



PARENT RESEARCH CENTER

RESEARCH FILE

HN-RC-EDU-001

The Education Paper Trail Starter Kit

How to Investigate What Is
Really Happening in Your
Child's Education

EVIDENCE MATTERS

- ☒ Ask Questions
- ☒ Find Sources
- ☒ Read Closely
- ☒ Evaluate Carefully
- ☒ Decide Wisely

DOCUMENT



Questions

Sources

Context

Evidence

Analysis

Wisdom

Welcome to the Parent Research Center



Important questions about education deserve more than headlines, assumptions, and arguments.

They deserve investigation.

At Homeschool Now, we believe parents are the primary protectors and influencers of their children. You don't need a degree in history, policy, or research to understand what is happening in education—you need a framework, curiosity, and the right tools.

THAT'S WHAT THIS RESOURCE PROVIDES.

We will walk together through a process that teaches you how to examine:



Documents

What do the originals actually say?



Research

What studies exist—and what do they show?



History

How did we get here?



Policy

What decisions are being made—and why?



Testimony

What have teachers, experts, and families observed?



Competing Explanations

What else could be true?

OUR PURPOSE

We don't begin with conclusions.
We begin with questions.

We don't promote fear.
We promote understanding.

We don't tell you what to think.
We teach you how to think.

**Your children's future is
too important to leave to
assumptions.**

Remember:

*The goal is not to become
suspicious of everything.
The goal is to become
capable of evaluating
anything.*

**PARENT EMPOWERMENT
BEGINS WITH EVIDENCE**

Why Parents Need a Research Framework



Every day, parents are exposed to claims about education, children, and what schools—or the culture—are doing.

You hear statements like:



“Research shows...”



“Experts say...”



“Schools are changing...”



“Children need...”



“This is best for your child...”



“It’s just common sense...”



Parents need more than information.
Parents need a framework,



BUT REMEMBER:

A claim is **not** the same as evidence.

A confident opinion is **not** the same as fact.

A popular idea is **not** the same as truth.

THE GOAL IS SIMPLE, BUT POWERFUL:



The goal is not to become suspicious of everything.



The goal is to become capable of evaluating anything.

Note:

Discernment is not cynicism. It is responsibility.

The Homeschool Now Investigation Method



**FIVE STEPS.
ONE PURPOSE.**

TRUTH FOR YOUR FAMILY.

Good research follows a process. This five-step method will help you move from confusion and overwhelm to clarity and confidence.



STEP 1 IDENTIFY THE QUESTION

Start with a clear, specific question that is worth investigating.

Example:

How has the purpose of education changed over time?



STEP 2 FIND THE SOURCE

Locate the original source of the claim. Go as close to the origin as possible.

Example:

Who wrote this? Where was it published? Is this the original document?



STEP 3 READ THE CONTEXT

Understand the full context in which the source was created and the problem it was addressing.

Example:

What was the purpose? Who was the audience? What was happening historically?



STEP 4 SEPARATE EVIDENCE FROM INTERPRETATION

Identify what the source actually says versus what others think it means.

Example:

What does the document say verbatim? What conclusions are being drawn?



STEP 5 DETERMINE CONFIDENCE

Evaluate the strength of the evidence and assign a confidence level to your conclusion.

Example:

How strong is this conclusion? What would increase or decrease my confidence?

KEEP THIS IN MIND:

- ☒ Slow down.
Rushing leads to assumptions.
- ☒ Read everything.
Not just what you agree with.
- ☐ Question everything.
Especially the things that sound right.
- ☒ Follow the process.
It protects you from being misled.

**FOLLOW THE PROCESS.
FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE.**

THIS METHOD IS NOT ABOUT:



Being negative or suspicious



Criticizing others



Finding problems with everything

It is about seeking truth, protecting your family, and pursuing wisdom.

The Evidence Classification System



Not all evidence is the same. This system helps you understand how strong a piece of information is—and how much confidence you should place in it.

**EVIDENCE IS
NOT A FEELING.
IT'S A STANDARD.**

1 DOCUMENTED



Direct evidence exists.

Examples: official documents, legislation, published statements, primary records.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- What exactly does the source say?
- What does it establish?
- What does it not establish?

2 SUPPORTED / PLAUSIBLE



Evidence points toward a possibility, but does not prove the full conclusion. More information is needed.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- What evidence supports this?
- What evidence is missing?
- What would strengthen this conclusion?

3 HISTORICAL ALLEGATION



A person reports that something happened. Important enough to investigate, but not yet independently established.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- Who made the claim?
- What evidence exists?
- What remains unknown?

4 OPEN QUESTION



A question worth exploring. Evidence is incomplete or currently unavailable.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- What information would resolve this?
- Where might this evidence be found?
- What should I look for next?



PARENT TAKEAWAY:

Understanding where a piece of evidence fits on this spectrum prevents confusion, improves discernment, and strengthens your ability to reach wise conclusions.



The Four Categories of Evidence



KNOW THE CATEGORY.
KNOW THE CONFIDENCE.

Not all evidence is the same. Understanding the category helps you know how much confidence to place in a conclusion—and what kind of research is needed next.

1

DOCUMENTED

Meaning:

Direct evidence exists.

Examples:

official documents, legislation,
published statements,
primary records.



Key Questions:

- What exactly does the source say?
- What does it establish?
- What does it not establish?

2

SUPPORTED / PLAUSIBLE

Meaning:

Evidence points toward a possibility,
but does not prove the full conclusion.

Examples:

research studies, patterns,
partial records, expert analysis.



Key Questions:

- What evidence supports this?
- What evidence is missing?
- What would strengthen this conclusion?

3

HISTORICAL ALLEGATION

Meaning:

A person reports that something
happened. Important enough to
investigate, but not yet independently
established.

Examples:

testimony, interviews, claims,
whistleblower reports.



Key Questions:

- Who made the claim?
- What evidence exists?
- What remains unknown?

4

OPEN QUESTION

Meaning:

A question worth exploring.
Evidence is incomplete or
currently unavailable.

Examples:

emerging issues, limited data,
unanswered questions.



Key Questions:

- What information would resolve this?
- Where might this evidence be found?
- What should I look for next?



PARENT TAKEAWAY

*Correctly identifying the category prevents overconfidence,
encourages honest evaluation, and keeps your investigation focused.*



How to Use the Four Categories



**EVIDENCE FIRST.
CONCLUSION SECOND.**

These four categories help you organize what you find and understand how much confidence you can place in a conclusion. Use them in every investigation.

1 DOCUMENTED

Meaning:

Direct evidence exists.

Examples:

- official documents
- legislation
- published statements
- primary records



Key Questions:

- What exactly does the source say?
- What does it establish?
- What does it not establish?

2 SUPPORTED / PLAUSIBLE

Meaning:

Evidence points toward a possibility, but does not prove the full conclusion.

Examples:

- research studies
- patterns
- partial records
- expert analysis



Key Questions:

- What evidence supports this?
- What evidence is missing?
- What would strengthen this conclusion?

3 HISTORICAL ALLEGATION

Meaning:

A person reports that something happened. Important enough to investigate, but not yet independently established.

Examples:

- testimony
- interviews
- claims
- whistleblower reports



Key Questions:

- Who made the claim?
- What evidence exists?
- What remains unknown?

4 OPEN QUESTION

Meaning:

A question worth exploring. Evidence is incomplete or currently unavailable.

Examples:

- emerging issues
- limited data
- unanswered questions



Key Questions:

- What information would resolve this?
- Where might this evidence be found?
- What should I look for next?

PARENT TAKEAWAY

Your goal is not to rush to a conclusion.

Your goal is to understand what the evidence can and cannot tell you.



Not every question has an answer yet. Keep looking.

The Evidence Classification System



Category 1 of 4

CATEGORY 1 DOCUMENTED



MEANING:

Direct evidence exists.

EXAMPLES:

- official documents
- published statements
- policy documents
- legislation
- primary records
- organizational reports

DOCUMENTS
DON'T LIE.
READ THEM.

1 WHAT DOES THE SOURCE SAY?



Summarize the main points in your own words.

2 WHAT DOES IT ESTABLISH?



What facts or claims are clearly supported by the source?

3 WHAT DOES IT NOT ESTABLISH?



What conclusions or assumptions does the source not prove?

4 WHAT ELSE MATTERS?



Audience? Purpose? Time period?
Historical context?

Primary documents are the strongest proof.

PARENT TAKEAWAY

When you find a primary document, you are holding direct evidence.
Start here. Build from here.
Everything else must be compared to it.



The Evidence Classification System



Category 2 of 4

CATEGORY 2 SUPPORTED / PLAUSIBLE



MEANING:

Evidence points toward a possibility, but does not prove the full conclusion. More information is needed.

**STRONG HINTS,
NOT FULL
PROOF.**

EXAMPLES:

- research studies
- expert analysis
- partial records
- data reports
- patterns and trends
- eyewitness accounts

1 WHAT DOES THE EVIDENCE SUGGEST?

What is this evidence pointing toward?
What might it be indicating?



2 WHAT EVIDENCE IS MISSING?

What additional information would strengthen this conclusion?
What gaps need to be filled?



3 WHAT WOULD STRENGTHEN THIS CONCLUSION?

What type of evidence would move this from plausible to proven?
What would you need to see?



4 HOW CONFIDENT SHOULD I BE RIGHT NOW?

Based on what is available, how much confidence is reasonable at this stage?



Plausible
today.
Proven
tomorrow.

PARENT TAKEAWAY

Plausible evidence is valuable.
It guides your research and helps you ask better questions.
Stay curious, keep searching, and don't settle too soon.



The Evidence Classification System



Category 3 of 4

CATEGORY 3 HISTORICAL ALLEGATION



MEANING:

A person reports that something happened.
Important enough to investigate,
but not yet independently established.

REPORTS CAN
RAISE QUESTIONS.
THEY ARE NOT
THE ANSWER.

EXAMPLES:

- testimony
- claims
- personal accounts
- interviews
- whistleblower reports
- media reports

1 WHO MADE THE CLAIM?



Who is the source?
What is their background?
What might influence their perspective?

2 WHAT EVIDENCE EXISTS?



Is there documentation, records,
or other evidence that supports
the claim?
What does it show?

3 WHAT REMAINS UNKNOWN?



What key facts are still unclear?
What has not been verified?
What assumptions are being made?

4 WHAT SHOULD I DO NEXT?



Where can I look for more
information?
Who else might I ask?
What sources should I check?



PARENT TAKEAWAY

Allegations can be the starting point of truth,
but they must be investigated carefully.
Ask questions. Seek evidence. Verify before you decide.



The Evidence Classification System



Category 4 of 4

CATEGORY 4 OPEN QUESTION



MEANING:

A question worth exploring.
Evidence is incomplete, conflicting,
or currently unavailable.

INCOMPLETE
TODAY.
EXPLORE
TOMORROW.

EXAMPLES:

- emerging issues
- conflicting reports
- future research
- limited data
- unanswered questions
- unresolved debates

1 WHAT IS THE QUESTION?

What is the issue or mystery
you are trying to understand?



2 WHAT DO WE KNOW?

What facts or information
do we have so far?
What evidence is available?



3 WHAT DO WE NOT KNOW?

What is unclear, uncertain,
or still unanswered?
What are the gaps?



4 WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN NEXT?

What further evidence, research,
or data is needed?
Who or what could help?



PARENT TAKEAWAY

Open questions are not dead ends.
They are invitations to keep learning.
Stay curious, stay humble, and keep seeking truth.
Today's good question can lead to tomorrow's breakthrough.



Putting It All Together



Use the Evidence Classification System
to guide your investigation from start to finish.

THE PROCESS



1 → 2 → 3 → 4 → 5

IDENTIFY

What question
are you trying
to answer?

GATHER

Find and collect
evidence from
various sources.

CLASSIFY

Place each
piece of evidence
in the right
category.

EVALUATE

Analyze the
strength and
relevance of
the evidence.

CONCLUDE

Make a conclusion
based on the
totality of strong,
reliable evidence.

INVESTIGATION WORKSHEET

1 WHAT IS MY QUESTION?



2 WHAT EVIDENCE HAVE I FOUND?



3 HOW DID I CLASSIFY THE EVIDENCE?



4 WHAT IS THE STRONGEST EVIDENCE?



5 WHAT IS MY CONCLUSION?



6 WHAT QUESTIONS REMAIN?



REMEMBER



Be honest.
Follow the
evidence wherever
it leads.



Be humble.
You may be wrong,
and that's okay.
Keep learning.



Be diligent.
Look deeply.
Verify carefully.
Think critically.



Be wise.
Truth is worth the
time and effort
to pursue.

Strong
evidence builds
strong conclusions.
Stay curious!

EVIDENCE LEADS TO TRUTH.
TRUTH BUILDS WISDOM.



Bringing It All Into Practice



Use what you've learned to investigate real topics
and make sense of the world around you.

THE PROCESS



1

IDENTIFY

What question
do I want to
answer?

2

GATHER

Collect evidence
from reliable
sources.

3

CLASSIFY

Place each piece
of evidence in
the right category.

4

EVALUATE

Determine how
strong and
relevant it is.

5

CONCLUDE

Draw a conclusion
based on strong,
reliable evidence.

PRACTICE INVESTIGATION

1

MY QUESTION

What do I want
to learn more
about?



2

SOURCES I WILL USE

Where can I find
reliable information
about this topic?



3

EVIDENCE I FOUND

What facts, details,
or information did
I discover?



4

HOW I CLASSIFIED IT

Which category
does each piece of
evidence belong to?



5

WHAT IT SHOWS

How strong and
relevant is this
evidence?



6

MY CONCLUSION

What conclusion
can I draw from
the evidence?



Great
investigators
ask good
questions and
follow the truth!

★ PARENT TAKEAWAY ★

Help your child practice asking questions,
seeking evidence, and thinking carefully.
These habits build confidence,
discernment, and a love for truth
that will last a lifetime.



KEEP INVESTIGATING. KEEP LEARNING. KEEP GROWING.

Truth is worth the search. Your questions can change tomorrow.

Investigator's Toolkit

Questions That Lead to Truth



Use these powerful question types to dig deeper
and think more clearly about any topic.

THE PROCESS



1

IDENTIFY

What question
do I need to
answer?



2

GATHER

Collect information
from trustworthy
sources.



3

CLASSIFY

Sort evidence
into the right
category.



4

EVALUATE

Test the strength,
relevance, and
credibility.



5

CONCLUDE

Make a conclusion
based on strong,
reliable evidence.

POWERFUL QUESTION TYPES

1

CLARIFYING QUESTIONS



Help you understand
the topic more clearly.

Examples:

- What do these terms mean?
- Can you explain that another way?

2

FACT-FINDING QUESTIONS



Help you find
important facts
and details.

Examples:

- What happened?
- When and where did this occur?

3

CAUSE AND EFFECT QUESTIONS



Help you understand
why things happen
and what happens
as a result.

Examples:

- What caused this?
- What were the results or consequences?

4

PERSPECTIVE QUESTIONS



Help you see
different sides
of the issue.

Examples:

- Who else might see this differently?
- What is another possible point of view?

5

EVIDENCE QUESTIONS



Help you look
for proof and
strong support.

Examples:

- What evidence supports this idea?
- How do we know this is true?

6

IMPORTANCE QUESTIONS



Help you think about
why the topic
matters.

Examples:

- Why is this issue important?
- Who does this affect the most?

7

ASSUMPTION QUESTIONS



Help you challenge
hidden ideas
or assumptions.

Examples:

- What are we assuming is true?
- What might we be overlooking?

8

FUTURE FOCUS QUESTIONS



Help you think
ahead and consider
what comes next.

Examples:

- What might happen next?
- What solutions could work?



★ PARENT TAKEAWAY ★

Great investigators never stop asking questions.
The right questions open doors to understanding,
help protect against deception, and lead to wisdom.



Investigation in Action



Apply the Evidence Classification System
to a real-world topic.

THE PROCESS



1

IDENTIFY

What question
am I trying to
answer?



2

GATHER

Find and collect
evidence from
credible sources.



3

CLASSIFY

Place each piece
of evidence in
the right category.



4

EVALUATE

Examine how strong,
relevant, and
trustworthy it is.



5

CONCLUDE

Draw a conclusion
based on strong,
reliable evidence.

INVESTIGATION PRACTICE

1

MY TOPIC OR QUESTION



2

KEY SOURCES I WILL USE



3

EVIDENCE I FOUND



4

HOW I CLASSIFIED THE EVIDENCE



5

WHAT I LEARNED



6

MY CONCLUSION



TRUTH BUILDERS



Ask boldly.
Curiosity opens
doors to
understanding.



Seek carefully.
Look beyond
headlines and
first impressions.



Weigh wisely.
Consider
context, intent,
and accuracy.



Think deeply.
Connect ideas
and look for
the bigger picture.



Speak truthfully.
Share what
you know with
integrity.



Live purposefully.
Use truth to
make a positive
impact.



EVIDENCE IS POWERFUL.
TRUTH IS TRANSFORMING.



Check Your Work

Review your investigation from start to finish.



THE PROCESS



1

IDENTIFY

What question did I try to answer?

2

GATHER

Did I find credible sources and evidence?

3

CLASSIFY

Did I place each piece of evidence in the right category?

4

EVALUATE

Did I test the strength and relevance of the evidence?

5

CONCLUDE

Did I draw a conclusion based on strong, reliable evidence?

INVESTIGATION CHECKLIST

1

MY QUESTION IS CLEAR

☐ I focused on one specific, answerable question.



2

MY SOURCES ARE RELIABLE

☐ I used trustworthy sources that provide accurate information.



3

I CLASSIFIED CORRECTLY

☐ I sorted my evidence into the right categories.



4

MY EVIDENCE IS STRONG

☐ My evidence is relevant, credible, and supports my conclusion.



5

MY CONCLUSION IS LOGICAL

☐ My conclusion is based on the evidence, not on opinions or guesses.



6

I REFLECTED ON MY WORK

☐ I considered what I learned and how I can improve next time.



Careful investigators become wise thinkers!

REFLECTION QUESTION

What is one thing I learned from this investigation?



KEEP INVESTIGATING. KEEP GROWING.

Strong questions lead to strong families.

Visit ParentResearchCenter.com for research, resources, and tools to help you homeschool with confidence and discernment.



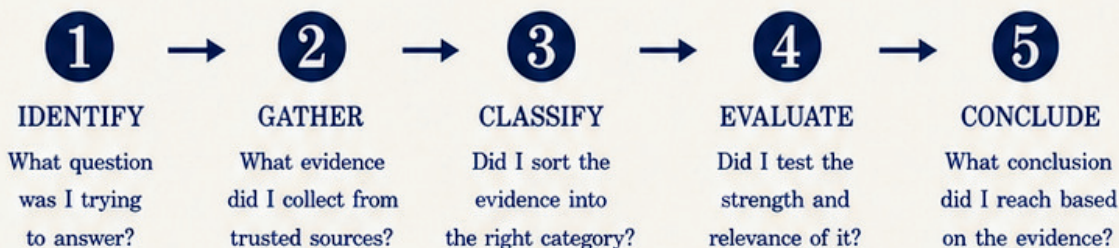
TRUTH IS WORTH THE SEARCH.
WISDOM IS WORTH THE JOURNEY.

Putting It All Together



Bring your investigation full circle.
Think deeply. Live wisely. Make a difference.

THE PROCESS



FINAL REFLECTION

1 WHAT DID I LEARN?

What new insights or understanding did I gain?



2 WHAT EVIDENCE MATTERED MOST?

Which evidence had the biggest impact on my conclusion?



3 WHAT CHANGED MY THINKING?

Did anything challenge my assumptions or initial ideas?



4 HOW CAN I APPLY THIS IN LIFE?

How can this knowledge help me make better decisions?



5 WHO CAN I SHARE THIS WITH?

How can I use what I learned to encourage or help others?



6 WHAT IS MY NEXT INVESTIGATION?

What new question am I curious to explore next?



Truth-loving investigators change minds, strengthen families, and build a better world!

★ PARENT TAKEAWAY ★

By teaching your child to investigate with wisdom, you give them more than knowledge—
you give them discernment.
These skills protect them today and empower them for a lifetime.



KEEP INVESTIGATING. KEEP LEARNING. KEEP GROWING.

Strong questions build strong families.

Visit ParentResearchCenter.com for research, resources, and tools to help you homeschool with confidence and discernment.



TRUTH IS WORTH THE SEARCH. WISDOM IS WORTH THE JOURNEY.

Growing as an Investigator



Investigation is a lifelong skill.
Every good question makes you wiser.

THE PROCESS



1

IDENTIFY

What question
am I trying
to answer?



2

GATHER

Did I collect
credible and
trustworthy
sources?



3

CLASSIFY

Did I sort the
evidence into
the right
category?



4

EVALUATE

Did I test the
strength and
relevance of
the evidence?



5

CONCLUDE

Did I draw a
conclusion based
on strong,
reliable evidence?

INVESTIGATOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

Check each statement that describes your investigation today.

☐

I asked a clear and focused question.

☐

I considered different viewpoints
and alternatives.

☐

I used a variety of reliable sources.

☐

I connected the evidence to see
the bigger picture.

☐

I sorted and organized my evidence
the right way.

☐

I avoided assumptions and
thought critically.

☐

I evaluated my evidence carefully
and fairly.

☐

I can explain my conclusion
with confidence.



PARENT CHALLENGE

Investigation isn't just for school—
it's for life!

Practice asking great questions together
as a family this week.

TRY THIS:

- ✓ Pick a real-world topic.
- ✓ Ask questions.
- ✓ Research together.
- ✓ Discuss what you learn.



KEEP ASKING. KEEP SEEKING. KEEP GROWING.

Great questions open doors to truth and wisdom.

Visit **ParentResearchCenter.com** for research,
resources, and tools to equip and encourage
your homeschool journey.



TRUTH GUIDES. WISDOM LEADS. INVESTIGATE WELL.

Reflect, Apply, Share



Every investigation is a step toward wisdom.
Reflect on what you discovered and how you can use it.

THE PROCESS



1

IDENTIFY

What question
am I trying
to answer?

→

2

GATHER

Did I collect
credible and
trustworthy
sources?

→

3

CLASSIFY

Did I sort the
evidence into
the right
category?

→

4

EVALUATE

Did I test the
strength and
relevance of
the evidence?

→

5

CONCLUDE

Did I draw a
conclusion based
on strong,
reliable evidence?

INVESTIGATION REFLECTION

1

MY BIGGEST DISCOVERY

What surprised me
most during my
investigation?



2

WHAT I LEARNED

What new insight
or understanding
did I gain?



3

WHAT I WILL DO DIFFERENTLY

What would I do
differently next
time?



4

HOW I CAN APPLY IT

How can I use what
I learned in my life,
my family, or my
community?



5

WHO I CAN SHARE IT WITH

Who could benefit
from what I
discovered?



6

MY NEXT QUESTION

What new question
will guide my
next investigation?



★ PARENT TAKEAWAY ★

You are raising a truth-seeker.
Keep encouraging questions,
modeling discernment,
and building wisdom together.

TALK ABOUT IT

Ask your child:

- What did you learn today?
- What evidence mattered most?
- How can we apply this truth as a family?



KEEP INVESTIGATING. KEEP GROWING. KEEP LEADING.

Strong questions lead to strong families.

Visit ParentResearchCenter.com for research,
resources, and tools to help you homeschool
with confidence and discernment.



Your Next Step: Investigator Commitment



Truth is worth the search.
Wisdom is worth the journey.

THE PROCESS



1

IDENTIFY

What question
am I trying
to answer?

→

2

GATHER

Did I collect
credible and
trustworthy
sources?

→

3

CLASSIFY

Did I sort the
evidence into
the right
category?

→

4

EVALUATE

Did I test the
strength and
relevance of
the evidence?

→

5

CONCLUDE

Did I draw a
conclusion based
on strong,
reliable evidence?

INVESTIGATION REFLECTION

Take a moment to reflect on your investigation journey.

1

MY BIGGEST DISCOVERY

What surprised me
most during my
investigation?



2

WHAT I LEARNED

What new insight or
understanding
did I gain?



3

WHAT I WILL DO DIFFERENTLY

What would I do
differently next
time?



4

HOW I CAN APPLY IT

How can I use what
I learned in my life,
my family, or my
community?



5

WHO I CAN SHARE IT WITH

Who could benefit
from what I
discovered?



6

MY NEXT QUESTION

What new question
will guide my
next investigation?



MY INVESTIGATOR COMMITMENT



I will keep asking great questions.

I will seek truth.

I will grow in wisdom.

I will help my family grow too.

I will make a difference.

Today, I commit to:



KEEP ASKING. KEEP SEEKING. KEEP GROWING.

Great questions open doors to truth and wisdom.

Visit **ParentResearchCenter.com**

for research, resources, and tools to equip and
encourage your homeschool journey.



TRUTH IS WORTH THE SEARCH.
WISDOM IS WORTH THE JOURNEY.

Thank you for investing in your family's future.
Keep asking great questions.

