Homeschooling: Pros & Cons
What is Homeschooling?

The homeschooling movement began in the 1970s when parents took upon themselves to educate their children at home instead of sending them to a traditional public or private school. Such a movement was introduced to parents by popular authors and researchers writing about educational reforms. Homeschooling has become increasingly popular with a growth rate of 7%-15% each year. Currently, there are about two million children in the US learning at home. Homeschooling is legal in 50 states and many foreign countries.
Legal requirements for homeschooling in the U.S. vary from state to state. Some states have few or no requirements, others ask for portfolio reviews or standardized testing at certain intervals. However, aside from the required curriculum it is important to like your children, to enjoy their company, their foolishness, passions and have lots of patience. When you are homeschooling your children, you are taking the role of teachers first, and parent later. It is important to understand these two very different roles. However, first lets take a look at the pros and cons of homeschooling.
Pros and Cons: Educational Freedom

The Pros
The majority of homeschooled students have greater choices to study and learn what they want, when they want, for as long as they want. This is not to say all the required curriculum isn’t covered. With educational freedom, the child will have the ability to spend as much time as they need on a particular subject or come back to it at a later time, without disrupting the learning process.

The Cons:
It is great that homeschooled children have the ability to spend more time on a particular subject or area they need to improve on. However, the downside to this is they might fall behind on a curriculum, since there is no pressure to move forward.
Pros and Cons: Physical Freedom

The Pros:
Potentially the greatest pro parents speak of when choosing the homeschooling experience: parents and children are no longer restricted by school hours, homework, and the school calendar. Parents can plan off-season vacations, visit parks and museums during the week, and live their lives according to what works for them.

The Cons:
It’s always great to avoid the huge crowds, long lines, traffic jams and expensive travel rates, however, taking kids on vacations while their peers are in school might create discrepancies in their social circles. It will be more difficult to organize play dates since you might be out of town when everyone is available and vice versa.
Pros and Cons: Emotional Freedom

The Pros:
Peer pressure, competition and bullying are all a part of a school experiences. Where as competition may not be such a bad thing for kids to experience, bullying or peer pressure is definitely something we’d like to exclude for our kids every day lives. When homeschooled, children do not feel like they must “fit in” with others. They have the freedom to express themselves in any way they like, wear what they like and not have a fear of being bullied. Studies have shown that in middle school, a child’s self-esteem plummets vs. those who are homeschooled whose self-esteem remains intact.

The Cons:
There are really no cons wanting to avoiding bullying or peer pressure. However, in an effort to do so, your child might also miss out on figuring out who he/she is, by discovering others. Socializing with other kids, your child will recognize many other types of people which can give him/her a better understanding of who he/she is.
Pros and Cons: Well-Rested Kids

The Pros:
More and more studies have been arising, which illustrate that, sleep is vital to the emotional and physical well-being of kids, especially in teens and preteens. The affects of early morning classes can be distressing to many children. Students are in school by 7:30- 8:00am and do not get home until later afternoon, exhausted. With homework and extra-curricular activities, they lose the extra two-three hours of sleep they absolutely need to thrive. Homeschooled children can spend only a few hours covering the same amount of information that would typically take a week for an average sized classroom to get through.

The Cons:
Without having to leave the house for school, a child might not feel motivated and organized to learn at home. Having the same environment for school and home can become a drag, leaving the kids feeling bored and unenthusiastic.
Pros and Cons

Teaching Styles

The Pros:
Teaching styles vary widely among parents who homeschool their kids. Some follow standard school curriculum, using the same textbooks and following a schedule of a regular school year. While others tend to follow an “unschooled” schedule, meaning no specific schedule is utilized and each day is different from the next. “Unschooling” may involve a variety of trips and learning experiences which can be highly creative and child-led.

The Cons:
However, not all children are able to thrive in the same type of environment. Some kids need more structured days, filled with schedules and specific types that are designated for specific activities. Attending regular school is the opportunity for kids to have that structure, without making them feel like they are being disciplined for no reason.
Pros and Cons
Socializing

The Pros:
Probably the most talked about aspect of homeschooling is the social aspect that children might be missing by not going to school with their peers every day. However not a lot of people know that parents who homeschool their kids, create social networks with each other and organize many social events for the kids on a weekly basis. They schedule play dates, fieldtrips, movie nights, and so on. Kids get to socialize while exploring new places.

The Cons:
These social networks, although a great idea, do not always encompass diversity, meaning a majority of the kids come from similar backgrounds, and have familiar mind sets to them. Parents, in attempts to have avoid conflicts, will not include children who do not get along easily. This can seriously limit their child’s social experiences, which in turn make it harder for them to learn things like compromise and conflict resolution- both extremely necessary for personal and educational development.
Pros and Cons

Parents Time

The Pros:
Parents who choose to homeschool their children, do it for a number of reasons. Some claim that the time children spend at school, is time away from home. To these parents, family is a number 1 priority and is incorporated into all aspects of life. Another major reason is religion. Families with strong religious belief, do not trust public schools to educate their children with that religion in mind. And of course academic reasons are what leads parents to be become full-time-at-home educators for their children.

The Cons:
Every parent wants their child to be the best, however, not every parent is able to dedicate a majority of their time to accomplish this on their own. Financially, it is important for many families to have a double income, and for both parents to be working. For others, such factors as having adult time, away from children, having a career, aside from financial reasons is also important and therefore they do not wish to be a-stay-at home parents and homeschool their kids.