

16 REASONS WHY MY CHILD WILL LEARN GOOD SOCIAL SKILLS AT HOME

1. Children at home are not locked into unnatural age strata groups. Children at most schools usually mix with students of their own age.

This is unnatural, distorted and unhealthy for developing good social skills. At home, children are free to mix with adults and siblings of any age. Throughout the day a child will have the role model of a parent to look up to. If they have older siblings, they interact with them as part of the family unit and learn what is expected of older children in all aspects of life. If they have younger siblings, they are able to help in many ways, teaching them many skills they will need later in life.

2. Children at home learn more from responsible adults than from age peers, who may have poor values. You are a better role model than an inexperienced child who may come from a completely different background and may have been exposed to very different morals. You have many opportunities to model the type of behaviour and responses that you would like to see in your child. If children see a consistent, positive, sensible, Biblical response to something, that is the way they will learn to react and it will become part of their character. Consequently, it is often said that children who are home educated are more mature than children who attend school.

3. Home educated children can have good conflict resolution skills. You are on the spot to teach them how to resolve disputes. You will be able to teach them the Biblical pattern (Mt 18), which is not followed by immature children in the schoolyard.

4. Home educated children are less peer dependent. They can learn to think for themselves and to stand up for what they believe in when their peers are not around. They are not reliant on what their peers think and do not have the unnecessary pressure of worrying about what will happen if they do not behave in the same way as their peers.

5. Children at home can have better relationships with siblings. At home, siblings are the children with whom a child will have the most interaction. Consequently they naturally learn how to live and play together. It may not be easy at first, but as they put into practice the Biblical character traits that are integral to our curriculum, they can become best friends. Furthermore, as they see each other all day, every day, it is in their best interest to work together to be friends. This is a vital skill to learn in preparation for living with a spouse for 30, 40 or 50 years. Being an acquaintance is easy, being a friend takes commitment. Starting with a brother or sister is an excellent start.

6. Character training is consistent and dealt with immediately. Biblical character training can be applied in a timely manner at home. You can talk to your child immediately you see him moving in the wrong direction. You are able to address the situation on the spot and give wise guidance and counsel. You do not have to wait for the school to contact you before you are aware of a situation. At home you are there and are able to deal with situations as they arise and in a consistent manner.

7. Communication and speaking skills are developed more rapidly. When your children interact with you they are exposed to more developed speech patterns and sentence structures than at school. A typical child will have an average of less than four minutes of one-to-one interaction with an adult during the school day. Even during these brief moments a teacher will rarely be giving a child their full attention, as they must constantly survey the rest of the class for signs of trouble. Quieter children are often overlooked and may not get many opportunities to speak at school in group situations. Consequently they are not able to practise the necessary skills needed for good oral language skills. At home there will be many more opportunities for them to practise speaking.

8. They learn that teamwork is essential in small groups. At home, children soon learn that they often have to contribute to the running of the household for it to run smoothly. At school many children do not like group work because they feel that others in the group waste time or do very little. The parent supervisor will be able to make sure all her children are "pulling their weight". This is much more difficult for a classroom teacher who has 30 children to supervise.

9. Children at home learn to respect adults. There is no confusion about who is the authority figure at home. There is no uncertainty about what other students said or even what a school teacher said. Children will learn that things will go well with them if they obey you (Eph 6:1-3). Your child will learn that dishonesty at home is soon revealed, because you will know what they are doing and that there will be consequences for rudeness, laziness or poor behaviour. The same cannot be said of children at school. Children at home have many more opportunities to speak to you and show respect to you as the authority figure and so will be more confident and show respect when speaking to other adults in authority.

10. Children at home see more of the real world. Your children are with when you go to the bank or go shopping, they see you pay your bills on the internet and they hear you make appointments on the phone. These situations are not made up scenarios dreamt up by a teacher. The child at home sees much more of the 'real' world than those who are in the school system.

11. Children at home learn to relate better to other children. A child's relationship with their parents is crucial to their social development. Most children who have a close and harmonious relationship with their parents have little difficulties relating to others and have less social problems in their adolescence and adulthood.

12. Children at home learn that authority is not against them. For some children at school, the main experience they have with authority is when they have done something wrong. In contrast, at home, the authority figure is someone who loves them so much that they are devoting their lives for them. The parent is giving up their own pleasures and earning potential for the sake of their child. This is the power of the parent child dynamic and cannot be replicated in any school classroom.

13. Positive male-female relationships are established with children at home. Often in primary schools the boys tend to be friends with the boys and the girls with the girls. In secondary school the situation changes and the pressure to have a boyfriend or girlfriend can be extreme. At home there are none of these pressures. You are always there and are able to guide and help develop your children's relationships with each other, especially male-female relationships.

Students who are taught at home often meet with other families who are like-minded where there is good positive supervision. Many families teach that mixed group activities are best and that dating during the school years is an unnecessary distraction.

14. Children don't learn negative social skills characteristic of school culture.

It is true to say that children learn social skills at school. However, what skills will they be learning? At school, students may learn about manipulation, boasting, strife and bullying. Who was the popular child at school? Was it the kind, generous, sensitive child? More likely, it was the child who was good at sport or the attractive girl, or the bully who had a sharp tongue. What is your child learning about how to be successful? Who is teaching him/her? At home, you can ensure that positive social skills are consistently modelled. You can greatly restrict any poor role models. Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits" (1 Cor 15:33)

15. They don't feel social rejection. At home you can ensure that everyone's opinions and ideas are valued even if they are different from other people. Sadly, even in some Christian schools children are rejected for expressing their faith. While this may make some strong, it causes many others distress and others to seriously doubt their faith. Furthermore, children with unusual interests or hobbies are often rejected as 'strange' at school. At home you are able to encourage them in their particular area of gifting or interest.

16. Reading and studying God's Word as a family develops sound moral values. There is no better way to instil moral values in your child than through the use of God's Word, throughout the day. A godly curriculum will support you in doing this.