



Canadian Study Confirms Advantages of Homeschooling

A recent Canadian study has confirmed what has been known for over two decades — much to the chagrin of public school officials: Homeschoolers perform better than public school students in the crucial core academic disciplines of reading and math.



The study, published in the [Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science](#), compared the standardized test scores of 37 homeschooled students between the ages of five and 10 to those of 37 public school counterparts, finding that while public school students typically tested at or slightly above their grade level, homeschooled kids performed about a half grade higher in math and 2.2 grades higher in reading.

In explaining the differences in scores, Sandra Martin-Chang, a professor at Concordia University and the study's lead author, said that the structure of homeschooling “may offer opportunities for academic performance beyond those typically experienced in public schools [including] smaller class sizes, more individualized instruction, or more academic time spent on core subjects such as reading and writing.”

One essential point the study seemed to confirm was the importance of structured and organized homeschool settings to a child's academic success. Researchers analyzed the scores of a subgroup of 12 homeschooled children educated in an unstructured environment known as “unschooling” that is “free of teachers, textbooks, and formal assessment,” explained a press statement from the study's authors. Martin-Chang noted that compared “with [the] structured homeschooled group, children in the unstructured group had lower scores on all seven academic measures. Differences between the two groups were pronounced, ranging from one to four grade levels in certain tests.”

As reported earlier this year in [The New American](#), a study by the [National Home Education Research Institute](#) (NHERI) found that “there are over two million children currently being homeschooled in the United States. The author of the study, NHERI's president Dr. Brian D. Ray, analyzed data from both state and federal education agencies as well as private homeschool groups, concluding that there are as many as 2.346 million homeschooled students across the nation.”

The Canadian study merely confirms both previous research and anecdotal evidence, demonstrating the overall superiority of homeschooling over public education. A 2009 NHERI study, for example, found that homeschooled students score an average of 34 to 39 percentile points higher than the norm on standardized achievement tests. Data from the study showed that the national average for homeschooled students ranged from the 84th percentile for language, math, and social studies to the 89th percentile for reading.

Research also shows that homeschooled students take their high performance with them to college. A 2010 study by Dr. Michael Cogan of the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota found that, compared to



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conventional students, college student who were homeschooled earn, on average, a higher first-year GPA (3.41) than the overall average (3.12), a higher fourth-year GPA (3.46) than the overall average (3.16), and have a higher college graduation rate (66.7 percent) compared to the overall population (57.5 percent).

As to why an increasing number of parents are opting to pull their children from government schools and teach them at home, a 2006 study by the Department of Education revealed that 31 percent of parents who chose homeschooling for their children did so out of concern for the public school environment, citing such issues as “safety, drugs or negative peer pressure.” An additional 30 percent cited the ability of the home school option to “provide their children with religious or moral instruction.” An additional 16.5 percent of homeschooling parents said they were dissatisfied with “the academic instruction available” in the public schools, while about 14 percent said they opted for home schooling because of special needs their children had.



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