

10 MYTHS ABOUT HOME SCHOOLING BUSTED

1. Children who are home schooled are socially inept - **Myth**

The assumption behind this myth is that children learn good social skills in a traditional school. This is like suggesting people learn to swim by being thrown in the deep end of the pool. Children are not born with social skills. They learn and develop them by living amongst more mature people who model and teach them. We therefore cannot expect children to learn social skills from their peer group who are at the same level of social development.

A balanced environment for learning social skills is a vertical age group – where children relate to other people of mixed ages – i.e. younger – they learn to be sensitive and caring towards those weaker than themselves and older children and adults – who become role models. What better structure than the family (including extended family – grandparents, cousins etc) where this vertical social structure is natural. Parents are the best and most effective teachers of social skills and the home is a nurturing and effective environment for children to learn to become part of a social group.

2. Children who are home schooled lack community involvement - **Myth**

The extent which children become involved in a community is up to each family. This is no different to children who attend a traditional school – as community involvement varies from school to school. Some schools do make an effort to encourage community involvement – however, this is often fairly superficial such as a single excursion to a community facility. Home educated children have wonderful opportunities to become significantly involved in their communities.

They have greater flexibility and greater variety of community opportunities – e.g. children accompanying their parents on hospital visits or nursing homes, helping elderly neighbours, being involved in church activities, fund raising for charities, baby sitting and joining neighbourhood clean-ups, planting trees, participating in sporting groups, travelling and meeting all kinds of people etc. These activities, rather than being one-off experiences, as might happen at a traditional school, can become an integral part of their lives and education.

3. Children who are home schooled perform poorly academically - **Myth**

How a child performs academically is dependent on many things – ability, confidence, past learning experiences as well as curriculum. Not all children at school or at home perform at a high academic level. However, studies have shown that children who are taught at home generally perform better than children who attend a traditional school. <http://www.nheri.org/Research-Facts-on-Homeschooling.html> Furthermore the studies show that the level of education of the parent does not play a significant role in the academic outcomes of the children.

Children who are academically inclined can learn at their own rate and level rather than be held back by the curriculum based on chronological age – i.e. school classes. Home schooled children have a far better opportunity to learn at whatever academic level is appropriate for them individually. Schooling cannot provide what the home can – that is, quality one-to-one teaching time for each student. Nothing can compare to the love and attention that parents are able to provide for their children.

4. Children who are home schooled will not be prepared for the real world - **Myth**

It is well known that children with a strong sense of self worth are less likely to participate in self destructive or other negative behaviours. Children, who grow up in a secure loving environment, develop strong sense of security, identity and self-worth and are not easily influenced by their peers or circumstances.

On the other hand, children who have learned that their value is based on what their peers think of them, become insecure and vulnerable to outside influences.

Home schooled children therefore are often much better equipped to 'choose good and resist evil' and so be prepared for the 'world'!

5. Children who are home schooled will not meet enough people with diverse views - **Myth**

This is more likely to be true of schooled children who mainly socialise with their age peers. Children who are home schooled have friends from various localities, varying ages, different schools or other home schooled

Families with all different family and cultural backgrounds, socio-economic circumstances etc. Home schooled families who travel have an even wider opportunity to meet all kinds of people living all kinds of lives.

A great advantage of children who home school is that their encounters with other people are within their parent's watchful and loving eye where parents are able to discuss the views and opinions of others with their children.

6. Children do not have enough opportunity for sport - **Myth**

Joining sports clubs or attending activities provided by recreational centres can easily solve the problem of not attending a school. Children can be encouraged to try out various sports and participate in more than one sport – e.g. archery, Little Athletics, football, basketball, gymnastics, swimming, crochet, bowling, roller skating etc. In a school, there might only be three or four sports to choose from, none of which may appeal to your child. In the community, there is a far greater selection of sports, which may be of far greater interest to your child.

7. Children are ill prepared for higher education - **Myth**

On the contrary, children who are home schooled are often well equipped for higher learning. This is because they have learnt to be goal setters, independent or self-directed learners – searching out matters for themselves.

They often have more opportunities to develop higher-order thinking skills such as the ability to analyse, evaluate and be creative in their approach to learning. In particular, children who are home schooled with ACHS using the ACE curriculum have been trained to set and meet goals and work independently towards meeting those goals.

They develop a mature and ethical attitude towards their academic work that benefits other areas of their lives as they transfer these skills to later academic study and then to careers, home and other responsibilities.

8. Children who are home schooled find it hard to get into university - **Myth**

Many universities (and other tertiary institutions) have alternate undergraduate pathways and are willing to negotiate entry requirements e.g. SAT – Reasoning Test, Tertiary enabling course, Open University, student portfolio, sit final exams etc.

Students wanting to attend some universities may find it difficult without a TER (Tertiary Entrance Rank). However, they can either sit the year 12 exams independently or if accepted into another university, transfer to their university of choice in their second or third year.

9. Children who are home schooled do not receive a balanced education across all learning areas - **Myth**

The guidelines supplied by Education Departments are given to ensure that all educational providers, whether day school or distance educated or home schooled, supply a balanced education across all cognitive learning areas. However, the guidelines do not include the progressive development of thinking or creative skills, Spiritual growth and the development of values and character.

A parent who home schools their child is able to provide broader and more balanced educational experiences to include life skills, spiritual growth, character development and opportunity to develop creative skills. Children learn these skills as an integral part of living and not in artificially contrived situations.

10. Children who are home schooled don't have the opportunity to work as a team - **Myth**

Home schooled children do not need to miss out working as team members. The most important team group is the family where children learn to follow leadership, take various responsibilities and develop loving and caring relationships that rely on cooperation and consideration. Other kinds of team experiences can be offered in sporting groups or amongst activities organised with other home schooled families, community or church groups.