

# HOMESCHOOLING

## IN CALIFORNIA AND NATIONWIDE:

Research Facts and Other Important Concepts



Brian D. Ray, Ph.D.  
May 2, 2022



**Christian Home Educators  
Association of California**  
Promote • Provide • Protect



FAMILY PROTECTION MINISTRIES  
DETECT • ANALYZE • MONITOR • INTERVENE  
DEFENDING HOMESCHOOLING SINCE 1986

Parent-directed home-based education has been the principal model used to educate children for most of recorded history. Although the practice of home-based education has waxed and waned over the course of time, the last several decades have seen a strong and steady resurgence of this solid approach. Today, home education is the fastest-growing form of education in the United States, with approximately 3.7 million homeschool educated students across the country in the fall of 2020 (Ray, 2021b). In California and across the nation, homeschooling has increased roughly 90% over the last ten years (Ray, 2022; United States Department of Education (USDE), 2021).

## REASONS FOR HOME EDUCATING

Most parents decide to homeschool for more than one reason (Ray, 2021a; USDE, 2021). The most common reasons given for choosing parent-directed home education are to:

- customize or individualize the curriculum and learning environment for each child,
- accomplish more academically in less time than in traditional schools,
- use teaching approaches other than those typical in traditional classroom settings,
- enhance family relationships that offer the greatest potential in directing the child's future,
- provide a natural and guided social and community life with peers and adults,
- provide a safe environment with less physical violence, drugs and alcohol, psychological and sexual abuse and maltreatment by school personnel and students, and improper and unhealthy sexual behavior,
- teach and impart values, beliefs, and a worldview to their children and young adults, and
- address special needs and individual learning challenges.

## CALIFORNIA AND NATIONWIDE HOMESCHOOL ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

### Nationwide

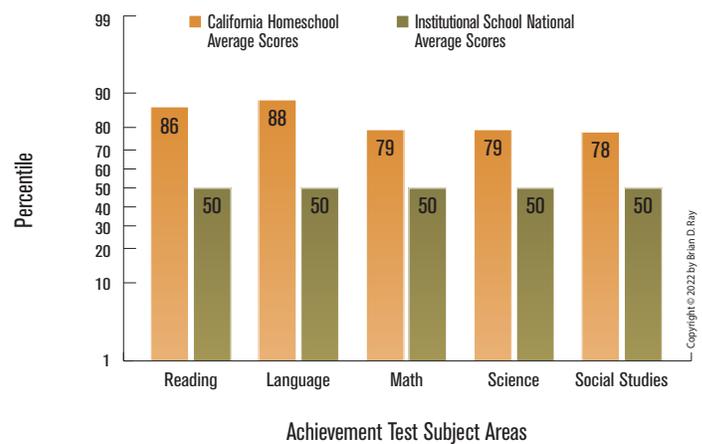
- Studies show that home-educated students average 15 to 30 percentile points above public-school students on standardized academic achievement tests (Murphy, 2014; Ray, 2013, 2017a, 2017b).
- Home-educated students typically score above average on the college-admission SAT and ACTs (Murphy, 2014; Ray, 2017a, 2017b).
- Colleges actively recruit homeschool graduates. College and university personnel have a positive impression of homeschool graduates (Gloeckner & Jones, 2013).
- The degree of state control and regulation of homeschooling is not related to academic achievement (Ray, 2010). Achievement test scores of homeschool students in states with higher regulation are the same as states with lesser regulation.

- Whether homeschool parents have ever or never been government-certified teachers is not notably related to their children's academic achievement (Ray, 2013).

### California

This document and the study behind it is the product of a collaborative project by NHERI, CHEA, FPM, and BJUPress Homeschool. Data from a 2022 standardized achievement test data analysis reveal that California homeschool students scored at the 78th percentile to 88th percentile in reading, language, math, science, and social studies (see figure). This is 28 to 38 percentile points above the national average.

### ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF CALIFORNIA HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS AND U.S. INSTITUTIONAL SCHOOL STUDENTS



Footnote: Data are from the standardized academic achievement test scores of California homeschool students during 2020 and 2021 test norms.

Here are some other key findings from these California data that are generally consistent with the past 30 years of research on homeschooling:

- The mother's education level is not statistically correlated with any subject-area scores. This is significant since in homeschooling the mother is usually the main academic instructor and in public schools there is a notable correlation between parent education level and child's achievement. That is, children perform better in public schools when their parents have higher education levels (Egalite, 2016) but homeschool children of all levels of mother's education are doing equally well.
- In public schools, there is a distinct positive correlation between family income and students' test scores (Egalite, 2016). However, these homeschool students' scores were essentially the same whether their family's income was high or low.
- The degree of structure in the homeschooling is not correlated with reading, math, and social science scores, and only weakly correlated with language and science scores. That is, a variety of homeschool pedagogical approaches are all associated with strong academic achievement.

## SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Research measuring peer interaction, self-concept, leadership skills, family cohesion, participation in community service, and self-esteem shows homeschoolers are doing very well. They are typically above average in social, emotional and psychological development (Medlin, 2013; Ray, 2017a, 2017b).
- Homeschool students are regularly engaged in common social and educational activities including field trips, scouting, 4-H, political drives, church ministry, sports teams, debate teams, drama, music classes, art classes, apprenticeships, and community volunteer work (Hamlin, 2019).

## SUCCESS IN ADULTHOOD

The research base of adults who were home educated is growing; thus far, studies indicate that they (see references section, e.g., Ray, 2107a, 2017b; Seiver & Pope, 2022):

- participate in local community service more frequently than the general population;
- vote and attend public meetings more frequently than the general population;
- go to and succeed in college at an equal or higher rate than the general population;
- by adulthood, internalize the values and beliefs of their parents at a high rate; and
- are more politically tolerant than other adults (Cheng, 2014).

## NUMBERS OF CALIFORNIA HOMESCHOOLERS AND TAX SAVINGS

There were an estimated 616,000 to 753,000 grades K-12 homeschool students in California during the spring of 2021 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022; Ray, 2021b). The average public school per-pupil expenditure in California that same year, 2020-2021, was \$15,019 (National Education Association, 2021). Therefore, it is estimated that homeschool families saved California taxpayers approximately \$10.3 billion that year. In addition, taxpayers do not have to pay for capital expenditures on home-educated students.

## CALIFORNIA HOMESCHOOL LAW AND CORE VALUES

California homeschool organizations point out that they have had great success under the current options in California law.

Private home-based education (homeschooling) generally operates under two options:

- Option 1: Single family home-based private school
  - California is one of fifteen states in which “home schooling” is accomplished under a private school exemption. Home educators may establish a private

school, based in their home, and must file a private school affidavit with the Superintendent of Public Instruction of California

- Option 2: Private School Satellite Program
  - Home-schooling parents may enroll their children in a private school PSP (private school satellite program) that has filed a private school affidavit with the Superintendent of Public Instruction of California [same legal exemption and requirements as (1) above]. A private school satellite program (PSP) may be composed entirely of home educators or may be an extension program of a campus-based private school.

For more information about private homeschooling and the law in California, please visit [www.fpmca.org/LFS](http://www.fpmca.org/LFS).

**Parental Rights:** It is the fundamental unalienable right of parents to direct the upbringing, care, and education of their children.

**Conscience Rights:** Every individual and each family have the unalienable right to act and order their life according to their conscience.

It is a Constitutionally-guaranteed and God-given right of parents to practice freedom of religion and to direct the upbringing, care, and education of their children.

## NEED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOMESCHOOLING?

### IN CALIFORNIA:

**Christian Home Educators Association of California (CHEA)**  
12672 Limonite Ave., Suite 3E, #514  
Eastvale, CA 92880  
(562) 864-2432  
[www.cheaofca.org](http://www.cheaofca.org) | [cheainfo@cheaofca.org](mailto:cheainfo@cheaofca.org)

### Family Protection Ministries (FPM)

P.O. Box 730  
Lincoln, CA 95648  
(916) 786-3523  
[www.fpmca.org](http://www.fpmca.org) | [contact@fpmca.org](mailto:contact@fpmca.org)

### NATIONALLY:

**Home School Legal Defense Association**  
P.O. Box 3000, Purcellville, Virginia 20134  
(540) 338-5600  
[www.hslda.org](http://www.hslda.org)

### National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI)

P.O. Box 13939, Salem, Oregon 97309  
(503) 364-1490  
[www.nheri.org](http://www.nheri.org) | [mail@nheri.org](mailto:mail@nheri.org)

## REFERENCES

- Cheng, Albert. (2014). Does homeschooling or private schooling promote political intolerance? Evidence from a Christian university. *Journal of School Choice: International Research and Reform*, 8(1), 49-68.
- Egalite, Anna. J. (2016). How family background influences student achievement: Can schools narrow the gap? *The Journal*, 16(2), <https://www.educationnext.org/how-family-background-influences-student-achievement/>
- Gloeckner, Gene W., & Jones, Paul. (2013). Reflections on a decade of changes in homeschooling and homeschooled into higher education. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 88(3), 309-323.
- Hamlin, Daniel. (2019) Do Homeschooled students lack opportunities to acquire cultural capital? Evidence from a nationally representative survey of American households. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 94(3), 312-327.
- Medlin, Richard G. (2013). Homeschooling and the question of socialization revisited. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 88(3), 284-297.
- Murphy, Joseph. (2014). The social and educational outcomes of homeschooling. *Sociological Spectrum: Mid-South Sociological Association*, 34(3), 244-272, DOI: 10.1080/02732173.2014.895640.
- National Education Association. (2021), Rankings of the states 2020 and estimates of school statistics 2021, [https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/2021%20Rankings\\_and\\_Estimates\\_Report.pdf](https://www.nea.org/sites/default/files/2021-04/2021%20Rankings_and_Estimates_Report.pdf)
- Ray, Brian D. (2010, February 3). Academic achievement and demographic traits of homeschool students: A nationwide study. *Academic Leadership Journal*, 8(1) <https://scholars.fhsu.edu/alj/vol8/iss1/7/>
- Ray, Brian D. (2013). Homeschooling is associated with beneficial learner and societal outcomes but educators do not promote it. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 88(3), 324-341.
- Ray, Brian D. (2017a). A review of research on Homeschooling and what might educators learn? *Pro-Posições*, 28(2), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1980-6248-2016-0009>
- Ray, Brian D. (2017b). A systematic review of the empirical research on selected aspects of homeschooling as a school choice. *Journal of School Choice: International Research and Reform*, 11(4), 604-621, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2017.1395638>
- Ray, Brian D. (2021a). An overview of the worldwide rise and expansion of home education homeschooling (chapter 1). In Rebecca English (Ed.), *Global perspectives on home education in the 21st century*. Hershey, PA: Information Science Reference (an imprint of IGI Global).
- Ray, Brian D. (2021b). How many homeschool students are there in the United States? Pre-Covid-19 and Post-Covid-19: New data, <https://www.nheri.org/how-many-homeschool-students-are-there-in-the-united-states-pre-covid-19-and-post-covid-19/>
- Ray, Brian D. (2022). Research facts on homeschooling, <https://www.nheri.org/research-facts-on-homeschooling/>
- Seiver, Jillene Grove; & Pope, Elisa A. (2022). The kids are alright II: social engagement in young adulthood as a function of k-12 schooling type, personality traits, and parental education level. *Home School Researcher*, 37(2), 1-9.
- United States Census Bureau. (2022). Quickfacts, population estimates, July 1 2021, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045221>
- United States Department of Education. (2021). Digest of Education Statistics 2019, Table 206.10 and Table 206.15, <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2021/2021009.pdf> and [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19\\_206.15.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d19/tables/dt19_206.15.asp)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian D. Ray, Ph.D., is president of the National Home Education Research Institute ([www.nheri.org](http://www.nheri.org)). He is recognized internationally for his nearly four decades of research and publishing on homeschooling. He holds a B.S. in biology and a M.S. in zoology, and his Ph.D. is in science education from Oregon State University.