

Problems At School Virtually Disappear



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The virtual school, which is free, allows students to complete class work at their pace.

By DONNA KOEHN

dkoehn@tampatrib.com

Published: October 31, 2008

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It wasn't an easy decision to allow my son, then 12, to begin taking all of his coursework online through the Florida Virtual School.

I agonized about the lack of socialization, primarily. Would he be stunted somehow from not completing his final middle school year with classmates?

Then I thought about my middle school years, which like a lot of people's, were just this side of psychological hell. Would I have avoided mine, if such an option were available then? Oh, pray, how fast could one sign up and sign on?

Teen [XY](#) is now 15 and still taking all his coursework online. For him, it has been fantastic.

[XY](#) is a sensitive brainiac, not always up to the rough-and-tumble of school. Born with food allergies, [low muscle tone](#) and a condition called sensory integration disorder, he always made excellent grades but was never going to be [first string](#) at football. Not a problem at all in the early years, but over time I saw signs he was being beaten down socially. Great with adults, not always connecting with classmates.

The virtual school, which is free, allows him to complete his class work at his pace, which is lightning fast. By the middle of what would have been his freshman year, he had completed half the credits he needed to graduate. He recently completed his [second semester](#) of [Spanish II](#) in just under six weeks.

I predict he will do well in college, even if he enters at a younger age.

The online teachers are amazing. Because a monthly call to parents is part of their job, I speak with them more than I ever did with his teachers in public or private

school. They give individual feedback on most assignments. Often, they are the mothers of young children, using [FLVS](#) as a way to work from home. Their enthusiasm is obvious.

[FLVS](#) doesn't work for all kids. They have to be motivated and self-starting. Some of them have flunked out or been expelled from public school, others are [child actors](#) or athletes who have commitments that make regular schooling difficult. And some, like my son, simply find this is the best path for them.

The lack of [socialization](#) has turned out not to be much of an issue, either. My son takes tae kwon do classes at Sidekicks Martial Arts Center in Lithia, where he has earned his black belt, and he has helped teach younger children. He is in his third year at the Young Chef's Academy in Brandon learning to cook alongside other kids, which he absolutely loves. And he volunteers at ECHO, a food pantry that provides assistance to needy people in our community.

Every year, we discuss anew whether to send him back to regular school, and every year we conclude that we're all happier this way. How wonderful that we live in a time in which we have options like this for kids who benefit from something a little different