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McKinzi Godfrey Smith
kinzigsmith@gmail.com

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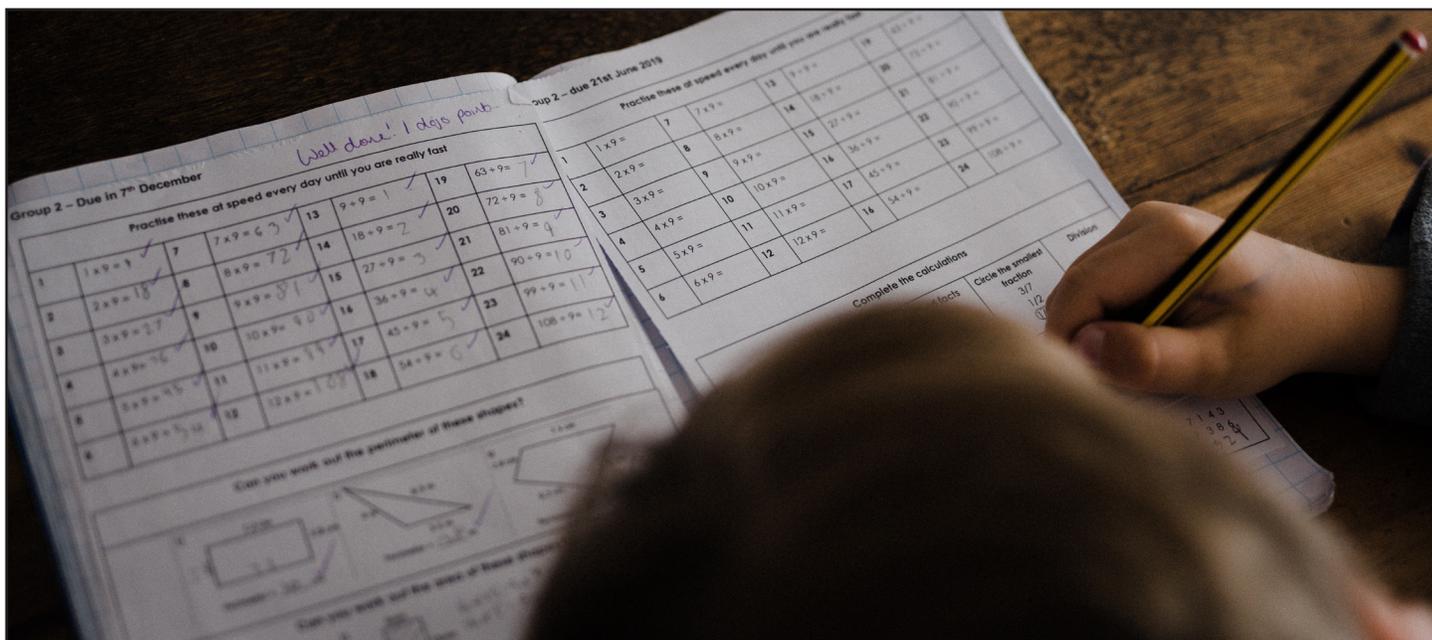


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Homeschooling: The New Way to Do School?

By McKinzi Godfrey Smith

If you are like me, then before the COVID-19 pandemic you would not have considered homeschooling your children... ever. I was a strong supporter of public education. My mom and grandma both taught in public schools, and I loved my public-school experience. In my mind, the only way to raise your kids was to send them to public school.

Then, the COVID-19 pandemic swept across the world. Schools shut their doors and transitioned to the internet, with teachers and students scrambling to adjust. Although not a parent yet myself, I saw and

read about many families struggling as they tried to navigate the online school system.¹ As dissatisfaction spread, some parents began searching for academic alternatives that might better suit their families, like homeschooling.

Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, homeschooling in the United States has doubled.² The question now becomes, will that trend continue after the pandemic? Even though homeschooling will face some obstacles, here are a few reasons to believe it could last.

Children Can Receive Unique Accommodations in Homeschooling.

One favorable attribute of homeschooling is that parents can personalize their child's learning curriculum. Parents can help their children develop strengths and work with them on their weaknesses. That is not to say that every homeschooled child will become the best academician, athlete, or musician, but parents can focus on the child's specific needs due to homeschooling.

Homeschooling can allow families more time together.

Do kids really need that much personalization? Although research is still in its beginning phases when it comes to homeschooling, the Journal of Catholic Education published a research article which found that homeschooled children have higher GPAs and ACT averages than traditionally educated students.³ This does not mean that kids need accommodation, but it implies that a personalized education may boost academic performance.

Homeschooling Can Strengthen Family Bonds.

Homeschooling can allow families more time together. That might sound terrifying for some families, but it can lead to fun and unique experiences. In a Huffington Post article, Kelly Burch wrote about the six-month vacation that her family experienced thanks

to homeschooling.⁴ She discusses how her family was able to encounter people, places, and views that they would not have otherwise.

The benefits of spending time together as a family can outweigh the risks. One Public Discourse article suggested that homeschooling could be an antidote to the loneliness and alienation many people are experiencing right now.⁵ When families are united, they can be a strong support for each other in emotional, educational, and social needs.

With Homeschooling, the Family Can Better Control What Influences the Child.

Parents can protect their children from harmful influences through homeschooling. In public school, kids can get exposed to negative influences like drugs, bullying, pornography, and more, long before they are prepared to deal with them. While not failproof, parents

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have much more control over the environment in their homes than they do the environment of public schools.

These dangerous exposures in public schools can lead to problems later in life. For example, a research article from the prestigious journal *Psychological Science* found that kids who are exposed to drugs and alcohol before age 15 have an increased risk for adult substance dependence, early pregnancy, and crime.⁶ Adolescent bullying has been linked to increased rates of depression and anxiety,⁷ and adolescent pornography use is associated with more accepting attitudes towards sexual violence.⁸

Homeschooling can be a great option for families, especially during a pandemic. But it is also a great option at any point because of the customized curriculum, family time, and safer environment. Will the newfound interest in homeschooling survive the Pandemic? Maybe. There are positive characteristics that would be attractive to many families, including my own. Maybe I'll end up being a schoolteacher like my mom and grandma, but teaching in the home, not the school.

Endnotes

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