader or third grader,

I'll skip a space and then they can copy.

So it's called copy work.

Oh, yeah.

I write it, how it should look.

I make, you know,

have them watch me model it.

And then they copy it right

underneath to look like.

And so now they're learning

through like the old way of learning art,

how to be an artist.

You would copy the masters.

Like I would look at that painting and go,

okay, what did he do there?

What color?

How do I make that color?

You know, and I'm transferring that.

Right.

Yeah, absolutely.

It's like we just kind of

expect kids to have all of

these different skills that are required.

And these are complex things  
when you want a child to be able to read,  
to process, to comprehend,  
or to come up with a story, write it down,  
and in a format that is legible.

A lot of times that is a  
very cultivated process and  
it takes a long time and a  
lot of different...

skills that are combined  
together and and so so yeah  
so success is and I love

that some of the states now  
not all states with their  
homeschool laws some of  
them say your child has to  
take a standardized test to  
show that they're at  
whatever level a lot of

times when that is required  
within the states though  
it's you don't have to give  
the test to the state it's  
just for your record and

And then some states have things, you know,  
that are added on.

Like when we lived in Minnesota,  
it was if your child falls  
below the 30th percentile,

make a note about how  
you're going to help teach  
to that deficit and then  
keep it in your records.

I mean, it didn't go to anybody.

It just was to us.

But there are some states

like Oregon that.

where they actually have to  
go into the schools and be tested.

But there are a lot of those

states that have that,

like Virginia does that too.

If a child can't do that,

they can show their portfolio.

And all that those states

require is that you show progress.

And so really,

if it comes down to bottom line,

what is success,

is that your child is

advancing successfully.

Right.

On a yearly basis.

And that could be in a

variety of different things.

It doesn't have to be purely academic.

You know,

what are your what are your goals

for them?

And what are their goals?

What are their goals?

I ask that a lot.

Like I was talking to a

fifth grader the other day and I said,

you know,

I work with her on her written

expression.

And I said, well,

how much do you like writing?

And she goes, not very much.

And I said, well,

like on a scale of one to 10,

how much do you like it?

She goes, I don't know, like a five.

And I said, okay, so about 50%,

you like it.

Now,

if I just showed up with you 50% to

work with you,

Would that be okay with you?

Because I don't want to work with you 100%,

give you 100% for me if

you're not 100% interested.

And she goes,

she kind of was contemplating that.

I said,

but if I could promise you that I  
could teach you a way to  
learn how to write that's  
kind of fun and different,  
what would you give me?

And she goes, I would give you like 90.

Okay, we bumped it up a little.

And I'm like, okay, 90.

My idea of success for a child,  
if you can do this as a parent,  
you're successful and they  
will be successful.

If you can instill a love of  
learning in your child, lifelong learning,  
a love for learning that if you step away,  
they're over there learning  
about learning and they're learning.

Yeah.

I mean, that, that's what we are made for.

You know,

I was listening to this really  
amazing book.

It's a book on tape that I'm listening to.

And he was talking about  
this internal thing that we  
have within us for home.

We have this thing for home, right?

Like we're, even when we're little,



we're always drawn to home.

You know,

we're everything like in so many ways.

And there's something in us

that God put in us to draw us to home.

And I think it has something

to do with that natural

curiosity in us and that

intrinsic motivation to learn.

I mean,

why do babies get up and want to walk?

You know, you see them rocking.

They just want to walk.

Yeah, right.

Where does that come from?

And everything that we're doing,

we're going forward.

We're going forward in life.

You know,

like I'm in the second half of my life.

My kids are grown.

But it's like, okay,

what does the second half

of life look like?

Well, the second half,

I've learned so many things

from the first.

Now in the second,

I get to give those gifts

and share those gifts with others.

But inside of me,

in the deepest part of me,

I'm longing for home, which to one,

know God, and two,

to know God in me and myself in God.

And that to me is home.

And so-

I feel like if you give your

child that natural desire,

I don't care what the disability is.

I don't care what the struggle is.

If you play with them and

you interact with them in such a way,

I don't care if you're out in the mud,

in the rain,

scooping up the dirt in a bucket,

you keep that curiosity alive.

I think that's what we were born with.

And if we do that, we will thrive.

always want to go home.

We will, it will lead us.

If you squelch curiosity in

a child and it's not you as a parent,

but the world does somehow.

Yeah.

No question.

They're not curious.

They're not curious about  
who they are or who is their creator.  
Who is this one that made me  
and why did he make me?  
And so I think that to me is like,  
the thing I've always wanted  
in every child as a special  
education teacher,  
if I can just get this  
child to come back with their curiosity,  
because it was smushed in this,  
I'm just stupid.  
I can't learn.  
You can learn.  
If we teach the way you learn,  
if your teachers will teach  
you the way you learn,  
you will learn and you will learn.  
It's not you.  
It's how we're getting that  
information to you.  
And so I don't know.  
That's my definition.  
It's always been the thing  
that's driven me the most in my work.  
If I can get kids just pique  
their interest.  
That's why I love learning styles.  
I love learning about the

personalities and.

how they were created and born.

Like how,

what were you born with Peggy

that you want to fly in the

air with scarves?

Do you know what I mean?

I know.

And you continue to figure

yourself out and how God, you know,

made you so unique.

Um,

And, yeah,

we tend to want to put our kids

in these categories or

these boxes because it's easy.

It's easy to say, well,

let's just get you to average.

And, you know,

that was the things that

made me cringe the most

when parents would call

when I was a consultant and say,

help me just get my child caught up.

I'm like, caught up to who?

Yeah.

This is your unique child

and you just want to make them average.

This is not the goal.

So success is really to help  
that child figure out  
what they were made for and  
prepare them for that.

And it doesn't mean that  
they were prepared for a job.

It doesn't mean,  
and I think that took me so  
long because it was so  
ingrained in me when I was growing up.

We are made to be,  
to walk alongside Jesus.

That's what we're made for.

And so we just need to be  
able to tune into that and  
also to be open to where he calls.

And so that is,

That is the most important thing,  
being successful as a  
parent and for your child.

And now they're saying that  
kids are going to have seven careers.

The ones that are graduating  
right now are going to have  
seven careers in their lifetime.

You want to make sure they can learn.  
because they need to reinvent themselves.

They need to figure out what

gifts they have so that  
they can go into the next marketplace,  
taking the skills they had  
from the previous one,  
reinventing themselves and  
putting themselves out again.

And that's, that's like,  
that is definitely like a,  
like a type of resilience  
and flexibility.

Like you said, with the creativity and,  
And the openness, like maybe, you know,  
there are those few that  
will just grow up.

They'll have one job all their life,  
30 years, you know, there are some.  
Yeah.

But you're right for the most, the,  
and I've tried, like, I think of myself,  
I've tried different things in life and,  
there's so many things that I love.

Like I'm an artist, I love to paint.

And my goal is when I'm  
really retired and old,  
I'm just going to be  
painting in the garage, you know,  
and something.

But so you can have various

different gifts and talents.

And it's, I think what's,

what's the most challenging for me,

what I've seen in parents

is when you have a parent that's very,

they think of,

They think like in a box and

they'll tell me, well,

this is the way I was taught.

This is the way I learned, you know,

paperwork or worksheets.

But then they have, you know,

they have four kids,

three do fine with

worksheets and like them.

And then there's that one, you know,

who is right.

You always get one.

Yeah.

And they're, yeah,

we're going to get the one.

And so.

It's just different for each one,

but having an open mind,

and that's why I think

coaching is so wonderful,

or some kind of a system of

support that you have where

people can help you and

support you to see your  
child in a new way with a new lens,  
not the lens that you grew  
up looking at the world through.  
I'm working with a family right now.  
Mom's a writer.  
She's a genius.  
She told me today, she goes, I said, well,  
let's talk about a writing  
program for him.  
She goes, I don't understand that.  
This is her real words.  
If she watches this,  
I hope you don't mind me using it.  
She goes, I'm a writer.  
I don't understand that  
certain people cannot write.  
Yes.  
When you get so good at something.  
And I've had parents like that.  
I don't know how to teach a math.  
I'm so good at math.  
Where do I begin breaking that down?  
So we found a little couple  
of little things for him to check out.  
They were online program  
that could suit him because  
mom could be out of the



picture a little bit and he could be,  
of course, online.

But that was that's just so  
fascinating to me.

You know, as a teacher,  
I teach everything to any child.

Right.

So to just but but I adore  
her because she's brilliant human.

And she's gifted in this way.

And she's just like,

I don't know where to begin with that.

I don't know how to break,  
chunk that down.

And as a coach,

I'm able to help her with that,  
help her to see it in a different way.

But she was just like, I know he needs it,  
but I don't even know where to begin.

And I don't understand  
people who don't know how to write.

I said, well, if we tap into this,

he may be a writer just

like you as soon as we get  
him up and going, you know?

absolutely yeah yeah that's

the way my dad was my dad

is an engineer and I could

not go to him for math

because it was just so hard  
to understand what he was  
talking about and so I  
figured it out enough by  
working with him actually  
it was a gift because as I  
became an engineer after I  
graduated from college I  
was like I was able to be  
like the interpreter for  
most of my other colleagues  
that were going what are  
these other engineers  
telling me to do and I'm like ah  
I got it when my dad talks.

Yeah.

So you just led us into the top approach,

Don.

It's working with somebody  
who can see your world,  
your homeschooling world  
from a different  
perspective that has a lot of knowledge,  
a mentor, a consultant.

Tell us just how,

Give us some stories.

Tell us, you know,

what advantages parents

have and and just what they  
come away with by working  
with somebody like, you know,  
like you to be able to pour  
into their homeschooling.

OK, well,

I kind of made a list and we're  
going to be sharing  
everyone through your podcast.  
the program.

Yes.

I'll share a link in the show notes.

Okay.

And so these are just a couple, but well,  
there's 10 of them that I came up with.

So it's structured support and guidance,  
of course.

So accreditation and record keeping,  
if you need accreditation,

we personally aren't,

which gives us a lot of freedom,

but that's for kids to

think out of the box, literally.

So can you break each of these apart?

So let's start with the first one.

Okay.

So structured support and guidance is,

It helps families to

navigate the complexities

of homeschooling,

like with curriculum or

classes or understanding

how does my child learn.

Kind of setting up a

schedule almost or helping

them to walk through their schedule.

How is this going to work?

Right.

That's one of the families

that I'm working with right now.

That's what we did.

And it was it was like.

a key was turned in this child's brain.

So we do,

we do an online profile about a

child's personality.

And when we found out he was organized,

his mom's like, no, he's not.

Well, yes,

he is in his brain where he

needs to know what's

happening next and next and next.

And so I said,

we need to create a schedule.

Once we created a schedule,

he was up in the morning

before everyone doing his work.

And then we learned how he needed,  
what his environment needed to look like.

So we created that  
environment that was his  
and just this ownership  
that kind of came to him.

He's, you know, it's just,  
it was life changing.

Yeah.

But who would have known?

You know,  
it's not something you think about.

And so so that helps.

And then so then, say, for example,  
you have a child that like  
we worked with this family  
for like five years.

And the goal was for them to  
go back into high school someday.

The kids are in sports.

So they wanted to go.

They wanted to be homeschooled.  
until high school so they  
could get the scholarships  
and everything for sports.

So we kept them on more of a  
strict standard based  
curriculum for their state  
versus a lot of flexibility more.

You could do more  
personalized learning if  
it's more private.

Right.

Yeah.

We weren't planning to go  
back in that track.

Yeah.

I think the biggest,  
greatest thing for a lot of  
parents is the record keeping part.

When you have somebody creating your,  
you know, your semester plan.

We also talk to the students.

I know,

I don't know how other schools do it,  
but we talk to them.

What kind of a grade do you  
want to get for this math class?

Well, math's not my favorite,  
but I think I can get a B.

So then you break down with  
them what a B actually looks like.

If they want an A, you have to go with A.

further do extracurricular  
project or something.

So just having conversations  
and being really clear about the goals.

Sometimes it's hard for  
parents to do that with  
their child because the child's like, eh,  
I don't want you to homeschool me.  
But when you bring in  
another outside person, you know,  
kind of represents some  
authority and some like, this is serious.  
You know, I did one of my students today.

How's it going?

Did you start on Monday?

it was just like a pop in  
text message to him.

Just, you know,  
we're not scheduled to meet yet,  
but did you get started?

Okay.

Send me a list of everything  
you're starting.

So,

It's that other person.

That other person.

Right.

Yeah.

And also, too, you know,  
a lot of people buy box  
curriculums because they  
want the schedule.

They want the to-do list.

And a lot of times that box  
curriculum does not work  
for struggling students  
because it needs to be customized.

Right.

And so this is a way to get  
that to-do list with a more  
eclectic approach is by  
working with a consultant  
because it's a win-win on both sides.

You get to use curriculum  
that's going to fit your  
child and you get the list  
of what you need to do.

And if you did buy that  
thousand dollar curriculum,  
which I've done before,  
don't worry because we can adjust it.

You know,  
once we supplement it into making  
it work.

Um, and, and I think like I used to,  
I said before, like we're like curriculum,  
you know, geeks.

We love.

Oh yes.

You know, everything.

Yeah.



What's out there, what works,  
what doesn't for certain things.

Learning, but I'm always curious about,  
Ooh, let's find that for this child,  
you know?

And so then we go and we can.  
it out and find it.

And you know what to look for too,  
versus a parent.

And I can't tell you how  
many parents I have spoke  
to over the years.

They're like, well,

I bought this curriculum  
and now it's sitting on the shelf.

And then I bought this  
curriculum and it's sitting on the shelf.

In the long run,  
you're going to save a lot  
of money just saying, I need an expert.

Tell me what I need.

And then I'm just going to,  
it's going to work right  
from the beginning.

I also want to say,

I know a lot of families,  
they'll sign up with  
charter schools and I'm not  
against charter schools, but,

but parents are told, Oh, we're,  
we're personalized and we customize.

No, they don't.

I work for charter schools.

They say that, but they don't.

And you really are still  
under a lot of pressure to  
keep the standards of that state.

Like I know in California.

Absolutely.

That's how they're funded.

They have to get their records.

Yeah.

So there's not that much flexibility,  
but maybe it's still worth it.

You can do it, but it's still stressful.

If you have a child that has  
a lot of anxiety, that's very,  
very hard because they  
still have to state test.

They have to do all the exams.

Right.

Absolutely.

That's not for everybody.

And then, of course, again,  
we just talked about that,  
like curriculum resources  
for that range of

curriculum and different  
choices without you having to go crazy.  
So I think that's a nice, nice thing.  
And then any administrative assistant,  
like handling the tasks such as grading,  
reporting and compliance.  
I mean, we even go as far as, you know,  
reading their work,  
correcting it and then  
supporting them in writing.  
So I do a lot through Google Docs now,  
which I love it.  
Oh, yeah.  
I work up there and I can look at it.  
On Khan Academy,  
I get accounts of my students.  
So I have access and I can just go in.  
And this is kind of an interesting thing.  
So we had a kiddo who was  
doing math on Khan Academy.  
And I went in as the teacher  
and I'm looking at his history.  
Mom didn't even catch this.  
OK, his history.  
And I'm going, OK,  
he's only I can see how  
many problems he's attempting.  
And then he's jumping out  
and going to the next one.

So he's not completing it.

Then I can do more research and see, oh,  
he's not watching videos.

Oh, he only spent one minute reading.

So we yeah.

So we were able to like dissect this.

I was able to.

So what I was on Zoom

because he's in another state,  
his Khan Academy with me.

And show me exactly what he  
was doing step by step.

And we were dissect that and say, no, no,  
no.

You need to watch the whole video.

You can't just watch a part  
of it because he would read the section.

He was getting like 50%,  
but the other 50% was in the video,  
which he didn't watch.

So now he's doing both  
components and have gone way up.

Wow.

Mom didn't even see it.

She just sees him doing his work.

It looks good.

But as a kid,

I come in with this different

set of eyes going, wait,  
something's wrong.

Right.

And what you ended up  
catching was things that  
would in the future have  
caused major learning gaps,  
especially in math,  
where you would have to go  
back and do that math over again.

Well, we haven't really.

Yes.

But at least it was in the same year.

It wasn't like multiple  
years down the road where you're like,  
why aren't we getting this concept?

Right.

the first place yeah yeah so  
that's just kind of a  
unique creative thing and  
then of course there's the  
socialization so some  
programs offer that and  
we have um had paired  
students up together so  
they could be like buddies  
you know like work buddies  
and stuff but we really  
encourage things like out

school or co-ops and things  
like that right parents  
don't even know where to  
begin with that they don't  
know where to start looking  
for that yes so if you have  
a child that's you know has  
some learning challenges or  
you might think I don't  
want to go into a co-op we  
we just it doesn't work for us  
We can teach you.

There are so many other options.

Yes.

Yes.

And you know that.

Yep.

We can teach you too,  
how to like talk to the  
teacher that's teaching your child.

If you do an online assessment with us,  
you can offer those  
strategies to the teacher.

Like this,  
these strategies really help my  
child to learn,  
or this is their learning style.  
So if you're just standing

there and talking,  
you might notice that they get distracted,  
you know,  
and you might want to bring them in and,  
So things like that,  
like tips like that can  
help them because that's, that's, um,  
I just talked to a school in Colorado, um,  
did a presentation for them, um,  
on how to bring into their co-ops,  
the learning and the  
dispositions and as teachers,  
cause I was talking to all their teachers,  
you know,  
how do we help those kids that  
learn differently?  
So, right.  
Um,  
And then, of course, we also, you know,  
are experts in a sense  
because of our background and education.  
And we help solve problems.  
Like if you're really  
bumping heads with your child and,  
you know, there's behavioral issues, say,  
for example, popping up.  
Right.  
How do we,  
I see that on FaceTime all the time.

Parents are saying,

I just started homeschooling my kids.

They're out of control.

They're running around.

I don't know.

Well, that's not a one answer thing.

No, it's not.

Definitely.

You've got to get to the

root of that for sure.

And you've homeschooled as well.

You know,

the majority of homeschool mentors,

consultants have been in your shoes.

Right.

Especially if they're

working with parents of

struggling learners,

they've had struggling

learners themselves.

And so not only are they

coming in as an expert, but they're like,

oh, I've been there.

I totally get where you're at.

And here's some strategies

that have worked for me,

but also for other people

that I've talked to over the years.



So just so much wisdom that  
can be poured into your homeschool.

Absolutely.

Yeah.

And just how to juggle that.

Like if you have a really  
little one and then you  
have two older ones,  
how do I teach them when I have this one,  
right?

So we can give you ideas for  
how to balance that out and  
play like the two, you know,  
there's just different  
strategies for making those  
sort of situations work.

And then also about scheduling.

Like you may have, you know,  
you may be an early riser  
and you want to start school at seven.

And I remember dad said that  
to me in a conference.

He's like,

I don't know what's wrong with them.

Like,

why don't they just get the math done  
at eight in the morning?

You know, like, well,

he had a wife and a

daughter who were what we  
call spontaneous and they  
wanted to do fun things in the morning.

They didn't want to.

So I had to help him to see  
them in a new way.

But at the same time,  
you have to figure out when  
is that child's best learning time?

It may be after lunch.

It may be

lunch so you have to think

okay what is the biggest

time so things like that we

help you with too and then

of course the customized

educational plan we we do

that yes on their needs and

goals again so goals like

what are the realistic

goals not the goals that

your sister-in-law is teaching her kids

But what are the realistic

goals for your children, right?

And really helping hone that in too.

Because I think when you

start saying goals, parents are like,

well, I want them to do everything,

you know,

but really you can only focus on

two to three a year that

you're really going to focus on.

And I always brought it down to, you know,

if like life just throws a

curve ball at us,

what are the two to three

things that I'm going to

actually get done?

this week.

And that's what those goals are.

I mean, what are you going to like,

there's no compromise.

These are like the top of

the line things that need

to happen with this child.

Um, and so, because life happens, you know,

people get sick, you know, and,

and things get behind, but,

but if you focus on those few things,

you're going to feel like, yes,

we accomplished something.

And so,

but have somebody to speak into your

um,

into your homeschooling that can really

help you hone that down instead of going,

everything needs to change.

This child needs, you know,  
cause I can have laundry  
lists for each of my kids and myself.

Um, and you can't, you can't.

Teaching your children,  
taking the first week and  
teaching systems.

Don't worry about teaching  
math the first week, teach them.

What do we do in the, like,  
like I'm in that place with new students.

They walk in the door,  
they're supposed to get their folder,  
the binder, sit down, get a timer,  
read for five minutes.

Then if the card on the  
board says blue card,  
they go to the blue section  
of their folder, their binder,  
and they work in that  
section until they're  
pulled individually.

Now, why that's so great.

And they get,

They get rewarded for that.

They get a punch every day  
if they follow that system.

Why that's so important is

oftentimes I'm called out  
to handle behavioral issues.  
And if my kiddos,  
if there's a  
paraprofessional in the class and not me,  
guess what?  
They know exactly what to do.  
And that's the thing,  
something a parent can do  
is have a backup packet.  
What if you wake up sick today,  
but you still want to keep  
on your schedule?  
Get your packet out, your special packet.  
And mom has that packet with, you know,  
a dry erase board, a little, you know,  
the little markers,  
their numbers to trace or, you know,  
sheets or books to read a  
book to read and a timer.  
And,  
and now she can sit back and have a  
cold or, and, you know,  
and those two packets today, because,  
or in the car with you, because you,  
We have to go see grandma who needs us.  
And so you're not wasting time.  
You're,  
you're thinking intentionally about,

like you said, those rainy days.

I promise you.

Probably exactly.

Crazy kids running around

with nothing to do.

So stuff like that, we help with that.

And then there's a legal compliance,

you know,

just each state has their own

homeschooling laws.

And so you don't just go

onto Facebook and say,

how do I legally homeschool?

Because somebody from a

different state is going to

answer and it's not going

to be right information.

That's a really good point.

I never thought of that.

Gosh, I know.

So, you know, we,

we have an affidavit and we're, you know,

allowed to do that and everything.

Um,

there's emotional and motivational

support.

I think this is a huge one.

So many parents, I mean, yeah, I have,

I've had moms that just go,  
I don't want to homeschool my children.  
I've never dreamed of this,  
but I don't want them in the schools that,  
that we have.

And so they're kind of like  
they want the best for their child.

They really care.

But they're right.

They're just like it's an  
identity change for parents.

And I don't think people  
realize just how  
emotionally hard that is to  
make that shift until you  
actually do it and go, who am I?

Right.

Why?

You know,  
you feel like sucked out of your life.  
the trajectory you were  
headed on for your own self.

Right.

And now I'm devoting all  
this time to my kids, but yeah,  
as you and I both know, Don,  
it has like changed our  
lives for the better.

You know what?

They were the best years of my life.

I say that to say,

I still have pictures and  
frames with them.

How they have their hands in  
these big bowls with this gooey flower,  
you know, something in there.

underwear and they're all, look at us,  
you know?

I mean, those were, I mean, I remember,  
I think I've shared this before.

Like we did a whole wall in  
our dining room that was a  
mural and I have a big paper up there.

So if we were studying the ocean,  
we just created the ocean on that wall.

And it was, it was just amazing.

Like,

they would come in and go, that's a shark.

And what do you know about a shark?

You know, at dinnertime,

we're talking about the barrel.

Oh, yeah, exactly.

You know, and so it was just wonderful.

Yeah.

Yeah.

And I mean,

I never wanted to homeschool



and I still cherish those  
years because just the  
relationships I was able to  
have with my children who are now,  
you know, just like yours, adults.

Yeah.

And yeah.

Yeah.

And I think if you go back to what is,  
what is my objective?

What is, what is the, what is the goal?

Like you said, what is,

what do I want for my family?

Do I want to raise lifelong learners?

Right.

I have grown adult children

that love to read.

I mean, my son was grabbing my,  
my audible account tonight.

He's like, how many credits you got?

Yeah.

And so I love that.

I love that.

Another one that I think, I mean,  
that emotional piece is good.

Someone just to hear your story,  
like I had a rough day.

I don't know what to do.

It's like this, or he has a meltdown.

Because we have that.

And,

and let them know they're not alone too.

You know,

there's other people out there

that you're working with,

that you've worked with in the past.

Been there, done that.

You know, you, this,

this is not a unique story.

It's what we need to hear for sure.

It's so, so yeah.

I said,

whatever kind of support

system you choose and not

everyone can afford like a private thing,

but you have to find your team, you know,

your,

your tribe or whatever you want to

call it.

Exactly.

People that can take your

kids for an afternoon and

you take theirs.

I had a really close friend.

She had four, I had three.

That's like a softball team almost.

And we always did art together.

We did art history.

That's how I, her and I,  
like our ideas created that  
curriculum with that  
history and their kids loved it.

It's great.

The last one I wanted to  
share too was access to  
expertise and networking.

So even sometimes like with  
a parent today that was like, I,  
I don't even know where to  
begin with writing.

I'm a great writer.

I do this for a living.

I don't even,

I was able to come in and  
give some ideas.

Let's check out this.

Let's check out this curriculum.

Let's check out this.

Just where do we go?

How do we break that down  
for this child in the way  
that they learn?

And so, you know, advice,  
like advice that you may  
not have thought of.

And the biggest thing is teaching parents.

Sometimes parents need to  
see their different,  
their child in a different light.

Not just this beautiful, fun,  
loving creature,  
but how do they really learn?

How do I learn?

You know, how do I learn as a parent?

And how do we learn the same  
or how do we learn differently?

So that's a lot of it.

That's a lot there, you know.

It is, but it's also good.

And that really is, I mean,

if you want a one-stop service,  
you know, I, you know,

I just need to get everything, you know,  
organized.

I need, you know, the support I need,  
whatever Don has talked about,  
if that has really triggered something,  
you really need to reach out and,  
and find a consultant.

And so yes,

those and we can connect you with,  
with somebody like Don and

Don is going to share her information.

Is it on your handout?

How people can connect with you too?

Um, I, I can put it on there.

I can get that.

Yeah.

Why don't you do that?

And then, um, then people can, oops,  
I'm hitting my microphone.

Um,

so then people can connect with you as  
well.

And, and also if you just want in and out,  
um,

like consulting help here

and there on the sped

homeschool website we do

have some groups that are

run by consultants so say

you just have one question

that you really need help

with with an expert like

don was talking about we've

got people on our website

in those groups that will

answer those questions um

and it's not me because um

I yeah I think it's better than I think

I did talk to a parent the other night,

and we worked short for time,

but her question was, I work from home,

and how do I work with my  
child at the same time?

That's becoming more and  
more of a question that  
parents are asking.

And you know what?

I have one of the  
consultants who is on there,  
and I know you too.

You homeschooled single too, right?

Yes.

So you had to do that.

And so Amy, who's on there too,  
she's remarried now,  
but she homeschooled as a  
single mom with â€”

Very young children.

And, you know,  
just they can give you advice on that,  
too.

And just how to make it work.

If you're called to homeschool,

God will make a way.

I think that's probably the  
best advice I can give you is, you know,  
just trust.

And his mercies are new every morning.

Remember that.

Absolutely.

Yes, exactly.

We don't do a perfect.

We just do it the best we can.

He fills in the rest.

Well, thank you so much, Dawn.

I appreciate you taking time  
and just for all your wisdom.

This was an amazing conversation.

Thank you.

Thank you, Peggy.

You too.

I'm always blessed by your  
amazing information and wisdom too.

Oh, thank you.

So thank you for joining us  
on Empowering Homeschool Conversations.

Like I said at the beginning  
is we're starting a group  
that also will be on the  
Sped Homeschool website,  
and you'll see it linked  
into every video from now on.

But if you want to ask  
questions ahead of time for our guests,  
you can see the upcoming  
events on their website.

You can post those questions in the group.

We'll also have our guests

who are on the show coming  
in if they like to and  
continue the conversation, too,  
so you can keep using them as a resource.

And so this will just be a  
place to have this ongoing  
conversation other than our  
once a week shows or podcasts,  
whatever you like.  
you dive into.

So now we are on YouTube.

Our videos can be found on Facebook.

Our podcasts basically can  
be found anywhere on whatever platform.

And we just started a channel on GodTube.

So Salem Media, who produces our podcast,  
has given us a channel on there too.

So you'll catch some of the  
newest videos on there.

And on our website, [spedhomeschool.com](http://spedhomeschool.com),

You'll also be able to,

once these videos come out as the podcast,

there is a one page you can

go to where you can not

only watch the video on YouTube,

you can listen to the

podcast and you can get the transcript.

So if you want all of those in one place,



that's the place to go.

And yeah.

And that you don't even have

to be a member of the site

to get access to all that.

So we just want to give that

to you because I know some

of you say that you've got, you know,

you have trouble hearing or

you want to take notes

based on what we want to say.

So we want to provide that for you.

So, so yeah, that's, yep.

It's all coming together.

I know it's taken me a long time.

Little by little.

And on top of it,

we have gotten some huge donations.

You'll see some major donors

on our website who are

funding us the ability to

start a consulting program

through Sped Home School.

And so we're actually hiring

a full time person, Carissa Nguyen,

who will be starting next week with us.

And so she is she is my my alter ego.

She is the very steady

And so me being the crazy outgoing person,

she's going to keep me in line.

But we'll be starting out a whole new program since HSLDA actually discontinued their consulting services at the end of May.

And it has been a huge loss in our community.

And so Chris is actually coming from HSLDA as one of their consultants to now work for us at Sped Homeschool.

So I'm going to have her on the show next week.

And we're going to talk a little bit more about some ways that consultants can save you money.

And so if you're budget conscious, we want to talk about that next week.

So you'll want to stay tuned for that conversation.

So.

All right, Don.

Well, I'm sure our group as a whole, the whole podcast team will be on sometime.

I think we're going to record once a month probably.

So you'll catch our crazy  
conversation probably  
coming up in the next month at least.

So absolutely.

All right.

Well, thanks everybody for joining us.

We'll see you next time here  
on Empowering Homeschool Conversations.

God bless.

This has been Empowering  
Homeschool Conversations  
provided by Sped Homeschool,  
a nonprofit that empowers  
families to home educate  
diverse learners.

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