



Homeschooling Myths

By Judy Arnall

Homeschooling is a popular phenomenon in education and is growing at a rate of 2.5% every year. Many parents consider homeschooling their children, but the image of Mom at the blackboard in the kitchen and the children not listening around the kitchen table fills them with dread. Rightly so! Homeschooling is not like that at all. In fact, even the word, homeschooling, is a bit of a misdemeanor – it's not anything like school and it's usually not at home either. Perhaps it should be called "community education" because most homeschoolers are out in the community living, working, volunteering and learning every day, more so than being "stuck at home".

Here are some of the most common myths and misconceptions surrounding homeschooling:

Myth#1

"Only special types of people can homeschool their children. I'm not one of them."

Truth

Everyone home schools their children from birth to at least age five. Every parent is their child's first teacher and for some parents, that doesn't stop when their child enters school.

They continue to provide stimulation and learning opportunities for their child up until high school and beyond. Homeschooling parents just decide to do this for a greater portion of the day than other parents. There are as many reasons why people homeschool as there are people who do it.

Myth#2

"I have to fight with my children to do their homework. I can't be fighting with them over the entire curriculum!" It's a fact that in parenting, many times children do not comply with their parents wishes and this tends to turn parents off of homeschooling.

Truth

Homework is an agreement between your child and their teacher. There is not much leeway in the assignments because the teacher has to deal with an entire classroom. Homeschooling is between you and your child. Everything is flexible. If your child hates doing an assignment, find another way for him to learn that is fun such as field trips, games, movies, or computer games. There are many more ways to learn than just workbooks and textbooks. The scope, depth, and methods of delivery of key concepts are all negotiable in the home environment.

Myth# 3

"I don't have the patience to teach my child."

Truth

Homeschoolers come in every shade of parenting styles and patience levels. For those who have little patience, they rely more on fun activities that are enjoyable for the whole family in order to teach the core subjects. Or they let the children teach themselves. Children are like sponges and will soak up information that they are interested in. Most children are naturally interested in all the subjects of the elementary core curriculum at some point in time.

Myth#4

"I need to earn an income and be away from home during the day."

Truth

Many homeschoolers work part time and some even full time while juggling children's activities and schedules. Finding childcare for school aged children not old enough to stay home alone can be a challenge though. Babysitting co-ops and parents tag-teaming childcare helps to alleviate this.

Myth#5

"My children are very sociable and need to be with other kids during the day."

Truth

Homeschooling is so social, that most homeschoolers express the desire to spend more time at home and have some down time. According to the

Fraser Institute, the average home schooled child is registered in 8 activities per week, and most of them involve other children.

The city is full of activities, groups and social events for homeschoolers to mix and mingle with children and parents of all ages, ethnicity, religion and personalities. In between activities, there are playdates between homeschoolers during the day. The social mix of homeschooling, instead of age-grading children, actually reflects the social mix that people get in “the real world.”

Myth #6

“I can’t afford to homeschool.”

Truth

The government gives you funding to buy supplies, lessons and activities to aid and supplement learning.

Myth #7

“My children won’t go to university if I homeschool.”

Truth

It’s well researched that homeschooled children are just as educated as their institution based counterparts and are just as sociable. Many homeschooled children are very self-directed and continue to love learning for its own sake. If research didn’t support it, the government wouldn’t embrace it.

Homeschooling is becoming so common that most families know at least one other family that homeschools. If you are considering it, talk to as many homeschooling families as you can to get a feel for what it is really like. Often, the media portrays one type of homeschooling – school at home – which doesn’t reflect the myriad of styles out there: unschooling, Waldorf, Montessori, traditional, classical, eclectic, relaxed, or project/unit based. One of these philosophies is right for you!

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