

NEWSLETTER

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PASS IT ON!

Parents often seem puzzled about how they can possibly serve as their child's teacher. "I don't remember any algebra or Shakespeare! But I keep reading about how I am my child's most important teacher."

You are an important teacher. You get to spend all that early time before preschool as the language, manners, values coach and you do a great job. But don't resign when your child enters school.

Sit down and make a list of skills you have that you can pass on to your children. Hint: these skills usually are associated with those activities you feel passionate about and love to do.

Let me give you an example. I had the privilege of watching a wonderful grandfather (my late husband) pass on skills to his grandchildren. He loved fishing and no matter where his grandchildren lived he found a nearby place to fish and brought the perfect beginner fishing rod for each child. His enthusiasm would have turned any child on to the excitement of catching his or her first fish. But that wasn't all he did. He patiently passed on his skills: how to put the rod together, the safe use of hooks, the right bait or artificial lure to use, how to set the hook, how to land the fish.

Grandpa also loved nature and bird-watching. He bought each child a set of binoculars. He taught them all how to focus binoculars, how to spot what you are looking for through the naked eye and then find it through the binoculars.

What are your special skills? Do you love to bake? Teach your children starting with cookies. Do you cook from a special recipe handed down from your grandmother? Buy your child a recipe box and pass on the recipe. This teaches the skills of passing on a legacy as well as baking.

Do you know how to change the oil in your car? When your child is old enough pass the skill on. You can even include a lecture on the environment as you properly dispose of the used oil.

You don't need a teaching degree to pass on your skills. All you need is passion for what you love to do, pride in your skill, and the patience to teach it to a child.

Bonus: you model this loving teaching behavior to your child who will pass it on to your grandkids.