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## Would you consider home schooling a child?

gen2gen

**Ellen says: Yes. I have.**

Children spend countless hours each school day following rules and being disciplined. (Line up, don't talk, put your head on the desk, sit down).

Imagine if those hours could be funneled into pure learning, and doing what inspires and sparks the child's imagination.

Home schooling provides a good alternative to mainstream education. For some parents, keeping bad influences far from their children is a workable solution to problems at public schools.

Courses and curricula are available online, through a variety of sources. There are many groups with which parents and their children can interact. Group outings can give home-schooled children a chance to socialize in a smaller, more controlled setting.

One of my daughter's friends is home-schooled at the high school level. She studies, works, exercises at the local gym and does community service. She's independent and smart and has learned to manage her time well. She may be what others consider "sheltered," but her parents are pretty happy about that. She is exposed to the kinds of activities and behaviors they want.

Just before my daughter entered high school, she considered home schooling. I didn't talk her out of it, but just explained the difficulties for a student with working parents. Ultimately, we decided to continue with conventional schooling because she was going to attend a specialized academy.

But like many other students, she has also found success through online learning at Florida Virtual School. She works closely with a teacher through e-mails and phone calls and her work record is available to us anytime online. Tutoring also is available online.

Home schooling avoids crowded classrooms, short lunches, late buses, but even more important, cliques, gangs, drugs, bullies and disrespectful behaviors that are found on campuses no matter how hard schools try to keep them out.

With home schooling, a parent or friend can be teacher, adviser and guidance counselor. Siblings can be classmates. On a sunny day, the lesson could be observing flora and fauna at the beach or volunteering to pick up litter at a local park.

It's not for everybody, but it works.

*Ellen has been home schooling herself for years. Contact her at [ellen.koven@news-jrnl.com](mailto:ellen.koven@news-jrnl.com)*

**Denise says: Absolutely not.**

I agree there are some subjects that are best taught by the family. You should not expect your child's teachers to be the first people to tell them about sex, about sharing, about caring for other people and good manners.

My husband and I are both intelligent, college-educated people who have a lot to teach our daughter, but neither of us would want to home-school her, ever. It's not that I can't handle third-grade math, or don't want to spend time with my child. It's that, just as there are lessons best taught at home, there are other lessons that need to be taught with other children.

My daughter is naturally social. She hates being cooped up inside on the weekends, and is always out playing with other little girls in the neighborhood. I would never want to deny her the opportunity to make friends and strengthen her ability to interact on a daily basis with kids her own age, as well as adults who are not her parents.

I know there are a lot of influences out there that don't necessarily fit with the ones in our home. For example, just this weekend I heard my 5-year-old in the back seat singing a Kelly Clarkson song, which I thought was odd because we don't normally listen to Clarkson. We found out our daughter had picked up on the song while playing with the little girl her age across the street, along with an affinity for Hannah Montana, although she's never watched an episode of the show in our house.

It was a little shocking. I don't object to Clarkson or Hannah per se, but it was surprising that all of a sudden, my daughter was coming home with influences that didn't come from us. But I know that this is a part of life, and of growing up. I can try to shelter her and protect her from all the evil in the world, but that will only hurt her in the long run when suddenly she is an adult without the tools to help her deal with temptations and trouble.

I'd rather watch her, and support her, and have honest discussions with her about what I feel is appropriate and inappropriate, and help her learn to decide for herself what is right, and to avoid what is wrong. Much more than algebra and chemistry, these are the lessons she will learn out in the big, wide world of school that will stay with her forever.

*Denise is dreading the next kid fad that will be driving her nuts soon. Contact her at [denise.cover@news-jrnl.com](mailto:denise.cover@news-jrnl.com)*

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