



Tot School

The following is an excerpt from my {hopefully coming soon} eBook all about Tot School. You can [read more about Tot School here on my website](#). If you notice a typo, please let me know! I am far from the final edit, but wanted to share different portions as I go!

Enjoy!

My Beliefs About Educating Young Children...

My beliefs come largely from my education at Appalachian State University where I majored in Early Childhood Development with a degree in Birth-Kindergarten. I am a certified teacher and taught K for close to 5 years in NC. I was in a wonderful program with great mentors that helped me learn vast amounts about the development of young children and how to best serve them. Since becoming a mom, and then a homeschooling mom, I have taken what I was taught many years ago, combined it with my motherly instincts, and developed what I believe.

-Learning at a young age should be child led and immersed in PLAY. If my tot becomes uninterested, we stop! When I begin to force my teaching on him, he begins to resent my teaching all together. Eventually he will pick the skills up, it is not important that he learn them early. I believe in exposing him and letting him learn at HIS pace.

-Learning should be fun and exciting, filled with many different experiences. I try to make sure I give my tot opportunities in all of the many areas of development on a regular basis. I use my leadership as mom and teacher to alternate items I choose for Tot School each day to help with this. Some days we do music, some days art, some days ABCs, some days physical games. I try to bring balance, while also letting him repeat activities often

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that I know he really likes. For example, we have this Doodle Pro Glow drawing board thing that he LOVES. I naturally wouldn't even bring this out much, but because it is something HE loves, it comes out a lot and is used to expose many different skills (shapes, letters, colors, etc.). HIS interest leads that. I just stem the learning from his interests.

-Do not overwhelm the child!! I do NOT believe in drilling facts, teaching to acquire and master a skill, or anything of the sort. If my tot picks up letters (which he has), that's great, but I will NOT drill him and make him color 50 Aa sheets until he gets it! My oldest son couldn't identify any letters until he was almost 4, that was fine with me...he's reading well above his grade level (if he were in traditional school) and knows them all now!!! K on the other hand could identify over half before age 2! They are just different kids.

-Kids are different. I do the natural comparing as all parents and teachers do, but I don't do it to push anybody. Sure, we comment on things P could do, or things K can do that P couldn't but it is NEVER to compare in a negative way. Children learn differently and I believe in relaxing about this.

-A little TV/computer is not a bad thing. I am not a die-hard about many things except my faith! Yes, we watch movies for school and I am CERTAIN they have learned from specific ones in ways they could not have learned from me ([Leapfrog Letter Factory](#), for example). I also use FUN, interactive DVDs ([Laurie Berkner](#), for example), to get the kids moving and engaged along WITH me. However, we don't watch TV very much and most of our

However, we don't watch TV very much and most of our learning is all hands on and electronic free. There are some great shows on TV, when watched in moderation, that I do believe can make homeschooling fun (Super Why, Between the Lions, Team Umi Zoomi, etc.). The computer is also wonderful (in moderation), when parents are in control of it.

-A lot of a good thing is GREAT! What do I believe are the good things for tots?

- **Engaging and open-ended toys...**I love toys that serve more than one purpose, things that can begin as one thing and end up as something entirely different! You can visit our [Tot School Tools Amazon store](#) for many ideas.
- **Books, books, books...**we can't get enough of them! I do not force my tot to listen to stories, but I expose him often. My oldest son did not like to be read to as a tot, but now he LOVES it and like I said earlier-he reads well on his own now too. K likes books a whole lot more than P did and we read together a lot. However, as I said, I do not force him – some days we don't read a book at all because he doesn't want to (except for bedtime, of course)!
- **Music...**I love music, and our home is filled with song much of the time. We dance and sing together, we listen to the Christian station together,

"I don't love the mess, but I sure love the results."

we learn simple songs and even grown-up Christian songs. Two of our favorite cds: [Songs for Saplings](#), and [Seeds Family Worship](#) ~ both have printables featured on [Totally Tots here!](#) We have tons of children's musical instruments and play together with them often. I am not a talented musician by any means, but I feel having musical experiences in the home is very important.

- **Art...**I am not talented artist either but I offer my children art experiences as often as I can. I personally do not enjoy the mess of paint (and other messy art materials), but I know they need to paint. I don't love the mess but I sure love the results... smiles on their faces, intent looks as they learn to create something, and of course the final product to hang on my fridge!
- **Movement...**Young kids love to move and learn tons while moving! I try to do many activities throughout the week involving movement, some for the sake of movement, some to use movement as a means of teaching (exposing) a skill.

Ultimately I believe that all of what I just mentioned is wonderful, but **if we aren't giving our tots a foundation based on Christ-nothing else really matters.** My #1 belief is to share everything I can about [my faith](#) with my children, starting when they are teeny tiny tots!