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What Are the Advantages and Disadvantages for Homeschoolers?

Some people wonder what it would be like to sleep in, wear pajamas all day, and do homework whenever they'd like. Others wonder what it would be like to wake up early, eat in a cafeteria, and be taught next to 20-30 other kids. Homeschooling has been a controversial issue for many years, and as the homeschooling population keeps growing, school boards and formal educators are starting to question the students, the teachers, and what opportunities they should be given. And while school boards and formal educators think that homeschooling may not be the best option for a child, homeschoolers think the opposite. However, both sides of the controversy should consider the advantages and disadvantages of homeschooling before coming to any conclusions. Good: a clean thesis that avoids choosing sides.

In 1970, homeschooling wasn’t unheard of, however, it was extremely uncommon. In the late 1900s, as standardization and culture took over formal education, people were seeking alternative routes. John Holt had nothing against education; in fact, he was a 5th grade teacher in a private school. In 1964, Holt’s book, How Children Fail, came out with some new and unusual perspectives on education. Holt claimed that children become self-conscious when forced to learn. Holt argued that schools were turning children into employees and that parents should liberate their kids from formal education.
Holt's claims both offended people and inspired people. And today, about 3 percent of all children (ages 5-17) in the United States are homeschooled, which is over 2 million students. According to *Kingdom of Children: Culture and Controversy in the Homeschooling Movement* by Mitchell L. Stevens, the reasons for parents homeschooling their children vary (7). "They come from different sectors of American society and have pursued their cause in contextually specific ways (Stevens 7)." The biggest reason people homeschool their children is the concern for the environment of formal schools. Other reasons include family time, financial reasons, dissatisfaction with the academic program, the desire for religious and moral incorporation in the curriculum, and having children with special needs and health problems.

There are many arguments between homeschoolers and formal schoolers. One argument for the avoidance of homeschooling is peer pressure and bullying. While the amount of bullying has grown over the years, it has taken a turn for the worst. Bullying can lead to depression, anger, and even suicide. Formal schoolers argue that teachers and staff are trained to deal with bullying and peer pressure. This includes talking about it, and putting a stop to it when it has been observed. Homeschoolers argue that some teachers are not fully experienced to deal with bullying, and would not know how to stop it if they saw it. They also argue that bullying and peer pressure is not always able to be observed.

Another argument for homeschooling is when you get to teach your child. Formal educators argue that children should be on a set schedule, and not be taught at random times. Schedules help regulate sleep and eating patterns, and they also show to help organization and learning. Homeschoolers argue that they are not always available at the same time every day to teach and they can learn outside of the home for a better world learning experience.
What you teach your child is another main argument in the topic of homeschooling. Formal educators argue that children should all be learning the same, basic things. And if they don’t learn them, they won’t be prepared for life when they graduate. Homeschoolers argue that children are individuals with different and unique learning styles and paces. They also argue that learning this way helps create individualism in the child and prepares them better for a career. And if you’re religious, you can incorporate your religious teachings into your curriculum.

An additional argument between homeschoolers and formal schoolers is tutoring and teacher time. Homeschoolers argue that teachers have about 30 students per class, so if they’re having trouble with their academics, the teacher is less likely to be available to help them. This may cause the parents to be forced to hire a tutor, which may cause a financial burden. Formal educators argue that some teachers offer after school assistance with school work. They also argue that some schools offer free tutoring and academic advice for children enrolled in that school.

Socialization is a major argument between homeschoolers and formal educators. According to an article titled Home Schooling, isolation forced by parents can lead to lack of communication and socialization skills (“Home” par. 29). According to Homeschooling: Depriving Children of Social Development? by Samantha Lebeda, parents and school boards have been arguing about school’s extracurricular activities and whether or not homeschooled students should be allowed to participate in them (100-101). While school boards are saying that parents chose not to have the school educate their children, so they shouldn’t be able to participate in activities or events held by the school, parents are saying that if they’re zoned for the school, they have a right to participate in extracurricular activities provided by the school. Formal educators argue that
without school, homeschoolers won't get enough socialization and they will not know how to interact with people when they are older. Lebeda says "They suggest that the larger the group of children—such as a typical public school classroom—the fewer meaningful socializing contacts a child can have" (103). Lebeda claims that there are ways, other than school, for a child to socialize, such as boy scouts and girl scouts, sports, classes, and activities provided by the "Y" and church (104). There are also homeschooling groups that take many educational field trips.

A minor argument, but still an argument, to do with homeschooling is family time. Homeschoolers have shown to have closer families and have more family time. Formal educators argue two different points; the first one is that families who go to school can have a family just as close. The second argument is that having a family that is that close is "unnatural". However, while some homeschooled families may enjoy each others company, some may not.

Another argument has to do with colleges. In *Homeschoolers on to College: What Research Shows Us*, Brian D. Ray says "Several colleges think so well of home-educated students that they have been actively recruiting them for several years (8)." While homeschoolers say that colleges look specifically for homeschoolers, due to their educational upbringing and home life, others argue that colleges look for the academically excelled, which has nothing to do with where and what they learn, but how they apply it. Another argument to due with college is whether or not homeschoolers are being prepared for college. While formal schools take mandatory tests to prepare for college readiness, homeschoolers argue that it is just not necessary. While some homeschool students have shown to have trouble in college due to classroom learning and testing, most homeschoolers show to adapt to the environment quite well.

In *Exploring Academic Outcomes of Homeschool Students*, Michael F. Cogan says...
“Homeschooled students (26.5) reported a significantly higher ACT-Composite score when compared to the overall cohort (25.0) (24).”

Another controversy in homeschooling is the family’s financial situation. With one parent staying home to homeschool a child, they may cause a financial burden due to their lack of a job. And while homeschool parents make that sacrifice and claim that it’s worth it, formal educators believe the opposite. Formal educators believe that most parents do not think it is worth the financial burden to homeschool their children, and others simply cannot afford it.

In addition to all of these arguments, parents being qualified to teach is one of them. Formal educators claim that most parents are not qualified to teach a child, whereas teachers in formal schools have received teaching certificates to teach. Homeschoolers say that it is not necessary to have a teaching certificate to teach their children. Any parent can just follow the curriculum whether it is web based or book based.

The last, and one of the main arguments of homeschooling is homeschooling laws. Formal educators claim that there aren’t enough laws to guarantee that homeschoolers are getting a proper education. Homeschoolers, however, argue that what they teach their children is their business and they should not have to get approval from the state on their curriculum. In *Homeschooling Laws (or lack thereof) in New Jersey-Are Children Slipping through the Cracks?* by Elizabeth Richardson, Richardson talks about the lack of laws for homeschoolers in New Jersey. Richardson claims that while for high schoolers in public school, the required subjects and credits are very specific, but for homeschoolers, there are no required subjects or amount of credits (174). Richardson says “Lastly, it is impossible to even check the progress of the homeschooled students, as they are not required to take any standardized tests (175).”
So, while homeschooling is a controversial topic, both sides tend to draw conclusion and generalize without getting any facts beforehand, which can result in negative attitudes toward the other side. While both sides have reasonable arguments, they need to look at the other side’s argument before making any conclusions. And maybe, in the future, people can live in a world where they don’t draw conclusions so easily. But for now, instead of drawing conclusions, people can get all of the information first, and then make decisions.
Works Cited


Overall, the paper cites a variety of sources, and the documentation is generally clean. A point to work on for improvement next time: more use of MLA style: when to use quotes vs. Italics.