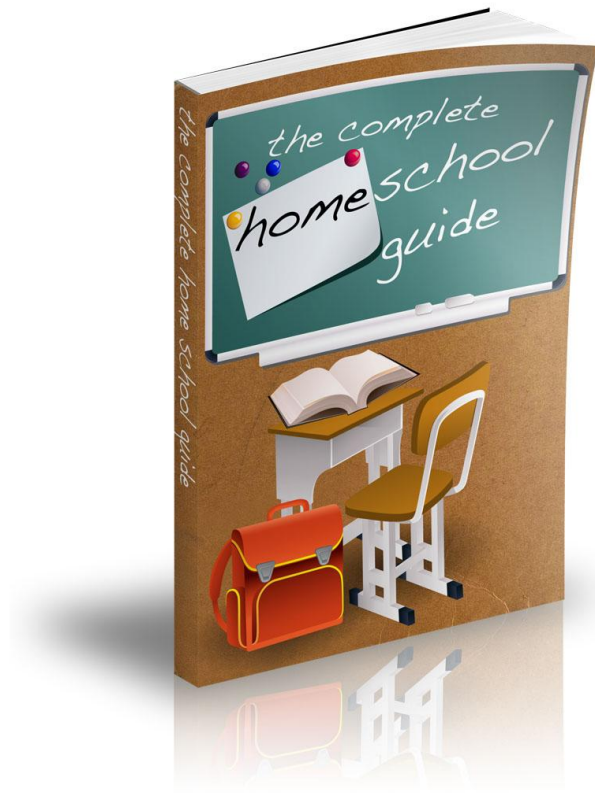


Complete Homeschool Guide

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Introduction

According to the most recent Department of Education study, there are over ONE MILLION homeschooled students in the US. That number is rising steadily. Homeschooling is even more prevalent in other countries.

Some of the reasons for this large and growing movement include the declining state of public schools, the opportunity for those able to spend more time with their children, and the desire on the part of many parents to impart a more personal and practical education.

Beyond those already engaged in homeschooling, there are many more interested in the idea and looking for information and answers to some common questions regarding homeschooling. Whether you are considering homeschooling, already a homeschooling parent, or just want to understand what's involved, this guide is for you!

The Complete Guide to Homeschooling will give you an excellent foundation about homeschooling basics, what you need to know about the law regarding homeschooling, and

address important issues such as socialization for homeschool students, how to become an effective homeschool parent, and how to insure your homeschooled students can continue on to college if desired.

The Complete Guide to Homeschooling also gives you tips to make homeschooling easier for you as the parent, how to make it more fun for student, and how to use the Internet for homeschooling.

Finally, The Complete Guide to Homeschooling lists resources for materials, and for improving the quality and enjoyment of homeschooling for both parent and child.

I hope you enjoy The Complete Guide to Homeschooling as much as I enjoyed putting it together. Homeschooling can be a wonderful, fulfilling, and valuable endeavor, and I wish you all the best on your journey!

Sincerely,

Isabel Allen - Parent of 4 homeschooled children.



Homeschooling Basics

If you're new to the idea of homeschooling, you likely have questions. Are you overwhelmed at the different choices you have to make? How do you prepare for the school year? Do you have to buy a specific curriculum, or do you even need one? Before you allow yourself to get too stressed, the following guidelines might help to make the process easier.

1. Learn your state's homeschooling laws. Each state has their own laws concerning educating your child. Make sure you understand and obey the laws in your state.
2. Write down your educational goals for your child. This will help you decide which curriculum will best meet those goals. It will also give you a guide to see if you're on track throughout the year.
3. Develop an educational philosophy by determining what you believe to be important. Are you concerned just about academics, or do you consider character development to be equally important? Do you want your child to be able to learn

for a test, or do you want them to learn to think for themselves?

4. Decide what type of personality your family has – do you normally schedule everything down to the minute, or are you more spontaneous. Knowing this one piece of information can make a big difference in choosing the style or method of homeschooling you choose.

5. Know your child's learning style? Are they a hearing, seeing, or doing learner? Knowing their learning style will help you determine what items you will need to best meet their ability to learn.

If your children are very young, you don't have to purchase the latest curriculum. Spend time with them helping them learn to write their alphabet, learn simple math, and prepare them to learn to read. Small workbooks available at most discount stores. Use candy or beans to teach math concepts. Teach them to form their letters properly, use shaving cream or rice on a cookie sheet. As you can see, you don't need to spend a great deal of money to teach the basics.

After teaching the basics, make sure your child has an

opportunity for fun. Get involved in a support group with other homeschoolers. Plan some play days or field trips; let the children run and work off some of their pent-up energy. Having a support group helps moms, as well, especially when you have questions or need guidance.

Subscribe to some homeschooling magazines or newsletters. This will also help when you have questions because you'll be able to see how other people homeschool and learn how they handle the different aspects of daily life while homeschooling. It will help you to know that you're not alone.

Plan on going back to school yourself; continue reading and learning as you teach your child. There will always be new things to learn, so plan on becoming a life learner. As your child grows you may need to try a different approach. By reading and learning along the way, you'll be better able to make the necessary changes.

Choosing to homeschool is not always an easy decision to make. However, when you realize that you can do it and follow these basic guidelines, you'll soon realize that you made the right choice. Homeschooling is an awesome opportunity for you, your family, and your children to learn and grow together.

Is Homeschooling Right?

Homeschooling is legal in every state, but the choice to homeschool should not be made lightly. Research and discussion are required to make a wise decision. How do you tell if homeschooling is right for your family? Here are a few questions to ask yourself when considering homeschooling as an option for your family.

Am I comfortable spending all of my time with my children?

One of the main reasons that people homeschool is because they love their children and want what's best for them. They also genuinely like spending time with their children, which is good since you'll be spending all of your time with them. If your children frustrate you easily, homeschooling might not be a good match for you.

Will questions bother me?

Homeschoolers are usually asked a lot of questions. Those questions could be about what curriculum they're using or about socialization for their children. If you homeschool, it helps if you don't mind answering the same questions more than once.

How can I find out about homeschooling?

Check out books from your public library. There is more than likely a large selection of books that will tell you everything you need to know. The librarian might even be able to tell you if there are any homeschoolers in the area, since most homeschoolers rely heavily upon the library for source materials.

Is there a support system available?

After you've read some books, find local homeschoolers, or do an online search for "homeschool groups (your city)" or "homeschool groups (your state)." There are homeschooling co-ops available in many places, as well as opportunities for families to get together and have fun.

What if I have other questions?

After you've found some families that already homeschool, and ask them about the pros and cons of homeschooling. Most families will be honest about their reasons, and will be more than happy to help you make an informed decision. Ask them what types of hardships they had to deal with when starting out. Should you be concerned about socialization for your children?

What about curriculum? Do they have suggestions about what to use or not to use?

What curriculum do I choose?

Curriculum choices are astronomical – in the variety available, and often in the price. While it is possible to have “school at home” by choosing books very similar to what are offered in public schools, it is also possible to homeschool without using a set curriculum at all. The library books you checked out earlier should have explained about the different methods, and should have given you an idea of what your child should learn in each grade.

If you are considering homeschooling your child, or children, answering the above questions should help you make an informed decision. Not everyone will choose to homeschool after investigating the option. However, if you want to be more involved in your child’s education, homeschooling might just be right for you.

Is it Too Late to Homeschool my Child?

People choose to homeschool for any number of reasons. Some of those reasons include homeschooling for religious reasons, not subjecting their children to many new schools if they move a lot, or having a child with health issues that could be made worse by attending public school. For whatever the reason, homeschooling is a great option. Homeschooling does not have to begin when a child first starts school, you can start a child on their homeschool journey at any point in their school career.

Many people think that homeschooling must start at kindergarten. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, you can begin to homeschool your child at any age or in any grade. When you begin homeschooling depends on when you've decided to take your child out of the public school system and bring them home to teach them.

While it may be easier to begin homeschooling right from the start, it isn't unheard of for parents to pull their children out of school in any grade. Depending on the student, parents may decide to teach when they're starting high school. It's not unheard of in homeschooling communities to choose to homeschool as their child's educational career is nearing a close.

One reason parents may choose to bring home a student starting high school is that the parents don't feel their local school is safe. With the possibility of being introduced to drugs and alcohol, parents may choose to keep their children from those influences. They may also bring their child home because of the threat of violence on campus. These and other issues may cause a parent to pull their high school student out of school to homeschool.

If unhealthy influences aren't an issue, some parents decide that high school is the right time to homeschool because of opportunities that arise. Some high school students are already in advanced classes, however if they homeschool, they may be able to attend some beginning college courses while still in high school.

Another possible reason for bringing a child home while they're in high school is so they can participate in a work-study program. Whether they are interested in a work-study program, or an apprenticeship, public high school students may not be able to work these programs into their schedule. As a homeschool student, however, they have the ability to work ahead and therefore may be finished with high school courses which will free them to pursue an apprenticeship position.

Homeschooling is an awesome opportunity for students, no matter what grade they begin. Things may be easier on both the parent and the student if they begin homeschooling when the student is younger.

However, that doesn't mean you can't bring your child home as they near graduation. Listen to your child, understand what they want to accomplish, and then let them spread their wings and fly.

Homeschool Naysayers

Everyone who decides to homeschool their children will run into at least one person, maybe more, that tell them they shouldn't homeschool. The decision to homeschool, isn't an easy one to make, and often isn't popular. However, the choice in how your child is educated is entirely up to you, so you need to decide ahead of time how you will deal with homeschooling naysayers.

One of the quintessential arguments of a homeschooling naysayer is that you're not qualified to teach your own child, regardless if you have a Bachelor of Arts in Education or not. To this argument, I say poppy-cock! If you're a parent, you've already been teaching your child since birth. Who was it that taught your child to talk, walk, and use the restroom by themselves? It was you and your spouse, of course. So, if you could teach them those skills, why wouldn't you be qualified to teach them how to read or do math?

Besides being "unqualified," other nay-sayers will tell you that teaching a child is too difficult. What I find even more difficult is the thought of having to teach with 18-20 five and six year olds several subjects all in one day. That is a difficult job;

teaching one child to read is not. You can do it!

Another argument you might hear if you're trying to decide if you want to homeschool is that the children need socialization. Well, I don't know about you, but I'm not sure I want my children to learn all of the things they learn at school. Of course, all of the lessons aren't given by the teachers. Many are learned as the result of being with other children.

To this argument, I say that homeschooled children are better socialized than 95% of the children in public schools. Besides being able to deal with their peers, homeschooled children can carry on intelligent conversations with people of all ages. Public schools create artificial societies and these societies are not true to life. Besides public education, there isn't a time at any other point in your life that you're going to deal with people all your age. It just doesn't happen, and it won't happen, either.

These are just a few of the comments that you'll likely hear as you are researching the possibility of homeschooling your child. All I can say is that it's okay if you don't know everything you're told you need to know. Take that as an opportunity to learn right along side your child. Since you want what is best for your child, you will be giving them the opportunity to learn

at their own pace and concentrate on the things they are interested in learning.

Ultimately, it is your choice on how to educate your child. Although the nay-sayers may be loud, be polite and listen to what they have to say. Listen, and then choose to ignore them. Give your child the opportunity to love the learning process. Learning is not a destination, it's a journey. Let them enjoy the trip along the way.

Different Ways to Homeschool

You've done it! You've made the choice to homeschool your children. But now what? There are different methods of homeschooling: school-at-home, Charlotte Mason, classical, and unschooling, to name a few. If you unschool are you really homeschooling, or is it something else entirely?

Unschooling, as it's often called, is one alternative to public school and even homeschooling. Also known as natural learning, independent learning, or child-led learning, unschooling is an approach that flies in the face of traditional thought when it comes to educating your child. So what exactly is unschooling, and how does it differ from homeschooling?

The biggest difference between unschooling and homeschooling is in the mindset. Where homeschooling is basically concerned with your child learning what it normally taught in public schools, unschoolers have a completely different way of looking at their children and at life. Unschooling is based on mutual trust between parent and child and in finding what works best for them.

Homeschoolers might choose to use a specific curriculum as a base for their teaching. Unschoolers, however, may not even use a pre-planned curriculum at all. Unschoolers believe that children learn at all times, and that what they need to learn doesn't necessarily have to come out of a set curriculum.

Another term for unschooling is delight-driven. It's not that a child is given complete freedom from learning; it means that the child is allowed to learn the things that interest them instead of what an institution says they should know. Most often those who unschool learn those things that they will be using in life rather than just what is in a book.

It may seem to an outsider looking in that an unschooler isn't actually doing school work at all. In fact, unschoolers believe that living life is the best education a child can get, so they aren't quite as concerned about what others think. Of course, if you live in a state that has more requirements for homeschoolers, it might seem a little daunting to prove that actual learning is taking place.

Since homeschooling can take on so many faces, it seems that unschooling fits right in after all. All homeschooling parents want the opportunity for their children to learn in an

environment where they are encouraged to grow, develop, and flourish. What better way than to allow your child to learn the things that interest them? In doing so, they'll pick up the things that traditional education believes they need to know.

What if I Didn't Do Well in School?

If you are considering homeschooling your children, you might be apprehensive if you didn't do well in school yourself. Thankfully your success, or lack thereof, in school does not have to be an issue in choosing to homeschool. In fact, you can take advantage of the time you're teaching your child to brush up on some of the things you didn't do so well with when you were in school.

Math is one subject that parents stress over when they choose to homeschool, especially if they struggled when they went to school. Your struggles shouldn't be a factor in choosing to homeschool. If you weren't good in math, remember you'll have the teacher's manual with the answers. However, you may have to spend a little bit of time relearning, or learning anew, the concepts prior to trying to teach your child. And remember, you can always turn to other homeschooling families to help you if you need it.

Another subject parents might not look forward to teaching is English. Maybe you hated English and writing. If you haven't found a planned curriculum to use for English, you can find helpful books at the local library. You can also find materials

online, including worksheets and tests.

Besides Math and English, another subject that parents worry about teaching is Science. There are a number of good science curriculums available, some with all of the materials for experiments. You'd be surprised just what you can find to use for free on the Internet. In fact, you can even dissect a virtual frog instead of having to smell formaldehyde if that turned you off when you took Biology.

Reading should be one of the easiest subjects. Your children will learn to love reading if they see you and your spouse read, no matter the book. Read books aloud with your child and then have them re-tell you the story in their own words. If they are just learning how to read, one resource that is popular with homeschoolers is "Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons" by Siegfried Englemann, Phyllis Haddox, and Elaine Bruner.

It doesn't really matter if you did well in school or not. You don't have to let how well you did keep you from teaching your children. You can learn along with them to fill in the gaps in your own education. If you come across something that you don't understand, search out your homeschooling friends, they

can probably help you. Another option would be to see if you can find a local homeschool co-op. In either case, you can make homeschooling a positive experience for yourself as well as your children.

Homeschool Laws

Millions of children in the United States are homeschooled. In fact, Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) projects that this number will reach over 12 million by 2015. The United States Constitution does not have specific laws concerning education; each state governs education and has its own laws concerning homeschooling. So, if you've considered homeschooling your children, you will only have to learn the laws for your individual state.

Homeschooling laws vary from state to state. Each state has a mandate to provide an education for its students; many states delegate that authority to the state's Board of Education. The state Board of Education wants to ensure that every child receives an adequate education. Because of this mandate, one Federal law was passed, Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974. This law requires that no state can deny any child an education based on their race, color, sex, or national origin. In other words, every child within every state is guaranteed an education.

While states cannot deny a child an education, it is ultimately up to the parent to choose where that child will attend school –

whether public school, private school, or homeschool. Public schools, and some private schools, are regulated by the state. However, since a large percentage of homeschool families do so for religious reasons, there are often few regulations for homeschools.

One state law that appears to be universal is the requirement for children to attend school in some fashion during set compulsory ages. These ages, however, may be different in each state. Some states require children to be in school from 5 to 17, others 7 to 16; it just depends on the state's laws.

To determine what your state's compulsory ages are you can search the internet, or contact HSLDA.

Home School Legal Defense Association, National Home Education Network, and other websites on the Internet, list the homeschool laws for each state. If you choose to homeschool, it would be advantageous to learn your state's laws. After you have begun to homeschool, if you move to another state, especially if you are a military family, you can go back to these sites to find the laws for the new state.

Military families often move several times throughout the length of a soldier's career. Many are choosing to homeschool because

it is one way to guarantee continuity in their children's education. Rather than transferring a child from one school to another, often internationally, a military family that homeschools can continue their child's education without fear of negative impact.

Choosing to homeschool is not always an easy decision to make. However, it is legal in each of the fifty states. You may have to register your intent to homeschool with your local board of education or you may have to turn in portfolios.

Whatever your state requires, just remember that you are allowed by law to homeschool your child, and that there are places to turn if you have questions.

Transition to Homeschooling

If your child is struggling in public school, for whatever reason, and is getting more discouraged as the year progresses. Choosing to homeschool might be a valid option to consider. However, be prepared for a transition period after taking your child out of public school before jumping into homeschooling.

If your child is currently in public school, before you withdraw them, you need to determine your state's homeschooling laws. Make sure you meet all of the state's requirements before taking further action. After you've met each of the laws of your state, contact your child's school and formally withdraw your child. Failing to formally withdraw your child may lead to truancy issues in the future. Also, be prepared for them to ask questions.

The manner in which you withdraw your child will probably vary depending on where you live, possibly writing a letter to the superintendent of your child's school system. Explain to them that you have chosen to homeschool and are formally withdrawing your child. Provide proof that you are following your state's laws and are legally allowed to withdraw your child from school. If you can quote part of the law in your letter, it will show that you understand the law and your rights as a

homeschooling family.

- When you have your child at home, be prepared to take some time off of actual school work. This will give your child a chance to learn a new lifestyle. After all, your child has been used to the school's way of doing things. They are no longer imprisoned by the rules and regulations they've come to know.
- Take some time to get to know one another again. You may think you know your child, but it's quite possible that you don't know them at all. There may be parts of your child's personality that you never knew existed. They might learn some new things about you, as well.
- Don't be surprised if your child continues to do the things that they've become accustomed to doing. Some new homeschoolers will raise their hand if they have a question or when they need to use the restroom. It may take some time to do, but those habits will need to be broken.

- Keep some of the better habits they've gained. If your child has been used to having spelling tests on a particular day of the week, continue to keep that schedule. If you allow them to stop doing everything they did in public school, you may have a situation that is worse than they left.
- Take the time to enjoy the process with your child. Choosing to homeschool, while primarily for the student, should also be enjoyable for you as well. Cut loose and have fun. Don't take yourselves too seriously, and remember that you were a parent first.
- Most of all, remember why you chose to homeschool . . . to enjoy the freedom homeschooling affords.

Finding Other Homeschoolers

When you first start thinking about homeschooling, you probably wonder if you'll be the only one in your area. However, with the ever increasing number of homeschooling families, that is not likely. Finding other homeschoolers, however, may not always be easy. You just need to know where to look.

One place you will likely find other homeschoolers is at local churches. Although all homeschoolers aren't Christians, and it certainly isn't a requirement to homeschool, many homeschoolers are. If you don't currently attend services, you might consider attending a couple of services to see if there are homeschoolers at the local church.

Besides churches, another place to find a homeschooling family would be the public library. Many homeschoolers use the library as a source for learning materials. Go to the library and see if you find children there during normal school hours. If you find children, most likely they are homeschooled and a parent is sure to be nearby. You could also ask the librarian if she knows of any homeschoolers. Most likely she will because they will be some of her best patrons.

If you take your kids to the park during school hours, you'll probably run into at least one homeschooling family there enjoying the sunshine and fresh air. Or they might be picking up leaves for a nature book, or finding other items to use in a school project. In any case, local parks are a great place to find homeschoolers.

You might find a homeschooling family at the grocery store while you're doing your own shopping. Many homeschoolers use real life circumstances to teach rather than just depending on books. So, if you see children standing around the meat freezer with calculators, it's likely they're doing comparison shopping for their math lesson.

The Internet is another place to find homeschoolers in your area. Try doing a search on one of the common search engines for "homeschool groups (your city)." If that doesn't work, expand your search to include your county and then your state. Since there are homeschoolers in every state of the union, surely you'll find someone close by. On the outside chance that you don't find anyone locally, don't give up. You can still find support online through any number of Yahoo homeschooling groups.

When searching for homeschooling families locally, don't be

afraid to approach a family that you see out and about during school hours. Most homeschoolers are used to being asked why their children aren't in school. They probably won't be offended and asking questions is a great way to meet new acquaintances. Keep an eye out for them; you may find there are more homeschoolers in your area than you first thought.

Routines for Homeschooling

When one decides to homeschool, there is so much to consider, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Along with being overwhelmed, you may feel confused about what to expect. How will homeschooling affect your daily lives? The homeschool family may choose to create a schedule for everyone to follow, or they may choose a routine that will be effective for their families.

For some people, a set schedule is the best way to run their lives. For others, however, having everything planned out in fifteen minute increments doesn't sound like fun. Where structure might be desired, it isn't always practical. Conversely, while being relaxed might be great, some routines are needed to be effective as homeschoolers.

Schedules and routines for homeschooling are as varied as the families that homeschool. Here are a couple of routine types that a family can follow:

1. School at home would have the children keeping a similar schedule as those in public school. This would include getting up at a specific time every day and then starting their day with

either breakfast or chores as the first order of the day. Following that, the children would be given 45 minutes per subject, just like if they were in public school, and they would have a printed schedule to go by for their day.

2. If you're not enthused by this approach, a more relaxed routine might be more what you're looking for. If this is the case, you may start your day whenever one of the children gets out of bed. You can work with that one child, undisturbed, until the other children make their presence known. This type of routine would be more staggered, with mom giving special attention to each child as they rise.

3. Some homeschoolers don't really have a set schedule or routine for actual schoolwork. They may allow the children to choose which subject they want to do first, and continue in that way until all subjects are covered. This type of routine is great for those students who are self-starters and can work without supervision.

While these routines might be helpful, there are the people that completely against anything planned and live life by the seats of their pants. This is the type of person that allows the day to happen to them, taking each moment as it comes and living their life to the fullest. They often have more fun, but may have a

little bit of a problem finishing projects and school work.

Whichever routine or schedule you choose to follow, just remember that all work and no play make Jack a very dull boy. Take some time out of your scheduled day to enjoy your children. Plan some free time on your calendar to allow them to just relish in being a child. After all, part of the reason you chose to homeschool was so you could spend quality time with your children. Let the schedules and routines slip every now and then. You'll be glad you did, and your children will thank you for it.

How to Make it Easier for Parents

Homeschooling, while it affords you certain freedoms when educating your child, is not always easy. But there are things that you can do to make homeschooling easier for yourself as a parent. The following tips may help make your job as a homeschooling parent a little easier.

- If in doubt, look on the Internet. If you are in doubt about your method of homeschooling, use the internet to seek another method. In fact, you can use the internet to help you in regard to nearly everything homeschool related. Do you need something to keep your little one busy while you're working with an older child? The internet has coloring sheets galore, as well as worksheets, mazes, and puzzles.
- Choose a complete curriculum. Complete curriculums will also make homeschooling easier on you as a parent. Instead of having to search through multiple catalogs to find just the right curriculum, choose a complete curriculum. Not only will it save you time, it may even save you money, in the long run.
- Cut yourself some slack. Don't expect yourself to be the

perfect teacher. Unless you have an education degree, you most likely will make mistakes along the way. Don't beat yourself up about them. Learn from the mistakes and try not to repeat them again.

- Allow your children to help themselves. You can't be expected to know everything, so if your child wants to learn something you don't know, give them the freedom to follow their interests. You might be pleasantly surprised to find that they learn more on their own than they did while you were more involved.

- Seek the help from others. When in doubt about anything dealing with homeschooling, seek the advice from those who have been homeschooling for longer than you. Even though they may not have dealt with exactly what you're dealing with, chances are they will be able to give you advice or point you in the right direction. Take advantage of your homeschooling peers' offers of help, there might be a time where you'll be able to return the favor.

- Online communities are available. If you don't know people that homeschool in your local area, there are literally hundreds of homeschooling communities on the Internet. Search online

for homeschooling groups or forums. They can be found in every state, and even some outside of the United States. You may have to register to join a homeschool group or forum, but you can be as active as you like and remain anonymous if you like.

Homeschooling doesn't have to be hard. In fact, one of the reasons most people choose to homeschool is the ease and freedom associated with it. When you have difficulty, however, you may feel as if you need help. The above tips, when followed, can help make homeschooling a little bit easier.

How to Make it Fun for Kids

Children often say they don't like school, but you might not ever hear your children make that statement if you homeschool. Homeschooling has many benefits over sending your child to public school. Besides being able to attend school in your pajamas, your child will have much more freedom to learn than their public school counterparts will have.

One of the things that can make homeschooling fun for children is the ability to take multiple field trips throughout the year. Whereas most public school students are lucky to take one field trip a year, if they even get to take that, homeschool students have the freedom to go on as many as their parent or support group can plan.

Field trip possibilities are endless, limited only to by the imagination of the planner, and funds you're willing to see leave your wallet. Some common field trips are museums, zoos, and botanical gardens. Did you know you can also make a field trip out of a trip to a Krispy Kreme Donut store? Yep, you sure can. You can also visit police departments, fire departments, and local newspapers. In fact, if you can find someone willing to allow it, you can make a field trip out of almost any business

you can think of.

Besides taking several field trips a year, another thing that makes homeschooling fun for kids is the ability to learn what interests them and in a way that suits their learning style. While they will still have to learn the basics of reading, writing, and mathematics, they may choose to concentrate on robots, dinosaurs, or some composer or artist. And one of the benefits of homeschooling is that you can combine coursework into Unit Studies that enable the student to cover the basics all while concentrating on that one subject.

It seems that art and music are all but missing from public schools as educational budgets are slashed each year. If you homeschool, and your child likes either art or music, you can spend as much time on those subjects as you'd like. In fact, you can combine art and music appreciation with many other subjects. Allow your child to try something they've never done before. You have that option if you homeschool, and you don't have to get permission from the principal to do so.

Many children learn best by handling items, whether math manipulatives, building blocks, or cooking utensils. If you homeschool, you can allow your child to use those

manipulatives if doing so will help them to learn. In public schools, children's learning styles often aren't taken into consideration since teachers have to teach to a whole group and can't address students individually. By allowing your child to learn in the way that is easiest for them, homeschooling will be much more fun for them.

While it's unlikely that your homeschooled children will say they "love" school, there are things that you can do to help them enjoy it more. By allowing them to learn to their strengths, concentrating on subjects that interest them, and taking them on field trips, your child will enjoy going to "school" much better.

How the Internet Can Help

Homeschooling and the Internet - many consider the two to be a match made in heaven. In fact, those who homeschool would be hard pressed to do so without the Internet. The following seven ways explain how to use the Internet with homeschooling, but there are many more.

1. Find state laws concerning homeschooling. One of the first ways the Internet can help with homeschooling is by giving parents access to homeschool laws for their state. Knowing the laws will prepare homeschool families to meet their state's requirements so they can comply with them.
2. If you're new to homeschooling, you'll most likely need to have support during the year. The Internet is a great place to find support. Not only can you find online homeschooling groups, but your local group will probably use the Internet to communicate, especially if the members are spread out over a large area.
3. Purchasing curriculum is a major undertaking every year. Use the Internet first to research curriculum and compare prices

before buying. Besides going to the curriculum manufacturer's websites, look for used curriculum on places such as eBay and vegeSource. If you purchase materials online it will be delivered right to your door instead of having to drive around trying to find it.

4. Once you have your curriculum, you may want to supplement it with handouts, worksheets, and puzzles. These are easily accessible on the Internet. And, most of the materials you find on the Internet are either free, or very inexpensive. Use common search engines like Google, Yahoo!igans, or Ask Jeeves Kids to find the items you need.

5. Some children are interested in music and would like to learn more about it. Resources found online would be great for this child. Not only can you find free sheet music online for nearly any instrument, you can also learn about the composers who wrote that music. There are even websites that can teach your child how to create music.

6. If your child is looking for specific information about their favorite subject? You can run to the library, or if you have Internet access, your child should be able to find anything they could ever hope to learn online. A couple of good research sites

would include Discovery.com, HistoryChannel.com, and PBS.com.

7. Does your child need to learn something that you don't feel comfortable teaching? You could either find out if there are private tutors for that subject in your area, or you may be able to find an online tutorial.

As you can see, the Internet can be extremely useful if you homeschool. These seven ideas for using the Internet are not exhaustive. All it takes is a little bit of imagination and you'll be able to find other ways that you can use it, as well. Take some time, do some searching, and you'll see that homeschooling and the Internet are indeed a match made in heaven.

What About the Socialization Factor?

One of the most often heard questions when considering homeschooling is, “Aren’t you worried about socialization?” I’m not sure if those questions are truly about socialization, or if they’re about socializing. There’s a big difference between the two.

While this issue of socialization seems to be on the minds of people against homeschooling, those who actually homeschool never give it much thought. They know that their children are not going to suffer by foregoing public school socialization. In fact, most homeschool children are probably better socialized than public school students.

Socialization is basically learning to conform to today’s society. What is it about homeschooling that would keep a child from learning to conform to today’s society? And do we really want children that conform and become little automatons? Or do we want children who can think for themselves while having something to offer society as a whole?

Children are little sponges, so just by being a part of a family

they will begin to learn what society expects of them. The only way a child would fail to be socialized is if they were secluded away from everyone. The image of a backwoods, backwards, misfit homeschool family is just not accurate. Homeschooling families are generally active in their local communities, and often involved in volunteering to help others. These activities will help solve any socialization issues.

So if you plan to homeschool, how should you respond when asked about socialization? Are the questions really about socializing instead? Well, I can honestly say, my kids are very social. Not only do we attend church every week, we have days during the week that we meet with other homeschool families, and they'll strike up a conversation with anyone, no matter their age. If those activities aren't enough, homeschool children have play days, skate days, and trips to the bowling alley. How much more social does a child have to be?

When thinking about socialization, one has to wonder, are the lessons they learn in public school really any better than what they'll learn at home? Since public schools create artificial societies which rarely mirror real life. In public schools children learn about drugs, alcohol, violence, and sexual promiscuity. Most homeschool parents are very happy that their children

won't have to learn those lessons.

If socialization is supposed to teach your child how to behave in society, how to properly respond to people, and be responsible adults, it isn't very likely that a child will learn that from public school.

All one has to do is go to nearly any public middle school and walk the halls. After witnessing the behavior of the students there, ask yourself which of those behaviors you would truly want your child to emulate. That should get any parent's attention and quell any further questions or concerns about a homeschool child's socialization.

Can a Homeschooler go on to College?

Families have homeschooled their children throughout history. Homeschooling fell out of fashion when modern public schools were developed, until homeschooling began again in the early 1980s. Since that time some of those homeschool graduates have continued their education, but it hasn't always been easy to go on to college.

Until recently, being accepted into college after homeschooling has been uncommon, but times are changing. In fact, many colleges now seek out homeschool graduates for admission. The reasons they do so are varied, but it boils down to the fact that homeschooled students already know how to learn.

Should your child pursue a college education after being homeschooled? That is a decision only you and your child can make. While college is different from public school, there are some similarities. If your child has not been used to the structure of public school, you need to realize that they may struggle in college. Don't let that dissuade your child; the struggles can be overcome if they put forth some effort.

If your child is interested in furthering their education, by all means allow them to pursue it. Encourage them to reach for their dream. Your job, however, will increase as you have to keep very good records. Your child will need a transcript that you create, or you can sign up with a homeschool cover that will create the transcript for you.

What are the requirements for gaining entrance to college? Each college has their own admissions requirements. Check with the college your student is interested in attending. The college should have their requirements listed on their website, if they have one, or you can write for a catalog or further information.

Quite often children will be homeschooled until they reach high school so that the student will be able to get a diploma. Others will continue to homeschool through high school and take correspondence courses to earn their diploma. Begin to prepare your student to take the ACT as a preliminary to entering college.

Seek out the help and advice from the college Registrar. They will be able to inform you of any special requirements for homeschoolers. They will also be able to tell you if there are

other options for those seeking admission without a traditional education. An option that isn't often considered if a student wants to continue their education is to seek admission after turning 19. This will classify the student as "mature" and changes the criteria for entering college. In some colleges, the age to classify as mature is 21. Check the college of your choice before using this option.

Finally, when considering a possible college education, make sure that your child has begun to contact potential colleges in plenty of time for the application process. They will also need to fulfill the other college admissions requirements. Encourage them to seek their dreams and do all you can to help them go from homeschool graduate to college student.

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Will Edwards is the founder of [White Dove Books](#) - the internet's leading website for Self Improvement and Personal Development. A graduate of the University of Birmingham, he develops and teaches Personal Development workshops and is a published author.

Within its first three years, White Dove Books was recognised as one of the internet's leading sites for self help and personal development; breaking into the top 100,000 sites on the internet at the end of 2005.

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