

# A Primer on Homeschooling: How to Resist Centrally Planned Indoctrination

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*"I liked Prof [Professor Bernardo de la Paz]. He would teach anything. Wouldn't matter that he knew nothing about it; if pupil wanted it, he would smile and set a price, locate materials, stay a few lessons ahead. Or barely even if he found it tough – never pretended to know more than he did. Took algebra from him and by time we reached cubics I corrected his probs as often as he did mine – but he charged into each lesson gaily. I started electronics under him, soon was teaching him. So he stopped charging and we went along together until he dug up an engineer willing to daylight for extra money – whereupon we both paid new teacher and Prof tried to stick with me, thumb-fingered and slow, but happy to be stretching his mind."*

– [Manuel Garcia O'Kelly](#)

Homeschooling, simply defined, is schooling at home; in other words, it is any form of education taught outside of an institution. Parents and children who engage in homeschooling are both referred to as "homeschoolers," although this term could easily be applied to any individual who is an autodidactic polymath. Various styles of home education range from replicating a classroom setting at the kitchen table, to allowing one's personal interests to guide the curriculum's subject matter.



Statistically, how many homeschooled students are there in the United States? Under the auspices of the [National Center for Education Statistics](#) (NCES), the federal government has been tracking the prevalence of homeschooling since Y2K; in 1999, there were estimated to be [850,000 homeschooled students](#). Four years later, there were [1,096,000 homeschoolers](#), and the latest NCES report said there were [1,508,000 of them](#); this means that the national homeschooled student population has grown by 658,000 children between 1999 – 2007.

Over the course of those 8 years, there are some other relationships amongst the statistics I think are worth mentioning. According to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#), the resident population of the United States in 1999 was ~ [273,000,000 Americans](#); for 2003, the Census Bureau estimated there to be [290,809,777 people](#), and in 2007, there were [301,621,157 folks](#). What this means is that American homeschooled students comprised 0.003% of the national population in 1999, 0.004% in 2003, and 0.005% in 2007.

So, while there was a 9% increase in the total American population, the body of homeschoolers increased by 44% over the same period. Put another way, there was 1 homeschooler for every 32 Americans in 1999, yet, by 2007, the ratio between homeschoolers to all Americans had increased to 1:200. This suggests that even though the number of homeschoolers comprises a measurable portion of the American body politic, they are being vastly outpaced by overall population growth; therefore, homeschoolers would qualify as a statistical minority.

Constitutionally, is there an enumerated power delegated to any American government to [tax, ban, or regulate](#) homeschooling? There is no such clause in the 1787 federal Constitution, so this means that the [Tenth Amendment](#) comes into play, which tells us that the next legal document to check would be one of the 50 state constitutions. According to [Article VII § 1](#) of the 1876 Texas Constitution:

*“A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools.”*

Most of the rest of Article VII details how these “free” schools are to be funded by taxpayers, yet, its purview is restricted to these public schools. Much like the federal Constitution, the Texas Constitution is equally silent about the government having an enumerated power to control homeschooling in any way.

Statutorily, have there been attempts by the Texas legislature in using its Article VII delegated powers to infringe upon homeschooling? According to the Texas Education Code, there are truancy laws; compulsory attendance is located at [§§ 25.085\(a\), 25.086\(a\)\(1\), and 25.094\(a\) & \(e\)](#), which say, respectively, that:

*“A child who is required to attend school under this section shall attend school each school day for the entire period the program of instruction is provided.”*

*“A child is exempt from the requirements of compulsory school attendance if the child... attends a private or parochial school that includes in its course a study of good citizenship...”*

*“An individual commits an offense if the individual: is 12 years of age or older and younger than 18 years of age; is required to attend school under Section 25.085; and fails to attend school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.”*

*“An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor.”*

According to [Texas Penal Code § 12.23](#), a Class C misdemeanor is punishable up to a maximum fine of

\$500. Even though there has been no delegated power to the Texas legislature to infringe upon homeschooling, their statutory exemptions for compulsory attendance do not specifically mention homeschoolers, but only those students attending a private or parochial school as being particularly exempt from the compulsory attendance law.

Judicially, was homeschooling upheld as an exercise of parental rights? The [Texas Education Agency](#) (TEA) prosecuted many homeschoolers during the 1980s because they claimed that these children were truants. Gary Leeper and other homeschooling families retaliated with a class action lawsuit against the TEA, which they won; TEA's two different appeals in the early 1990s were subsequently denied. [Judge Nathan Hecht](#) wrote the opinion of the Texas Supreme Court in the case of [Texas Education Agency, et. al. v. Gary Leeper, et. al.](#), No-D2022 (1994), where he said that:

*“At the beginning of this century the public school system of Texas was not well developed. No more than ten percent of school-age children attended public schools, according to the uncontradicted evidence at trial, as there were few private and parochial schools in the State, many children were taught at home...[e]nactment of the compulsory attendance law in 1915 did not end home schooling; some children continued to be educated at home just as they had before...the State never attempted to prohibit or even restrict home schooling, or to allege a violation of the compulsory attendance law based solely on a child's being taught at home, until 1981. ”*

Right there, homeschooling is admitted to being the norm during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Texas. Not only that, but there was a 66 year gap between the enactment of the compulsory attendance law, and its **enforcement** by the TEA. The crux of the entire matter, it would seem, was when Judge Hecht mentioned that:

*“Not **every** statement by an [administrative agency](#) is a rule for which the APA [Administrative Procedures Act] prescribes procedures for adoption and for judicial review. As noted above, the APA applies only to statements of general applicability that implement, interpret or prescribe law or policy. The 1986 resolution was not such a statement...[i]n these circumstances, defendants' argument that the 1986 resolution constitutes a rule is plainly incorrect.”*

In other words, the TEA's assistant general counsel **presumed wrongly** that because the compulsory attendance law did not specifically exempt homeschoolers, or otherwise define them as attending a type of private or parochial school, then therefore homeschooling had been outlawed, by default.

Thankfully, the homeschoolers defeated TEA through [civil litigation](#), but they shouldn't have had to in the first place. Homeschooling was never outlawed in Texas, so for TEA to exploit a loophole due to poor grammar and ill-defined terms by the legislature is just unconscionable. As [Murray Rothbard wrote back in](#)

1971:

*“Obviously, the worse injustice is the prevention of parental teaching of their own children. Parental instruction conforms to the ideal arrangement. It is, first of all, individualized instruction, the teacher dealing directly with the unique child, and addressing himself to his capabilities and interests. Second, what people can know the aptitudes and personality of the child better than his own parents? The parents’ daily familiarity with, and love for, their children, renders them uniquely qualified to give the child the formal instruction necessary. Here the child receives individual attention for his own personality. No one is as qualified as the parent to know how much or at what pace he should teach the child, what the child’s requirements are for freedom or guidance, etc...**the State has been warring with parents for control over their children.**” [emphasis added]*

If Rothbard’s observation here is correct, then wouldn’t the TEA’s frivolously litigious behavior be a *fait accompli* of “public schooling” itself? [Government monopolies hate competition](#), so why anyone assume that “public education” could be anything other than incessantly politicized, because the [teachers’ unions feel systemically threatened](#) by the privatization of education, especially through homeschooling?

As a result of the *Leeper* cases, as well as similar legal actions over the past two decades, organizations such as the [Home School Legal Defense Association](#) (HSLDA) and the [Texas Home School Coalition](#) (THSC) have arisen in order to preserve the liberty of parents to teach their children at home. Although I [am a firm opponent of reformism](#), even I will admit, that HSLDA and THSC both have done some good work in shrinking the power of government regarding this single-issue topic; at the very least, they have kept [the State](#) at bay thus far, primarily by keeping parents out of jail and their children out of foster care. HSLDA uniquely provided not only a [legal memorandum on homeschooling in Texas](#), but also a [national color-coded map](#) that briefly describes the level of government regulation upon homeschooling by the several States of the Union.

Financially, how much does homeschooling cost, relative to the cost of government schooling? [According to the Census Bureau](#), the national average for current public school spending per pupil was \$10,705 for FY 2013, and Texas’ spending per pupil was \$8,299 that same year. While there is certainly variability in [how the cost might be calculated](#), private sector estimates range from an annual cost of **\$2,030 – \$3,200 for all children within a family**. Of course, the price of something is not just in terms of textbooks and supplies, but also the [opportunity costs](#) involved. Consider the time and effort spent on [Parent-Teacher Association](#) meetings, [lobbying the school board](#), and [fruitlessly debating](#) with your publicly schooled child at the dinner table about whatever nonsense they were indoctrinated with that day.

Realistically, [how does one get started in homeschooling](#)? Ideally, you’d never sent your toddler to kindergarten in the first place, so you’d be able to gradually transition your child towards learning actual ideas; however, if your child is already in a government school, you’ll need to **withdraw** them from it. Much like [cancelling your voter registration](#), at least in Texas, [withdrawing from public school](#) is as simple as [writing a letter](#) to the principal of the school where your child is enrolled, informing him of your intent to engage in homeschooling. Should you receive a letter back expressing concern about the withdrawal, then send the bureaucrat a [letter of assurance](#) that you are in compliance with the case precedent set in *Leeper*.

The next thing you'll have to do is for you and your child to habituate to a new routine. While the initial benefits of being able to sleep in, remain in your pajamas into the afternoon, and eat whatever is in the kitchen are appealing, it is crucial to maintain good discipline for the long haul. How exactly to go about doing so is beyond the scope of this primer, but suffice it to say that in order to remain motivated and on task, a certain amount of give and take is to be expected, and to greater or lesser degrees, depending on whichever [style of homeschooling](#) you decide to use.

[Choosing a curriculum](#) is crucial, and unless you are pursuing [unschooling](#), you must fulfill [government requirements for educational content](#). Again, your homeschooling style will initially gauge how difficult this is going to be for you; generally speaking, traditional and [classical](#) styles are easier to select curriculum for, yet, the unit studies and [Charlotte Mason](#) styles are usually considered more enjoyable. In many ways, decisions about choosing a curriculum gets more into the realm of personal choice, rather than anything else.

Don't underestimate the value of distance learning and public domain books. [FreeWorldU](#), [K<sup>12</sup>](#), [edX](#), and the [KHAN Academy](#) are but just a few of the distance learning options available to homeschoolers. The National Academies Press has [5,638 books you can download for free](#), and [Miss Maggie](#) discovered that she was able to download and cheaply print nearly all of the books she needed to homeschool her children from [Project Gutenberg](#).

After you've gotten your feet wet, [it's time to expand your options](#). If it turns out there are subjects you are not skilled at teaching or would prefer someone else to teach it, then consider hiring a freelance homeschooling tutor. Usually these entrepreneurs are sought for their specialization, typically in mathematics or a foreign language, and their going rates become more affordable if you can hire them in tandem with a homeschooling co-op. Even without these specialists, homeschooling co-ops are a form of [mutual aid](#), where homeschooling parents can barter goods, services, and favors with each other for their own individual advantage.

There are also side benefits to homeschooling, which are seldom mentioned. Direct control over your child's food is imperative for parents who are concerned about [genetically modified organisms](#), or even just good ol' fashioned nutrition. According to [Texas Government Code § 62.106\(a\)\(2\)](#), homeschooling parents enjoy a [jury duty](#) exemption, but for only as long as the child remains younger than 12 years old. Best of all, there is no opportunity for the government to incentivize your children to [snitch on you](#) through indoctrination programs, such as [D.A.R.E.](#)

Alternative media content about homeschooling can both inform and motivate you and your children in pursuing free market education. Newsletters and magazines such as [Home Education Magazine](#), [THSC Review](#), [Practical Homeschooling Magazine](#), and the former [Growing Without Schooling](#) are but just some of the options for up to date information about homeschooling topics. Video tutorials and lessons from websites such as [Free Econ Help](#), [Learn Liberty](#), and the [Mises Academy](#) gives you an idea for how powerful [the Internet](#), as an educational tool, can actually be.

Support work and advocacy on behalf of homeschoolers is the best way for both former and non-homeschoolers to push back against centrally planned indoctrination. [Workshops](#), [ad hoc scholarships](#), and just plain encouragement can make the difference between a child remaining homeschooled, or being returned to a government school. A [freedom holiday](#) celebrating a "Homeschooling Day" might provide an opportunity for neighbors to stage a local freedom festival. Advocating for the further [deregulation](#) of homeschooling, as well as the [abolition](#) of all truancy laws, are noticeable milestones towards [the separation of school and state](#).

Whatever nexus might exist between homeschooling and "[peaceful parenting](#)" is rather moot, because homeschooling is already inherently peaceful. I suspect the adherents of "peaceful parenting," because of



[inconclusive neurological studies](#), intrinsically view parents as villains who must be rehabilitated, through their anti-spanking diatribes. Unlike “peaceful parenting,” homeschooling has not only borne its burden of proof regarding its efficacy, but it also engenders a can-do, optimistic attitude that is the complete opposite of the [victim mentality](#).

I would like to offer a word of warning here. Not everyone is suitable for homeschooling. There are children who already don’t respect their parents, there are parents who already treat their children worse than pets, and homeschooling, for those families, would only exacerbate such a disconcerting situation. Even if the working relationships are good, children, as they grow older, might benefit from a change in homeschooling style, such as less structure in the curriculum as they mature, or they may even opt to return to government schooling.

Despite [Charlotte Iserbyt’s incoherent rambling](#), I do think apprenticeships are crucial, especially for homeschoolers. Besides directly contradicting [John Gatto](#), Iserbyt thinks that homeschoolers who get apprenticeships are *somehow* falling for some conspiratorial Marxist plot. Not only do employers and clients care more about your work experience and competency in your chosen field over that of your coursework, but the skills learned on the job can seldom be replicated anywhere else. The apprenticeship system built this country from *nothing*; just ask [Ben Franklin](#). Homeschoolers should be *less* focused on getting [admitted into college](#), and *more* focused on getting some actual work experience.

Over the years, the political implications of homeschooling, beyond irritating the education bureaucrats, have been mentioned publicly from time to time. George Carlin remarked during [his last HBO comedy special in 2008](#):

*“But I’ll tell ya what they don’t want. They don’t want a population of citizens capable of critical thinking; they don’t want well-informed, well-educated people capable of critical thinking. They’re not interested in that, that doesn’t help them, that’s against their interests, that’s right. They don’t want people who are smart enough to sit around a kitchen table to figure out how badly they are getting fucked by a system that threw them overboard 30 fucking years ago. They don’t want that.”*

People using critical thinking around the kitchen table and then discovering the authoritarians surrounding them; that doesn’t sound like homeschoolers at all, does it? If you’re still incredulous, then consider the fact that none other than [Vicki Weaver homeschooled her children](#) before she was murdered by [Lon Horiuchi](#) back in 1993. Claire Wolfe has written about not only [the connection between homeschooling and individual liberty](#), but also the fact that homeschooling is one of the relatively few methods that has [solidly proven its efficacy](#) in terms of restoring liberty.

Education is *not* the answer to tyranny, yet, it is the critical starting point for discovering such answers. Homeschoolers, more so than even their private school counterparts, are already predisposed to [homesteading](#) and the true independence of spirit that comes along with it. Depoliticizing education *requires* privatization, and the most [frugal](#) and effective way to do just that, is through homeschooling.