

“Homeschooling – the answer maybe?”

by Willemien Krüger © March 2011

Its not the superior academic education you can offer, its not the one-to-one tuition, its not the freedom your children have to pursue their passions, it not your that children can progress at their own pace, its not that you can tailor-make their education to suit their learning styles, its not the life skills they learn by working in the home. NO, the hidden blessing of homeschool is more than all this ..."... God's wonderful, but subtly hidden agenda is that the homeschooling experience be so challenging for the parents that they feel the need and hunger for a closer walk with their heavenly Father." (Kyle Miller)

The concept of homeschooling is strange to a lot of people even though it is legal in most countries. Homeschooling or home education is the practice of education of children by their own parents at home. Some of the main reasons why people home school are of religious, philosophical, pedagogic and/or social reasons. Lots of parents wonder about homeschooling – what it is, and why one would consider it and what and how one will do it. In this article some real homeschoolers share their perspectives on homeschooling in answer to some of the most common questions surrounding the issue.

Why do you homeschool ?

- In our home we homeschool because we believe ‘it is the right things to do’ to develop your child’s full potential. As a Christian it is essential to be able to develop a value system of our own in our children.
- We homeschool since I want to provide my children with the best, i.t.o. spiritual development, self confidence, the development of quality character, good values as well as to be able to learn to cope in real life and accept responsibility with what God has given them to do.
- I homeschool to develop my children’s potential by supporting their strong points and working on their weak points. This is only possible if there is the one one one relationship and when a child is allowed to work at his/her own tempo.
- As homeschool parents we have the opportunity to constantly disciple and discipline in shaping our children’s character. When bad habits develop such as laziness, selfishness, dishonesty, disrespect then we are there to correct and instruct. We have the opportunity to build strong relationships with our children by winning their hearts, to develop respect for God and others and to grow into adults with integrity. What is the value of a academic qualification without a person being honest, reliable, with integrity ? Homeschooling is for us a Total Family Development program.

Can anybody homeschool ? Do we feel we can ? Did we always feel we can ?

Research has shown that there is no relationship between a parent’s qualification and the child’s performance.

- The things that convinced me that I am the best educator for my children has nothing to do with me or my husband’s qualifications, but the fact that there is nobody in the whole world that loves them more than me and my husband. And all children flourish with love!!! Love is patient, love is kind...and this is not necessarily the case in a class of 30 with only one teacher responsible for all.
- It is a misconception that a homeschool mom need a education qualification or subject knowledge or must be ‘very intelligent’. The real answer lies in commitment, which can overcome all sorts of stumbling blocks. We all have moments of doubt, but we support each other. And every success we have with our children help to drive the doubts away.
- Any parent doubt at times if we are a good parent, and this happens when you home school or not, but the belief that I am the right mother for my children, the understanding that I have what it takes...and they have what it takes, they are the right children for me, is the perspective which carries me through.

What do we define as quality education ?

- I believe that reading and writing and doing sums is the basics needing attention. This includes that I want my children to discover the joy of reading and learning. We also focus on the development of logical thinking, problem solving and sensible communication of knowledge gained.
- In our home children are taught from young age to learn how to learn, how to research for information and to think about things. There is time also for discovery and development of personal interests, which is something seldom found time for in a normal school system.
- As a parent directly responsible for my children's education I can see the problem areas and try and solve the problem area either by asking for help or by experimenting with curriculum. The bonus of homeschooling is that there is enough TIME for quality education and quality family time as well as quality activities such as sports or other interests.

What do you do when you homeschool ?

As introduction it must be pointed out that there is a wide variety of curriculums (either whole curriculums or only in part) available to purchase. Curriculums can be classified as either 'fully traditional school' with textbooks, tests and workbooks or 'unschooling' where an informal learning approach is supported. For more info on different approaches to homeschooling read [Step2 Approaches](#). Between these extremes there are other approaches which is usually clarified as you clarify and define your personal vision for homeschooling. For more info on how to do this see [Step 1 Define a vision](#). This vision is unique for each family and very important before a curriculum is chosen.

- I make my own compilation of curriculum of resources in each subject area based on what I define is important to support our own family vision. The compilation of different material and resources has a purpose and is part of a bigger plan. I also believe that my child will assist in stating what is important and necessary for his/her development and preparation for their life purpose in later years.
- I am currently doing a lot of research on each subject area. I am involving my children in this process as they are old enough to be involved. I am looking into curriculums including all grades to ensure smooth progress from grade to grade.
- I compile my own curriculum since material in our home language is not readily available. My primary objective is to have a child read very well. We regularly do work related to a child's specific interests. My children give clear indications as to what interest them and what not, and I believe one should not waste time on unnecessary knowledge.

How much time does it take ?

- Depending on the daily tasks, the schooling hours are usually about 3-4hours in the mornings. However, I see everything that we do as learning opportunities and handle it as such. I find that I have more time available than my friends with their children in school.
- It usually takes about 3-4hours each day, with no extra homework to be done.
- For us, school can take between 4-5 hours per day, but this includes all the extras such as music lessons, sport, extra classes, reading etc.

Which good things happened since you have been homeschooling ? What is the sacrifice you had to make?

- There is definitely a deeper relationship between me and my children and the atmosphere at home is more relaxed. The children are more relaxed and their self confidence have really improved as the stress of exams have made space for "I understand it now". Competition is now only between myself and therefore every mistake is a step closer to success and not closer to humiliation.
- Some days it feels as if there is never enough time, especially on busy mornings, but then I hear my friends with school children complain, and I realize I have much MORE time than them. More time for each other, for family, for recreation and investigation. The wonderful positives of homeschooling is that I can build relationships with my children and really know my children better – with all the moods a time intensive relationship bring. What a privilege to have my family to fellowship with !
- From the day I have my children at home even I have more time. I get to know my children in all different aspects, and we chat about all sorts of things. Yes I sacrifice having some time

for myself in the mornings, but I do not have to watch the time to pick them and I do not have to wonder what they have or have not learnt in school today....

- To enjoy studying animals (big five and little five) in die game reserve, to enjoy farms of all sorts en relive history when visiting old towns. To enjoy and discuss classic stories snuggled close on a cold winter day, to design our own games, to share dreams. To be able to open our home to people from other countries and to involve the children in learning about other cultures, and play tour guide when we take people to see our country.
- In our home birthdays has become a whole project on its own, and adventures are planned and enjoyed with passion !

What about socialization and sport ?

- Apart from a variety of sport activities (athletics, soccer, swimming, ballet, gymnastics etc.) our children can compete in, we have a cultural activity similar to Scouts, which is an excellent socialization opportunity. As homeschoolers we get together regularly to play and visit and share and fellowship.
- Just like other moms do, we as homeschool moms also organize playdates for our children. My children have homeschool and school friends. Within the family, my children learn proper socialization skills. And of course most sport activities are good social opportunities as well.
- Since we have more time for afternoon and other activities, we can do more of those and the children can even enjoy it more since all schoolwork are usually completed. They can therefore focus better and usually perform better as a result.

What will you advise somebody considering homeschooling ?

- Think through your basic reason or motivation clearly and redefine that as your vision for homeschooling. What should your end result look like ? Try and define it such that you will be able to say “ I want to teach my children so that they can do/know/be...x, y,z.”
- Make this decision together as a couple in a marriage relationship, you will definitely need the other person’s support.
- As with other important decisions in your life is the decision to homeschool very personal. It is therefore very important to make the decision personally and not be influenced by other opinions and circumstances.
- Remember to homeschool is a journey not a destination.