

# Homeschooling Now More Approved

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Greetings. This is Dan White with Homeschool Helpers.

A generation ago only a small part of the general population in the U.S. approved of home schooling. It was often considered a strange idea, and was specifically illegal in some states. Some Christians even heard the prison doors slam behind them for the crime of teaching their own children abc's and 1-2-3's.

There was a general perception that only public school professionals could teach. Although private tutoring was originally preferred as the most elite education, in America the big government schools were thought by many to be the only possible way to educate. They had a government monopoly on education.

The earliest home school families faced potential legal challenges and opposition from local school authorities, as might be expected. More often, however, they faced antagonistic relatives and disapproving churches. These might be the ones who most supported a disciplined Christian education, yet often they were the most opposed.

Now home schooling is legal in every state in the union. All colleges and universities accept home school students, including the most selective and famed institutions. Some universities now actively recruit them as being superior students, academically and socially. Home school students, although greatly outnumbered by public school students, have repeatedly had outstanding performances in national spelling bees and geography bees. Year after year home school students score the highest of any group in America on standardized and college entrance tests, above their private school and public school counterparts.

Today a majority of Americans approve of home schooling. This change was not brought about by demonstrations or battles, but by America gradually recognizing the fruits of Christian home schooling. Now home schooling doesn't seem strange at all, and it seems strange that it was once thought so.

## *Homeschooling Now Easier*

Many states have made it much easier for parents who choose to teach their children at home. Actually, this is one of the fears of those who are considering homeschooling. "What do I have to do?" they ask. They fear a legal and logistical nightmare, like adopting a child or going through probate. It is surprisingly easy to start homeschooling.

In Arizona, all parents have to do is send an affidavit to the state stating that they will be homeschooling. Texas, Alaska and several Midwestern states don't even ask parents to do that, making them especially home-school friendly. Missouri requests that parents

send their public school an official notice of withdrawal if their child has been attending the school, so they will know why the child is missing. If the child has never attended a public school, obviously no such notice is needed. In any case, an official notice to the public schools in Missouri is not required by law.

Family News in Focus spoke with Tim Lambert, president of the Texas Home School Coalition. He stated that 20 years ago homeschooling was illegal in Texas. "Our attorney general at that time said he didn't believe parents were qualified to raise their children much less teach them at home," Lambert said. "At that time Texas was one of the worst places in the country to homeschool. We had almost a hundred families prosecuted."

Lambert told Family News in Focus the difference for the Lone Star State came when families defended homeschooling in court and elected lawmakers who supported the idea.

"Today, as a result of aggressive political activity of home-school families in Texas," he said, "virtually every statewide officeholder in Texas promotes the freedom for parents to teach their children without regulation of the government."

We did homeschool in Texas in the early 1980's. We had to work through the local school superintendent in Red Lick, Texas. He was quite cordial and we had no problem. You can tell by the name that Red Lick, Texas is not exactly Dallas or Houston so the rural atmosphere helped. Some states still require homeschoolers to go through their state educational bureaucracy, as we worked with that superintendent. However, it is extremely unwise to put the competition under the control of the school bureaucracy. That's like putting UPS and FedEx under the control of the US Postal Service.

Family News in Focus said that several states in the Northeast have set stringent requirements for homeschoolers, including curriculum approval and home visits by state officials. Michael Smith, president of the Home School Legal Defense Association, said efforts to make changes there have run into significant opposition.

"We have bills in both New York and Pennsylvania that would drastically change the regulations," he said. "We can't get them passed because the folks that are in there – generally speaking – the majority is not prepared to give the freedom that homeschoolers need to excel."

New England, as everyone knows, is one of the most socialistic regions of the nation and would be expected to give Christian homeschoolers the most difficulty. Most other states, though, make it fairly easy to start homeschooling.

### *Homeschool Activity Groups*

One of the biggest factors making homeschooling easier today is the existence of so many local homeschool activity groups. We feel that the biggest challenge facing homeschool families is not academic at all. Unless a family is trying to be at the very top

of the ACT/SAT scale or trying to win a National Spelling Bee, the lessons and learning are the easiest part of homeschooling. Of course, a family has to work at the lessons in a systematic and constructive manner. The lessons have to be done regularly and the children and family have to be disciplined enough for the lessons to be learned. But if a family does that, then the academics go quickly and efficiently.

The biggest challenge we always faced was social activities. We were not part of a big church, and like many homeschoolers, did not want to be. Most churches do not actively support homeschooling, anyway. The neighbor kids were usually tied up with school and school activities for almost all of their time, so they were seldom available for social times with our kids. Sometimes the difference in standards may make it unwise for Christian homeschool kids to socialize with the public school types. I well remember the time that a neighbor boy in Arkansas was teasing our boy about not taking marijuana. That is typical public school socialization and we didn't need that.

Finding another homeschool family – not a homeschool group, mind you, just a family – took some doing. We homeschooled in several different areas, and we began to learn how to spot homeschoolers. If they were doing things together as a family, that was always a very suspicious sign that they were homeschoolers. Also, if the students were in the public library, that set them up as being possible suspects. If the children were particularly well behaved, we wondered if they were homeschoolers.

After finding such a family, we would approach them directly, with the possibility of doing activities together. Generally they were quite pleased at this, and we developed wonderful friendships. We had homeschool activities together with Catholics, Mormons, Baptists, Church of Christ, etc. The experience was great, and we have very fond memories of these times. Most often, these activities consisted of only two families, sometimes three. Since Christian homeschool families believe that children are blessings from God and have a lot of them, even with two families we had enough folks there to have fun.

Those activities took a determination to make them happen. I always felt a pressure to come up with something for my kids to be able to have play and social time. It was hard to do, because homeschool families have enough burdens just trying to keep the bills paid and the roof mended, but I strongly felt that young people should have fun time. Arranging a continual program of those times was our greatest challenge.

In the later part of our homeschooling experience, the number of homeschool families increased and we associated with homeschool groups. We went from simply getting together at Dog's Bluff to go swimming, as in the old days, to organized basketball programs, big drama productions, co-op classes, and elaborate English Country dances. Such a blessing! And all accomplished by the parents, working for the benefit of their children.

That is the way the homeschool situation is today. Even in left wing Massachusetts the homeschool conventions attract thousands of people. In most areas Christian homeschool

groups are available for homeschool families, and these groups get an amazing amount done. In our area of the Ozarks, there are presently so many homeschool activities that a family would not reasonably participate in them all, as that would be just as unbalanced as having no activities at all. The homeschool family has to be willing to travel to get to these activities, so they still take work and money. I still very strongly believe that young folks need time just be young folks, to be with other young folks, for the sole purpose of having fun in an uplifting manner. All these activities have to be planned and carried out by the parents themselves, and every parent has to contribute to that or they do not work. But the groups are there, the activities are there, and they are such a blessing for the Christian homeschool family.

When we first began formally homeschooling, around 1981 we ordered a curriculum from Calvert School. That home school service had been around for decades, and was used by diplomats and internationals who were not able to have their children attend public schools in the US. We chose that course because we thought it was “safe.” Teaching math is a very dangerous pursuit, you know, and one must be very careful! There were not a lot of curricula choices at that time. Calvert was strictly a non-religious approach, and after a year with that we decided we wanted to try another curricula and wound up using, and being satisfied with, Alpha Omega.

Today there are a multitude of curricula alternatives, and some parents teach using no formal curricula program at all, preferring to create their own. That is more time consuming, I will caution, and a homeschool family’s time is at a premium. The internet has become available for everyone in the last decade, adding still more options and opportunities for homeschool families. There are also courses on CDs, videos or DVDs. For those math or science courses which you may dread to teach, you can now access some of the best teachers available on the internet or videos. All of this makes homeschooling easier and better.

### *Homeschool Grows But Small*

In spite of the fact that homeschooling has increased exponentially over the last three decades, the total portion of American students who are homeschooled is quite small. Government schools control 89% of America’s students. 9 of every 10 young Americans are being indoctrinated into anti-Christian socialism. We have been very encouraged by the growth in Christian homeschooling, and consider it one of the great Christian revivals in the history of America. Yet how short has been the reach, when compared with the overall number.

On the one hand, we have all the Catholic schools, Lutheran schools, Baptist local church schools, Seventh Day Adventist schools and academies, the expensive preppie private schools where the liberals send their kids, and all the homeschoolers all together adding up to only 11% of America’s students. On the other hand, we have the government public schools controlling 89% of our young people.

We have the situation in our beloved country where the public schools are getting more and more anti-Christian, at the same time that Christian homeschooling is getting better and better and easier and easier. We have two counter trends, the growing evil of the public schools and the growing ease of homeschooling. The growing evil in the public schools makes more Christians want to get out, and the growing ease of homeschooling makes it easier for them to get out.

Now is the time to encourage them to do that. It has never been easier to homeschool than it is now. It has never been more necessary to homeschool than it is now.

We have spoken here of homeschool courses and homeschool activities, but make no mistake. This is not a light matter. This not just education we are discussing. In Christian homeschooling, we are talking about human lives being rescued, the lives of teachable children.

In Missouri in 2001, over half of the public high school seniors had used marijuana. A quarter of them were currently repeat users. A number of them also used harder drugs.

Think about that. Over half of the high school seniors in the state have committed the crime of using marijuana, and one quarter of them are practicing criminals. Not only are their minds and bodies being defiled by the drugs, but they have absolutely no respect for the laws of their country and don't mind being a criminal.

Where do they learn that?

In the public school culture. They don't learn it at home. They don't learn it at church. They learn it at school. At school they learn cool. In this case, cool is criminal. Even the kids who don't do drugs learn to accept living in a lawless society.

There has been a big campaign in the public schools, "Just say no to drugs!." This campaign overlooks the most obvious fact. If you want to just say no to drugs, then just say no to the public schools where they learn that.

Drugs are not a prevailing problem among Christian homeschool students.

Among the nation's high schoolers, about half have fornicated. About a third are frequent fornicators. What does this mean?

It means that already they have messed up their marriages, to a more or less degree. They have broken the law of fidelity, and it will affect them emotionally for years to come. A large portion of these young kids have already become infected and afflicted with incurable diseases of adultery. Far more of them than the non-fornicators will consider or attempt or succeed at suicide. It means that in a local school, in the 2005 – 2006 school year, 18 junior high girls became pregnant. I didn't say high school girls. That's too common to be very noticeable now. We've all gotten used to that. I said 18 junior high girls, like eighth graders.

Where do these youngsters learn such behavior? In the public school culture.

Frequent fornicating is not a prevailing problem among Christian homeschoolers.

In Christian homeschooling, we are talking about young people receiving right instruction and right direction. In Christian homeschooling, we are talking about families being restored. In Christian homeschooling, we are talking about a whole movement of people turning to Christ to direct their lives, and being willing to give Him the time to let Him do that.

It is time for Christians to leave the anti-Christian schools. Homeschooling has never been easier. The public schools have never been worse. If you have children in the government schools, do whatever you have to do, make whatever arrangements you have to make, just get them out. If you don't have children at home yourself, encourage others you know to make this commitment. If you are a homeschooling family, let it be widely known that you are and encourage others to join you. Forward this message to others. If you are a Christian homeschool family, don't you dare go back to that drug infested, frequent fornicating public school system.

Christians, it is time.

This is Dan White with Homeschool Helpers. God bless the Christian homeschoolers.