

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Name suppressed

Date received: 8/08/2014

Partially Confidential

Submission to Select Committee on Home Schooling

from;

My Personal Background:

Primary School Teacher

Married 20 years

Mother of five children, (ages 3 to 18)

Home educating parent for past 12 years , (our children have never attended school)

Began home education living in Melbourne, continued after moving to Albury (NSW)

Personal Comments:

I believe the education of children is the parents' responsibility, parents should certainly be free to choose the most suitable form of education for their family. Even when that choice is to send children to school, the results are far better with the support and involvement of parents, as I'm sure most teachers will affirm.

Most home educating parents are very motivated to support their children's learning and growth. A major benefit of home education is the ability to choose methods/materials that suit our children's individual characteristics and there are a vast array of resources available to parents, written to suit the home education context.

I think that the nature of the current home school registration requirements is incompatible with the practise and experience of home educators. The nature of home education is far more flexible and responsive to children's learning needs and interests than the current requirements allow for, if strictly interpreted. Whilst I think there is some value in encouraging parents to consider all the key learning areas when working with their children, I find the current requirements to be overly prescriptive and onerous to implement. I think a less prescriptive approach would be more appropriate, more acceptable and more helpful for many parents.

Some Research Findings:

There have been numerous different research studies and surveys on home education, the results of which indicate the typical outcomes of this style of education. Although it is likely these have been brought to your attention by others, I will include here a selection of the findings.

In academics:

“Significant research has demonstrated that home-educated students perform academically as well as or better than those in traditional schooling, and that motivated parents are effective educators.” (Harding, 2008, p9). A number of different studies showed home educated students did well in reading, maths and language (Calvary, Bell & Vaupel 1992; Frost & Morris, 1998, both as cited in Harding, 2008), science and social studies (Calvary, Bell & Vaupel 1992, as cited in Harding, 2008) and academic achievement and intelligence measures (Delahooke, 1986, as cited in Harding, 2008).

These are only a representative selection of the available research in this area.

Socially:

“Researchers in the field of socialisation have found that home educated students have a higher self-concept than students from public schools” (Harding, 2008, p9)

“Dr Larry Shyers' socialisation research...found that home educated students in Florida showed significantly higher assertiveness and self-concept ratings than traditionally schooled students. They also demonstrated significantly lower problem behaviour as a means of resolving social issues than children educated in schools.” (Harding, 2008, p9)

General:

“Another study compared the performance of tertiary students in five categories of indicators – academic, cognitive, social, spiritual and psychomotor. The students had come from public, private and home education. They found that home educated students placed first in each category, leading by a large margin in everything except the psychomotor category.” (Harding, 2008, p9)

Tertiary Entrance:

“A small Tasmanian study of adults who had been home educated found that nearly 80% had completed tertiary courses and gone on to employment in technical, scientific, teaching or nursing fields.” (Harding, 2008, p11)

“A survey of 438 home-educated Australian adults demonstrated that such students are able to enter tertiary courses in all states of Australia. After completing their home education, 36% of respondents had entered bachelor degree courses; 21% had entered professional diploma courses; 43% had entered trades and training via apprenticeships and certificate courses at TAFE. These results are comparable to the post-school study pathways of students from

traditional schooling and prove that home education is no barrier to tertiary entrance.” (Harding, 2008, p11)

Final Comments

Especially considering the generally very positive outcomes of home education, as testified by the research and survey investigations referred to above, I think a more relaxed approach to regulation is quite appropriate. This educational model works really well, is implemented by people with the deepest commitment to the children concerned and does not seem to need to be over-regulated.

References

Harding, T. (Nov 2008), “Home Education in Australia” *VoxPoint*, pp8-11

Note; Harding's article contains full references for all the studies mentioned in the quotations.