



Written by [Israel Wayne](#) on February 7, 2019

Published in the February 4, 2019 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 35, No. 03

## Benefits of Homeschooling

My family was one of the very first families to begin homeschooling in the United States during what I call “The modern-day homeschooling movement.” Homeschooling is as old as the first family on Earth. In our day and age, however, it feels like a very new experiment.

My older sister was taken out of kindergarten in 1978, and we began our adventure as homeschoolers. At that time, my mother didn’t know about compulsory attendance laws, and we ended up in court to defend our new homeschooling decision. In 1988, my mother started an influential national homeschooling magazine. This gave me a front-row seat for all that would develop in the next three decades as the homeschooling movement would explode.



AP Images

When I graduated from homeschooling in 1991, it was still illegal in many states (including the one in which I lived). My family was featured in a cover story on homeschooling for *Time* magazine in 2001 entitled, “Is homeschooling good for America?” Since my family’s initial involvement, homeschooling has grown from a small counterculture phenomenon to a vibrant mainstream movement. Homeschooling is now legal in every state, and legal barriers have fallen to varying degrees. Yet opponents of homeschooling continue to push back, and homeschoolers need to remain vigilant of their rights.

## Homeschooling Begins Again

Between 1979 and 1983, Dr. James Dobson had Dr. Raymond Moore on his radio show a few times to discuss his research on early childhood development. Based on his studies, Dr. Moore advocated for delaying formal schooling for young children, especially boys who were struggling with reading. On the broadcast, he encouraged parents to keep their children at home and let them develop until they were older before sending them to a formal school. He quickly began advocating for home education as a general principle, as he saw the success parents were having in teaching their own children at home.

Because of these broadcasts, thousands of families around the nation began taking their children out of public school (or never sending them in the first place). This was met with legal opposition from local school boards and truancy officers. These families were accused of violating their state compulsory attendance laws by refusing to send their children to government or private schools.

In 1983, Michael Farris and J. Michael Smith founded the Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) and were soon joined by a young lawyer named Christopher J. Klicka (formerly of the Rutherford Association). They began to represent families who had decided to home educate but were facing truancy charges from school districts.



Written by [Israel Wayne](#) on February 7, 2019

Published in the February 4, 2019 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 35, No. 03

---

That same year, Christian state organizations began to form, and state-wide homeschooling conventions were established. Parents could come and hear speakers teach on home education, and they could buy curricula from vendors in the convention hall.

## The Legal Battle

Christian school administrators, many of whom had faced their own legal battles in a fight for exclusively Christian education, began to take notice of these families. Many of them allowed homeschoolers to enroll in their school, as private-school students, but to continue to do the bulk of their teaching at home. The private schools kept all the records and did standardized testing (in many cases) to appease authorities. Because private schools were not mandated by law to hand over the private records of these students, it was almost impossible for these families to be prosecuted, even though the students were not attending a formal school classroom.

HSLDA began working in conjunction with many state homeschooling associations to create legislation that would exempt private home educators from compulsory attendance laws. This created a new category, legally, of “homeschoolers,” rather than the two previous options of “public school” and “private school.” State organizations have provided important legislative work by watching their legislature each year for bills that could adversely impact homeschooling freedoms.

## The Early Days

In the 1970s, not only was homeschooling illegal, but there was almost no support. Curriculum companies that sold materials to Christian schools would not sell to parents. Pastors told parishioners who chose to home educate that they were being disobedient to scripture. They said that Romans 13 commands parents to obey all civil laws, and so they were disobeying God by trying to give their children a Christian education at home.

Because of the threat of truancy officers or child protective service workers showing up unexpectedly on our doorstep, families like ours stayed inside during school hours. We kept the curtains closed. We tried not to talk about school with our nosy neighbors (who wondered why the bus never stopped at our house). Grandparents and extended relatives thought we were being deprived and believed the experiment would go totally wrong. They were convinced we would grow up to be social misfits, be unemployed, and have no idea how to relate to others in the “real world.”

The stakes were high because if you were caught homeschooling, your children could be taken away from you. Your parental rights could be terminated, and your children could be placed into foster care (where government schooling was mandated). It was a scary time. Many homeschooled children (like my older sister and me) actually had escape routes planned to hide if social workers came to get them.

It’s hard to believe that we aren’t talking about some communist nation during the Cold War, but the “land of the free and the home of the brave” during the 1970s and ’80s. My own family was in court on several occasions to defend our right to home educate. I remember the fear I had that I would not be able to continue living with my family and would not be allowed to homeschool. On two different occasions, because of run-ins with the courts (my second- and sixth-grade years), we were placed in private Christian schools for a year until the smoke cleared, and then my mother promptly went back to home educating us (after everyone had forgotten about the ordeal).



Written by [Israel Wayne](#) on February 7, 2019

Published in the February 4, 2019 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 35, No. 03

---

It is a blessing that such scenes are almost a distant memory in today's homeschooling climate. It is important, however, for newer homeschoolers to learn the history of the modern-day home-education movement.

Today, homeschooling is not only legal in all 50 states, but it is also flourishing in many countries around the world. Almost everyone knows someone who is being, or was, home educated. Homeschooling is now mainstream, with people from all walks of life choosing to take control of their children's education. There are now an estimated two million homeschoolers in America, close to four percent of all students.

## How Do Homeschoolers Do Academically?

My homeschool experience consisted of being homeschooled in high school by a single-parent mother who didn't finish ninth grade. Research from Dr. Brian Ray, of the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI.org), reveals that parents can still give their children a great academic education at home, even with very limited formal schooling themselves.

"A parent's education background has no substantive effect on their children's home school academic performance," Dr. Ray notes. "Home educated students' test scores remain between the 80th and 90th percentiles, whether their mothers have a college degree or did not complete high school."

According to Dr. Ray's research, a child in the government school whose parent has a master's degree or a teaching certificate will score 25-30 percent lower, on average, than a homeschooled student whose parent has only a high-school diploma or less. In homeschooling, it is the customized context and the parental involvement that make the difference, not the academic pedigree of the parents.

Home-educated students have repeatedly won the National Geographic Bee, the Scripps National Spelling Bee, the Intel International Science & Engineering Fair, the GSN National Vocabulary Championship, the National Mock Trial Championship, National Merit Scholarship awards, and many other honors, as well as scoring top placement at leading universities.

## What About "Socialization?"

"Won't they grow up isolated and socially maladjusted?" Homeschoolers are certainly familiar with questions and comments of this type. However, many studies by researchers at major universities over the past several decades have completely debunked these concerns. In fact, the research shows that homeschoolers tend to score much better on all socialization indices than their public school counterparts, with better self-image, fewer problem behaviors, less peer dependence, better communication skills, and greater ability to interact with adults and students outside their age cohorts. Research shows that much of the socialization in government schools is *negative* socialization: bullying, ostracism, sexual harassment, profanity, etc. Homeschoolers are spared these negative influences. But far from being isolated, they engage in abundant social activities through church, homeschool co-ops, sports, 4-H, Scouts, Little League, singing groups, neighborhood activities, and much more. *Positive* socialization is one of the most important benefits of homeschooling.

## Not as Difficult as You Think

Taking charge of educating your children may seem a daunting endeavor. However, it is easier now



Written by [Israel Wayne](#) on February 7, 2019

Published in the February 4, 2019 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 35, No. 03

---

than ever before, with support groups at the national, state, and local levels; a super-abundance of curriculum and teaching options; and millions of homeschool families and students who have pioneered before you. Some homeschool parents choose to put together their own curriculum, but there are many other options. Church-related and commercial programs already exist that cover every subject area and provide testing, grading, and counseling services as well. Many courses are available on video and/or online, including live, interactive classrooms (see article on page 42). Many church schools, private schools, and homeschool co-ops have outreach programs for homeschoolers, particularly in providing options for attending classes in the sciences and higher math, as well as sports and other extracurricular activities.

You might think that you could not possibly be an adequate teacher. But what is it that qualifies someone as a good teacher? It is not IQ. It is not a college degree or state certification. It is not being an expert at knowing random facts and information. A good teacher cares about the student and understands his/her strengths and weaknesses. A good teacher is a good listener and an exemplar of good character, good work habits, and good study habits.

The fact is that no one knows your child, or cares about him, more than you do. God gave your child to you, not to the government or the church or another family. He entrusted that child to you, because He believes that you are the best-equipped person in the world to raise him. And now, thanks to the burgeoning homeschool movement, you have immense resources at your disposal to effectively carry out that immense responsibility.

## **The Future of Homeschooling**

Homeschooling has come a long way since the early days when we were essentially an underground movement — in the catacombs, so to speak. It continues to enjoy phenomenal growth, but there are very real threats not only to its continued progress, but even to its very existence. Big Government — at the local, state, and federal levels — is obviously a perpetual peril. This is due not only to officious bureaucrats grasping for power, but also because government spending consumes more and more of the family's budget, the family is less and less able financially to avail themselves of educational options outside of the government monopoly. There is another danger. It is that the autonomy and the legal freedoms that were so painfully fought for and won over the past few decades may simply be given away by today's homeschooling parents, in exchange for "free" government handouts in the form of education vouchers for homeschoolers and other government-funded educational opportunities. Whoever pays for the education controls it.

Homeschooling freedoms will be maintained through eternal vigilance on the part of parents and organizations that are committed to the principles of liberty and parent-directed and parent-controlled education. We have gained so much freedom. Now it is up to us to maintain and preserve that freedom.



Written by [Israel Wayne](#) on February 7, 2019

Published in the February 4, 2019 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 35, No. 03



*This article originally appeared in The New American's February 4, 2019 special report on education.*





Written by [Israel Wayne](#) on February 7, 2019

Published in the February 4, 2019 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 35, No. 03

## Subscribe to the New American

Get exclusive digital access to the most informative, non-partisan truthful news source for patriotic Americans!

Discover a refreshing blend of time-honored values, principles and insightful perspectives within the pages of "The New American" magazine. Delve into a world where tradition is the foundation, and exploration knows no bounds.

From politics and finance to foreign affairs, environment, culture, and technology, we bring you an unparalleled array of topics that matter most.



[Subscribe](#)

### What's Included?

- 24 Issues Per Year
- Optional Print Edition
- Digital Edition Access
- Exclusive Subscriber Content
- Audio provided for all articles
- Unlimited access to past issues
- Coming Soon! Ad FREE
- 60-Day money back guarantee!
- Cancel anytime.