

Is Homeschooling a Good Option?



Q. Our daughter has a mild learning disability. We are not sure she is getting all she needs at school and are considering homeschooling as an option for her. What do you think?

A. With every education option there are pros and cons. It depends on who you ask. What seems common between the two opposing views is that parents who home school need to be organized, creative, diligent, well read, have high energy and be hands on motivators for their children. By definition, homeschooling is an education option in which parents accept total responsibility for the education of their children. Home, versus school, becomes the center of the child's educational universe. Homeschooling is an accepted alternative for kids of elementary school age through the high school years. In recent years, several styles of homeschooling have evolved, including (among others): faith-based education, self-directed learning, cyber-learning (or online learning), and even an approach called unschooling. This article will focus on the more traditional approach to homeschooling, specifically as it applies to kids with learning and/or attention problems, and their families.

The **Homeschool.com** website has put together a list of the **10** most important things parents need to know about homeschooling.

1. Homeschooling is life changing. It creates personal growth for both the parent and the child. You get a chance to re-discover your own special genius, while helping your children to find theirs.

2. You are qualified to home school your children if you love to read to them, love to spend time with them, love to explore the world with them, love to see them learn new things and, most importantly, love them.

3. Children love to learn. They have an innate desire to explore the world and examine what they find interesting. Children learn by following their interests, with one interest leading to another. Homeschooling families learn together, making learning a life-long process.

4. Homeschooling is legal everywhere in the United States, but homeschooling laws vary from state to state. The three basic categories for homeschooling laws are: home education laws, private school laws, and equivalency laws. The best way to learn about your state's laws is to contact a local support group in your area.

5. It does not take six to eight hours per day to home school your child. A significant amount of time at school is spent waiting. Design a plan that works for your family and be prepared to revise it several times or even start over. Don't sacrifice your family's happiness to "school" your children. There are many different ways that families can home school - find what works for you and your family. Think outside of the box, and where necessary, consult with homeschooling/learning specialists.

6. Your child will not become a social misfit. Children do not need to be socialized in a large group of same-age children to become well adjusted socially; it is quite the opposite. Homeschoolers have healthy relationships with people of all ages, including the new mother next door, the retired couple who loves to garden, their friends at ballet, 4-H and Karate and, most importantly, their parents.

7. Don't be afraid to teach Algebra or high-level math courses! When your child is ready for these courses, there are numerous options to assist you if your knowledge is not up-to-speed. Explore the many resources available to help your child learn high-level math skills: in a community college class, with a tutor, through a textbook, or with a program such as [ALEKS](#). [S](#) ALEKS is a research-based online math program that provides highly-targeted, individualized assessment and learning for grades 3-12. Explore others as well.

8. You will question yourself a lot. Even professional teachers question themselves sometimes!

9. Thousands of homeschooling families are able to make the money they need, while also homeschooling their children. Whether you create a family business or dream job, or restructure your current job, your children will learn the most important skill of all - how to create the life of their dreams.

10. Trust in your children. They learned how to love, smile, crawl, walk, talk, run, dress themselves, and understand their world before starting school, and they will continue to grow and learn through homeschooling.

Overall, it is important to approach homeschooling with the proper knowledge and support system, while providing your children with the information that they need to succeed in college and beyond. A strong curriculum is the vital base for any home school, and can provide you with peace of mind that your children's learning needs are being met.

Disadvantages to Homeschooling!

People disagree about how much formal education a person needs to be a good teacher. Not all parents and home school tutors have gone to school to learn to teach or to learn the subject they are teaching. If a parent is well educated, he or she may understand some subjects really well but others not as well. For instance, a kid's mom may be great at chemistry but not as good at English.

To be fair, not all school teachers are experts in their fields either. And tutors may be used for subjects the parent isn't skilled in. If a home school parent or tutor doesn't know something or can't fully explain it, the instructor and student can always research the issue together. A local library, university, community college, or the Internet may have the answers.

A kid who's homeschooled doesn't have the convenience of school facilities, such as a gymnasium, science lab, or art studio. The child may be taught at the kitchen table or at a "school" area in the home. He or she might do science experiments in the kitchen or go outside to work on an art project. Some parents who home school their kids form groups so their kids can go together to take art classes and take part in other group learning activities, like field trips.

Effects on social life can be another possible disadvantage for homeschooled kids. All kids need to have friends and be around other children. Some homeschoolers may feel cut off from kids their age or feel like they spend too much time with their families.

Parents who home school their kids often make efforts to ensure their son or daughter has a social life. For instance, groups of homeschooled children may get together regularly to learn together or just socialize. And like any child, they may be on sports teams, in dance classes, or take part in other activities outside of school.

Why would parents of kids with LD or AD/HD choose to homeschool?

Parents of kids with LD and/or AD/HD offer a variety of reasons for homeschooling. Some believe they can do a better job than a public or private school in meeting their children's special needs. Some parents think they can more effectively tailor the curriculum to their children's needs and also protect them from the teasing and stigma associated with being in special education. Some families opt to homeschool on a short-term basis, to help a child finish a difficult year of school or to reach a certain level of maturity and development. Other parents homeschool their kids from elementary school age through high school years.

Will my child become socially isolated if she is homeschooled?

Kids who have LD or AD/HD often struggle to develop adequate social skills, whether they are homeschooled or not. But, as with all homeschool students, there are several ways to ensure your child has ample opportunity to socialize with others. To expand your child's socialization skills and experiences, consider involving her in:

- Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- 4H Clubs
- Team sports and other extracurricular activities available through your community recreation department
- Groups affiliated with your place of worship
- Church activities
- Music lessons or dance lessons
- Martial Arts Schools

A local homeschool networking group may become a rich source of social activities for both you and your child. Whether your gatherings are as formal as a field trip or as casual as a picnic, your child will benefit from learning with - and playing with - other kids. Check with your local school district. Some allow homeschooled children to attend class trips and participate in afterschool activities.

Do your homework!

There is no magic formula for homeschool success and your decision to homeschool (or not) will be as individual as your child and family. As with any decision concerning your child's education, we encourage you to tap into trustworthy resources and information (such as those mentioned in this article). Talk with parents of other homeschoolers in your community. And, above all, trust your good judgment about the well-being of your child.

Lisa-Anne Ray-Byers is a licensed and certified speech-language pathologist who has worked in education for over two decades. She holds graduate degrees in speech-language pathology and multicultural education. She also holds certification in educational administration. She is the author of the books, *They Say I Have ADHD, I Say Life Sucks! Thought From Nicholas* and *They S S Say I'm a St St Stutterer, But I S S Say Nothing! Meet Kelly* and co-author of *365 Ways to Succeed With ADHD* available at www.Amazon.com

She is the Education Editor of the *Community Journal* and a member of the National Education Writers Association. You may contact her at speechlrb@yahoo.com or by visiting her website at www.AskLisaAnne.com.