

# home schooling: the better choice of education essay sample

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## Home Schooling: the better choice of education

The home schooling movement has gained great notoriety across the nation over the past 10 years. According to Jenny Murphy, “ It’s no longer something Evangelical Christians practice, more and more mainstream families are opting out of the public school systems and choosing to educate their children at home.” Given that 1. 5 million children are estimated to be educated at home, this can be considered a significant type of learning.

Recent studies show the increasing rate of home schooling within families since the 1970’s. In the 1970’s, the home school population was between 10, 000 and 20, 000 students. By the 1980’s it had grown to between 120, 000 and 260, 000 students. Now, it is estimated that the home school population has reached 1. 5 million students, growing at the rate of 10% per year. More parents are losing their faith in the public school systems and leaning on this alternative way of learning. There are many reasons why a parent would choose home schooling over public schools. First off, with home schooling a child can learn at a quicker pace while engaging in activities that interest them. Next, the dire condition of public schools can be another reason why a child is kept at home. Finally, there is a higher success rate for home school students compared to non home school students.

While learning at home, a child can learn at a quicker pace while engaging in activities that interest them. According to Mary Lanphier, “ The most common reason today’s parents have for not sending their children to public school is that they feel that public school is no longer a place where children can obtain a quality education.” With schools becoming overcrowded, a student is less likely to receive individual attention and extra help. With

home schooling though, a child's curriculum and day is structured to fit the needs and interest of the student. Parents can provide a variety of different, personalized lessons like fields trips to museums and historical sites that only help broaden their children's community and culture, something that can't always be provided at a public school. My entire education was spent in the public school system. The one conclusion that stands out to me is that if you are an average student academically and not a discipline problem, it is very easy to be overlooked. Most teachers have the time to spend with the accelerated student, especially if they have an individual progress plan which must be met. They will also focus more on the below average students or a student which presents a discipline problem. Either way, in public schools, the average student who passes doesn't get the attention or guidance they need in order to help them move to the next level.

An average student can have much more attention given to him or her while learning at home. By allowing a child to learn the way they want to and incorporate real life experiences into their lessons, home schooled students grow and mature faster than someone their own age and score higher on standardized testing. For example, Murphy states, " Test scores for the reading section on the Iowa Tests of Basic skills showed that home schooled students performed better than 79 percent of students who were not home schooled." An example of one's parent's philosophy of home schooling their child is provided in an article written by Michelle Davis: I believe that each child is gifted, but each has different gifts, said Ms. Puckett, who sees it as her job to help facilitate the learning that her children choose. When I see

them veering toward something, I guide them toward it. If they're showing no interest, then we don't do it. (8) Whether it's real life learning experiences or focusing on subjects that interest and inspires a student, home schooling offers personalized attention, sparks the imagination of the learner, and helps them mature faster than their non home schooled peers. The dire condition of public schools also can be to blame for why more families are no longer relying on the public school system for education. Over packed classrooms, deteriorating buildings, and underpaid teachers are all factors that play into a parent's decision for home schooling. High drop out rates, low test scores, and the struggle to make adequate yearly progress required by the NCLB (No Child Left Behind Act) creates an unhealthy learning environment.

A regular school going child has many distractions that keep them from learning. Lanphier writes, " He cannot keep silent or think in depth about any one thing." She also goes on later to say, " Rowdy and destructive behavior, as seen among peers, is more noticeable in school-goers." It's not just academics that seem to be on the down fall in public schools. Socially wise, students who are home schooled develop better as a person. As Chris Liakos states, " The home environment is a shield from unnecessary exposure to the public school dramas of teenage sex and pregnancy, use of tobacco and illicit drugs, the stress of peer pressure and the pursuit of popularity." This type of environment that is inevitable in public schools can easily be avoided by home schooling.

Granted, no one is immune to teen pregnancy, drugs and peer pressure, or

the pursuit of popularity, the chances of a student getting involved with these types of situations are greatly decreased when the environment is set at home, away from these influences. According to Davis, "learning should be a more organic, curiosity-inspired exercise." Whether you want to shield your kid from the negative influences that plague public schools or give them an environment that is comfortable and more individualized, home schooling offers both, something that public schools can't seem to provide anymore. On the other hand, not all parents can stay home and teach their children.

While it's commendable that some parents are willing to sacrifice their time and energy to educate their children at home, most parents do not meet the requirements to be a teacher. For example, if a parent is not trained and certified to teach, they will have a difficult time trying to instruct their children on subjects like calculus and foreign languages. If there is more than one child in the home, most parents have to dedicate their time between all of them, which can put a tremendous amount of stress on the family.

Considering that 98% of all home school families are married couple families, this type of learning would make it extremely difficult on single parent families. On top of that, not all parents have the money to provide the range and variety of classes and field trips that higher income families can offer.

According to Murphy, "Parents who home school do have some notable differences from the mainstream population though." For instance, 88% of parents who teach their children at home continued their education beyond high school, compared to just 50% of parents whose children were not being home schooled. The median income for home school families is \$52,000.

When you compare this to non home school families, whose median income is \$36, 000, this difference is significant.

While home schooling does outweigh public schools in many different aspects, many families in the United States just do not have the experience, certifications, and money to provide for their child so they can receive an adequate education at home. With home schooling comes victory. There is a higher success rate for home schooled students compared to non home schooled students. Home school students generally score at the 65th to 80th percentile on achievement tests. This is 15 to 30 percentile points higher than those in public schools. Tests like the SATs consistently show each year that home schoolers perform and score better compared to public school goers. The average home schooler has a combined SAT score 67 points higher than the national average and test scores from 20, 000 home schooled kids scored far above the national average on standardized tests. In her article, Pamela R. Winnick gives an example of one home schooled student and just how well she did on her SAT's, " Her combined Scholastic Aptitude Test score was 1, 560 out of a possible 1, 600. She'd received the highest score — five — in advanced placement exams: U. S. history, literature, psychology, French and English language, a writing course." There is no denying these scores or that home schooling results in a better education which leads to higher grades. Its not just tests that home school students prove to be perform better at, but they have also been successful at dominating national contests like the National Spelling Bee. In 1997, the winner of the National Spelling Bee was a home schooled student.

Every year since then, the winner has been a home schooled student. Stanford University is one of the world's leading research and teaching institutions and they too have acknowledged the success and hard work of home schooled students. In the 90's, the university accepted 27 percent of home schooled students. In the 90's, the university accepted 27 percent of home schoolers who applied, a rate that was twice as high as public school graduates. In the academic year of 2000-01, out of 35 home schoolers, Stanford accepted 9, which was still nearly twice that of the university's applicant pool. Many would assume that being home schooled, a child would be unsuccessful in the friend department. According to Martin Morse Wooster, " Nor do these children lack friends. The average home schooled child's life is full of activities outside the home, such as Scouting, 4-H, and music and art classes" (56). He also writes about a study that was done in the following: A University of Florida grad student videotaped 70 home school and 70 public school eight-to ten- year-olds playing, and showed the tapes to professional counselors without identification. The counselors could find only one difference: The home schooled kids were better behaved. (56) Home schooling succeeds in educating kids successfully in all areas of their life. The skills they learn and use in their childhood and teenage years transfer over into their adult years. As Lanphier states: These children are thus better equipped with the tools necessary to face the world.

The positive reinforcement that takes place in the home schooling environment as opposed to being abandoned, embarrassed or ignored in a normal school environment strengthens their self-esteem. Children turn out to be better balanced and well-rounded as they progress into adulthood.

Consistently high test scores, performing better in National Contests, and superior people skills all are components of why home schooling can be a better choice for many individuals and lead them to be more successful than the average public school student. Home schooling all around is the better choice of education. With home schooling, not only does a child learn faster but they mature quicker than their non home schooled peers. They are also kept away from the every day temptations and influences that overwhelm public schools. With deteriorating buildings, over crowded classrooms, and under paid teachers, the environment at public schools makes it almost impossible for a student to get a decent education. By allowing the learning environment to place at home, a child can encounter real life experiences and interest themselves in subjects that truly inspire and intrigue them. Finally, the success rate for home schooled students exceeds far above those who are not home schooled. Like I said earlier, I went to public school my whole life and I feel I got a pretty decent education.

After reading the statistics of test scores and the overall success of home schooled students, my opinion about the education I received compared to the education you receive from home schooling has drastically changed. Regardless of this, a parent deciding what choice of education their child will get is very important. It is not something that should be taken lightly. It is a decision that could affect the rest of the child's life; therefore the decision should be made between the parent and child, not just by the parent or just the child. If the child is too young to decide, then the parent has to think what would give their child the best opportunities and education. Obviously,



home schooling would be the better choice of education because it can provide everything public schools seem to be losing and guarantee a successful future or your child.

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