References:


Vandell, Deborah Lowe; Belak, Jay; Burchinal, Margaret; Steinberg, Laurence; & Vandergoot, Nathan. (2010). Do effects of early child care extend to age 15 years? Results from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development. Child Development, 81(2), 737-756.

Homeschooling—that is, private parent-led home-based education—is an age-old traditional educational practice that a decade ago appeared to be cutting-edge and “alternative” but is now bordering on “mainstream” in the United States. There are about 2.4 million home-educated K-12 students in the United States, and it appears the homeschool population is continuing to grow (at an estimated 2% to 8% per annum over the past few years) (Ray, 2016; Redford, Battle, & Bielick, 2016). It may be the fastest-growing form of education in the United States.

Key Facts for Informing Policy

Several policy issues regarding homeschooling are addressed by these research findings:

• Home-educated students score above average on achievement tests regardless of their parents’ level of education.

• Homeschool students score above average on achievement tests regardless of their family’s household income.

• Whether homeschool parents have ever or never been government-certified teachers has almost no correlation with their children’s academic achievement (Ray, 2013).

• The degree of state control and regulation of homeschooling is not related to academic achievement (Ray, 2010). That is, where states control or regulate private homeschool education families more (e.g., require registration), the students do no better academically than where homeschoolers have more freedom.

• There is no empirical evidence that home-educated students are incarcerated at the same or higher rate than those who attend public schools in Indiana. Actually, homeschool parents are more civicly engaged than others (Smith & Slikkink, 1999) and homeschool graduates are more politically tolerant than others (Cheng, 2014).

• There is no empirical evidence that homeschool students lose as many instructional days and hours as public school students in Indiana.

• Home-educated students typically score above average on the college-admission SAT and ACT tests (Murphy, 2012).

• Home-educated students are regularly engaged in social and educational activities outside their homes and with people other than their nuclear-family members. They are commonly involved in activities such as field trips, scouting, 4-H, political drives, church ministry, sports teams, debate teams, and community volunteer work.

• Home-educated students are more politically tolerant than others (Cheng, 2014).

Most parents and youth decide to homeschool for more than one reason. The most common reasons given for choosing home-based education are the following:

• customize or individualize the curriculum and learning environment for each child,

• accomplish more academically than in schools,

• use pedagogical approaches other than those typical in institutional schools,

• enhance family relationships between children and parents and among siblings,

• provide guided and reasoned social interactions with youthful peers and adults,

• provide a safer environment for children and youth, because of physical violence, drugs and alcohol, psychological abuse, and improper and unhealthy sexuality associated with institutional schools, and

• teach and impart a particular set of values, beliefs, and worldview to children and youth.

Academic Performance

A 2017 data analysis revealed that Indiana private homeschool students are scoring at the 85th to 91st percentile across the subjects of reading, language, math, science, and social studies on standardized academic achievement tests. This is 35 to 41 percentile points above the U.S. public school average.1

Multiple studies by many researchers show that home-educated students average 15 to 30 percentile points above public-school students on standardized academic achievement tests (Murphy, 2012). Please see table on the following page.

These average high scores also show up in states that mandate achievement testing of all homeschool students. For example, homeschool students score at about (median) the 79th percentile year after year on state-required standardized academic achievement tests (Oregon Department of Education, 2014; Williams, 2014).

Reasons for Home Educating

Most parents and youth decide to homeschool for more than one reason. The most common reasons given for choosing home-based education are the following:

• Home-educated students typically score above average on the college-admission SAT and ACT tests (Murphy, 2012).

• Graduates of parent-led home-based education are increasingly being actively recruited by colleges. College and university personnel have a positive impression of graduates of homeschooling (Glöckner & Jones, 2013).

Social, Emotional, and Psychological Development

The home-educated are doing well, typically above a verage, on measures of social, emotional, and psychological development (Medlin, 2013). Research measures include peer interaction, self-concept, leadership skills, family cohesion, participation in community service, and self-esteem.

Homeschool students are regularly engaged in social and educational activities outside their homes and with people other than their nuclear-family members. They are commonly involved in activities such as field trips, scouting, 4-H, political drives, church ministry, sports teams, debate teams, and community volunteer work.

Need More Information About Homeschooling?

See back for references.

For more homeschool research and more in-depth interpretation of research, please contact: National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI), P.O. Box 13939, Salem OR 97309, USA | www.nheri.org | (503) 364-1490 | mail@nheri.org | Copyright © 2018 by Brian D. Ray

Homeschooling Law and Economics in Indiana

• By Indiana law, homeschools are considered to be non-accredited private schools, and thus, homeschools must comply with Indiana’s private school statute. For example: There is no state-mandated curriculum; homeschools are not required to register with the state.

• There were an estimated 44,000 to 54,000 K-12 homeschool students in Indiana during the spring 2016 (Ray, 2016; Redford, Battle, & Bielick, 2016), and it is likely these numbers have grown.

• Public school per-pupil expenditure in Indiana during 2015-16 was $8,135 plus capital expenditures (National Education Association, 2016). Therefore, it is estimated that homeschool families saved Indiana taxpayers $358 million to $439 million annually over the past two years, plus capital expenditures that the state did not need to spend on home-educated students.

• The topic of home-based education often shows up in Indiana news outlets (e.g., IndyStar.com, 2016).

Success in the “Real World” of Adulthood

The research base of adults who were home educated is growing thus far it indicates that they:

• participate in local communities more frequently than does the general population,

• vote and attend public meetings more frequently than the general population,

• go to and succeed at college at an equal or higher rate than the general population,

• by adulthood, internalize the values and beliefs of their parents at a high rate, and

• are more politically tolerant than others (Cheng, 2014).

Table: Percentile scores on academic achievement tests, average

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
<th>INDIANA HOMESCHOOL</th>
<th>NATIONWIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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