

LIFELONG LEARNING

A COURSE IN UNSCHOOLING

10 Foundational Principles of Unschooling

1 **Unschooling is about principles not rules.**

Principles allow us to maintain equality in the home. Parents don't dictate the rules, our principles guide what we do. Rather than focusing on rules, results, or goals, we keep principles and convictions in our focus.

2 **Learning never stops.**

Everything that goes on around us, everything we hear, see, touch, smell, and taste, results in learning of some kind. Unschoolers do not follow formal timetables or school terms. Because we're always doing life, we're always learning.

3 **Learning should be self-directed.**

When learning is forced or controlled, it can cause anxiety, stress, confusion, and embarrassment which all inhibit real learning. Everyone learns differently and should be given the freedom to direct their own learning.

4 **Self-directed learning brings joy.**

Learning is satisfying and intrinsically rewarding. If you allow learning to happen based on needs or desires that arise in your children, then the learning itself is the reward. It brings more independence to do things on their own.

5 **Joyful learning is not easily forgotten.**

When learning is coupled with a feeling of joy and satisfaction it is much more likely to be retained by the learner.

6 **Learning begins with questions.**

Questions rise either out of curiosity or need. In both cases, the learner will be motivated to explore and discover answers to the questions they have (not the questions they are told to have).

7 **Unschooling requires intentionality.**

We do not force our children to participate. We can, however, provide high quality learning environments and ensure uninterrupted periods of time for our kids to play and develop.

8 **Learning should be free, relaxed, and uninterrupted.**

Learning does not bow to deadlines or schedules. The learner must be free to go at their own pace. If we step in and try to control, it inhibits learning, often shuts down the learning taking place, and doesn't build confidence.

9 **Learning happens best during age-integrated play.**

Learning is often a social activity, not done in isolation from others. Through age-integrated play, children develop effective communication and social skills, build cognitive and critical thinking, and grow in confidence and creativity.

10 **Failure is not an enemy.**

Because we learn through failure, our children must feel the freedom to "fail forward." Fear of failure is often created by the parents or someone else's expectations. If they don't have the freedom to fail, then they won't even want to try.