



Socialization and Home School

By Carlynn McCormick

Is it possible for children to have a social life and be home schooled?

Some argue that home schooled children need to go to public school at some time in order to have a proper social life. While the idea of having friends and social graces is a very good one, the idea of sending children into an environment where morals are waning is *not* such a good idea.

Guidelines influence sociability

The separation of State and religion is necessary to prevent any one belief from becoming a State-sanctioned religion but, all too often, this is interpreted to mean that teachers in public school are *not* allowed to teach *any* moral code whatsoever. This is indeed a travesty. For it is only common sense that children need a set of guidelines from which to align their actions. Without such guidance, it can be difficult for a child to develop a truly social personality.

Purpose of schooling

Then too, when contemplating public school as a means of creating a social life, parents should look at the real reason children go to school. Traditionally, school has been a place to learn skills in basic subjects — reading, writing, math, research, history and science — so children will be prepared to function well in the adult world. The “social-life” part of school, after all, only consists of lunchtime and recess — a brief hour or so a day. Other than that, for many decades parents have had to put some effort into enhancing their children’s special interests.

Unfortunately, many activities that pass for “social life” are not actually that at all. Do you remember writing notes to friends in school and secretly passing them back and forth behind your teacher’s back? Perhaps you viewed it as a way to enhance your social skills rather than an indication that you had lost interest in your studies. It might be said, however, that most, if not all of the social problems encountered in school — cutting class, getting bad grades, bullying others, defacing property, back-talking teachers, experimenting with “recreational” drugs and on and on — stem from a lack of purpose for what is being taught. But shouldn’t every student be interested in learning those particular subjects that are going to affect his or her future?

Not if the basic step “there is a very good reason for **you** to learn such and such a subject” were left out! This is the usual case in public school where a teacher has over thirty students in her class. Whereas a home school parent can give one-on-one instruction using her child’s interests — what gets him excited — what makes him tick. She can make any subject come alive by aligning it to her child’s favorite things to do — thus instilling a deep love of learning.

Social well-being for a child

Does this tremendous academic advantage come with a price? Does it cost a home schooled child his or her social well-being? Is it possible to study at home surrounded by one’s parents and siblings, and have an opportunity to create lasting friendships with children of one’s own age?

Well, “yes” and “no.” “No” if you never leave home or do anything about establishing any out-of-home contacts, and “yes” if you’re willing to put some effort into helping your child create his or her own social group.

It may not always be easy to launch a social life for a child, but (and this is a very big **but**) it is well worth the effort. That is if (and this is also a very big **if**) the social group is morally sound. I cannot stress enough the importance of this particular “if” because *every juvenile delinquent horror story ever told to me by a parent had something to do with this point*. One for one, they run along the same vein: “He was a great kid until he started doing drugs with his ‘friends.’” “She was a wonderful daughter until she started running with the wrong crowd.”

Creating a good social life

Building a fulfilling friendship begins with an understanding of what a friend is and what a friend is not. And that includes showing children how to be individuals and the way to develop strong moral fiber. Teaching our children how to *be a friend* and who to *have as a friend* has everything to do with our children’s survival. How well do parents who home school their children do in this area?

Of the 100s of individuals I know that were home schooled from early childhood through high school, not one became a troubled teen. Quite the contrary! And today each is a happy, productive and ethical adult. Now that is what I call a good social life.

Ideas for helping children grow socially in an ethical environment:

- Get together once a week with other like-minded families or establish a home school co-op group.
- Check out the YMCA for children’s summer or after-school classes for activities your child would enjoy doing with other children.
- Encourage your child to join a group such as Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Brownies, Girl Scouts, 4-H or a church youth group.
- Plan a slumber party and have your child invite cousins, neighborhood children or a few children from one of the group activities your child attends.
- Plan a field trip for the weekend and let your child invite a friend to go along—weekend trips give him the opportunity to choose a friend that attends school during the week.
- Research for your city’s baseball, basketball, football or soccer leagues.

- Contact your city about children’s dancing, aerobics, or Karate classes—these are usually available weekly for a small fee.
- Start a “Beautify the Environment” club in your neighborhood and plan and carry out community projects such as planting a tree or cleaning up a park.
- Investigate summer swimming lessons offered by a local school or see if your town has a community pool that offers recreational swimming.
- If your city has a roller rink or bowling alley, inquire as to children’s lessons or leagues.
- Many craft stores have complimentary art classes that can be attended by children.
- Start a tutoring group—your child might be able to help another child who is having difficulty and perhaps make a friend for life!



“Socialization and Home School “ article courtesy of Carlynn McCormick, Copyright 2010, All Rights Reserved.



©2010 Applied Scholastics *Online Academy*. All Rights Reserved. Applied Scholastics *Online Academy* admits students of any race, color and national or ethnic origin. Applied Scholastics *Online Academy* is licensed to use Applied Scholastics™ educational services. Applied Scholastics and the Applied Scholastics open book design are trademarks and service marks owned by Association for Better Living and Education International and are used with its permission.

AppliedScholasticsOnline.com