



# Why Home School?

By Carlynn McCormick

Christina took the plunge. She pulled her children out of the system and turned to home school. To do this, she had to beat off the doomsayers who predicted her kids would end-up social misfits. She had to convince her overworked husband who hadn't yet noticed the decline in public education. And, she had to work out *how* and *what* she was going to teach her children.

What prompted such a drastic decision? Christina had been attentively listening to what her children were saying. Edward was having difficulty with reading and math and his teacher didn't have time to help him. He didn't have many friends and he was unhappy. Although his sister Shelly was popular and had lots of friends, she hated every subject in school except physical education. Jonathan, the oldest, had gotten good grades since kindergarten, but now that he was in high school, he not only found school boring, it was beginning to scare him. He didn't like the metal detectors or the police cars parked in front of the school. He had seen two officers treat a boy roughly for having a pocketknife in his backpack and learned the offense had gotten the boy expelled. Since Jonathan enjoyed whittling, he was fearful that he might suffer the same fate if he were to accidentally bring a woodworking tool to school.

Like Christina, all parents want their children to be safe, happy and well educated. When this is not happening, many take their children's schooling into their own hands. Indeed, the status of home schooling has gone from practically illegal to mainstream in just a few decades. While such a change of attitude could be attributed to the poor performance of public education, it might be far wiser to attribute it to the advantages of homeschooling.

After all, home school presents an opportunity for each student to move at his or her own pace. If a student is having difficulty, the trouble area can be located and missing basics filled-in one step at a time preventing the child from “falling through the cracks.” For the student way ahead of his peers, individualized challenges can be presented that would not be possible in a classroom setting; challenges inviting enough to prevent the child from becoming “bored stiff.”

And since parents know their children’s interests and the activities their children love, these can be incorporated into lesson plans to add greater meaning and purpose to every area of study. For example, a budding actor might enjoy using maps to locate movie studios and find his way to potential auditions.

Another reason to home school is the freedom it affords parents to teach courses in ethics, morals and family values. Many public educators avoid such topics for fear of crossing the line that separates state and religion. Then too, if a parent wishes his child’s education to be free of the psychological “standards” that have seeped into most state schools, this can easily be accomplished with home school. But perhaps the greatest benefit of all, it shows your child that you think education is so valuable you are willing to take on the extra obligation of teaching him yourself.

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