

Submission
No 106

INQUIRY INTO HOME SCHOOLING

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially Confidential

Hello, I am a home schooling mother and wish to add my thoughts and experiences to the discussion and I hope you find it helpful.

My husband and I choose to home educate because of our own bad experiences at school (ie bullying) but also because we felt that the Lord had ordained us as our childrens parents, to educate our children and bring them up in the way they should go. We also wanted to be able to teach our children about God without ridicule.

I think home educating is a fantasitic way to build relationships within families. Our children love spending time together and are each others best friends. They have also learnt the valuable lesson of how to care for one another and others around them.

I started home educating with a school of distance education. This was a good way for me to start as I had little idea of what I was doing. However I found the curriculum very American based and found it hard the way it was teaching the alphabet sounds, as they did not add up to our Australian English. I also found it hard to stay with this distance school after a few years because a new rule was bought in that we had to do residential days. This was really hard to comply with because we are from the Western areas of NSW and most of the residential days were on the East Coast areas of NSW. The cost of having to travel that far and get accomodation for my family of 5 children at the time was too costly and I also didn't know how to juggle this with a number of young children and a baby at the time. I think it was very unfair of the government to bring this requirement to this distance ed school. Adding more things for home educators to have to comply with can actually damage the effectiveness of what those home educators are already teaching. Less is more!

I then enrolled with the Board of Studies. I had some really fun times with my children during this time. We did lots of art work and working out doors. Then the new curriculm and syllubus came in. This was too much for me to cope with in my current situation. As a home schooling parent I can tell you that I have the best interest of my children in mind when schooling them. I know that it is I who will be responsible for a good outcome or a bad one. Obviously I am aiming for the former!! I believe that the majority of home educators are parents who want the best for their children.

I then re enrolled with a distance ed school. Not because I thought my children would be better off there but because I couldn't cope at the time with the new changes to the syllubus and lack of communication around it.

I believe that educating at home needs to be viewed entirely different to educating in a schooling system. But the new syllubus enforced onto us is creating more of a school set up for home educating students.

I have some suggestions for the Board of Studies.

1. Please inform enrolled home schooling families of any changes to curriculum (like the new syllubus) by email, as soon as a date is locked in for them to come into effect. The way we heard about new changes was from other home educators and eventually from our Authorised Person. But I would have preferred to have heard directly from the BOS. This was a "grape vine" way of finding out. It also caused stress, where stress was not needed.

2. It would be good if Authorised People were men and women who have had experience home educating or have a true understanding of the philosphies behind home educating. Our Authorised

Person was kind and gave us ideas to try, but came from a school teachers philosophy, so his and the departments expectations still caused stress. I think you need people who have had first hand experience.

I believe home educating should be valued and respected. There are so many children who attend schools who cannot read and write properly. They fall through the cracks and do not get the extra support they need. I feel greatly blessed that I have been able to overt any of those experiences away from my children. I know where they are lacking and where I need to help them more. I know if they are understanding concepts or not and we can take the time to rectify any learning difficulties. This is a real bonus for children who are home educated. They receive one on one time with their teacher.

They can take the time needed to grasp concepts they are having difficulty with, this helps to prevent gaps in our childrens learning!

So please, realise that home educators are dedicated mothers and fathers who seek the best education for their children, and that they are providing a great service to our communities. Encourage us and offer help where it is needed, but please dont enforce more laws and curriculum to our already full and demanding days.

Thank you