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A Closer Look at
HOMESCHOOLING

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Introduction

Over the past three decades, the amount of school-aged children in the United States being educated at home significantly increased. In fact, Blumenfeld (1997) proposed: “homeschooling is now the fastest growing educational phenomenon in the United States” (p. 1). Although many attribute the growth in homeschool(s) (HS) to a rebellion movement in the 1960s and 1970s and to the writings of author/educator/philosopher John Holt (1964, 1967, 1976, 1981), the greatest increase in HS occurred after 1980. Anderson (2000) summarized demographic shifts among HS families, explaining:

Only 20 years ago, home schooling was a far-out fringe phenomenon. No more than 50,000 children were then educated outside the school, their parents mostly graying hippies who wanted to protect them from what they considered the stifling conformity of “the system.” In the early eighties, though, the ranks of home schoolers began to swell with Christian fundamentalists dissatisfied with value-free public schools. Today, the full array of American families . . . are joining . . . in home schooling their kids. (p. 1)

Ishizuka (2000) contends that state laws, legalizing HS during the 1980s and 1990s, probably spurred more parents to contemplate HS as an option. Whatever the cause, Ray (2002) said that by the 2001-2002 school-year, there were between 1.6 and 2.0 million HS students in the U.S., a “remarkable increase of 500 percent over the number homeschooled in 1990-1991” (p. 8).

Why do parents HS their children? Lyman (1998) recalls that “there are two historical strains of homeschooling, a religious-right thread inspired by author Raymond Moore and a countercultural-left thread inspired by John Holt” (¶3). In order to assess more modern reasons for HS, Lyman (1998) analyzed 300 newspapers and magazines that contained parents’ rationales for educating their children at home. According to Lyman’s (1998) study, the top four

reasons parents chose HS were: “dissatisfaction with public schools, the desire to freely impart religious values, academic excellence, and the building of stronger family bonds” (¶ 35). Lines (1991), citing a study by Gladin (1987), listed similar reasons for parents choosing HS including: religion or philosophy, control over what their children learn, reduction of peer pressure, and increased time/quality with family.

In this paper, I review homeschooling as an educational option and discuss various HS curriculum choices. First, I review both the “cons” (arguments against) and “pros” (arguments for) HS. Next, I move into some curriculum considerations for HS families. Third, I describe specific HS curriculum options. Finally, I discuss my thoughts and feelings about homeschooling and whether I may someday want to HS my own children.

The Pros and Cons of Homeschooling

“Everyone cares about what others think. About what they know. About what they believe. And about what they do. Because it deals with these things, homeschooling has clearly caught the imagination and attention of citizens...” (Ray, 2002, p. 1). It seems to me that rather the reader of this paper is a teacher, administrator, researcher, parent, or a future-parent, he/she should carefully examine arguments for and against homeschooling before deciding rather HS is a viable curriculum choice. After all, before persons participate in discussions about *what* and *how* children are taught at home, they should first decide *whether* teaching at home is a positive educational decision. Thus, next, I examine some of the criticisms (“cons”) and the defenses (“pros”) of homeschooling.

The “Cons”

Not everyone is supportive of the homeschooling movement. As Lines (1995) asserts “Homeschooling is controversial. The National Parent Teacher Association [NPTA] opposes the

practice, as do the National Education Association [NEA] and the National Association of Elementary School Principals [NAESP]” (p. 3). The NAESP outlined some main concerns about HS, including that this type of education: uses non-certified and unqualified teachers/parents, deprives students of social experiences, denies students of a full range of curriculum experiences, isolates students from diversity, creates a burden on school administrators, and that it does not allow for adequate academic assessment (Sterling, n.d.). Next, I briefly describe some of these issues.

The first argument, that *parents are unqualified*, might be accurate if certification is seen as equivalent to “qualified.” After all, while some HS parents might have a college degree and/or teacher training, most probably do not. Critics of HS argue that most parents who educate their children at home are not trained teaching professionals -- and, even if the parent(s) happen to be teachers, they will not be well versed in all subject areas and at all grade-levels. Voicing this opinion, David Arnold (n.d.) wrote in a NEA publication, “why would some parents assume they knew enough about every academic subject to home-school their children? You would think that they might leave this – the shaping of their children’s minds, careers, and futures – to trained professionals . . . Teachers!” (¶ 3). Hassel and Hassel (2004) argue that only *some* parents should HS their children. According to Hassel and Hassel (2004), parents considering HS should ask themselves if: first, they are knowledgeable; and, second, if they can convey this knowledge. Hamilton and Hamilton (1997) further propose that some parents NOT educate their children at home, including parents who: “cannot read, write, do simple arithmetic or control the house properly” (p. 64); are lazy or unmotivated; and who want, or must, pursue a career.

Another long-standing attack against HS is that *children who are educated at home lack socialization*, specifically with other children their age. Critics charge that HS children are

deprived of peer interaction, social opportunities and social development, including learning to “cooperate with others, to respect others’ rights and feelings, and to enjoy their company” (Webb, 1990, p. 148). Gary Prior, an outspoken critic of HS, argues that HS children are at a disadvantage, saying: “When you enter the real world and are on your own – when you are forced to come out of your cocoon – you’re going to have to cope with all sorts of people and situations that may or may not be to your liking” (Lawrence, 1994, ¶25).

The socialization critique of HS is closely tied to another argument that says: if children are schooled at home they will *not be exposed to diversity*. Critics of HS argue that part of living in a democratic country is learning to interact with dissimilar people. Reich (2002) says that schools are one of the “few remaining social institutions . . . in which people from all walks of life have a common interest and in which children might come to learn such common values as decency, civility, and respect” (p. 54). If children do not attend schools with diverse others, the argument goes, they will not learn to interact in a multicultural world.

Lubienski (2000) takes the civic-duty aspect of attending public schools a step further. According to Lubienski (2000), when parents choose to leave the educational system and HS their children, they *undermine “deliberative democracy as well as public education as an institution. . .”* (p. 208). Lubienski (2000) further argues that homeschooling deprives the public educational system from potentially involved students and parents.

Finally, the last concern outlined by the NAESP pertains to the *lack of accountability and assessment* in HS. Concerns about HS accountability are actually worthy of an entire paper/project, as many parents, administrators, and legislators disagree on how (or if) accountability for home learning is (or should be) measured. Currently, state laws differ as to

what tests, if any, HS children are required to take. Next, I begin with this issue in outlining advocates' arguments *for* HS.

The "Pros"

I begin discussing the arguments for HS where the arguments against HS left off. While critics dispute how to assure educational standards for HS children, statistics consistently show that *HS children outscore their public school peers*. In fact, a study conducted by Brian Ray and the National Home Education Research Institute (1996), showed that "On average, home schoolers out-perform their public school peers by 30 to 37 percentile points across all subjects" (Farris, 1997, p. xii). According to the study, no matter what the income level of the HS family, HS children still outperform their public-schooled peers. David Guterson (1992) asserts that very little (income-level, religion, certified or not, structured or informal curriculum) will alter the consistent higher scores of HS children because the determining factor is "that all homeschoolers come from families devoted to the education of their young" (p. 16).

Family involvement is a phrase many HS proponents mention. Though Guterson (1992) argues that parental involvement is key to academic/homeschooling success, others note that HS *allows for* greater parental/family involvement. Blumenfeld (1997) says HS families benefit from a family lifestyle focused on education and child-rearing; that this "togetherness adds a new intellectual, spiritual, and cultural dimension to family life" (p. 89).

Another benefit to HS, advocates claim, is the ability to teach *family values*. Because parents set the HS curriculum, they can include lessons of morality, religion, and values in their teaching. Public schools, on the other hand, are often reluctant to advocate any one set of values. Michelle Baron (in Dobson, 2002) writes that keeping "family values" separate from the educational system is not beneficial. "Schools, in particular, struggle to promote value-free

education, but this is always going to be a losing game” (Dobson, 2002, p. 200). Blumenfeld (1997) says public schools lack spiritual and moral guidance. The result, Blumenfeld (1997) argues, is that many children “emerge from public schools not as rational humanists, but as amoral nihilists” (p. 3).

Not only can HS parents teach values, advocates claim, but they can also assist their children with *positive socialization*. According to Blumenfeld (1997), absence from public schools means separation from drug abuse, unwanted pregnancies, bullying, murder, and competitiveness. “Lack of socialization” during school, others argue, has other benefits as well. Farris (1997) says, “home schooling does not eliminate socialization, but it does separate socialization and academics . . .” (p. 123). Separating academics from socialization, Farris (1997) argues, is positive because socialization during school deters from learning. HS advocates claim that home education allows for socialization but “at the right time and with the right people” (Farris, 1997, p. 124). “Homeschooled youngsters are in the same positive activities as their schooled peers. These include things like Scouts, 4-H, YMCA, sports activities, church groups, and community-case youth groups. Most communities also have special activities and organizations for home-schoolers” (Dobson, 2002, p. 80). “In summary, as far as researchers have found, the home-educated are doing well in their social, psychological, and emotional development” (Ray, 2002, p. 60).

Last but not least, HS advocates claim two large educational advantages to educating children at home: *individualized instruction* and the *absence of institutional structuring*. Dobson (2002) notes that “homeschooling can be fashioned and shaped by its users into a viable educational approach suited to individual family needs and circumstances . . . [including] children who are labeled gifted, have special needs, are diagnosed with Attention Deficit

Disorder (ADD) . . . or (ADHD), or have experienced discipline problems in school” (p. 41).

Guterson (1992) says parents who HS can adapt their teaching to their children’s individual learning styles and needs. In fact, “many homeschooling families, when it comes to selecting and integrating methods and content, view the needs of their children, their particular learning styles and areas of interest, as the elemental consideration” (Guterson, 1992, p. 20).

Guterson (1992) further contends that public schools waste a lot of time disciplining, structuring, and organizing the masses, while individual students wait, become bored, and are discouraged from being creative. Cofax and Cofax (1988) assert “American schools have become . . . *industrialized* . . . this is assembly-line education, in which the child is processed, over the years, much like a can of soup or a piece of hardware” (pp. 32-33). “The sad part is,” Guterson (1992) writes, “that in the process schools have also been exceedingly good at snuffing out the desire of many young people . . .” (p. 24).

Now that I reviewed some of the arguments for and against HS, I will next discuss some issues that parents who decide there are “pros” than “cons” to homeschooling should consider.

Curriculum Considerations

According to Doris Hohensee (in Dobson, 2002), one of the first steps parents need to take after they decide to HS their children is to determine how their state (where they reside) legally perceives homeschooling. States in the U.S. typically consider HS one of three ways: as equivalent to public schools, as private schools, or as separate schools with their own “home education” laws (Dobson, 2002). HS families need to be familiar with state laws because these laws could impact everything from registration requirements and curriculum decisions to progress reporting and/or standardized testing. Linsenbach (2003) says parents interested in homeschooling their children can find information about state requirements from individual State

Departments of Education and also from the Home School Legal Defense Association (<http://www.hslda.org>). Jackson (1997a) notes that “most states expect you to select a reliable curriculum, though some states have the authority to approve or disapprove your choice” (§9). In addition, “states usually require certain academic disciplines such as spelling, English, math, science, and history during the compulsory ages” (Jackson, 1997a., ¶10). Overall, familiarity with state laws and regulations is crucial.

In addition to becoming familiar with state laws, Ishizuka (2000) says parents who want to HS should consider: which teaching approach or personal teaching style they might use, educational goals for each child, each child’s interests, the child(ren)’s learning style(s), measuring the child(ren’s)’s equivalent age and/or grade-level in each subject, the family budget for educational materials, available community resources, and the type of curriculum they plan to use. Specifically related to curriculum, Ishizuka (2000) suggests that parents decide: 1.) whether or not they want the curriculum to have a religious or secular orientation; 2.) if they want to purchase a comprehensive or subject-based program; 3.) if textbooks, workbooks or neither are best for their child; 4.) if and what kind of assessment/evaluations they’d like to use, 5.) how or if they plan to schedule schooling; and 6.) how they plan to record learning. Next, I further describe some particular HS curriculum options.

Curriculum Options

There are various ways to categorize and organize curriculum options. For myself, one of the most helpful ways to visualize curriculum options was described by Guterson (1992) who refers to a continuum of very structured lessons to lessons that are not structured at all. For example, I picture an Independent Study Program (ISP) as an example of very a very structured curriculum, whereas I see the unschooling movement as a very unstructured choice. The amount

of structure in a child's lessons might depend upon: parenting philosophy, teaching philosophy, religious perspective, the child's learning style, special needs of the child, and the child's personality. Hence, whereas some parents want or need a very structured program for their child's learning, other parents want a lot of flexibility and freedom in how their child learns. Finally, there are some parents who use pick-and-choose various levels of structure in their curriculum. "Eclectic schooling" according to Linsenbach (2003) means families may "pick and choose individual courses from a curriculum provider, enlist in a course or two through a virtual school, select a variety of hands-on experiments for science . . . and Saxon textbooks and Cuisenaire rods for math concepts" (p. 57). Hence, the level of structuring, in some HS families, might vary for each subject area

Before describing some curriculum options, it is important to realize that there are many resources to assist HS parents with curriculum decisions. In my research, I found many websites that contain HS curriculum information (see Appendix E). I also found that some books (see Appendix F), magazines (see Appendix G), conferences and curriculum fairs, organizations, and support groups can help parents with curriculum decisions, as well as provide parents with additional HS information and support. Next, I briefly review some possible curriculum philosophies/methods.

Structured Alternatives

Some of the most structured HS curriculum options I researched included: correspondence schools, independent study programs (ISPs), distance learning (and/or on-line courses), charter home-based schools, and public school extension programs. It is important to note, though, as Ishizuka (2000) pointed out, that these programs can vary widely in terms of flexibility and structure. Linsenbach (2003) compares ISPs to distance learning and

correspondence schools in which “the concept is a student is sent a curriculum package via mail. He [sic] then studies, completes the lessons, and returns the lessons to the school to be assessed and graded” (p. 53). Examples of cyber school programs (computer-based on-line learning) include: the K12 HS Program (<http://www.k12.com>), and Alphas Omega’s Classes2You (<http://www.classes2you.com>). In all of these cases, the programs typically involve a lot of structure and very little flexibility. The advantage of such programs, Linsenbach (2003) notes, is that they free time for parents because program administrators take care of lesson planning and record-keeping.

Some developing HS options (though some argue they are not “home” schooling at all) include charter schools and public school extension programs. Ishizuka (2000) discusses charter schools as a HS option, saying some charter schools offer part-time schooling: children learn at home sometimes and attend charter school classes at other times. Ishizuka (2000) adds that often at these schools, parents serve on the independent board of trustees, which gives them some control of curriculum content. Lines (2000), on the other hand, describes public school/ home school partnerships as a HS option. According to Lines (2000), in these partnerships school districts recruit HS children “enticing them with free curricular supplies and services from the district and, in some cases, a voucher for additional materials. These districts then include the children enrolled when calculating state per pupil assistance” (p. 160). Often, in these partnerships, HS students can use local computer labs and/or public school classrooms (Lines, 2000). Some HS advocates worry, however, that these partnerships could give public school districts too much control over HS children.

Comprehensive Packaged Programs

A different, yet still structured, curriculum option involves purchasing a packaged curriculum. “If homeschooling with more structure appeals to you, you can find a wide variety of ready-made curricula . . . a comprehensive package generally includes everything you need: grade-appropriate workbooks, texts, and lesson plans” (Ishizuka, 2000, p. 155). In general, comprehensive packaged programs require children to enroll in the program. Thereafter, while parents can (and often) assist with their child’s learning of the material, the program administrators take care of record-keeping and testing. Homeschool.com (2005) lists and contains many links to comprehensive HS program websites, including: *Ablaze Learning*, *Calvert School*, *CLASS* (Christian Liberty Academy School System) *Homeschools*, *Citizens’ High School*, *Keystone*, and *Laurel Springs School*. Parents should note that some of these comprehensive programs are secular in nature, while others are connected to particular religions. Lines (1991) describes *Christian Liberty Academy* as “the largest of the religiously based organizations” (p. 19). Finally, Linsenbach (2003) adds *Core Curriculum of America* and *Curriculum Services* as other secular packaged options; *Abeka* and *Bob Jones University Press* as Christian-based packaged options; and *Seton School* and *Kolbe Academy* as additional Catholic-based package options.

Text Instruction/ The Traditional Approach

Ishizuka (2000) says most parents do not purchase a complete, structured curriculum because they find these packages too structured and inflexible for their needs. However, not all parents want to abandon textbooks all together. Many companies, in fact, sell texts to HS families outside of comprehensive packages. Homeschool.com (<http://www.homeschool.com>) and the other previously-mentioned sources (Appendices E-G) list and advertise textbook

companies for parents wanting to purchase individual texts. Jackson (1997b) says textbook instruction (also called “school-at-home” and a “traditional approach”):

utilizes the same instructional and learning methods employed in the school system, but on a one-to-one scale. Most of the textbooks were originally designed for schools, particularly Christian schools, but have been adapted to the home setting, with each subject having its text and workbook. Families using this approach often have a routine – studying the same subjects, in the same order, daily. (¶6)

In all, the textbook or traditional method of homeschooling is still quite structured. Unlike the comprehensive packaged programs, however, this method allows parents greater control of record-keeping, scheduling, and testing.

Classical Approach

The classical approach to HS often includes a Christian component and it “concentrates on teaching children critical thinking skills, classic languages such as Latin and Greek, with a curriculum based on the ‘great books’ of Western Civilization” (Ishizuka, 2000, p. 146). Dorothy Sayers is often credited with advocating this approach in HS. The classical approach is based on the trivium, which can be described as “a teaching model that attempts to correspond the curriculum with a child’s cognitive development” (Ishizuka, 2000, p. 147). In brief, the trivium is divided into three stages: the grammar stage (memorization and fact/skill development), the dialectic stage (reasoning, argumentation, logic) and the rhetoric stage (articulation, discussion, writing). Farris (1997), an advocate of using the classical approach in HS, describes several resources for incorporating the classical approach at home, including: David Quine’s *World*

Views of the Western World and a magazine/resource center called *Trivium Pursuit*. I also found some websites that address the issues and needs of parents wishing to use the classical approach, including: Classical Homeschooling (<http://www.classicalhomeschooling.com>), The Well-Trained Mind (<http://www.welltrainedmind.com>), and Great Books Academy (<http://www.greatbooksacademy.org>). Overall, the classical approach emphasizes learning how to learn through the study of conventional works. This philosophy then proposes that these ageless learned tools can be applied to society at all points in time.

Literature Based Approaches and the Mason Method

Some HS parents do not want to use either textbooks (which they feel distort and/or omit information) or the classics (which they feel are too old or out-dated). The literature-based approach offers an option for these parents because it is based on reading original, *modern* books. Charlotte Mason is often credited with advocating the use of modern literature or “living books” in HS learning. “Mason respected the abilities of children, and advocated their involvement in real-life situations and in allowing them to read really good ‘whole’ books, instead of what she called “twaddle” – inferior, superficial material, such as textbooks” (Ishizuka, 2000, p. 45). Ishizuka (2000) explains that Mason’s method is actually more than just literature-based, though, because Mason also advocated: “providing experiences such as nature walks, observing wildlife, visiting art galleries” (p. 145), asking students to keep notebooks and diaries, and narration.

Unit-Based Approach

Unit studies “focus on a specific theme or topic while incorporating the core subject areas into the study” (Linsenbach, 2003, p. 59). For example, a child might study boats in science,

history, math, and in reading. Ishizuka (2000) says unit studies are often recommended by families with more than one child because “multiple ages can investigate one subject, varying activities according to each child’s level” (pp. 38-39). Overall, the unit-based approach can be used in combination with the classical approach, the text-based/traditional approach, or the literature based approach.

Unschooling

The final type of HS curriculum I will discuss is “unschooling.” As the name suggests, some argue that unschooling is not a curriculum-type at all, instead it is a *lack of* curriculum. Blumenfeld (1997) describes unschooling as when: “the child learns what he or she wants when he or she wants to learn it” (p. 168). John Holt is often credited with starting the unschooling movement. Holt (1964, 1967, 1976, 1981) proposed that children’s innate curiosity and interests would lead them to learn on their own. Katharine Houk (in Dobson, 2002) explains that unschooling is sometimes called “natural learning, the discovery method, or experience-based learning” (p. 99). Unschooling is based on the belief that learning is a part of each day and that “When confined to a desk . . . the child is removed from the real world, making it hard for him [sic] to connect with what is being taught” (Linsenbach, 2003, p. 69). Houk (in Dobson, 2002) adds that unschooling can involve abandoning one’s notions that schools must be institutionalized, saying “these notions may include the idea that learning is a chore and must be coerced with punishments and rewards, or that teaching is necessary for learning, or that there is a uniform timetable for learning certain things such as reading” (pp. 99-100).

In closing, in this section of the paper I reviewed a variety (but by no means an exhaustive list) of HS curriculum options/methods. Next I will discuss my own thoughts and feelings about homeschooling.

Some Personal Thoughts

I began this project with a great interest in homeschooling. In particular, I wondered when and if my husband and I are blessed with children, I would want to pursue this educational option. I spent an immense proportion of time (and space in this paper!) weighing the pros and cons of homeschooling because, as I see it, choosing HS is, in and of itself, a huge curriculum decision. Particular curriculum choices, outlined later in the paper, are important, but must be made *after* this initial choice.

The main reasons I would consider HS include: spending more time my children; having a greater influence on their moral/spiritual development; allowing them to be more creative and expressive than schools often allow; sharing my love for learning with them – without them feeling the institutional pressures of grading and testing; and, finally, individualizing a classic curriculum that considers their learning styles. This said, the more I worked on this project, the more I questioned my reasons for considering HS. In particular, I wondered if HS are really the best educational option. I particularly pondered Guterson's (1992) proposition that family involvement, not HS alone, is most important. I also considered Lubienski's (2000) point that parents who HS do not contribute to the public educational system and that, instead of trying to make public schools better, they take a sort of "easy out." I especially thought about the life lessons that I learned (and can now appreciate) from attending school . . . even though, I admit, I also quickly recall the many unwanted bureaucratic aspects of this institutional setting that wasted my time, patience, and nerves! Finally, I considered how, if I stayed at home to teach, I might feel about not contributing to our family income. In all, I am currently unsure whether or not I believe HS is (or will be) the best option for my family. Luckily, since I just got married

and have no children yet, I have time to contemplate this decision! I am grateful, though, that no matter what my decision, HS are legal in the U.S., so I have this type of education as a choice.

As far as my thoughts on the various types of HS curriculum, I feel that I fall somewhere in the middle of the structured-unstructured curriculum continuum. I do not think I would want to use a very structured option (I see this as hindering the greatest advantages of home schooling, freedom!) but I also realize I am very organized and structured person, so I can not see myself choosing unschooling either. Overall, I find the eclectic approach towards curriculum most similar to my ideal— allowing me to use textbooks for some subjects, modern books for other subjects, and yet still rely on the “classics” in some subject areas.

Conclusion

In this paper, I discussed the “pros” (see Appendix B) and “cons” (see Appendix A) of homeschooling. Next, I reviewed some important questions that parents interested in homeschooling should consider (see Appendices C, D). I listed some possible sources of homeschooling information (see Appendices E-G) and then described some specific curriculum options, including some very structured and some very unstructured choices. Lastly, I shared my thoughts and feelings about possibly homeschooling my own children someday.

My intention was for this paper to provide: 1.) a thorough overview of HS as a curriculum option, and 2.) some specific HS curriculum possibilities. Further, I hope parents, teachers, and citizens interested in HS found many helpful curriculum resources throughout this paper. I close with a quote by Guterson (1992) that captures my overall thoughts about homeschooling and curriculum:

Our privilege as parents is to understand our children with all the thoroughness that true education requires . . . Certainly not many parents will feel this means they must pull

their children out of schools. On the other hand, the notion of parents as teachers is, in the broadest sense, neither extreme or outlandish, and whether we choose to send our children to schools is secondary to the commitment we make to involve ourselves meaningfully in their educations. . . homeschooling is only the extreme form of life in which all parents should take part. All parents are potentially teachers of the sort their children need them to be. (p. 36)

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Appendix A

Some of the major arguments against (or the critiques of) homeschooling include:

Homeschooling uses non-certified and unqualified teachers/parents.

Homeschooling deprives students of social experiences and social development opportunities.

Homeschooling denies students of a full range of curriculum experiences.

Homeschooling isolates students from the diversity offered in public schools.

Homeschooling undermines public schooling and a democratic society.

Homeschooling creates a burden on school administrators.

Homeschooling does not allow for adequate academic assessment.

Appendix B

Some of the major arguments for (advocating) homeschooling include:

Homeschooling “works,” homeschooled children consistently score higher on standard tests.

Homeschooling allows families to spend more time together.

Homeschooling provides an opportunity for parents to teach their morals, religion and/or values.

Homeschooling allows socializing, but deters “negative socialization.”

Homeschooling encourages individualized learning.

Homeschooling provides an outlet from institutionalized learning, testing, and ”red tape.”

Appendix C

Some questions parents interested in homeschooling should ask before choosing a particular curriculum:

1. What are the state laws (where I reside) regarding homeschooling?
2. Which teaching approach or personal teaching style might I use most effectively?
3. What are my educational goals for each child?
4. What are my child's interests?
5. What is my child's learning style(s)?
6. Do I know my child's equivalent age and/or grade-level in each subject?
7. What is our family's budget for educational materials?
8. What community resources are available?

THEN CONSIDER . . .

9. What type of curriculum do I plan to use?

Appendix D

Some further curriculum-related questions parents interested in homeschooling might ask:

- 1.) Do I/we want the curriculum to have a religious or secular orientation?
- 2.) Do I/we want to purchase a comprehensive or subject-based program?
- 3.) Are textbooks, workbooks or neither the best for my/our child?
- 4.) If and what kind of assessment/evaluations do I/we want to use?

*Note- Also refer to your state laws regarding homeschooling-
some state laws mandate particular assessments!?

- 5.) How do I/we plan to schedule schooling (or will it be scheduled at all)?
- 6.) How do I/we plan to record learning?

*Note: Also refer to your state laws regarding homeschooling-
some states mandate particular record-keeping

Appendix E

Some helpful websites that contain homeschooling curriculum information:

the American Homeschool Association (<http://www.americanhomeschoolassociation.org>)

Home Education Magazine (<http://www.homeedmag.com>)

Homeschool.com (<http://homeschool.com>)

Homeschool World (<http://www.home-school.com>)

the Homeschool Resource Guide (<http://members.cox.net/ct-homeschool/guide.htm>)

the Homeschool Zone (<http://www.homeschoolzone>)

Appendix F

Some books that review homeschooling curriculum options:

Christian Home Educator's Curriculum Manual by Cathy Duffy

The Complete Home Learning Source Book by Rebecca Rupp

The Everything Homeschooling Book by Sherri Linsenbach

The Home School Source Book by Jean and Donn Reed

Homeschooling Children with Special Needs by Sharon Hensley

Home School Manual by Ted Wade

The Unofficial Guide to Homeschooling by Kathy Ishizuka

Appendix G

Some helpful magazines on homeschooling include:

Home Education Magazine

Home School Digest

Homeschooling Today

Old Schoolhouse

Practical Homeschooling

The Teaching Home