

Does homeschooling  
deprive children of  
social development?



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Homeschooling; a parent-led home based education was once the backbone of the education system now is again becoming more mainstream as all states in America now permit homeschooling though the regulations vary from state to state. (Gardner, J. McFarland, 2001) not only in the United States and Canada but also this fastest growing form of education is becoming popular all around the world in nations like Australia, Hungary, Japan, United Kingdom and Kenya. United States alone has about 2.04 million home educated students (Ray, 2011). Estimated number of home educated children in grades K to 12 during spring 2010 was 1.73 to 2.35 million. Home based schooling has gained much popularity and has been accepted as a good way of learning largely because of the availability of educational curriculum on internet (Kochenderfer, 2011). Parents have their own reasons and concerns for homeschooling their children. Most believe that superiority of education that can be provided at home is not possible at Public schools (U. S. Dept. Ed. 2001). Further considerations included religion, various family reasons, and objections to what public school was teaching, student behavioral problems at school, convenience, and student special needs. However some are strictly against this method of educating children. Critics of homeschooling believe that this system lack socialization and structure as well as adequate qualified parents. And in this way it hinders the social development of a child. According to a research conducted by Aiex, stereotypical home-school children being isolated from the normal socialization in the public schooling are often seen to be more shy, lethargic and passive. Lack of exposure is also another major drawback of homeschooling in the conventional environment (Aiex, 1994). However, most homeschoolers strongly disagree with these condemnations.

<https://assignbuster.com/does-homeschooling-deprive-children-of-social-development/>

Computer technology has changed the course of the human life. It also has the capacity to enhance home schooling. Homeschoolers believe that combining the old learning environment with modern technology can prepare the best workforce for the future's multi-ability and multi-generational workplace where developing personal expertise and independence will bring challenging and exciting opportunities (Rieseberg, 1995). Learning from interactive softwares gives homeschoolers an opportunity to prepare for the real which largely relies on computers. Critics yet argue that extra-curricular activities in the public school are something homeschooling children are deprived of (The Journal of Contemporary Legal Issues, Vol. 16: 99, 2007). The critics debate over the issue that socialization is the process by which individuals learn to establish and maintain relationships with others, become accepted members of society, regulate their own behavior in accordance with society's codes and standards, and get along with others. Many educators, child development specialists, and social scientists claim that homeschooling deprives the child of the ability to develop socialization skills. Another to socialization home educators have to face is that they are over-protective about their children in the real world. However in response to this, in a research conducted by Bliss in 1989, over-protection should not be considered a major problem because it's a part of nurturing and growth in the early developmental years. A survey done by 92% of public school superintendents found that homeschooled children receive inadequate socialization experiences. The common argument is that sheltering children from the real world prevent them from exploring opportunities to learn greatly needed knowledge and social interaction skills.

Unless children are experience social life found in public schools on a daily  
<https://assignbuster.com/does-homeschooling-deprive-children-of-social-development/>

basis, they will find it difficult in the later years to adapt to real life situations successfully (Mayberry et al, 1995).

Most of the homeschooled educators find it silly and annoying when questioned about the socialization of homeschooled children. They disagree with the fact that homeschooled children are introverted misfit who stays isolated from the outside world. In contrast to public school children, homeschooled children are found to be more polite and respectful, and outgoing too (Manfred B. Zysk, 1999). Homeschooling educators blame psychologists, sociologists, local teachers unions and public school administrators for perpetrating this “socialization” problem. Various experiences and exposure to differing views and opinions is what makes a child to mould into the society properly. This enables children to form their own opinion and think about their individuality. Public schools allow children only to group-think and share the same views. Another critic that homeschooling has to face is the question of interaction with adults as with peers. Homeschooling allow parents to interact with other homeschooling groups, visit libraries, museums and visit local businesses. This gives them a chance to understand how things and societies operate as well as interact with all age groups of the community whereas public schools segregate students by age groups. Homeschoolers suggest that the larger the group of children such as a typical public school classroom, the fewer meaningful socializing contacts a child can have. Next, proponents point out that socialization can be either positive or negative, and argue that a great deal of peer socialization, especially in the school setting, is of the negative variety. Next, they attack the notion that school is the only place for a child’s

socializing experiences with peers (The Journal of Contemporary Legal Issues, Vol. 16: 99, 2007). Homeschooling gives children an opportunity to spend time with kids older and younger than them as well as adults up to 90 years old (Zysk, 1999). Homeschooled children have places like Churches and Communities that offer them variety of activities based on healthy social interaction as compared to school. They get involved in sports, music, youth groups and service groups that give them a chance to become productive in relationships and be a positive influence on society using good interpersonal skills.

Study done by Stough in 1992 on families with children of 7-14 years of age, particularly looked at the issue of “socialization”. He compared 30 homeschooling families with 32 conventionally schooling family. He found out that necessary skill, knowledge and attitude required to function properly in a society, of the homeschooled children were same as public school children. Children’s self concepts of the two groups were not different from one another. The research also took in account that considering self concept as a socialization reflector, some homeschooled children were socially deprived and some homeschooled children indicated a higher self concept than the children of the conventional schools. In order to find out this contrast of self-concept between homeschooled and conventional school students, Taylor in 1986 did a nationwide study. Considering self-concept as a significant aspect of a child’s psychological development. Taylor used the Piers-Harris Children’s Self- Concept Scale for measuring the central core of personality of homeschooled children in grades 4-12 (Michael H. Romanowski, 2006). He found that half of the homeschooled children scored

91 percentile or more, which was 47% higher than the conventional school children. This negated the skepticism that homeschooled children are lower in socialization. The findings of these two researches suggested that concerns of the teachers, sociologists, psychologists, legislators and administrators, are baseless.

Though results of standardized academic achievement tests show that homeschooled students score 15% to 30% more than public school students (Ray, 2011), some researchers believe that homeschooled children have difficulties in adjusting to college and universities. One such study conducted by Isaiah Cohen and Cynthia K. Drenovsky suggest that due to lack of wide array of institutional experiences, may find it hard to cope with the stresses of a college environment. Though homeschooled college students are more likely to excel in academics, in speaking and writing more effectively, have better critical and analytical skills, have a better understanding of themselves and of different racial or ethnic groups, have set clear career goals; have better career and work related knowledge and skills and, may manage study and time effectively, however personally adjusting into their new college community is not taken into account in the previous studies. The transition to college can be a hard time for many students, and feeling uncomfortable in the new environment can result in depression, anxiety and stress. To test the research, survey forms for measuring student's participation in extracurricular and academics were sent to 1500 Homeschooled College students out which only 11. 7% responded. Researchers believe that the reason for low response rate in this case was the special nature of population targeted. A question that emerges here is

that whether these consequences have negative impact on their personal and social life? A solution to this problem as suggested by the authors has already been discussed in previous researches that amount of social activities and levels of community engagement before college for homeschooled children should be enhanced and most home school educators take the involvement of children in the social and community related activities seriously. Parents are now aided by homeschooling networks in designing a diverse curriculum for their children with ample of opportunities for field trips, community work and other extracurricular activities.

Though homeschooling has been proved to be successful in making the children not only better individuals academically but also better citizens. However there is a lack of research on rules and regulations under which states grant the parents' permission to educate their children at home. There is also not much work on the parent's education or any standardized test that parents must pass to be their children's tutor at home. Research has been done on the statuses of the parent's marriage, their income but not particularly on their own education and community involvement level. A research should be conducted to study the education and exposure level of the parents who teach their children at home. Parent's interest in outdoor and community activities is something which is going to help their children to socialize with the community and people around. For this purpose tests should be conducted for parents to check their own knowledge and concepts on annual basis as well as reports should be submitted by the parents annually, outlining the academic and extracurricular goals achieved. This will

help to evaluate the progress of the homeschooled children on regular basis. Research on homeschooling also lacks the scenarios in rural and remote areas. Whether the quality of homeschooling education and socialization activities is similar to comparatively developed areas or not? For this purpose I suggest that to conduct a survey in rural areas and know what problems and limitations that exist there as well as compare the academic and extracurricular performance of homeschooled children in rural areas and homeschooled children of urban areas which will add more confirmation to the works of Stough, Taylor and Zysk.