

Home-Schooling

What is home-schooling?

Home-schooling is often perceived as the ultimate privatization of education, because parents must secure funding, choose curriculum content, and determine how to grade and progress their child. Home-schooling occurs when a family decides to teach their child at home and a parent assumes responsibility for the formal instruction of his or her child.

For further reading on the development and character of home-schooling see the following NCSPE articles:
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Occasional Paper 48: Nemer, Kariane Mari. 2002. "Understudied Education: Toward Building A Home-Schooling Research Agenda." http://www.ncspe.org/publications_files/114_OP48.pdf

Occasional Paper 62: Belfield, Clive. 2002. "The characteristics of Home-Schoolers: New Evidence from High Schools." http://www.ncspe.org/publications_files/932_OP62_v2.pdf
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Occasional Paper 64: Isenberg, Eric. 2002. "Home Schooling: School Choice and Women's Time Use." http://www.ncspe.org/publications_files/406_OP64.pdf

Why is home-schooling controversial?

Home-schooling has become an attractive choice for families that hold values not promoted in public schools or existing private schools. Families may home-school to teach religious beliefs and alternative values. This agenda may make educators and politicians nervous, especially when home-schoolers avoid other tasks of public education, such as citizenship preparation. In addition, recent plans have used public money to fund home-schools. Both California and Alaska allow home-school charter schools, while charter schools that use the internet to instruct students are popular with home-school parents. The potential advantages and disadvantages of home-schooling are listed below.

What are the possible advantages of home-schooling?

- **Individual Attention.** Unlike in a large classroom setting, home-schooled children receive the full attention of their parental teacher.
- **Greater flexibility.** With limited students, a parent can design a curriculum that addresses the specific talents and needs of each child.
- **Reduced Peer Pressure.** Public education often encourages unhealthy forms of competition among students. Home-schooling allows students to focus on learning.
- **Promotes Family.** Many people believe parents have the right to promote core beliefs and values in their children. Home-schooling enables this process.

What are the possible disadvantages of home-schooling?

- **Greater Costs.** Home-schooling usually requires the family to absorb the total cost of their child's education, including classroom materials and technology unless provided through charter school provision.
- **Poor Civic Participation.** Learning in a group promotes social learning and values of citizenship. An isolated home-schooled child does not encounter the diverse perspectives needed to develop shared values.
- **Lost Social Services.** Public schools not only educate, but also provide many social services through trained workers. Home-school families lack such expertise and resources.
- **Lack of Quality Control.** If education is privatized through the family, it becomes difficult to ensure that competent instruction is provided or that a student is engaged in learning. Only a few states require home-school students to be tested.

For further consideration of the debate surrounding home-schooling see the following NCSPE articles:
Occasional Paper 45: Nemer, Kariane Mari. 2002. "Exploring the Democratic Tensions with Parents' Decisions to Home School." http://www.ncspe.org/publications_files/690_OP45.pdf
Occasional Paper 49: Belfield, Clive. 2002. "Modeling School Choice: A Comparison of Public, Private-Independent, Private-Religious, and Home-Schooled Students." http://www.ncspe.org/publications_files/20_OP_49.pdf

How large is the home-school movement?

Home-schooling is legal in all fifty states. In fact, children have been home-schooled throughout United States history, but with the rise of a public education system, home-schooling declined. However, increased criticism of public education has helped revitalize home-schooling. By 2003, about one million students were taught at home (Lines, 1998). It has proven difficult to measure exactly how strong the home-school movement is. For example, despite large numbers, the average home-school education has been estimated as lasting only two years (Lines, 2002). Below the size of home-schooling is compared to other educational reforms.

Participation	Home-schooling	Charter Schools	Public Vouchers
Number of states	50	41	3
Number of students	800,000 - 1.23 mil	684,000	24,681

Sources: Center for Education Reform: [<http://www.edreform.org>]. *Home Education across the United States*. (1997). Purcellville, VA: Home School Legal Defense Association. Pp. 2-3. Lines, Patricia M. (Spring 1998). *Homeschoolers: Estimating Numbers and Growth*. (Washington D.C.: National Institute on Student Achievement, Curriculum, and Assessment, Office of Education Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). (2001). *Homeschooling in the United States: 1999*. [<http://nces.ed.gov/>]

Where can I find out more about home-schooling?

Home-school information located on the NCSPE website can be found at <http://www.ncspe.org/inforead.php?mysub=5>

Books and articles reviewing home schooling include:

Bauman, KJ. 2002. "Home-schooling in the United States: Trends and characteristics." <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n26.html>

Lines, P. 2002. "Support for home-based study." *Eric Clearinghouse on Educational Management*, University of Oregon. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). 2001. Homeschooling in the United States: 1999. <http://nces.ed.gov/>

Stevens, ML. 2001. *Kingdom of Children. Culture and Controversy in the Home-Schooling Movement*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

For additional information from internet resources see:

The National Center for Education Statistics at:
<http://nces.ed.gov>

The Home School Legal Defense Association– a strong advocate for home school education– at: <http://www.hslda.org>