

E V E R Y T H I N G T O G E T
S T A R T E D W I T H
H O M E S C H O O L I N G !



There are a lot of reasons to consider homeschooling. Sometimes people decide to homeschool for religious reasons, public schools in their area, or disapproval of school systems. No matter the reason, while you are making the decision to homeschool there are a lot of pros and cons to consider. I am going to hit on some of the most common pros and cons below, so it might be helpful to grab a sheet of paper and follow along. You can take notes to the different aspects that concern you. Let's get started!

The Pros of Homeschooling:

- Countless Options
- Flexibility
- Support
- Fun
- Closer Relationships
- Instilling Family Values
- Learning At Their Pace
- More Control in Your Child's Life
- Special Education Needs

Options

Once I first started thinking about homeschooling, I was very nervous. I wasn't sure of the laws, how I would handle teaching my kids, or even more daunting, how my parents were going to respond. No matter how much I was nervous I couldn't be more excited about all the options we were going to have. As a homeschooler you are able to choose from different curriculum, support groups, sports, music and art lessons, friends, and learning styles that it really is fun.

Flexibility

When you have a child in school and they miss classes because of being sick, having a family issue or emergency, it is up to the teacher how long they have to make up their missed work. In homeschooling though, you are the parent, the teacher and the principal, you get to put off a few days of work if necessary, or even if you just want to have an impromptu day off. The possibilities are endless. Imagine having a long weekend you spend away at family's and you get back late Sunday night. How great is it that you can start school in the afternoon the next day, or just skip it and pick up on Tuesday? You are in charge of your child's learning, you get to control your life.

Morals & Values

It seems one crisis after another in America comes back to values and morals. The current generation we have of graduates from high school expect things to be handed to them without question, and most don't want to have to work for anything. It's sad, but when you homeschool you have all the time you need to teach your child family values, morals, right from wrong, and individualism. One statistic at the end of this report shows that as many as 94% of all homeschooled adults are employed, years after graduating.

Their Pace & Special Education

When my oldest son started learning how to write he was having a lot of trouble. He couldn't concentrate, and got so bored and upset that he would cry while we forced him to keep going. We made a rookie mistake in homeschooling in that we were forcing him to work at something he wasn't ready for. We have a lot of homeschooling families in the area so I started to ask around and they all had the same suggestion: Drop it. He isn't ready, stop doing it for now and come back to it in a few months. We followed their advice and months later he would write without frustration, and we kept the lessons short so that he never got overwhelmed with it.

All I mean to say with this story is that when you homeschool you don't have to make sure your children keep up with everyone else in their class, you can help them move forward, or hold off on subjects based on how ready they seem to be. In schools this isn't an option, which results in lots of homework, that cuts into precious family time. If you are homeschooling just relax, take your time and use your best judgement on when to change up your schedule.

Another aspect to taking your time and following their pace is when you have a child with special needs. More and more special needs children are being homeschooled and parents are seeing a lot of success because of the one on one time. No one loves your child and wants them to succeed as much as you do, and when you need the public school system's help in most states they are still available even if you do homeschool.

Fun

The fun I experience by homeschooling my kids will never be replaced. I enjoy more than anyone going on field trips and relearning everything about life through the eyes of my child. We do crafts together, bake together, make messes together with their toys,

build with their legos, and finger paint. Each of these activities contributes to our bond, their education and our fun. What could be better?

Control

Being able to decide who your child spends time with is a pro that parents of teenagers will appreciate. When your child is in school, you have little say in who they become friends with, or how other children behave. However with homeschooling you will be able to have more control with who they spend time with and even more importantly you are going to know their parents. If you stick with a support group in your area your children will develop friendships with that you can monitor with other families, giving you a lot more back up if something comes up.

The Cons of Homeschooling

- Frustration
- Family & Friends
- Time
- Finances
- Sports Teams
- Being Different
- Your Academic Problem Areas
- Behavior Problems

Being **tired**, as a parent, taking on the task of parent, teacher, principal, and every other kind of teacher can be exhausting. Sometimes your kids don't want to participate, they might just want to play. Sometimes you might be overwhelmed, especially at first when you are adjusting to the power you have in their education.

As the only source of power in your child's life they might be a bit **rebellious** at first, especially if you have had to take them out of school. As parents we tend to let them get away with more than a teacher might and they know this, while you have your teaching hat on, they might want to get away with their behavior. The good thing is, if you stick to your guns and keep on them about doing school work they way that is best for your family, this will get better, sometimes in a matter of days.

Family and Friends. It has to be said that family and friends aren't always encouraging when it comes to homeschooling. They tend to go through a whole set of emotions.

Shock, Disagreement, Persuasion, Annoyance, you name it. When we told my father we were homeschooling he said we couldn't, that the kids would get messed up, and wouldn't have any friends. Other family members asked if we could do that by law, what the laws were, as if I had to pass their test. The thing to keep in mind here is that they are reacting to it based on what society has taught them, they usually think have your child's best interest at heart, and are CONCERNED.

While your family and friends might always think you are weird for homeschooling, they will adjust and accept your decision, and even better if they ever consider it or have other friends that do, they will look to you for guidance. (disclaimer, mother in laws seem to be the exception to acceptance, some think they are right and will test your child all the time).

Legal Requirements for Homeschooling

Well some people don't realize it, homeschooling is perfectly legal and there are several families that have fought over the years to make sure that is so. But past it being legal, did you know there are requirements for homeschooling? It actually depends on the state you live in, not the school district. Some school districts might have you believe they get to make the decisions based on your child, but as long as you are following the state laws all you have to do is stick to your guns, or call your homeschool legal team to have them take care of it. We will cover that later though.

I have found some links that I think will be very helpful in learning the laws of your state, they are listed below:

About.com-

http://homeschooling.about.com/od/legal/Staying_Legal_Homeschool_Laws_and_Requirements.htm Each state is listed and then you can get factsheets to print.

HSLDA- <http://www.hslda.org/laws/default.asp> All you have to do is choose your state and you will get a PDF of your laws.

It is very important to follow these laws as if you do not you could be at risk with Child Welfare in your area.

Now to discuss the legal team I was talking about. HSLDA is just one of them, there are other groups. You join and every year you pay dues, you can do this starting the year

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your child has to be registered with your state. I am in NY, so we don't have to do it until your child is 6 at the beginning of the school year. I believe the membership is less than \$100 and you get a lot of fringe benefits. You get discounts and such with other homeschooling companies. What the membership does for you is it gives you access to the legal team if have any problems. There are still a lot of districts out there that try to control you and what you are allowed to do with your child's education. If they give you any trouble at all, all you have to do is call the HSLDA team and find out what is really expected of you.

Here is a link to HSLDA that shows you exactly what you get out of having a membership. <http://www.hslda.org/join/protect.asp>

Getting Started

Getting started might be a bit difficult, but it is important to give yourself and your child space to adjust to either starting school or starting to homeschool. The first thing you need is some kind of curriculum.

Choosing your curriculum is the other place that you have a great advantage. Every child learns differently. There are actually 5 different learning styles, have a look here to figure out what your child's is. Once you know your child's learning style you can choose curriculum that will help you teach them in a way they can learn best, this will give you the most success in homeschooling.

<http://www.ldpride.net/learningstyles.MI.htm#Learning%20Styles%20Explained>
<http://www.ldpride.net/learning-style-test.html>

This is a great quote to get your mind going on how to teach.

How We Learn

10% of what we READ

20% of what we HEAR

30% of what we SEE

50% of what we SEE and HEAR

70% of what is DISCUSSED with OTHERS

80% of what is EXPERIENCED PERSONALLY

95% of what we TEACH TO SOMEONE ELSE

by William Glasser

There are a lot of places to get curriculum, depending on your needs, the subjects you want to cover, and how your child learns. In my eBook "Homeschooling Resources for

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Optimal Success" I go over all of the best resources available for homeschooling, as well as tips and tricks I have learned from experts and more experienced moms over the years.

Social Interaction

This is the most common objection to homeschooling, but it isn't that big of a deal. There are a lot of ideas on how this can be argued. First, the obvious answer, since when do kids go to school for social reasons, aren't they suppose to be learning? Don't teacher tell them to be quiet in their seats? Even when they do socially interact, can we honestly say it is good for them and healthy? Kids graduating these days go through all sorts of social problems, not being accepted by their peers, being laughed at for how they dress, not being popular enough, etc. Is it that great to subject a kid to that in the first place?

Another answer to the social aspect is homeschool kids are usually in up to 2x more activities than a public school student. Not only that but because they live in a world where they aren't split up by age they learn to socialize with all ages, not just their peers. Think about it, when we graduate and go out into the big world, do we only have to work with, live with or deal with people our own age? Definitely not!

When it comes to my own family we are in swimming and gym classes at our local YMCA, we have been a part of a co-op and we meet with other families regularly for play dates, with kids their age, younger and older. We have a lot of family and friends in our area so we enjoy social interaction with them. In case you are in an area where you don't have a lot of contacts you should be able to find a homeschooling support group in your area. These groups are great for the moms to be able to exchange ideas, curriculum, and get together for the kids to interact. Here is a great link to use to find support groups in your area: <http://localhs.com/>

Yahoo groups, and facebook are great places to look for other homeschoolers as well. I am part of 2 or 3 homeschooling groups for my area, and we aren't that big of an area, so I am sure you can find something near you.

In the odd case you don't have something close by, I would recommend joining a forum. This one in particular is very active <http://www.home-school.com/forums/>

Interesting Statistics and Facts About Homeschooling:

These homeschool families are notably larger – 68.1% have three or more children – than families nationwide. (nheri.org)

Almost all homeschool students (97.9%) are in married couple families. Most home school mothers (81%) do not participate in the labor force; almost all home school fathers (97.6%) do work for pay. (nheri.org)

Homeschool student achievement test scores are exceptionally high. The mean scores for every subtest (which are at least the 80th percentile) are well above those of public school students. (nheri.org)

Children who are homeschooled "... may be more socially mature and have better leadership skills than other children ..." - Richard G. Medlin, Ph.D. (nheri.org)

ACT: (2002 and 2003) homeschool average was 22.5, national average was 20.8.
SAT (2002) homeschool average was 1092, national average, 1020. (hslida.org)

On average, homeschool students, grades 1–4, perform one grade level above their public and private school counterparts. The achievement gap grows in grade 5; by 8th grade the average home school student performs four grades higher than the national average. (<http://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/543>)

Dr. Gary Knowles, the University of Michigan, studied home educated adults.

"None were unemployed and none were on welfare, 94% said home education prepared them to be independent persons, 79% said it helped them interact with individuals from different levels of society, and they strongly supported the home education method." (nheri.org)