



HOMESCHOOLING IN COLORADO AND NATIONWIDE:

Research Facts and Other Important Concepts

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Homeschooling—that is, private parent-led home-based education—is an age-old traditional educational practice that a decade ago appeared to be cutting-edge and “alternative” but is now bordering on “mainstream” in the United States. There are about 2.3 million home-educated students in the United States, and it appears the homeschool population is continuing to grow (at an estimated 2% to 8% per annum over the past few years) (Ray, 2018; Redford et al., 2016). It may be the fastest-growing form of education in the United States.

Reasons for Home Educating

Most parents and youth decide to homeschool for more than one reason. The most common reasons given for choosing home-based education are the following:

- customize or individualize the curriculum and learning environment for each child,
- accomplish more academically than in schools,
- use pedagogical approaches other than those typical in institutional schools,
- enhance family relationships between children and parents and among siblings,
- provide guided and reasoned social interactions with youthful peers and adults,
- provide a safer environment for children and youth, because of physical violence, drugs and alcohol, psychological abuse, and improper and unhealthy sexuality associated with institutional schools, and
- teach and impart a particular set of values, beliefs, and worldview to children and youth.

Academic Performance

- A 2018 data analysis revealed that Colorado private homeschool students are scoring at the 84th to 91st percentile across the subjects of reading, language, math, science, and social studies on standardized academic achievement tests. This is 34 to 41 percentile points above the U.S. public school average.¹

Subject Area	Colorado Homeschool	Nationwide Public School
Reading	91	50
Language	84	50
Math	84	50
Science	90	50
Social Studies	88	50

Table: Percentile scores on academic achievement tests, on average.

- Multiple studies by many researchers show that home-educated students average 15 to 30 percentile points above public-school students on standardized academic achievement tests (Murphy, 2012; Ray, 2013, 2017).
- These average high scores also show up in states that mandate achievement testing of all homeschool students. For example, homeschool students score at about (median) the 79th percentile year after year on state-required standardized academic achievement tests (Oregon Department of Education, 2014; Williams, 2014).
- These homeschool students score above average on achievement tests regardless of their parents’ level of education, family’s household income, or whether their parents were ever certified teachers.
- The degree of state control and regulation of homeschooling is not related to academic achievement (Ray, 2010). That is, where states control or regulate private homeschool education families more, the students do no better academically than where homeschoolers have more freedom.
- Whether homeschool parents have ever or never been government-certified teachers has almost no correlation with their children’s academic achievement (Ray, 2013).
- Home-educated students typically score above average on the college-admission SAT and ACT tests (Murphy, 2012; Ray, 2017).
- Graduates of parent-led home-based education are increasingly being actively recruited by colleges. College and university personnel have a positive impression of graduates of homeschooling (Gloeckner & Jones, 2013).

¹ The data were from Ray, 2010; analysis by Ray.

Social, Emotional, and Psychological Development

- The home-educated are doing well, typically above average, on measures of social, emotional, and psychological development. Research measures include peer interaction, self-concept, leadership skills, family cohesion, participation in community service, and self-esteem (Medlin, 2013; Ray, 2017).
- Homeschool students are regularly engaged in social and educational activities outside their homes and with people other than their nuclear-family members. They are commonly involved in activities such as field trips, scouting, 4-H, political drives, church ministry, sports teams, debate teams, and community volunteer work.

Homeschooling Law and Economics in Colorado

- In Colorado, there are three options for homeschooling:
 1. Establish a non-public home-based education program. Yearly, file a notice of intent with a school district in Colorado. Make sure to follow the Colorado law outlined in CRS 22-33-104.5.
 2. Enroll in a Colorado-based independent school and follow that school's requirements.
 3. Obtain a current Colorado teaching license. (See <https://chec.org/getting-started/colorado-law/> for more information.)
- Legislative Issues Concerning Home Educators
 - Parental Rights

It is the fundamental unalienable right of parents to direct the upbringing, care, and education of their children.
 - Conscience Rights

Every individual and each family have the unalienable right to act and order their life according to their conscience.

There were an estimated 39,000 to 48,000 K-12 homeschool students in Colorado during the

spring 2016 (McQuiggan, et al., 2017; Ray, 2018), and it is likely these numbers have grown.

Public school per-pupil expenditure in Colorado during 2015-16 was \$11,183 (National Education Association, 2017), plus capital expenditures, plus research and development. Therefore, it is estimated that homeschool families saved Colorado taxpayers \$43 million to \$54 million annually over the past two years, plus capital expenditures that the state did not need to spend on home-educated students.

Success in the “Real World” of Adulthood

The research base of adults who were home educated is growing; thus far it indicates that they:

- participate in local community service more frequently than does the general population,
- vote and attend public meetings more frequently than the general population,
- go to and succeed at college at an equal or higher rate than the general population,
- by adulthood, internalize the values and beliefs of their parents at a high rate, and
- are more politically tolerant than others (Cheng, 2014).

See back for references

Need More Information About Homeschooling?

IN COLORADO:

Christian Home Educators of Colorado (CHEC)

19039 Plaza Dr Ste 210, Parker, CO 80134
(720) 842-4852
www.CHEC.org

NATIONALLY:

Home School Legal Defense Association

P.O. Box 3000, Purcellville, VA 20134
(540) 338-5600
www.hsllda.org

National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI)

P.O. Box 13939, Salem, OR 97309
(503) 364-1490,
www.nheri.org
mail@nheri.org

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