

HOMESCHOOL *Arizona*



A PUBLICATION OF ARIZONA FAMILIES FOR HOME EDUCATION

December 2025

A Good Homeschool Day
Carrie De Francisco

**What UNESCO Gets Wrong
about Homeschooling**
Kevin Boden

Upcoming Important Dates

Homeschooling: The Research
Dr. Brian Ray

**Fraction Fun: Doubling and
Halving Recipes**
Demme Learning Blog

**Looking Back as a
Homeschool Parent**
Kathie Morrissey

ABOUT AFHE

Arizona Families for Home Education (AFHE) is the statewide organization that has been serving the needs and protecting the rights of Arizona's homeschooling families since 1983. AFHE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit educational, religious, and charitable corporation directed by a Christian board. AFHE membership is available to all Arizona homeschool parents.

OUR MISSION

AFHE exists to **INSPIRE** parents to homeschool their children; **PROMOTE** parent-directed, privately funded, home-based education; **PRESERVE** the freedom to homeschool; and **SUPPORT** parents who choose a home-based education option for their children.

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What will you find at **AFHE.org/Get-Started?**

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Follow a link to our **AZ Law & Affidavit** page, where you can:

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- read Arizona's legal definition of **homeschool** and the statutes that pertain to homeschooling
- view a walk-through video for filing the Affidavit of Intent to Homeschool (the only legally required paperwork in Arizona!)
- download the affidavit and simple instructions



Discover even more!

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Link to our **FAQs about Getting Started, Graduation & Diplomas, Testing, and Homeschooling & the ESA**



A Good Homeschool Day



by Carrie De Francisco

So many moms worry that they are not doing enough. Are you one of them?

FOR NEW HOMESCHOOLING MOMS, it is hard to believe that we as homeschoolers can get so much done each day in half the time it takes during a traditional school day. It leaves us feeling like we are missing something or not doing enough.

For veteran homeschooling moms, it's hard not to play the comparison game. We see our homeschooling friends seemingly doing "more" each day than we are and we panic. We wonder if we should push a little harder or assign a little more work.

Moms ask me all of the time:

What does your typical homeschool day look like?
How do you know if you are doing enough?
What makes a homeschool day a good day?

You are going to hate the answer to the first two questions: *it really depends*. It depends on your family's priorities, your family's daily rhythms, and your family's needs.

However, I can answer the third question: What makes a homeschool day a good day?

By asking yourself a few simple questions each day, you can change your perspective on what makes a good day. Here are a few things to think about to help you change your expectations without lowering them, and a simpler way to look at your day to help you realize you are probably already doing enough.

At the end of each day, ask yourself these nine simple questions:

Today, did we . . .

Worship together
Read something
Write something
Create something
Solve a few problems
Explore nature
Move and exercise
Care for each other
and our home
and Rest?

Today, did we . . . Worship Together?

If you and your family spent time together in God's Word and gave Him the worship He rightly deserves, then you have done the most important thing to make your homeschool day a great day! It doesn't have to be long, it doesn't have to be a mini-sermon, and it doesn't have to come from a fancy Bible curriculum. A simple devotion for children will suffice. Opening up God's Word and reading a passage or chapter from Proverbs will do. Listening to worship music or learning a new hymn is also a wonderful way to worship together. Praying together as a family is a powerful and worthwhile activity in your homeschool day.

Today, did we . . . Read Something?

If all you and your family did today was read from THE Good Book (the Bible) and read from a good book (literature), then your day was good enough! Reading aloud together as a family (or listening to a book on Audible) is a wonderful way to start or end your homeschooling day. It doesn't have to be long, and it doesn't have to end with a series of comprehension questions. A few simple picture books or a chapter from a classic is enough.



Of course, the more time you can read aloud, the better; but if you can squeeze in at least 20 minutes a day, you are doing enough. Include some discussion and narration after you read, and your day is off to a great start.

Today, did we . . . Write Something?

If each child writes something (anything) each day, then he or she is getting the basics. If your child is younger, copy work and letter practicing is a great start. If your child is older, writing a letter to a friend, creating a "Thank You" card for Grandma, journaling in a nature notebook, or composing lists and stories is purposeful writing. If your child is a tween or teen, writing a well-written paragraph about a science topic or an essay about a historical topic each week is great practice.

I always found the more meaningful the writing was, the better the result was. One of my favorite writing activities was to give a journal prompt or story starter during our morning time each day for all of us to respond to. I would even write and share too!

Today, did we . . . Create Something?

If your student has an opportunity each day to be creative, it is a good day. God created us in His own image, which means we long to create. Spending time each day using our creativity and imagination is a wonderful use of time. It isn't wasted time. The projects don't have to be elaborate, fancy, or expensive. They don't have to be Pinterest-ready when complete, either.

Cater to your child's natural bent. Create a little art nook in your home full of arts and craft supplies—papers, markers, pencils, paints, yarn, glue, scissors, cardboard, tape, play dough, Legos, building blocks—anything that can be used to create a story, a picture, a gift, or an imaginary world. But don't limit your child to art. If your child created beautiful music today, it's a good creative day. If he cooked a snack or a meal, it's a good creative day. If he created a new business today, it's a good creative day.



(continued on next page)

Today, did we . . . Solve a Few Problems?

If your child solves a few problems today, it has been a productive homeschool day. This could include his or her math for the day, but it isn't limited to only math problems. If your children solved a sibling issue today, then they used their problem-solving skills. If your kids played a game, especially a strategy game like chess, Clue, or 20 Questions, then they used their critical thinking skills. If your teen discussed with you a current news story and shared his or her thoughts on the issues, then your teen definitely used his critical thinking skills. If your child built something, he or she used his spatial problem-solving skills. If your children had to use real-world math skills like measuring or counting money, then they solved quite a few important problems today.

Remember, math comes in all shapes and sizes. Don't feel guilty if you missed a day (or week) of math workbook pages. Look around to see how your child was using computation, critical thinking, and real-world math skills today. I'm sure it was plenty enough.

Today, did we . . . Explore Nature?

If your child had time and space to play outside today, he or she participated in the best part of your homeschooling day. Playing outside and exploring nature is as vital to a growing person (and to adults) as the essentials of water and sunlight. It doesn't have to be structured or planned. Playing in the backyard, taking a walk with the dog, or drawing with chalk on the sidewalk will suffice.

I will say, however, the more time they have outside, the better. As long as your children have plenty of time to explore, to get dirty, to climb, and to be wild and free, the better they will feel and the more productive they will be. This is the best part of childhood.

Don't deprive your child of it in order to do a few more math problems today.



Today, did we . . . Move and Exercise?

If your family was able to get their bodies moving today, then it was an even better day of homeschooling. Exercise and movement are not only healthy habits to cultivate but actually release important hormones for growth and feelings of well-being.

Whenever a child is stuck on a problem or a concept, put the schoolwork away for a little bit and go jump on the trampoline. Do some jumping jacks. Run around the house or jog in place. It is amazing what a little exercise (and an impromptu dance party in the kitchen) will do to open up your child's mind and put him or her in a better mood.

Today, did we . . . Care for Each Other and Care for Our Home?

In all honesty, this is the best part of homeschooling. The gift of spending time together every day with your family is priceless. While children in traditional school are being forced to socialize in an unnatural and unhealthy environment, your children are learning how to respect and love one another in an environment designed by God. While children in institutionalized settings (aka public schools) are learning about the world's priorities, your children are learning about truth, forgiveness, and God's grace—centered on God's Word. While children in schools are catered to, your children are learning the importance of good work ethics and the blessings that come with good old-fashioned hard work.

If each day, your children show kindness, forgiveness, compassion, and/or grace to one another, it is a good homeschooling day with much fruit! If each day, your children have an opportunity to learn a new skill or to participate in family chores, it has been a good day with even more observable fruit! Life is about caring for one another, putting others' needs before our own, and being good stewards of what God has blessed us with.

Don't feel guilty about including family relationships and household chores as part of your homeschooling day. And certainly do not feel guilty about putting math aside to get to the heart of an attitude or to mend a broken heart. Moms, this is what homeschooling is all about!



Today, did we . . . Rest?

If you and your child had an opportunity today to take a Sabbath rest, then your homeschooling day was complete. Good honest work is important, but God also created and commanded us to rest. While it may seem counterproductive to take an hour to rest, nap, or chill with a good book, it is good for the mind, body, and soul.

If your child doesn't have an opportunity each day to rest, he or she will be miserable. If you do not take time each day to rest, you will certainly burn out sooner rather than later. If your homeschooling day included a Sabbath rest of some kind, then it was most definitely a very good day.

At the end of each day, assess how you and your family spent their time. If a few things were missing, pray about how to be more intentional.

Remember, less is more, and simple is always better!



CARRIE DE FRANCISCO is an out-of-the-box thinker which is probably why she was an outside-of-the-curriculum-box homeschooler. Carrie was a featured speaker at the 2025 AFHE Convention. Through her consulting services, books, and her podcast "Coffee with Carrie," she helps moms simplify their homeschooling one step at a time, one day at a time, and one cup of coffee at a time.
COFFEEWITHCARRIE.ORG

AFHE would like to remind our members of valuable discounts and special offers that are currently available. For member access to these free or reduced-cost specials, just visit the AFHE website and log in on your member profile, then go to the MEMBERSHIP tab. It's that easy!



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**Alliance Program for
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and college prep support.

**More benefits listed at the
AFHE website!**

Membership supports the work
of your statewide organization
year-round.

Consider supporting AFHE as a
volunteer, as well! We have
openings in several vital areas.
Volunteering at events is open
only to AFHE members.

Save the Date!

AFHE is pleased to announce our

2026 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Saturday, March 21



This annual event is presented to support YOU as you lead, influence, and inspire homeschool families.

AFHE values and applauds your work!

Join leaders from around the state for fellowship, insights, developments, networking, and refreshment.

Please mark your calendar, tell your leadership team, and watch for announcements about this year's guest speaker, location, program details, and registration information.

Questions? Email groups@afhe.org.

We can't wait to see you there!



Learn more and support the UCS at
afhe.org/used-curriculum-sale

Shop the AFHE UCS to find quality homeschool curriculum at unbeatable prices, with the proceeds going to the AFHE Hope for Homeschoolers Fund to assist homeschool families in Arizona. The date for 2026 will be announced soon!

Have curriculum or materials you no longer need? Donate them to the sale! Donations are accepted year-round. Your gently used educational materials will help provide affordable options for other families and increase support for the Hope for Homeschoolers Fund.



What UNESCO Gets Wrong about HOMESCHOOLING

by Kevin Boden, Esq., Home School Legal Defense Association

Who is responsible for a child's education? In our view, education is the responsibility of the parent. In the other view, it is primarily the role of the state—a view that is incompatible with parent-directed homeschooling.

These widely divergent views stem from fundamentally different roots and yield very different fruit, as the recent United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report, "Homeschooling through a human rights lens," shows. The report is the consequence of a human rights ideology that, at best, doesn't understand homeschooling and, more likely, doesn't like it.

HSLDA has been monitoring this issue for decades. We have long opposed domestic ratification of any international treaty or convention that would impact parental rights and homeschool freedom.

Standing for Freedom

HSLDA successfully led the US opposition to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in the 1990s. We were concerned the legal language used in the treaty leaves the door open for state actors to determine what is "best" for children and families and overrule fit parents.

Far from ensuring protections for children, we argued the treaty would lead to federal control over children, overruling a long history of laws and legal protections for families. If the treaty had been ratified, the federal government would

have assumed jurisdiction of family and education laws. Those would in turn be subject to CRC mandates.

With this recent report, our concerns that the CRC would lead to an unacceptable and dangerous landscape seem to have materialized. The 45-page report is rife with problems.

The authors of the report operate from a view that cedes primary educational authority and responsibility to the state. For example, in the one-page Short Summary, the report states that "safeguarding the right to education in every setting remains a core responsibility of the State."

It emphasizes the implementation of government "oversight mechanisms such as to registration and evaluation" with the goal of ensuring that "homeschooling serves both individual and societal needs." While that might sound harmless, or even desirable, the practical outworking of these proposals is ultimately greater state control over homes, families, and children.

Flawed Approach

Buried within the report are a handful of positive statements; however, these acknowledgements are rendered hollow by the rest of the report's conclusions. For example, the report correctly distinguishes homeschooling "from the distance-learning responses employed during the school closures" resulting from COVID-19.

UNESCO also acknowledges there are diverse reasons parents choose to homeschool, and says, “Parents’ right to freedom of choice regarding their children’s education is widely present in [International Human Rights Law].” And the report explicitly admits that “school attendance does not automatically translate to developing all life skills” and attendance at public institutions comes with other problems.

However, despite this handful of positive recognitions, the substance of the report makes clear that UNESCO’s approach to homeschooling is flawed. Regarding a parent’s education, the report notes that “teacher qualifications [are] a key determinant of education quality, raising questions about how homeschooling can maintain equivalent standards.” Regarding the content of students’ education, UNESCO believes in a one-size-fits-all approach following “government-imposed requirements.”

Read the recent *HSLDA Magazine* piece on the factors that influence education quality. hslda.org/post/what-qualifies-us-to-give-our-children-a-quality-education

With mere passing acknowledgment of the duties of parents, the report calls for government oversight. It claims that “regulation, if not arbitrary, remains legitimate and necessary to safeguarding children’s rights, including the right to education.”

Notwithstanding that freedom of religion includes the right to teach your children in accordance with your beliefs (even under current international human rights law), the report offhandedly slams religious education. “Dogmatic approaches may stir up intolerance,” the report says, and “homeschooling may be a practice sensitive to fundamentalist approaches.”

The report’s views on accountability and monitoring are equally alarming. It calls for registration as “one of the fundamental regulatory measures” to ensure homeschool children are educated. In addition, the report says “inspections by local authorities/the minister of education” which “often take the form of home visits” are needed.

Looking to the State

Finally, the report says, “standardized testing is one of the accountability and monitoring tools.” But the purpose of this testing is not to ensure basic literacy and education. Rather it is “to guarantee that

children have been exposed to the State’s national curriculum and are reaching attainment levels similar to those children in public schools.”

Sadly, for the majority of homeschooling children around the world, this would mean a worse education.

While this report is alarming, it’s not surprising to homeschool advocates. This focus on state oversight and control of both public and non-public education is pervasive in the UN and other international organizations.

Ten years ago, UNESCO hailed a World Education Forum meeting held in Incheon, South Korea as “a historic milestone on more than one count.” At this meeting, 160 countries adopted the Incheon Declaration and the Education 2030 Framework for Action, which according to the Final Report has a goal to “realise everyone’s right to education as a fundamental dimension of human, social and economic development.”

A few years later, in 2019, a group of 57 “global education and human rights experts” met in Ivory Coast, Africa with their sights set on private education. During this meeting, the group’s “experts” adopted the Abidjan Principles, which focus “on the human rights obligations of States to provide public education and to regulate private involvement in education.”

The question they ask is not whether the state should regulate private education, but simply how they should fulfill this requirement.

And we could go on, naming many other education initiatives, goals, meetings and the like that are intended to redesign education from a globalist perspective.

(continued on next page)



UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France, as viewed from the Eiffel Tower.

What Makes Homeschooling Work

It's clear that this attitude toward private education and homeschooling is the result of the seeds planted in the CRC, which is referenced no fewer than 36 times in this latest report. UNESCO and other international organizations have been watering the seeds from the CRC in many ways over the course of decades, operating from the perspective that education is primarily the responsibility of the state.

What UNESCO does not understand is that homeschooling largely works because it's not a part of the state. They cannot conceive of a world in which children are educated outside of the purview of government and public institutions. They cannot conceive of a world where the state doesn't regulate and monitor all students.

HSLDA was correct about the CRC in 1995. In the international context, it has led, and continues to lead, to a place where homeschooling is put in a box under tight state control and regulation. The fruit of the seeds from the CRC continue to lead to an unacceptable and dangerous international landscape for homeschool freedom.

What about here in the United States? While we may not be bound by the CRC directly, many within our borders—from academics to politicians to the media—believe that the responsibility for education lies with the state. The ideas and

proposals in the UNESCO report are held by many within our own country. As a result, we cannot let our current freedom lead to apathy and inattention. We must remain vigilant and vigorously oppose any attempts to curtail our freedom. The preservation of homeschool freedom for generations depends on it.

And we can only do it together. HSLDA stands alongside all of you, our members, our donors, our allies, and our cherished friends, to defend the right of parents to direct their children's educations. Together we have made homeschooling what it is today, and together we will preserve homeschooling for the next generation.

In the early 1900s, Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote: "The responsibility for starting the child in the right way is the parents—it cannot be delegated to the schools or the state, for the little feet start on life's journey from the home."

We agree.



KEVIN BODEN and his wife, Wendi, began homeschooling in 2008. He is a graduate of Wheaton College and received his J.D. from Seattle University. Kevin served on active duty in the US Air Force for ten years as a Judge Advocate, allowing their family to homeschool in three different countries and five states. As a Staff Attorney with HSLDA, Kevin is the primary contact for members in nine states (including Arizona) and one territory, and he leads HSLDA International.

HSLDA.ORG

AFHE CELEBRATES AMERICA'S 250TH IN 2026

*We are seeking volunteers
to help us present special programs and fun opportunities all year long!*

If YOU would like to help AFHE families have some fun and enriching *semiquincentennial* opportunities in 2026, get involved NOW by emailing **homeschool@afhe.org**!

Explore opportunities in social media, events teams, convention programming, and content development.
Please mention your area(s) of interest in your email.



Arizona Homeschool SCHOLARSHIP FUND

The Arizona Homeschool Scholarship Fund (AHSF) provides eligible Arizona homeschooled students with financial assistance in pursuing post-secondary education.

Application dates for 2026:

January 1-March 10

Designated and general awards available.

Eligibility guidelines and application details are available at the AFHE website.

Visit [AFHE.org/scholarship-fund](https://afhe.org/scholarship-fund)



2026 Senior High *Graduation*

Save The Date

Friday, May 22, 2026

Held at Dream City Church | Phoenix, AZ

Registration dates:
January 2-February 28, 2026

Visit AFHE.ORG/GRADUATION for complete information.
Hosted by Arizona Families for Home Education | AFHE.ORG



HOMESCHOOLING: THE RESEARCH

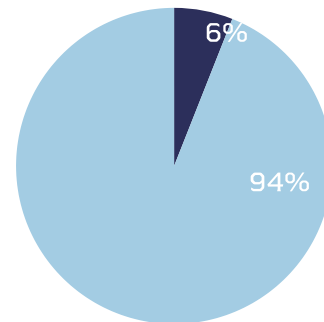
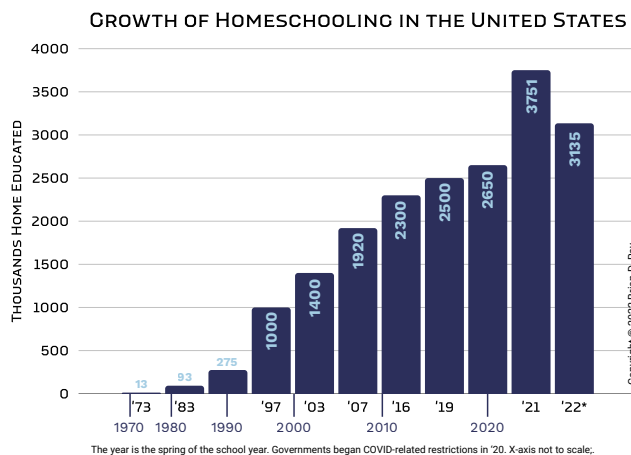
FAST FACTS ON HOMESCHOOLING

Homeschooling—that is, parent-led home-based education; home 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. It may be the fastest-growing form of education in the United States. Home-based education has also been growing around the world in many other nations (e.g., Australia, Canada, France, Hungary, Japan, Kenya, Russia, Mexico, South Korea, Thailand, and the United Kingdom).

GENERAL FACTS, STATISTICS, AND TRENDS

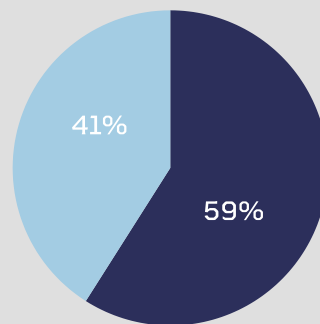
There were about 3.1 million homeschool students in 2021-2022 in grades K-12 in the United States. This is up from 2.5 million in spring 2019 [note 1]. The homeschool population had been growing at an estimated 2% to 8% per annum over the past several years, but it grew drastically from 2019-2020 to 2020-2021.

It is estimated that over 9 million Americans had experienced being homeschooled as of February of 2020.



Roughly 6% of school-age children are educated at home.

A demographically wide variety of people homeschool—these are atheists and Christians; conservatives, libertarians, and liberals; low-, middle-, and high-income families; black, Hispanic, and white; parents with Ph.D.s, GEDs, and no high-school diplomas.



One nationwide study shows that 41% of homeschool students are Black, Asian, Hispanic, and others (i.e., not White/non-Hispanic). (U.S. Department of Education, 2019)

Taxpayers spend an average of \$18,853 per pupil annually in public schools, plus capital expenditures (National Education Association, 2025). However, taxpayers spend nothing on the vast majority of homeschool students. The roughly 3.1 million homeschool students of 2021-22 represented a savings of over \$58 billion for taxpayers. This is \$58 billion that American taxpayers did not have to spend.

Homeschool families spend an average of \$600 to \$1,600 per student annually for their education. In Arizona, “homeschooling” as defined in Arizona statute [A.R.S. §15-802(G)(2)] is a non-public, privately funded education category.

REASONS AND MOTIVATIONS FOR HOMESCHOOLING

Most parents and youth decide to homeschool for more than one reason. The most common reasons given for homeschooling are the following:

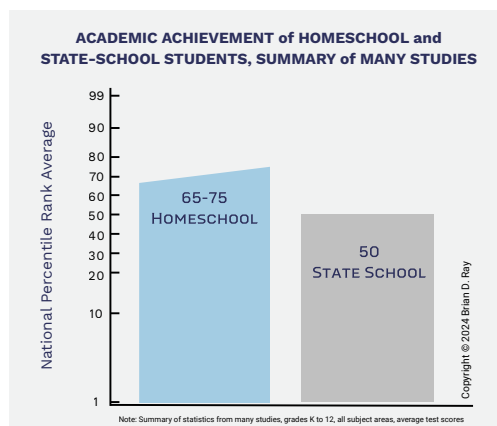
- customize or individualize the curriculum and learning environment for each child
- accomplish more academically than in schools
- use pedagogical approaches other than those typical in institutional schools
- enhance family relationships between children and parents and among siblings
- provide guided 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, racism, and improper and unhealthy sexuality associated with institutional schools
- as an alternative education approach when public or private institutional schools are closed due to acute health situations such as related to disease (e.g., Covid-19, Coronavirus)
- protect minority children from racism in public schools or lower expectations of children of color (e.g., black) (e.g., Fields-Smith, 2020; Mazama & Lundy, 2012)
- teach and impart a particular set of values, beliefs, and worldview to children and youth.

Sources: Ray, 2015 and US Department of Education

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS

The home-educated typically score 15 to 25 percentile points above public-school students on standardized academic achievement tests (Ray, 2010, 2015, 2017; Ray & Hoelzle, 2024). (The public-school average is roughly the 50th percentile; scores range from 1 to 99.)

- A 2015 study found Black homeschool students to be scoring 23 to 42 percentile points above Black public-school students. (Ray, 2015)
- 78% of peer-reviewed studies on academic achievement show homeschool students perform statistically significantly better than those in institutional schools. (Ray, 2017)
- Homeschool students score above average on achievement tests regardless of their parents' level of formal education or their family's household income. (Ray, 2013, 2010)
- Whether homeschool parents were ever certified teachers is not notably related to their children's academic achievement.
- Degree of state control and regulation of homeschooling is not related to academic achievement. (Ray, 2013, 2010)
- Home-educated students typically score above average on the SAT and ACT tests that colleges consider for admissions.
- Homeschool students are increasingly being actively recruited by colleges.



SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Research facts on homeschooling show that the home-educated are doing well, typically above average, on measures of social, emotional, and psychological development. Research measures include peer interaction, self-concept, leadership skills, family cohesion, participation in community service, and self-esteem.
- 87% of peer-reviewed studies on social, emotional, and psychological development show homeschool students perform statistically significantly better than those in conventional schools. (Ray, 2017)
- Homeschool students are regularly engaged in social and educational activities outside their homes and with people other than their nuclear-family members. (Hamlin, 2019) They are commonly involved in activities such as field trips, scouting, 4-H, political drives, church ministry, sports teams, and community volunteer work.
- The balance of research to date suggests that homeschool students may suffer less harm (e.g., abuse, neglect, fatalities) than conventional school students.
- Adults who were home educated are more politically tolerant than the public schooled in the limited research done so far.
- Read more research on the subject of socialization at NHERI.org.

ADDITIONAL DATA

- One researcher (Sheffer, 1995) finds that homeschooling gives young people an unusual chance to ask questions such as, “Who am I?” and “What do I really want?,” and through the process of such asking and gradually answering the questions home-educated girls develop the strengths and the resistance abilities that give them an unusually strong sense of self.
- Some think that boys’ energetic natures and tendency to physical expression can more easily be accommodated in home-based education. Many are concerned that a highly disproportionate number of public school special-education students are boys and that boys are 2 to 10 times as likely as girls in public schools to be diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

GENERAL INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH ON HOMESCHOOL SUCCESS OR FAILURE

It is possible that homeschooling causes the positive traits reported above. However, the research designs to date do not conclusively “prove” or substantiate that homeschooling causes these things. One hypothesis is that the positive findings might be due to the demographics of the homeschool students and families in the studies. The “sources” (articles) below explain limitations and caveats regarding the studies. More methodologically stronger research needs to be done to find whether homeschooling is what leads to or causes better outcomes. At the same time, there is no empirical evidence that homeschooling overall causes negative things compared to institutional schooling. Future research may better answer the question of causation.

NOTES

1. For more detail, see How Many Homeschool Students Are There in the United States? (nheri.org) The March of 2021 estimate is based on data from state governments (e.g., Delaware, Florida, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Carolina, and Virginia), the U.S. Census Bureau (2021), and the U.S. Department of Education (2019). See McDonald (2020). The spring 2019 estimate was based on an estimate of about 2.5% per annum growth from estimates of 2 million home-educated children during the spring of 2010 and 2.3 million spring of 2016 in the United States (Ray, 2011). The estimate of 2.3 million in 2016 was calculated by Brian D. Ray, the author of this fact sheet, on April 7, 2016. He based it on publicly available research findings.

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The original version of this report appeared at NHERI.org, the website of the National Home Education Research Institute.

NHERI.org



For more information about the history and features of homeschooling in Arizona, AFHE invites you to read our article series, “Carrying Homeschool Freedom Forward” at afhe.org/blog.

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FRACTION FUN

doubling and halving recipes



from the Demme Learning blog

FRACTIONS TAKE ON NEW MEANING when students trade pencils for measuring cups and turn math into something they can mix, stir, and taste.

Doubling and halving recipes turns math into a hands-on experience filled with sights, smells, and even tastes. Numbers become ingredients to measure and enjoy — making fractions both memorable and meaningful. Teaching fractions through cooking offers one more way to bring mathematical concepts to life, complementing the strategies your student is already learning to use.

Research suggests that students who learn fractions through hands-on activities like cooking develop stronger

math skills and retain concepts longer than those who use only paper and pencils for practice. They see immediate results from their calculations. Too much flour makes cookies crumbly. Not enough sugar leaves them bland. These natural consequences create memorable learning moments that stick with students far beyond any single lesson.

Why Cooking Works So Well for Teaching Fractions

Cooking naturally incorporates fractions at every turn. Measuring $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sugar or $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt turns intangible numbers into something students can hold, smell, and taste. This concrete experience helps learners understand fractions, made simple through real-world

application. Students will better learn to compare fractions when deciding whether to use half or one quarter of an ingredient.

Seeing how math works in the kitchen also helps students understand its purpose beyond the typical instruction.

Hands-on math instruction significantly improves understanding because, according to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, it leads to deeper conceptual knowledge of the relationships between numerator and denominator.

How to Double and Halve Recipes: A Step-by-Step Guide

Doubling and halving recipes gives students practice with multiplication, division, and fraction sense. Use these steps to guide them through the process with confidence.

Step 1: Start with the original recipe. Have your child write down the list of ingredients with the given measurements.

Step 2: Choose the operation. If doubling the recipe, multiply each measurement by 2. If halving, divide each measurement by 2.

Step 3: Do the math carefully.

- Whole numbers: Doubling 2 cups becomes 4 cups.
- Fractions: Halving $\frac{2}{3}$ cup means dividing $\frac{2}{3}$ by 2, which equals $\frac{1}{3}$ cup.
- Mixed numbers: Doubling $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups means doubling the whole number ($2 \rightarrow 4$) and doubling the fraction ($\frac{1}{2} \rightarrow 1$), for a total of 5 cups.

Step 4: Simplify or convert. Encourage your child to write answers as mixed numbers when appropriate. For example, $\frac{3}{2}$ can be written as $1\frac{1}{2}$. This helps him see the relationship between improper fractions and mixed numbers.



Step 5: Double-check your results. Have your child compare amounts by pouring ingredients into measuring cups or checking with a sibling to confirm the calculations.

Common Mistakes When Working with Fractions in Recipes and How to Avoid Them

Students often double the main ingredients but forget the other ones. For example, a student might double the flour and sugar, but forget to double the eggs and milk, which results in a recipe that doesn't turn out as expected. Create a checklist system where students write each ingredient and mark off calculations as they determine the new amount. Taking a systematic approach prevents oversights.

Another frequent error involves misreading measurements. Students confuse $\frac{1}{8}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoons or mix up tablespoons and teaspoons. Using proper measuring techniques and understanding the difference between measuring tools helps prevent these mistakes. One student might need extra practice with quarters and halves before moving to more complex fractions, while another might struggle to compare fractions or double a mixed number without making calculation errors.

Watch for calculation errors when working with mixed numbers and improper fractions. If students struggle, encourage them to use fraction models or manipulatives to visualize the problem before recalculating. This can lead to a discussion of different solution strategies.

(continued on next page)



Fun Fraction Activities for the Kitchen Classroom

These fraction games and fraction activities for kids take abstract concepts and turn them into engaging experiences.

Pancake Fraction Flip is a fun activity that engages the whole family in a delicious math challenge. Have your kids double and halve a basic pancake recipe, then compare batter amounts using measuring cups. After calculating, cook and flip mini pancakes to check the math in real time. If the recipe was doubled correctly, they'll end up with twice as many pancakes to flip. This visual and hands-on process reinforces the relationship between fractions and their scaled versions. (You might want to invite plenty of hungry friends!).

No-Bake Fraction Treats make it easy to practice halving and doubling without kitchen equipment. Your kids can create trail mix, energy bites, or parfaits by scaling ingredient amounts up or down from a given recipe. This reinforces fraction skills in a practical way. Research on fraction learning shows that repeated practice in varied contexts improves long-term retention, and studies confirm that manipulative-based fraction instruction significantly outperforms traditional methods.

Recipe Card Rewrite develops both mathematical and communication skills. Select a recipe and have your child rewrite it for half and double portions, showing their work and explaining their reasoning step by step. This activity works equally well for classrooms, homeschool settings, and co-ops, since it only requires a recipe card, paper, and pencil. By focusing on halving or doubling, students practice applying fractions in a clear, written format that reinforces both accuracy and explanation.

Taking it Further: Adapting Recipes for Different Serving Sizes

Once your child masters doubling and halving, introduce more complex scaling challenges.

If your recipe for brownies makes twelve but you only have enough ingredients to make eight, they'll need to calculate the reduced amounts for each ingredient. This type of real-world adjustment is an early example of proportional reasoning, a skill that students will continue to use in advanced math such as algebra and geometry.

Working with unusual multipliers like $\frac{2}{3}$ or $1\frac{1}{4}$ pushes students beyond simple doubling and halving.

- For example, if a recipe calls for $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of milk and you need only $\frac{2}{3}$ of the recipe, multiply $\frac{3}{4} \times \frac{2}{3} = \frac{6}{12}$, which simplifies to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.
- Similarly, if you need to scale $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sugar by $1\frac{1}{4}$, multiply $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{5}{4} = \frac{5}{8}$ cup.

Showing these steps helps students see how both numerators and denominators are involved in fraction multiplication.

The parent can adopt real-world resources, like guides that show how recipes change for different pan sizes, to create additional math challenges. For younger students, this might mean comparing how a recipe changes when baked in a square pan versus a rectangular one. Older students can take it further by using digital scales to measure ingredients by weight, adding practice with decimals alongside fractions.

Building Confidence through Kitchen Success

The beauty of teaching fractions through cooking extends beyond mathematical understanding. Students develop problem-solving skills when recipes need adjustment, and they practice precision when measuring ingredients with equal parts. Most importantly, they experience the satisfaction of creating something delicious through mathematical thinking. This approach helps students see how fractions are an important part of the foundation for practical math applications.

These activities also support mastery-based learning. Your child will progress from halving simple whole-number measurements to doubling or reducing more complex mixed numbers. Having your students explain their reasoning, compare their solution methods with each other, or record calculations on recipe cards provides clear evidence of growth. Each successful adjustment builds confidence and reinforces the skill before moving on to the next challenge.

Even when actual food isn't involved, you can adapt the activities by using dry measuring cups with beans, rice, or beads. Students still practice halving and doubling ingredients in a safe, accessible way that builds confidence and supports fraction success.

*Ready to make fractions come alive? Download Demme Learning's free printable **Fraction Recipe Activity** and discover more hands-on resources that make math meaningful for every student at new.demmelearning.com.*

The original version of this article appeared on the Demme Learning Blog, Sept 10, 2025.



Looking Back

as a Homeschooling Parent of 31 Years

by Kathie Morrissey

LOOKING BACK AS A HOMESCHOOLING PARENT OF 31 YEARS, I am feeling introspective. Time gives you a new perspective. There are definitely things I'd do differently if I had the chance. It's easy to look back and think, "I wish I had..." But it's also rewarding to look back as a homeschooling parent and be able to say, "I'm glad I did..." Both reflections are part of the journey, and can provide valuable insight that I can pass on to others who are still on their homeschool journey.

Looking back, if I had it to do over again:

1. I would say "yes" more often.

To be honest, I was tired and frazzled with homeschooling eight kids. That made it easy for me to quickly say "no" to a request that might mean extra work for me or a little bit of inconvenience.

I had to work on this, and learn to take my time before replying to requests. I began to ask if there was really a good reason I couldn't say "yes." The smiles on my kids' faces and their delight in some of those slightly messy or inconvenient activities are still some of my favorite memories today.

2. I would smile and laugh more rather than be so intense.

It is easy to get so focused on "getting it all done" and checking everything off the list. As a result, we are impatient and stressed. In our rush to get things done, we miss moments to encourage our kids about the effort they made or the improvement they have shown.

Sometimes they want to tell us a little about what they are learning, but we are in a hurry to move on to the next

thing. This causes us to miss out on opportunities to build relationships.

3. I would try to be less idealistic and more realistic in my expectations.

I wish I had learned this earlier in my homeschooling, as it would have saved me much frustration. Being realistic in your expectations about what you can accomplish and what your kids are capable of is key to avoiding burnout. Know your limits, as well as your kids' abilities, and things will be much less stressful in your homeschool.

4. I would have kept tucking my kids in and praying with them at night into and through the teen years.

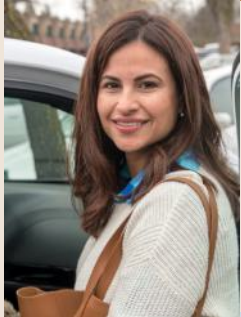
Some of the best conversations I had with my kids over the years happened when I was tucking them into bed or talking, listening, and praying with them before they went to sleep. Often, that was when my kids felt free to share what was on their heart, expressing needs or concerns.

(continued on next page)



Just because they become teens doesn't mean they don't need those one-on-one times at the end of the day.

Even though you're tired and want nothing more than to get everyone to bed so you can relax or get a few things done, cherish those bedtime moments and make the most of them! They will help you win and keep your child's heart.



5. I would work more on training the difficult child.

It was easier to default to asking a more compliant child for help so I could "avoid the hassle" of dealing with the difficult one. Yes, dealing with a difficult child can be exhausting, but looking back, I would work more with the difficult child. God reminded me one day that while that may have been "easier" at the time, it wasn't fair to either child.

The more compliant one shouldn't be asked to do something simply because he will be more willing. On the other hand, the difficult child needs to be trained to respond correctly, and by asking a sibling to do the tasks, you miss an opportunity to work with the challenging one.



6. I would not compare myself to other homeschooling moms or moms in general.

As moms, it is so easy to fall into the comparison trap. We look at other moms who seem to have it all together or homeschooling moms who seem to do it all. We then feel like we are failing, wondering why we can't be like them or do things like they do. The truth is all moms have their struggles, even though they may appear to have it more together than you do. Also, we all have different situations and need to do what is best for our family rather than what works for someone else.



7. I would judge my homeschooling success more on how much my children have learned wisdom rather than on whether they were "caught up" for their age or grade level.

While we need to give our kids a strong academic education, that shouldn't be our top priority. We must remember that it is much more important to help them grow in wisdom and godly character. That is what will truly determine their success in life. If they are "behind" for their age but are growing in wisdom, you are accomplishing what matters the most.



8. I would remember that the time I spend daily teaching, training, and caring for the children, my husband, and our home is more important than anything I didn't accomplish on my to-do list.

There were days when I felt discouraged because I "didn't get anything done." But in reality, I had spent the day fulfilling my God-given responsibilities and building relationships. The training I did counted for eternity, which was so much more important than those other things on my list that I didn't get to.



These are things I'm glad I did, and would do them again:

1. Homeschool all the kids all the way through grade 12.

While it wasn't always easy, and there were days of frustration, I would definitely homeschool my kids again! While I was in the midst of it, I felt that maybe I wasn't doing a great job, or was even failing. But now that my kids are adults, I know that's not true, and homeschooling was the best thing I could do for them.

2. Spend a lot of time on scripture memory and character training.

Building my kids' faith by helping them memorize God's word and training them in godly character prepared them to be what God wanted them to be. It gave them a solid foundation for their faith.

3. Give up a good-paying job to stay home and raise my children and spend every day with them.

Yes, we had to be careful with our finances, and we didn't have money for a lot of extra things. But we never went without our needs being met. God proved Himself faithful and blessed us many times over. This was a great testimony to our children that God will provide, and we can trust Him.

4. Base our family's rules and expectations on biblical principles.

This was one of the best ways that we were able to get God's word into the hearts and minds of our kids. When they needed correction and training, we taught them what God said and what was pleasing to Him. They knew that our rules were based on living a life of obedience to God and His word.

5. Seek godly wisdom and counsel from those who are older and wiser.

I wouldn't have made it through my early years of homeschooling without the godly mentors that God gave me. Gleaning wisdom from someone who had years of experience was such a blessing and help to me.

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KATHIE MORRISSEY, founder of The Character Corner, is a devoted wife, mother of eight, and grandmother of 20. The author of two widely used character curricula and several parenting books, she encourages parents through her blog and speaking engagements and equips families with practical tools for raising godly children. Kathie seeks to inspire parents to cultivate Christian character and a heart for God in their children.

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