

Homeschooling—is it the right choice?

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Calvin walked around the campus of Arkansas State College for his very first college visit. As he strolled through campus, Calvin noticed the huge masses of people talking to their friends, and he became overwhelmed.

He had been homeschooled his whole life, so the school experience was all new to him. Between changing classes, meeting people, and juggling teachers, college was one confusing mess. Calvin would have had a smoother transition from high school to college if his parents had put him in public school, but unfortunately, that was not the case. He suffered. Unless you are a qualified teacher, parents should not homeschool their child because it negatively affects his or her social aspects and college career.

Homeschooling your child is not the same as a public school because most parents are not qualified teachers and homes are not schools. Since there are a plethora of jobs, only about two percent of parents are qualified teachers, which is not very many. As Myra Immell said, “ Anyone can buy a social studies, science, or math book, but that does not mean that person knows how to instruct someone else about the subject matter contained in that book.” Only qualified teachers know the right techniques and methods of teaching, and even then, an English teacher is an expert on English, not math or science. The average parent may be highly educated on one subject, but definitely not all of them.

Another downfall of a parent-teacher is that he or she does not have access to nearly as many resources as a classroom teacher would, therefore, the student would not receive the complete learning experience. Even though parents have access to the internet, they still do not have access to

everything; for example, the internet does not have the proper materials for various science labs, graphing calculators, or interactive activities with other people. Part of the learning experience in middle and high school is changing classes for each subject. For homeschooling, a student is not necessarily on a set schedule, and they usually stay in the same environment for each subject. Most parents homeschool their children in order to protect them, but I recommend only homeschooling your child through middle school if you are worried about protection. Socialization is important at every stage of one's life, from childhood through adulthood, and it is not something that is easily taught.

Proper social skills are essential for making friends and communicating with others, and everyone needs to master these skills way before college. Sure, once you get to college, making friends is not the hardest thing in the world, but shouldn't people learn how to do that before college? Plus, developing social skills is much easier for a child than for an adult. One key social event that I enjoy in high school are the school dances, and less homeschooled teens go to the dances because they are not exposed to them nearly as much. Public schools also teach students how to work in groups.

Homeschooling teaches students how to work independently. In the real world, not everyone lives an isolated life, cut off from the rest of the world like North Korea, so you have to be able to interact with others.

At a public school, students are taught to interact with others through group projects, having opportunities to join school clubs and sports, and meeting new people. In contrast, homeschooled students tend to work more, visit family members, have more individual responsibilities, and do all their school

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work individually. Being socially awkward, and homeschooled, is not that big of a deal when you are a child, but it greatly affects a college career (“Preface”). Once a homeschooled student gets to college, learning how to socialize is difficult, but getting accepted is even more challenging.

Homeschooled students who have completed their high school curriculum receive a diploma, just like a public school student, but most homeschool diplomas are not recognized by state colleges. The majority of homeschoolers receive their diplomas from their parents, and because their parents issued the diploma, the college has no way of telling what a homeschool diploma represents.

The colleges may be reluctant on accepting the diplomas because they have not knowledge on who taught the student, what the student learned, or what textbooks they used. On top of that, parents could easily lie about what their child knows because parents are bias for their child. In 2008, there was a case on homeschooling diplomas in Tennessee. At first, in 1985, the state of Tennessee recognized homeschoolers’ diplomas until, in 2008, they realized the diplomas could not be proven valid. Since then, homeschoolers’ diplomas are not accepted in Tennessee, and homeschool diplomas’ validity is still a controversial topic in colleges today.

Even though you may think homeschooling is the better choice for your child, it is not a wise choice to make if you care about their future. Don’t be the parent that ruins your child’s life. Don’t be the parent that embarrasses your child. Don’t be the parent that constantly annoys your child about school work. Be the parent that every child wishes for: supportive, fun, not too outgoing, and a good listener.

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I know I would be resentful if my parents wanted to homeschool me. How would your child feel?