

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Ms Sarah Bromwich

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Hello world,

Last year, as we prepared to enrol our eldest child in primary school, we started to feel uncertain whether institional/traditional western schooling was the right choice for our family. Was it the best way for our daughter to learn? Would it be the best way for her individual needs to be met? Would this formal method of educational really enable her to learn at her natural pace, explore her interests at the pace that suited her and in a way thayat was truly engaging and fun?

The questions went on and on and on...

Was our daughter, at just 5 years of age, ready to go into a whole new environment where she didn't recognise the space, people or many of the new practices? And was she ready to do this alone?

I then started to question how my husband and I felt about these things. After many discussions together, with our daughter, teachers and a variety of homeschooling families, we decided the answer to these questions was undoubtedly, "No!".

We do not feel that regular schooling is the best method for our daughter/our family. We prefer a more natural learning style that meets our child's needs. While our daughter is not typically "shy" or afraid to be separated from us we believe that 30 hours a week away from well known and trusted care givers is much too long and our daughter agrees. It is our job as parents to raise our children and instill in them the confidence, self belief and values that we feel will benefit them best.

We truly love being so present and involved in our children's schooling. Parenting is an amazing roller coaster of unknowns, excitement, challenges, joy, overcoming fears and discovery. The same can be said of homeschooling.

I am running out of time to sit at the desk as I need to be with my children. I would like to finish with a few comment on the registration process.

The registration process is daunting. The syllabus outcomes are not written in plain Enligh and without good support of the HEA/other experienced homeschoolers I would have been completely overwhelmed the the reigration process and put myself through unnecessary pain and stress by overpreparing and trying to make sense every single syllabus outcome.

I would like to see the process simplified and the minimal requirements much easier for parents to locate/understand. I would also like people to be directed to their local HEA members and any known/existing homeschool groups to be listed on the Dept of education website. It is really important for prospective homeschoolers/those preparing for registration to be well supported. I also feel that the AP's do not seem to really understand homeschooling, what we do, why we do it and how it all works. My own AP didn't even seem to understand how much learning had already been taking place in our home prior to registration OR that there were a plethora of teachings/learning styles that would certainly meet the syllabus requirements regardless of how different these were from the most common methods used. I feel the APs need more education or else should even have their own homeschooling experience so they can better support home schooling families. You don't have a driving lesson with someone who has never driven so why be registered/assessed/supported by in your homeschooling journey by someone who really knows nothing about it?

I hope this inquiry will revolutionize homeschooling registrations in Australia and lead to better support for those of us embarking on this epic journey.

Sarah Bromwich