

Don't leave home
without an education



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Don't Leave Home Without an Education Seven year old Mindy Lillie is reading a fifth grade reader about the Revolutionary War, one of her favorite topics. Her school studies today will cover 5th grade math, civics, history, a discussion on the importance of English, and a field trip to study biology. Like most children, Mindy is curious about the world and loves to learn. As soon as she finishes breakfast, she gets her books, the teacher clears the table, and Mindy is joined by her only classmate, her younger brother. Mindy, like an estimated 1.5 million other children in the US is being homeschooled (Homeschooling in the United States, 2006). These children have the freedom to study at their own pace, which usually outpaces their public educated counterparts. Moreover, the parents have the opportunity to teach material and coursework that is not offered in the local public school system. Though some may say that children develop more social skills in a classroom setting, this has not been born out by research and in fact has indicated the opposite to be true. The ability to teach your children at their own pace, in a wider array of interesting topics, and cultivate their unique socialization, makes homeschooling a welcome alternative to public schooling.

In a classroom setting with 25 other children, the pace of instruction is usually set by the slowest learners. The brighter students are often ignored as they compete for the teacher's scarce time. However, home schooling offers individual instruction designed around the child's interests and abilities. Grade school children can be offered physics, astronomy, and geometry in a setting that makes the introduction to these subjects possible. Subjects usually reserved for middle school can be taught much sooner in a home setting where the student receives the individual instruction that is necessary to excel.

Along with learning at a pace that is unhampered by limited teacher attention, the parent and student can decide what subjects to learn. Poorly funded public school systems have recently stripped their curriculum in an effort to save money. The homeschooler has the opportunity to pick and choose from the infinite variety of educational materials available. The arts, sciences, history, and social studies can be taught to even the youngest students. Homeschooling opens up a world of educational possibilities that can't be offered in a typical public school.

Critics will often point out that homeschooled children miss the opportunity to socialize with children their own age. Though they may miss the peer pressure and the stress of the need to "fit in", they do not lack in socialization. In fact, the opposite is true. An extensive 1989 study of 45,000 homeschooled children designed to measure self-concept found, "[...] [H]alf of these children scored at or above the 91st percentile--47% higher than the average, conventionally schooled child" (Aix, 1994). Children schooled at home can be imparted with the values the parents deem important without socially limiting their children by a lack of classroom experience.

Given the numerous advantages that homeschooling has over the traditional classroom setting, it is no surprise it has been met with a growing popularity. The one-on-one instruction of homeschooling results in students performing well above the average of a typical public school class. Parents can teach a wider variety of topics when the student is ready and focus on the student's interests as they are given the opportunity to learn subjects outside the scope of public instruction. Socialization, guided by the parents, will not be overly influenced by peer pressure, and will actually result in a child with an improved self-image. These factors will ultimately produce a student that is

brighter, more academically advanced, and better adjusted than most of their conventionally schooled counterparts.

References

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