

# **An Argument in Support of Home Schooling**

**Home schooling is an intelligent and promising alternative to a traditional education. Data from studies on home schoolers has shown that they are well educated and socialized people involved in their communities. It has also been found that government regulation and parent certification are not necessary for successful home schooling. However, there are some who would dispute the usefulness and benefits of home schooling.**

**One of the main objections to home schooling is that it is detrimental to the child's social skills. This misconception is usually based on the assumption that home schoolers are stuck in their homes 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Home schoolers have many opportunities to meet and interact with other kids. In fact, a study by Dr. Brian D. Ray found that the mean number of home school students' outside activities (for example music classes, field trips, volunteer work, sports, etc) is 5.2 activities per student. Also, because home schoolers are not limited to interacting with only people their own age, as would often be the case in a traditional school setting, they learn to socialize with people of all ages.**

**On a related subject, it is interesting to note that in a study of 7,300 home school graduates, conducted by Dr. Ray and published in 2003, it was found that 71% participate in an ongoing community service activity, compared with 37% of adults of similar ages who were traditionally educated.**

**Another common objection is: “Wouldn't they be better off with a certified**

teacher?” According to the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) the answer is no. In a study by Lawrence M. Rudner (1999), no difference was found in standardized test scores whether the children had at least one parent certified to teach, or no certified parent.

Of major importance to home schoolers is government involvement in home schooling. Many people who feel that home schooling is detrimental believe the government should impose more regulations on home schooling. In a study of 5,402 home schooled students called, “*Strengths of Their Own: Home Schoolers Across America*,” Dr. Ray compared the effect of government regulations on the academic achievement of home schoolers. He found that regardless of the level of state regulation, students all scored on average in the 86<sup>th</sup> percentile on standardized tests. He concluded that government regulations could be legitimately questioned since there is no apparent benefit to the students.

Some people also claim that home schooled students won't be as well educated as their traditionally schooled counterparts. Multiple studies have shown that home schoolers test higher on standardized tests across the board than traditionally educated students. In the *Strengths of Their Own* study, Dr. Ray found that the home schoolers out performed their counterparts by 30-37 percentile points on standardized tests in all subjects. The results were confirmed in another study of 20,760 home schooled kids by Dr. L. Rudner entitled, “*The Scholastic Achievement and Demographic Characteristics of Home School Students in 1998*.” In fact, in that study it was shown that the longer a student was home schooled the higher the percentile scores. In addition, another advantage shown in the *Strengths*

*of Their Own* study is that race and gender of home schoolers had no effect on their scores.

Home schooling provides other advantages that make it a good alternative to a traditional education. For instance, home schooling allows kids to learn at their own speed and is specially tailored to the needs of the student. Home schooling also allows a person to use his time more efficiently. For instance, consider a home schooled child who is talented at math, but is falling behind in science. Well, since he finishes math quickly, he can use the time that he could skip on math to catch up in science. If this same child was in a traditional school setting, he would have to sit in math and wait until everyone else was done, and then try to cram an extra half hour of science into his schedule.

Other ways that home schooling increases efficiency are: the student doesn't have to travel to and from school, go from class to class, sit through attendance and discipline problems, wait for teacher availability when he needs help and wait for other people to finish when he is already done with something.

Some other reasons to home school, cited by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), include the following: religious reasons, disability, special needs, to develop character/morality, school does not challenge child and transportation/convenience, among other things.

It is interesting to note that modern home schooling has produced many successful and influential people. Among those noted by Christian and Homeschool Resource Center are: Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Pierre Currie, Charles Dickens, C. S. Lewis, Mark Twain, Daniel Webster, Ansel Adams, Andrew

**Carnegie, Sandra Day O'Connor, Sally Ride, Albert Schweitzer and Christopher Paolini, to name a few.**

**Home schooling is a viable alternative to a traditional education. It produces well educated and socially involved citizens. In addition, home schooling can be successful without certified teachers or government involvement. It provides many benefits and remains an option for those who wish to pursue it.**

**References:**

*\*Strengths of Their Own – Home Schoolers Across America: Academic Achievement, Family Characteristics, and Longitudinal Traits, Brian D. Ray, 1997 (book).*

*\*The Scholastic Achievement and Demographic Characteristics of Home Schooled Students in 1998, Lawrence M. Rudner, 1999.*

*\*Home Educated and Now Adults: Their Community and Civic Involvement, Views About Homeschooling, and Other Traits, Brian D. Ray, 2003.*

*\*U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey of the 2003 National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES).*