

10 good reasons to home school your child

by Annalisa Barbieri, Sept 10, 2016

From going on holiday when you like and writing your own timetable to bringing them back into the school system if and when they are ready

‘You can go at the child’s pace, rather than the child having to go at the class’s pace.’

Photograph: Brownstock Inc/Alamy

Flexibility

You can work around any work rotas/shifts (although home education only works if one parent isn’t in full-time employment so there is a financial implication). You can go on holiday when you want – no massive hike in expense when school holidays come round – and extend holidays at whim. You never have to count down (with glee or dread) thinking “X more days until the summer holidays are over”, as I am doing now.

No school runs

Can I just repeat that? No school runs. This means bedtimes and get-up times to suit and, more crucially, at a more adolescent-friendly time for teenagers whose biological clocks shift at the start of puberty.

Child-led learning

This is probably the main reason home education is so different from school. We all learn more effectively, and it’s more fun, if we can learn about the stuff we like. You can also go at the child’s pace, rather than the child having to go at the class’s pace.

Write your own timetable

You don’t need to follow the national curriculum if you don’t want to. You definitely don’t need to follow a school day. This means you can be led by your child, which means more efficient learning. If your child is particularly interested in something after seeing a film or reading a book, you can learn about that, which will lead into lots of other things. If your child is more receptive from 3pm to 6pm, that’s when you can target lessons.

You will need to follow the curriculum if you intend to put your child in for GCSEs or A-levels (you can apply privately to sit them). But that also means your children haven’t sat lots of other largely pointless exams by the age of 15.

Benefits of one to one

Because one-to-one teaching (or one to two or three if you have more than one child) is so effective, you can pack a lot in. Some home schoolers say they get a day’s worth of learning in within two hours. The rest of the time you can do what you want.

Interactive

Children are far less afraid to ask a parent about anything they don't understand, than putting a hand up in front of a whole classroom. Be aware though, that if your children are of vastly different ages, this can be a challenge.

Boosts confidence

If your child really struggles with certain subjects, if they have “uneven skills” as one home-schooling parent put it, but excels at others, you can structure their learning accordingly, which helps to boost their confidence.

Best of both worlds

If you start off with home education, you can, as lots of parents do, return your child into the school system later on. Some parents feel that children start school too young so they home educate until high school level and then send their children to school. You can also flex-school (which is part-time schooling and home education) – but this is up to the discretion of the headteacher, so ask.

Legal niceties

There is no legal imperative to send your child to school in this country, but you do need to provide an education for your child. You can home educate from the start, but if you decide to do it later on, once they have been at school, you must write to the headteacher to de-register them (the school does not need to approve your taking them out to home educate). It is then up to the school to notify the relevant local authority. Education authorities may get involved to a greater or lesser degree. Some are supportive and helpful, others less so.

Support network

The social aspect of home education is often mentioned but you can join local groups where you meet other families who are in the same situation. In some areas, this works really well, with parents sharing skills to teach children. Home education groups can provide more information and there are also groups on Facebook.

Useful links:

educationotherwise.net

bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/home_education

schoolhouse.org.uk

bbc.co.uk/schools/parents/national_curriculum_key_stages

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