

Submission
No 202

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 9/08/2014

Partially Confidential

Director
Select Committee on Home Schooling
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Home Educators

Home Educating Years of Experience: 5.5yrs

Children Educated at home: Grace – 2 years (grades 7,8), Angus – 3 years(grades 5,6,7,8),
Callum – 1 (grade 9) Year and Kieran – 1.5 years (grades 4,5).

Our Families Personal Experience,

Grace was always very good at her scholastic endeavours, never received a negative Report from any school staff or teachers, however near the end of her Primary School life she appeared to be falling into the wrong crowd of friends, and we were worried it would affect her scholastic abilities through peer pressure. As a family we decided that home-schooling would be a good way of re-directing her path to a more positive educational future.

We found Grace was very independent in her studies and would fly through all syllabus areas without much trouble which in turn allowed us to monitor our son Angus with his dependence on our scheduling and teaching arrangements. Grace re-entered the School system to complete her Year 10 high school certificate, on her first week back there was a pop quiz in her science class and she received 85% mark which was the second highest in the class on that test. Presently, Grace is qualified in Early Childhood Education and is a full-time Medical Receptionist.

Angus was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) at the age of 5. He had been enrolled into Kindergarten at the age of 4 years and 10 months but the Principal of his school approached us regarding his behaviour and suggested that we remove him until the beginning of the following year. During that time we investigated the possibility that Angus had ADHD, this led to his diagnosis and subsequent medication to

improve his attentive abilities. Before Angus was re-enrolled into Kindergarten we had been able to teach him to read fluently, which proved to help him greatly with all the distractions of the classroom.

The School we enrolled him into was rather small in comparison to most with a total of 99 students. Classes moved to a new teacher for each subject and this was advantageous for someone like Angus, as it prevented him from becoming bored and also allowed the teachers to have him in small spurts at a time. Unfortunately, by Grade 2 we had moved homes and Angus was moved to a larger school. With a larger class he became quite disruptive, unable to focus his attention on one thing at a time; this led to him being placed outside the classroom many times in a 'timeout' situation. Bullying was a major issue for Angus at all schools he went to, both emotional and physical. The following year was much better he had a teacher that understood him and kept him busy and motivated making it harder for Angus to get bored and distract the rest of the students.

When Callum began Kindergarten we placed him in a different school to Grace and Angus and during the first term of the same year we moved them to that school in order for them all to be together. Angus was lucky enough to receive another teacher that understood his abilities and created a great environment for Angus to learn in. When the next school year began this teacher actually passed on his knowledge of what worked for Angus to his new teacher but unfortunately they didn't implement it and Angus suffered for it through self-esteem issues and his inability to pick up what the rest of the class was doing due to being unable to focus. It was at this point we decided to home school him. We sent him back to the Year 10 High School to complete his school certificate. Presently, Angus owns his own home, has a full-time job and is establishing a new business in the _____, New South Wales.

Like Grace, Callum never had any trouble in his Scholastic endeavours but when he reached Year 8 he got into the wrong crowd and his Grades began to decline. We decided to home school him to help him re-focus and it worked, he chose to do a pre-apprenticeship course in the Panel Beating trade. This led to an apprenticeship and he is in his 4th year of that training.

Kieran was diagnosed with Asperger's at the age of 3 and after many courses of occupational and speech therapy, early intervention and a lot of work at home, he was able to handle most routine changes in his daily life. I was able to teach him to read before he entered Kindergarten and this helped him transition into school life. He went to a small infant's school as they had Teachers Aids trained in working with children that have Asperger's. He flourished at this school and was all set to move into the larger K-6 School in our area, unfortunately, Kieran didn't receive any assistance to clarify he understood the directions, he was being bullied, and he was coming home with a whole new vocabulary from the bullies he encountered. It was then we decided to home school him before such behaviour became permanent within him as it is hard to undo things he has learned due to his Asperger's tendencies.

Currently Kieran is in year 5 and has started a year 6 spelling book, loves reading, getting right into the human body which we spent hours on building. This wouldn't have happened if he'd been at school, he would have had to move onto another subject. Being aspergers he either is into stuff or not, which can be a problem when according to the curriculum he has to do certain subjects that he doesn't like eg, music, He loves singing but as to playing an instrument has no interest. Loves Horrible Histories but hates early Australian history. He is much nicer to be around without the stress of mainstream schooling.is an avid AFL follower knows all the stats for each player and strategies employed in the game etc.

He reads for hours I often go into his room to turn off his light and find him asleep with the book in his hand.

My one big regret is not home schooling my son Callum longer, because life is so frantic they grow so quickly, one minute there your babies then they're off to work. I missed so much of his life with him being at school everyday.

Here are some suggestions for the Board of Studies:

1. It would be good if our AP'S were people who know about Homeschooling and what it involves.

2. Home Ed should be respected as any other learning institution, and be informed of any changes made via email,

So often children fall through the cracks at school not quite grasping the idea of a particular area of the subject, but have to move on to keep up with the class. Our kids get one on one they move on when they understand the subject. We Home Educate so they can learn at their pace, at their own level of understanding and maturity, not held to the age group level they "should" be in.

Please hear us we want the best for our kids, to educate them. To help them be assets to the community to be well rounded adults who respect authority, Please help us, encourage us and offer help where it is needed but please no more rules and regulations that take away our joy of learning together.

Thank you