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**What Is Homeschooling and How Do I Know If It's Right For My Family?**

**By Anita York**

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What is Homeschooling And How Do I Know If It's Right For My Family?

Do you know what these famous people have in common?

Alexander Graham Bell  
George Patton  
Albert Einstein  
Benjamin Franklin  
Winston Churchill  
Agatha Christie  
George Bernard Shaw  
Will Rogers

If you guessed that they were all homeschoolers, you'd be correct. This is a very short list of famous and successful people who were educated at home. If you would like to expand this list, do a search on the Internet for "famous homeschoolers." There are many websites that list these people and some provide detailed biographies. There is even a book called, aptly, "Famous Homeschoolers," by Nancy and Malcolm Plant. (<http://www.fun-books.com/specials.htm>)

The point here is to get into the mindset that people can be educated and become successful adults without attending public school. And because I can almost "hear" what you are thinking, no, it is not necessary to have a high school diploma to go to college.

So what is homeschooling? In the broadest sense, homeschooling is educating your children at home. You, as parent, become teacher. Parents homeschool for more reasons than you can imagine. Some want to avoid having their children exposed to violence and peer pressure. Some homeschool so that they can make sure their children's education adheres to their religious beliefs. Some live a different lifestyle perhaps they travel a lot and want their children's schooling to be flexible enough to fit around that life style. And some, like me, simply enjoy being with their children. They don't want the public

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school to interrupt and weaken the parent/child bond that they have been working hard to create for the first five years of their child's life.

Just as there are many reasons to homeschool, there are many methods of homeschooling. All the way from "un-schooling" (learning by doing, learning from life, not using textbook type materials) to "school at home" (using textbooks at desks set up in a schoolroom at home) and everything in between. It's very easy to find hundreds of homeschool Websites by using a search engine, but just to get you started, try:

Jon's Homeschool Resource Page <http://www.midnightbeach.com/hs/>

When I decided to write this article, I thought hard about what I could offer that wasn't being displayed on thousands of Websites on the Internet. I realized that the only thing I have to offer anyone

interested in homeschooling is my experience. So everything in the article below comes from my fifteen years of experience homeschooling my four youngest children. I hope it is of some use to you.

Deciding to homeschool your child may be one of the most important decisions you ever make as a parent, and it will take a lot of thought and soul searching. To the newcomer, it may seem impossible, overwhelming and very, very lonely. But like most huge obstacles, once it's broken down into smaller pieces, it becomes manageable. We'll take it one step at a time, in small enough chunks to get a hold of. So, if you're game, roll up your sleeves and let's get to work figuring out if homeschooling is for you and your child.

First things first. Organization is the key. Get a three-ring binder (homeschooling parent's LOVE three-ring binders) and put a label on the front. (If you've made the transition to digital record keeping, you can just start a folder on the computer. But it's not as much fun.) Label it something serious, like "My Homeschooling Plans" or "Homeschooling Thoughts." Put some paper in the binder, find a really comfortable ink pen, and sit down somewhere quiet.

Ready? Good. Now, let's get started.

What are your reasons for considering homeschooling? Even if you haven't actually made the decision to homeschool, the fact that you are here reading this article says you are curious. Perhaps you honestly don't know the answer yet—and that's ok. The remainder of this article is going to try to help you start to find those answers.

Homeschooling is legal in all 50 states, but each state has its own set of laws that must be followed. Compulsory (how I hate that word) education here in Washington State starts at the age of 8. Even though I had been homeschooling him from birth, to stay legal once my son reached 8-years old, I was required to become "certified." That meant I either had to have two years of college education, or take a "certification class." I met this requirement by taking an independent correspondence class, during which I was asked to put on paper my goals, philosophies and reasons for wanting to homeschool. I'd like to help you do the same right now.

Start a page—either the "tree" kind or a file on the computer—and title it "My Educational Beliefs." List

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what personal beliefs you have about education?especially the education of your own children. Get as detailed as you can here—the value is in the thinking process behind the list. Take your time, I'm in no hurry.

As an example to get you started, I'm going to share with you what I wrote on my list nine years ago.

### My Educational Beliefs

1. I believe my child's attitude about learning should be:

One of continual curiosity and seeking of knowledge.

2. I believe my child's learning should lead towards a lifestyle that is:

Rural, physically active, creative.

3. I believe these basic values should be part of my child's learning:

Respect for others

Loyalty to family and friends

Honesty

Generosity

4. I believe children learn best:

Through hands–on learning experience, reading, workbooks.

5. I believe a teacher should:

Provide side–by–side assistance and direction.

Interact with the child.

Provide the structure within which the child may explore, experiment, study and achieve.

Provide a good example of excitement in learning.

6. Other beliefs:

I believe my child should grow up to be self–reliant and occupationally secure in a field of high interest to them.

Now, that wasn't too bad, was it? Don't give up on this until you have at least something written down, but don't agonize over it either. You can come back to it later if need be. Next, start a paper or file titled ?Life Goals For My Child.?

I want you to write down what kind of person you envision your child being as an adult. What are your hopes and dreams for him/her? What educational gifts do you hope to be able to help them find that will serve them their entire lives?

I'll share mine from 9 years ago, just to get you started.

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### ?Life Goals for My Child?

7. Be literate.
8. Be self-reliant.
9. Compete well in their chosen field of occupation.
10. Appreciate art, music, and literature.
11. Be creative.
12. Be inventive and resourceful.
13. Be healthy, mentally and physically.
14. Co-operate with others.
15. Maintain a strong sense of self-worth.
16. Maintain a life-long curiosity, seeking knowledge as a way of life.
17. Look to the future with a sense of excitement and adventure.

For the last exercise, start a third paper titled: Why We (I) Am Going To Homeschool Our (My) Child? (Yes, single parents can successfully homeschool their children.) You may not have all the answers for this one yet either, but just get something down. All of these ideas and beliefs can start getting mixed in with other people's opinions once we start educating ourselves in depth about homeschooling, and you'll be glad you have these lists tucked away.

Okay, here's my old list:

### Why We Are Going To Homeschool Our Children

Our family consists of myself, my husband, a 21-year-old daughter, a 19-year-old daughter, an 8-year-old son, a 7-year-old daughter, a 4-½ year old daughter, and an unborn son due in 6 months. My two oldest daughters (from my first marriage) were in the public school system for the whole of their educational years. It is largely a dissatisfaction with the public schools and all its attendant problems (academic, social, and moral) that has caused us to make the decision to homeschool our youngest children. We decided, even before our 8-year-old son (the oldest of the younger set) was born, that somehow we would find an alternative to the public schools.

We want to homeschool for some additional reasons. We want added closeness with our children. We want more independence, greater control over our family's moral and philosophical values, and better awareness of our children's interests.

We dislike the thought of any government agency—no matter how well meaning—directing the raising of our children.

We intend to homeschool because we do not want our children's academic, social, and moral education taken out of our hands.

We believe these areas of a child's education are a parent's responsibility, right, and pleasure.

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I'd like you to spend some time going over these lists until you feel they accurately reflect your feelings about homeschooling your children. When I did these exercises, I had only a vague idea about why I wanted to homeschool and what kind of education I wanted to help my children acquire. These simple exercises helped me to ?solidify? my ideas and provided the basis for our future homeschooling methods. I hope they help you to do the same. Keep these lists in a safe place and add to them as you explore the possibility of homeschooling your child.

Anita York has homeschooled her four children for 15 years. She is a contracted Senior Editor, Editor, Copyeditor and Manuscript Screener for three publishers. Her book "You CAN Homeschool Your Child" is available at: <http://www.L7S.net/Item.php?ID=YC000>.

### **Seventeen Reasons To Homeschool Your Kids**

**By Rudy Silva**

Homeschooling was once a rare educational method. Today it is well known and an accepted way to education your kids.

Most parents thinking of homeschooling have a difficult time deciding whether to do it or not. The following is a list 17 reasons why other parents are homeschooling their kids. And, there is one important question you must answer correctly if you expect to succeed in homeschooling. This will be given to you at the end of this article.

- Private school is too expensive
- Their children have problems learning in school or have a hard time getting along with other kids
- They have special health needs
- They are unhappy with the public school curriculum
- They want their kids to have a better education
- They enjoy homeschooling and being with their children
- They don't want their kids to be badly influenced by other kids and learn their bad behaviors
- They want their kids to learn the skills they need to succeed in life
- They want their kids to receive an education that caters to their interests, ability level and aspirations
- They move around, following husbands work, and this is a way to keep the family together
- Their kids would get the individual attention they really needed
- It gives the kids a chance to become who they really are by giving them more freedom to express themselves than public schools would allow.
- They want to see their kid grow and turn into wonderful, capable, loving person.
- They want a way of life that allows the whole family to be together
- They feel they are releasing their kids to strangers to raise them and this is not what they want to do
  
- Their own educational philosophy greatly differs with the public school education.

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So how do you decide whether to homeschool or not. Well, you're going to need a lot of information. You need to learn about,

- academic research
- legal homeschool rulings
- homeschooling practicals
- schooling materials
- how much it will cost
- how to evaluate what you are doing

One more important thing you will need to find out. You need to know what it feels like to homeschool your kids day in and day out.

Finally, the most important question you have to answer if you are planning to homeschool your kids is:

Do you really enjoy being and spending time with your kids? The question is, if you enjoy spending a lot of time with your kids every day. You must like being with your kids most of the time and if you don't then most likely, homeschooling is not for you.

For more tips and information about homeschooling and a special email course on homeschooling go to:

Rudy Silva has a BA Physics degree and is a Natural Nutritional trainer, teaching people how to gain good health.

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