

Homeschooling

Abraham Lincoln, Margaret Mead, General Douglas MacArthur, and Mark Twain are a few notables who were homeschooled.^{1,2} Less well-known homeschoolers are teenagers Evelyn Blacklock and James Williams. Evelyn was the runner-up in the 2003, 76th Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee. James won the 2003 National Geographic Bee.^{3,4}

While a current trend in public schools is standardization, homeschooling and other nontraditional educational systems that provide more flexibility are emerging, such as on-line education.⁵ In addition to flexibility, homeschooling: (1) allows for the incorporation of family values and beliefs into the curriculum, (2) offers tailor-made curriculum designed to accommodate students' style of learning, (3) provides a supportive, safe teaching environment, (4) promotes learning for the sake of learning, (5) provides one-on-one instruction leading to higher academic performance, (6) encourages development of closer parent-child relationships and opportunities for high-quality interaction with adults, (7) offers an environment without negative peer pressure, and (8) promotes enhanced self-concept and social skills.^{6,7}

As with other alternative forms of education, homeschooling has its limitations. The lack of socialization opportunities is the most often cited. Others include lack of peer interaction in the classroom, lack of resources for delivering a well-rounded education, lack of qualified teachers, and inability of students to develop organizational skills and study habits.⁸ Some critics view homeschooling as a subversive activity, others as fanaticism.⁹ Critics lament that homeschoolers do not benefit from the physical and mental-health role that public schools play in providing scoliosis and tuberculosis screening, offering sports physicals, and discovering abuse and neglect.¹⁰

Definition

*Homeschoolers are students whose "parents reported them being schooled at home instead of a public or private school, . . ."*¹¹

Homeschool Attendance by School District in Nevada: 2001-2002

School District	Number K-3	Number 4-6	Number 7-8	Number 9-12	Ungraded*	Total Number
Carson	27	40	14	24	0	105
Churchill	40	35	25	26	0	126
Clark	723	701	597	657	163	2,841
Douglas	57	66	65	110	0	298
Elko	46	48	41	45	1	181
Esmeralda	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Eureka	9	4	6	7	0	26
Humboldt	13	20	19	27	0	79
Lander	4	5	3	4	0	16
Lincoln	8	3	2	4	0	17
Lyon	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mineral	4	6	2	6	0	18
Nye	46	54	48	52	1	201
Pershing	6	10	4	2	1	23
Storey	8	5	3	1	0	17
Washoe	287	248	182	179	0	896
White Pine	4	6	4	2	0	16
NEVADA						4,872

Note: NA = Not Available.

*The new Nevada homeschool forms do not have a place to mark grade. It is optional.

Source: Nevada School Districts, 2001-2002.

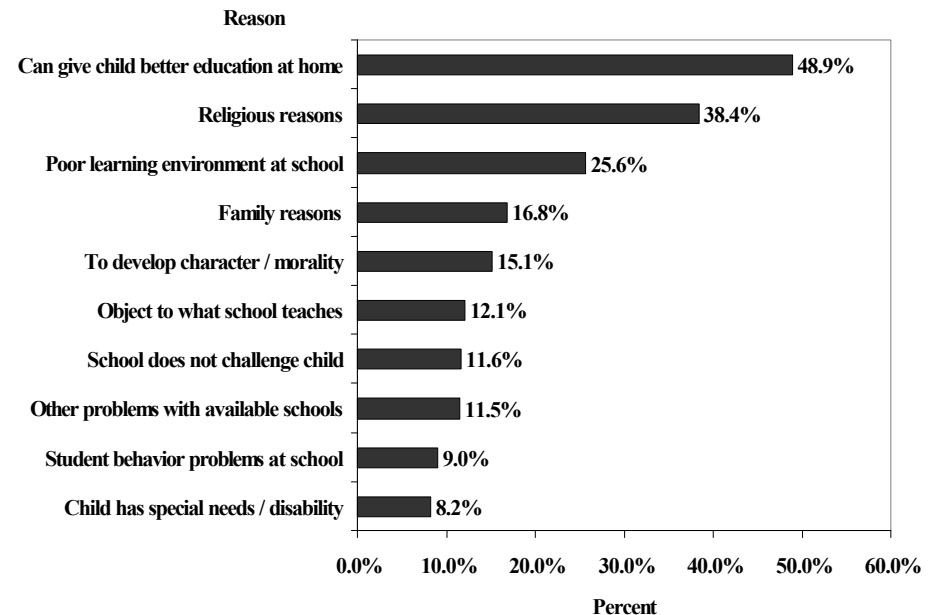
Homeschooling Continued

Estimates of the number of homeschooled students vary by source. The U.S. Department of Education estimated that 850,000 students were homeschooled in 1999.¹² The U.S. Census estimated about 791,000 students.¹³ The president of the National Home Education Research Institute estimated 1.5 to 1.9 million students were homeschooled in 2001-2002.¹⁴ Homeschooling in the U.S. is a growing force that educational institutions will have to deal with as the *No Child Left Behind* legislation exempts homeschooled students from federal-testing requirements that govern public-school students and forbids the federal government from overseeing homeschools.¹⁵ New technology, such as the Internet, which allows parents access to teaching materials online¹⁶ and perceived lack of safety in public schools¹⁷ have also spurred the homeschool movement. After the Columbine massacre, the number of homeschoolers rose 10 percent in Colorado.¹⁸

Homeschooled students generally perform well academically. One study, using test scores from a national testing service, found that homeschoolers' scores were well above those of public- and Catholic/private-school students.¹⁹ ACT test results for 2000 placed homeschoolers' scores above the national average score (22.8 versus 21.0).²⁰

Although hundreds of universities accept homeschooled students, some universities are hesitant to admit homeschooled students for fear that doing so would prevent their students from receiving federal student aid under the Higher Education Act.²¹ Others may be more accepting. Stanford University acknowledges in its homeschooling and admission policy that homeschooled students may have an advantage over traditional students in the area of intellectual growth and quest for knowledge as "they have consciously chosen and pursued an independent course of study."²²

Ten Reasons for Homeschooling: Parent Survey of the National Household Education Surveys Program: 1999



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, July 2001, "Homeschooling in the United States: 1999," by Stacey Bielick, Kathryn Chandler, and Stephen P. Broughman, *Statistical Analysis Report*, available online at: <<http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001033.pdf>> as of 8/27/03.