

Newsletter

Homeschooling since 1984

wpa@homeschooling-wpa.org • www.homeschooling-wpa.org

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The Future Must Be Unity

Reflections from the WHPA President

The homeschooling environment continues to change. In the past, families intentionally chose homeschooling as a means to move towards a way of life and embrace an educational philosophy that best suited their families. Today, many families choose homeschooling because they want or need to move away from what their children are experiencing in traditional institutional schools, including choosing homeschooling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead of choosing homeschooling as a lifestyle for their family, many people now choosing homeschooling are feeling pressured to escape from mainstream education, and in some cases, homeschooling is used as a short-term solution. This shift from "move towards" to "move away from" has drastically altered the landscape of homeschooling from a unified constituency to a disparate and disjointed conglomeration of people, some of whom really don't want to be there.

Another factor in the changing homeschool environment is that homeschoolers have become a lucrative and growing market. Entities ranging from national companies, speakers, and consultants to local "experts" provide consulting services, information, curriculum, or classes to families who fear they may not be able to adequately cover these materials themselves. This only adds to the confusion of what is legal under Wisconsin's current homeschooling laws. Because homeschooling laws vary from state to state, some programs and services being sold may be legal in some states, but are not in others. This causes confusion both for homeschoolers and legislators as the programs and services gain popularity.



Adding more layers to the confusion and division amongst homeschoolers is the environment of instant communication. Instead of researching homeschooling and reading the statutes for themselves, families often ask a question on a social media platform, receiving answers that contradict each other and are often incomplete, inaccurate, or incorrect. Misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation spread quickly and are incredibly divisive to homeschoolers in Wisconsin, and are some of the biggest threats to homeschooling freedom, since legislators, the media, school officials, and the general public may not be familiar with

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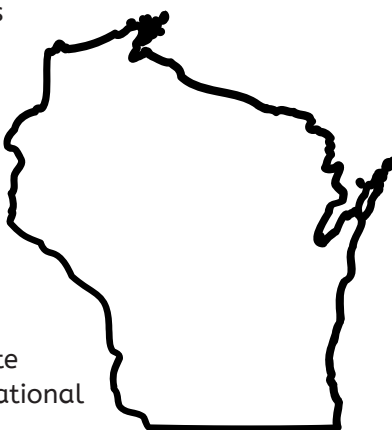
The Future Must Be Unity (con't)

(continued from page 1)

Wisconsin's homeschooling law, the history of Wisconsin's homeschooling law, the facts, or where to find accurate information.

These are some of the reasons that homeschoolers in Wisconsin are finding themselves divided. When the homeschooling law was passed in 1984, in order to be successful, homeschoolers had to come together in unity, focus on their common goals, take full ownership and responsibility for their own homeschool, and ensure that the decisions they made did not negatively impact other homeschoolers. Today, some homeschoolers are focusing more on what works for their family only, or focusing on solutions for short-term problems, often losing sight of the bigger picture: how what they want or the action they take may affect homeschooling families all over the state for years to come.

WHPA has faced many challenges to the unity that made passing the homeschooling law here in Wisconsin possible, from the option to take two public school classes, to legislation that allows school district oversight of homeschoolers who choose to participate in sports and/or extracurricular activities at the public schools. Now we face legislators at both the state and federal level wanting to "help homeschoolers" by offering taxpayer-funded benefits and other favors. We have groups that blur the lines between private schools (providing an educational program to multiple families) and home-based private educational programs (providing an educational program to one family). We have people (some with the best of intentions) spreading information that is not accurate. Finally, we have people that believe that homeschoolers should receive public monies to fund and support their private programs.



For almost 40 years WHPA has helped homeschoolers come together to look at the big picture and fight for the rights of all parents to choose an education for their children according to their own principals and beliefs.

The following WHPA (then WPA) resolution, passed in April 1990 is, in many ways, even more important now in 2021. As homeschooling continues to become more mainstream, it becomes far more likely that if we allow ourselves to be divided, we will end up facing more regulation and oversight, which may work well for a few, but will absolutely restrict the rights and freedoms of many.

WPA Resolution #9: Unity Among Home Schoolers*

Whereas home schoolers come from all walks of life; they home school for a number of different reasons; and they use a variety of curriculums and approaches to education; however, they all have one thing in common, namely, their determination to preserve the right

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WHPA Member Families by County

3 Adams	3 Marinette
2 Ashland	4 Marquette
7 Barron	83 Milwaukee
4 Bayfield	8 Monroe
45 Brown	4 Oconto
2 Buffalo	6 Oneida
2 Burnett	20 Outagamie
1 Calumet	25 Ozaukee
5 Chippewa	6 Pierce
3 Clark	7 Polk
17 Columbia	11 Portage
1 Crawford	2 Price
95 Dane	20 Racine
14 Dodge	5 Richland
3 Door	12 Rock
3 Douglas	3 Rusk
5 Dunn	1 Saint Croix
18 Eau Claire	19 Sauk
14 Fond du Lac	8 Shawano
5 Grant	15 Sheboygan
6 Green	12 St. Croix
1 Green Lake	1 Taylor
4 Iowa	5 Trempealeau
1 Jackson	6 Vernon
15 Jefferson	4 Vilas
6 Juneau	6 Walworth
19 Kenosha	2 Washburn
4 Kewaunee	30 Washington
10 La Crosse	74 Waukesha
5 Lafayette	12 Waupaca
2 Langlade	2 Waushara
3 Lincoln	27 Winnebago
11 Manitowoc	11 Wood
22 Marathon	

WHPA Board of Directors

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Rebecca Ahl,
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Colleen Manning,
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Michelle Holmquist,
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QAC Corner: FAQs about Kindergarten

The WHPA Question Answering Committee is ready to answer all types of questions about homeschooling, including these questions we often receive about kindergarten:

If we do not send our child to kindergarten, and then decide to have them go to school for first grade, what do we do, since the law says that kindergarten is required for attending first grade?

A law passed in 2009 (2009 WI Act 41) requires children who attend a public school for first grade to have completed a kindergarten program. The legislation also requires that each school board, "shall establish procedures, conditions, and standards for exempting a child from the requirement that the child complete kindergarten as a prerequisite to enrollment in the first grade." If you are planning to send your child to public school for first grade, contact your local school district for details. If you are planning to continue homeschooling, completing a kindergarten program is not a requirement for entry in a public school for any subsequent grade.

What will the school district require to exempt us from the kindergarten prerequisite for first grade?


Since each district establishes their own policy for the exemption, you will need to check your district's policy.

My child turned 6 in July, so I need to file the PI-1206 Homeschool Report for the first time this year. I looked at the form and we will be doing kindergarten work with them, but there is no kindergarten option on the form--only 1st through 12th grade or ungraded. What do we check?

Compulsory Attendance in Wisconsin is for ages 6-18, so, kindergarten is not an option on the PI-1206 because kindergarten is not actually compulsory. However, you are correct that a 6 year-old needs to be included on the form in the year they turned 6 before September 1. You should feel free to use a kindergarten curriculum with your child, but on the PI-1206 form, you will have to choose 1st grade or Ungraded.

Do I have to sign my child up with PI-1206 if we are going to homeschool for 3K or 4K?

Compulsory attendance in Wisconsin is required from ages 6 through 18. So, if you are homeschooling, you must file the PI-1206 the year that your child turns 6 by September 1st. You should not file for a child who is younger, but you are certainly free to teach your own child at home.

The WHPA Kindergarten FAQs page has more information: www.homeschooling-wpa.org/faqs/kindergarten/ 



Congratulations!

Congratulations from WHPA to the following recipients of the \$10,000 Kohl Student Excellence Scholarship in 2021: **Caleb Peterson** (Barron), **Kailyn Walukas** (Eau Claire), and **Hannah Loew** (Boulder Junction). Hannah and her family are WHPA members.



Best wishes to these shining examples of homeschooling in Wisconsin! Each of them

demonstrated excellence and love of learning during their high school years.

The final recipients were announced on February 25, 2021. Kohl Student Excellence Scholarships are awarded to 100 Wisconsin high school seniors each year. Homeschooling students receive a proportionate number of the total scholarships awarded. WHPA is honored to work with the Kohl Foundation to evaluate the homeschool student

applications, and we applaud the Foundation for its support of homeschoolers.

The Herb Kohl Foundation opens the scholarship application process each year in September. To learn more about applying for a scholarship, please see the WHPA Scholarships page at www.homeschooling-wpa.org and the Kohl Student Excellence Scholarship pages at www.kohleducation.org/studentexcellence/. 

Legislative Watch Update

2021 brings a new legislative session, both at the state and federal levels. If you have not already done so, WHPA encourages you to contact your state representative and senator, as well as your federal representative and senator, to let them know that you are their constituent and a homeschooler, that Wisconsin's homeschooling law works well, and ask them not to change our reasonable law by offering taxpayer-funded benefits or other favors.

Governor Evers has released his biennium budget, SB111 and AB68. There is currently nothing in the budget that would affect our homeschooling law. WHPA's Legislative Watch Committee is monitoring the process as the Legislature debates and amends these bills, and if anything is added that will affect our homeschooling law, WHPA will send out action items.

Representatives Sortwell and Thiesfeldt, along with Senator Nass, have introduced AB122 and SB201, which propose creating a new class of private schools, called "microschools," which are almost identical in definition and are identical in regulation to home-based private educational programs. At this time, the proposed legislation does not directly affect homeschool law. We have contacted these legislators to express our concerns, and have also reached out to the members of the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate Education Committees. We continue to monitor this legislation, and will issue a call to action if necessary and appropriate. For more details and analysis about this legislation, please see "Update on AB 122 / SB201" below. 🏠

Update on AB 122 / SB 201 "The Creation of Microschools in Wisconsin"

WHPA issued an analysis and an Action Alert for 2021 AB 122 / SB 201 in March. If you have not yet read this important analysis and Alert, you can find them on our website under News > Current Events.

I. What happened at the public hearing

On March 18, the Assembly Committee on Education held a public hearing on AB 122, at which Representative Shae Sortwell introduced his "microschools" bill to the committee. Mike Michaelson, speaking for Senator Stephen Nass, who is the only current senate co-sponsor, added his testimony. A few questions were addressed to these two speakers before the floor was opened to public testimony.

Two mothers of children enrolled in public school testified about their dissatisfaction with how their local public school has operated during the COVID pandemic. Neither are currently homeschooling under Wisconsin law.

Next, Rebecca Ahl offered her personal testimony against AB 122. Ahl sits on the WHPA Board of Directors and serves on WHPA's Legislative Watch Committee. She raised serious legal concerns that "microschools" will weaken our current

homeschooling law, undermine parental rights, and create a dangerous legal quagmire for Wisconsin parents. She cited several examples of the confusion that has already been created by these bills. Several committee members asked questions of Ahl. She explained the legal history of Wisconsin's reasonable homeschooling law, and why the legal distinction between homeschools and private schools is fundamental to both those institutions. The important legal issues she raised remained unanswered by the bill's sponsors.

One person with homeschool experience testified in support of the bill. She runs informational websites for homeschoolers, and also offers homeschooling related services for profit through several venues. She testified that she is a strong homeschool advocate and does not want anything about our current homeschooling law to change. However, she also said she believes "microschools" address what she believes is a "gap" in current educational choices in Wisconsin. She also testified that she knows parents who are already effectively running illegal private schools, under the guise of legitimate homeschooling,

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Member Submission: Staying Active During a Pandemic

Cate Olson, homeschool mom

We are officially a full calendar year into pandemic life, and all of us have grown accustomed to new buzz words: social distancing, mask wearing, hand washing for 20 seconds. What this boils down to on a personal level as a homeschool mom is there seems to be a big giant “closed” sign painted across the sky in giant, neon letters. (I swear! I can almost see it.)

This has been a challenge for many homeschooling families. We may not be struggling to reinvent a classroom experience at home via a computer screen as many of our traditionally-schooled friends are, but my guess is your homeschool activities have changed and you too are figuring out how to adapt when your favorite enrichment activity is either not happening or your comfort levels don't allow you to attend.

As homeschoolers though, we are as we ever are, agents of our own circumstances. When the world throws us lemons, we make lemonade. This is as it has always been. Look up “resourceful” in the dictionary and I think it actually reads “see: homeschooler.”

Last March, when the world first shut down, Wisconsin state parks closed with the world. I confess to grumbling about this more than my fair share (my husband

kindly asked me to never mention state parks to him as long as we both shall live), but my family didn't just not go hiking as a consequence. Instead we found privately owned or county and city hiking trails to use. As a result, we found new favorite spots that we likely would not have discovered had the state parks been open to us. My family logged over seventy miles on foot in April alone and have some new favorite spots to boot.

By May I really missed seeing people regularly and so my friends and I took turns hosting small, backyard parties. In the past, I would have been so tight on time running my kids hither and yon that I would not have even considered getting to the chosen night's watering hole on foot. But this year? I dusted off my bike and logged over twenty miles a month throughout the summer just getting to friends' backyards in order to socialize. My kids did the same.

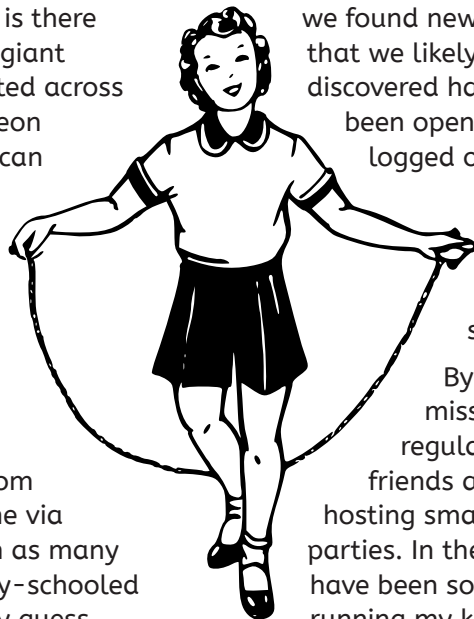
Heading into the fall of 2020 I knew that, no matter what happened in the world around us, I didn't want my family to stop being as active as we had become. And, so, exercise journals became a part of our homeschool. My two students were free to create their own exercise regimens and summarize the event once completed. There were no restrictions except that

the exercise had to be free and, at least sometimes, out of doors. My teen, to avoid the horrors of running, really plumbed the depths of exercise ingenuity. (She says skipping is very aerobic.) My guess is your kids can too.

It was five degrees last week when my youngest threw foot warmers into her ice skates and went over to a local community park and skated for over an hour. My oldest took up skiing this winter. Building snow forts can be a vigorous family activity.

The pandemic has really highlighted skills that have always been attributes of homeschoolers. As a rule, we are the most ingenious, creative, and imaginative group of people I know.

How can you and your family stay active while the world around us closes? Use that homeschooler resourcefulness! With that and appropriate apparel anyone can stay active in the confines of a pandemic, and for little to no cost at all. 🏠



Introducing the New Checking Sources Tool!

Homeschooling is no different from any other topic you can Google: there is a lot of information out there, and only some of it is reliable.

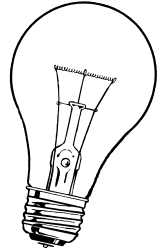
Homeschoolers have become a lucrative market. Answers can be obtained quickly online, especially on social media. But how do you know if any of it is accurate? Where do you even begin to “fact

check” any of it?

WHPA is pleased to introduce our **Checking Sources** tool! This tool gives tips, advice, questions to ask yourself, and things to check for when doing research, such as evaluating sources, angles, and things to beware of. Use this tool to help you determine what is accurate and what is misinformation, disinformation,

or malinformation, and to avoid pitfalls which might land you outside of our very reasonable homeschooling law.

Check it out on our website under FAQs > Checking Sources and share it with your homeschooling friends! 🏠



How Questions About School Enrollment Affect Parental Rights

This article originally appeared in Issue #121 of the WHPA Newsletter (Aug 2014). It has been updated for clarity.

The extent to which we maintain our parental rights and responsibilities depends on how we think, act, and react, especially when dealing with public officials, including school officials.

The question of whether your child is officially enrolled in a public or conventional private school provides a good example of how we can think, act, and react. To maintain our rights, we can and should understand and make clear to others that “officially enrolled” means we have formally registered our child for the coming school year and/or sent our child to school when it opened in the fall.

School districts increasingly want to claim that a child is “enrolled” until the child is formally withdrawn, which requires that a parent or guardian sign an official withdrawal form. But such claims assume that the *school* rather than the *parent* has control over a child during the summer and, more importantly, that the public school is where the child should be during public school hours unless the child is formally withdrawn. However, the compulsory attendance law states only that a parent or guardian shall cause a child to attend school. It is up to the parent or guardian to decide which school the child attends and to ensure attendance. The legal requirements and penalties have to do with whether a child is

attending a school, not whether a child has been formally withdrawn from a school.

Families who begin homeschooling at the beginning of the school year are not required to formally withdraw their child from their public school. You may choose, but are not required, to provide notice to the school **as a courtesy**. If you choose to provide notice of the intent to homeschool, that notice is sufficient under the law for the school to remove your child from attendance, until October 15. After you file the PI-1206 Homeschool Report between the third Friday in September and October 15, the school will receive timely notice of your child’s enrollment in your homeschool from the Department of Public Instruction.

Homeschoolers often begin homeschooling in the middle of the school year. Filing the PI-1206 Homeschool Report before beginning to homeschool is all that is necessary. This acknowledges that the parent is responsible for their child in accordance with the statutes and does not require that parents sign a withdrawal form.

Please inform WHPA if your local school officials claim your child is officially enrolled simply because they attended a public school last year or if they insist that you sign an official withdrawal form before beginning homeschooling. 🏠

Insights from The Handbook: Why Homeschooling Works

Homeschooling in Wisconsin: At Home With Learning, 7th edition, pg. 133-135

In 1985, Wisconsin Parents Association (now Wisconsin Homeschool Parents Association) published the first edition (of many) of "the handbook," a groundbreaking collection of essays and information about homeschooling law and practice in Wisconsin. Although the handbook is no longer in print, we routinely cover important topics from the handbook in these "Insights From the Handbook" features.

Experienced homeschoolers know that homeschooling works. But conventional schooling plays such a prominent role in the lives of the vast majority of children that many people assume such schooling is essential and are surprised to hear that homeschooling works. Let's consider some reasons why it works. This list is only a beginning, the tip of the iceberg. Readers are encouraged to add to it.

The richness and diversity of approaches to learning and living that are available to homeschoolers allow them to try different approaches, to find what works and what doesn't, and to discover or create ways of homeschooling that work for them. There is no one right or best way to homeschool. Each family has to decide for itself which approaches to learning and living work well for the individuals in their family and for their family as a whole, in light of the circumstances in which they live.

Most families use a variety of different approaches, depending on the children's ages and other circumstances, making changes as children's (and parents') ages, interests, needs, and skills change.

The flexibility of homeschooling is also one of the main reasons homeschooling should not be unnecessarily regulated by the state. Such regulation would diminish the freedom and flexibility that are essential parts of homeschooling as an approach to education that works well.

Homeschooling offers many different ways of learning. Children learn from reading books, hands-on experience, talking with other people, technology, and in other ways. Children can move around as they are learning, which makes it easier for some children to process information. Children can concentrate on something they find particularly fascinating for several hours or longer. This flexibility means that children who had (or would probably have) difficulty learning in a conventional school setting often do very well at home. If our society is really committed to meeting the needs of all children and helping each child become educated, homeschools are a critical part of the alternatives that should be available so families can choose an approach to education that works for each child.

Homeschooling works because it is based on one of the

most highly respected and recommended approaches to learning: tutorial or one-on-one learning. This allows children to work at their own pace, moving rapidly ahead when they are ready, taking time when they need or want to, and setting things aside until later if they're not ready to handle them yet. Children have a chance to discover what interests them and to pursue their special interests.

Homeschooling works because it gives people opportunities to discover things for themselves and to understand why things work. People usually remember what they understand, especially if they have discovered it themselves, because it makes sense. There is much less need to memorize isolated facts that may be hard to remember because they don't make sense.

Homeschooling works because children learn how to learn. No one can learn everything. But people who learn how to learn can learn what they need to know at any age. It's a matter of recognizing that you don't know something, being willing to admit it, and then finding out by figuring it out yourself, asking someone, looking in the library

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Milestones Flashback: 2001

When it comes to homeschooling in Wisconsin, we all are where we are today because of the tireless work of the volunteers who came before us. Working together through WHPA (formerly WPA), homeschoolers in Wisconsin have reclaimed and maintained basic freedoms in education and family life since 1984. Here's a flashback to some of the issues and efforts of twenty years ago:

WHPA Major Milestones: 2001

RESOLUTION: 36. WPA Opposes Standardized Testing Required by the Federal or State Government

RESOLUTION: 37. Homeschools Defined by Law as One Family Unit


Fifth edition of handbook published.

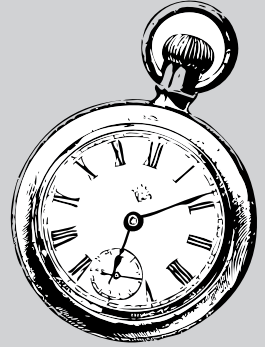
WPA clarifies statute on "more than one family unit."

WPA works to increase funding for library systems.

WPA presents testimony against state funding for full-day four-year-old kindergarten.

WPA alerts members to problems with virtual charter schools.

Learn more about the last 37 years of homeschooling in Wisconsin and read the full text of all WPA's resolutions on the About section of our website. 



The Future Must Be Unity (con't)

(continued from page 2)

to choose for their children an education consistent with their beliefs and principles; and

Whereas the Wisconsin statutes defining private schools (including home schools) resulted from the hard work of the full range of home schoolers and people involved in other small private schools in this state; and

Whereas home schoolers have organized themselves as Wisconsin Parents Association (WPA) to watch and protect their parental rights in education, especially home schooling rights and responsibilities; and

Whereas WPA has steadfastly refused to take any position on approaches to education, religion, moral values, and has fought for the rights of its members and others to make their own decisions in these matters; and

Whereas it is not necessary for home schoolers to agree on educational approaches or religious and moral beliefs and principles in order to work together to secure and preserve the rights and freedoms all home schoolers need in order to make choices; and

Whereas home schoolers are a small minority and are opposed by powerful political interest groups


and organizations; and

Whereas Wisconsin has a reasonable home schooling law; and

Whereas the unity of home schoolers on home schooling legislative issues has earned home schoolers respect in the Wisconsin Legislature and has worked to prevent unnecessary regulation of home schoolers; and

Whereas WPA is a grassroots organization which relies on the strength of its own local members rather than "experts," especially out-of-state experts who become involved in state legislative matters;

Be it resolved by members of Wisconsin Parents Association (WPA) that WPA affirms its goal of assuring reasonable home schooling laws by working together as a united group that is open to all home schoolers; and

Be it further resolved that WPA opposes any state or national efforts that would split home schoolers into factions and thus weaken the ability of home schoolers to ensure reasonable home schooling laws. 

**The terms homeschooling and homeschoolers were originally two words.*

Preserving Our Freedoms

Since 1984, WHPA's work has been based on Ten Principles. These principles are things all Wisconsin homeschoolers can do to maintain our freedoms.

They require understanding and a strong commitment, but except in the time of a crisis, they do not require much time or money. They provide important learning opportunities for us and our children. And they help us discover how to maintain freedoms in other areas of our lives as well.



WHPA's seventh principle cautions us against pursuing new homeschooling legislation for a number of vital reasons.

"7. Do not push for new homeschooling legislation. Small minorities generally have difficulty getting legislation passed. Also, legislation can be changed so much through amendments, as well as produce unintended results, that it may end up working against those who introduced it."

Indeed, small minorities generally have difficulty getting legislation passed. In addition, once a bill has been introduced, it is very difficult to control. It can be changed so much through amendments that it actually ends up working against the parties that introduced it rather than in their favor. For example, Wisconsin's very reasonable homeschooling law resulted from legislation that was introduced by opponents of homeschooling and then changed through amendments so it ended up supporting homeschooling. It is easier for a small minority like homeschoolers to gain support from non-homeschoolers when we are a beleaguered minority being put upon by a large interest group like a teachers union, than to find support for legislation we initiated ourselves. This is why we would be unlikely to succeed in getting favorable homeschooling legislation passed if we initiated it, even though we were successful in turning harmful legislation around in 1984. In addition, since we have one of the best laws in the country, we simply don't need additional legislation.

You can learn more and read all of WHPA's Ten Principles in the About section of our website. 🏠

Who Is In Your Village?

A Wisconsin Homeschool Parent

Under Wisconsin law, homeschoolers may designate any person they wish to provide instruction to their own children (one family unit) as part of their homeschool program. (Wis. Stat. 115.001(3)(g)). Of course, that can mean hiring someone for one-on-one piano lessons or academic tutoring. But that's almost never been the case for our family. Instead, choosing to educate our children our own way has meant paying attention to the many teachers who are already in our lives, as well as seeking out teachers where we may not have looked before. Here are some examples of "guest teachers" who have supported our family's education over the years:

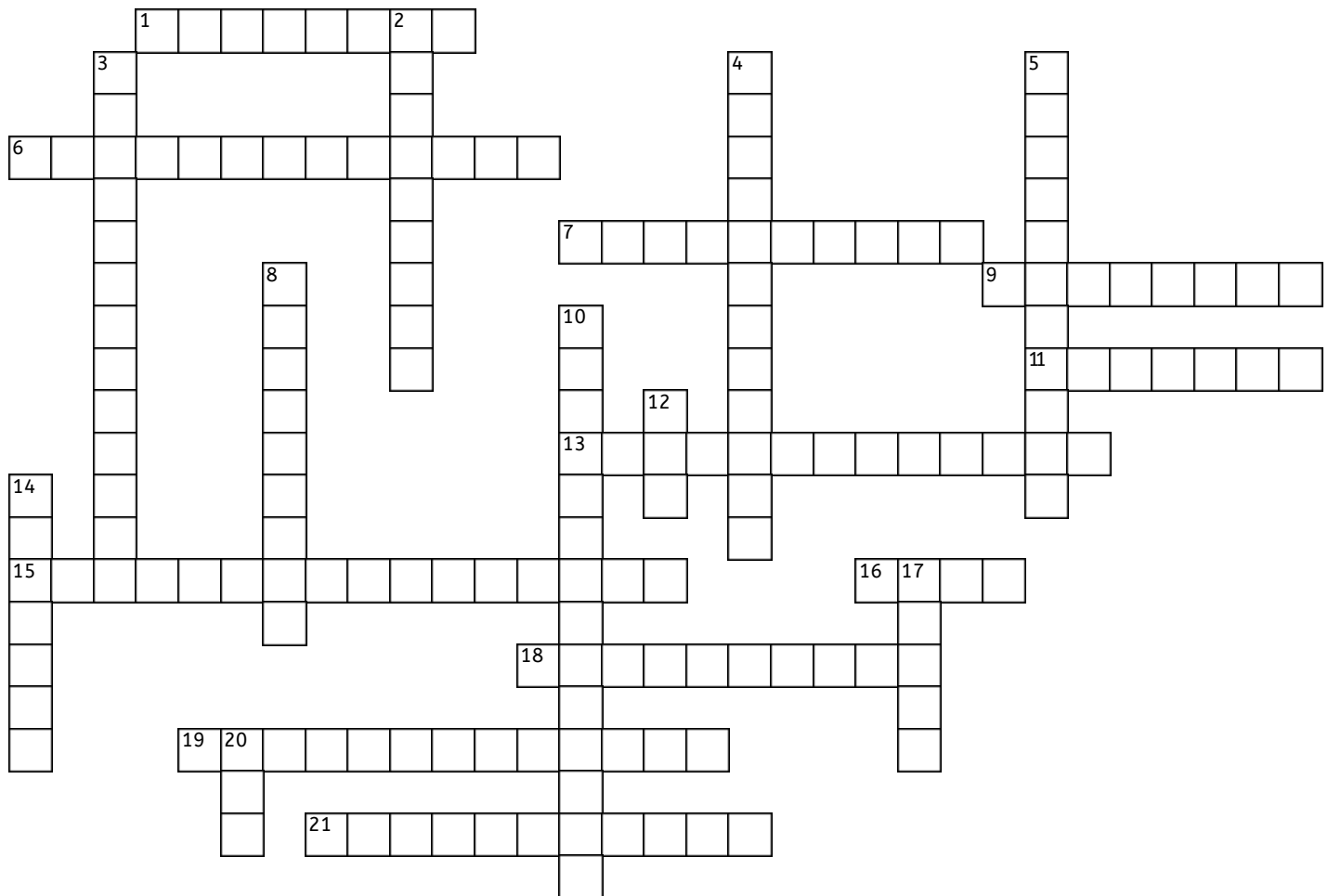
Nana and Grampa: Of course, they were always willing to share a read-aloud, and often to play long, imaginative games of pretend play like store, house, and veterinarian. But some special experiences with each of them were important parts of our home instruction. Nana was often game for an outing to a museum or an outside event like picking apples, or visiting a farm or the zoo. She was - and still is - a patient co-chef. Grampa, who was once an avionics engineer in the Navy, spent many happy hours with the kids taking apart broken electronics and appliances, sharing tools, and sometimes finding new uses for the parts. He also loved to explore outdoors, and spent many afternoons with his grandchildren, reading the maps and trail signs in state and county parks.



Our neighbor who has a shop: Not only have our families relied on each other as good neighbors and friends, but the kids have been

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Homeschooling in Wisconsin Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Homeschooling using bits from several different sources and approaches
- 6 Using board games and card games as a key part of your personal homeschool culture and educational philosophy
- 7 Italian physician and educator; educational style which views children as naturally eager for knowledge

- 9 American author and educator, proponent of homeschooling and, specifically, unschooling (2 wds)
- 11 Community space offering books and other resources for lending
- 13 Homeschooling while traveling the country, often in an RV of some sort
- 15 WHPA committee that monitors local, state, and federal laws (2 wds)

- 16 Acronym for Wisconsin Homeschooling Parents Association, Wisconsin's only state-wide, inclusive, grassroots organization dedicated to protecting the right and freedom of parents to provide an education to their children according to their own principles and beliefs.
- 18 In WHPA, costs a family \$35/year or \$400 for a lifetime

- 19 Person responsible for ensuring compliance with Wisconsin homeschool law and issuing homeschool diplomas
- 21 Adjustment time after leaving a traditional school setting

DOWN

- 2 A group that accepts all homeschoolers, regardless of their beliefs or reasons for homeschooling
- 3 Education in which the parent takes primary responsibility
- 4 Teaching method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects (2 wds)

- 5 Learning without a specific curriculum or materials
- 8 A process of teaching children to learn based on developmental phases and educational principles developed by the ancients
- 10 British educator in late 19th & early 20th centuries; style of homeschooling that asks the student to retell what they've learned (2 wds)

- 12 Acronym for WHPA's Question Answering Committee, the group of experienced homeschoolers available to answer your homeschooling questions
- 14 Educational style which strives to develop pupils' intellectual, artistic, and practical skills in an integrated and holistic manner; based on Rudolf Steiner's work

- 17 Acronym for Home-Based Private Educational Program, the legal term for homeschools in Wisconsin
- 20 Acronym for Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction, the agency that creates and administers the PI-1206 Homeschool Report

Answer Key on Page 19

Homeschooling in Wisconsin: Know Your RIGHTS and Your RESPONSIBILITIES

When you choose to homeschool your child, you are choosing to:

- Take full responsibility for your child's education.
- Not take advantage of other opportunities for your child's education.
- Exercise your rights under Wisconsin law.
- Follow Wisconsin's homeschooling law.

Homeschooling RIGHTS

Under Wisconsin law, you have the right to:

- Homeschool your child.
- Homeschool your child at any time between the ages of 6 and 18, for any number of years, through high school graduation.
- Educate your child in a way that best suits your child, your family, and your principles and beliefs.
- Move freely, and choose freely as to what constitutes your child's education.
- Have your child assessed for special education needs by your school district (under the Child Find mandate of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act).

Under Wisconsin law, you do *not* have a right to:

- Public money or goods for instructing your child.
- Special services outlined in IDEA, which guarantees a free, appropriate public education to all children. (You may be able to access some services if your district chooses to allow it; you are not guaranteed the services outlined in IDEA.)

Homeschooling RESPONSIBILITIES

Under Wisconsin law you **MUST**:

- File a PI-1206 Homeschool Report with the Department of Public Instruction each year that you are homeschooling.
- File your PI-1206 Homeschool Report on or before October 15.
- Comply with the requirements of homeschooling in Wisconsin, as defined in Wis Stat 115.001(3g) and Wis Stat 118.165.

Responsibilities to other homeschoolers:

One responsibility we each have is to operate our homeschool in a way that is in compliance with our very reasonable law. As one WHPA founder often said, "What I do affects each of you, and what each of you does affects me."

Two ways to take responsibility are:

- Do no more than the law requires. Doing more than the minimum required by law works to erode your rights to direct your own child's education under the law.
- Don't ask for special treatment under the law. Because homeschoolers have the same legal standing as other Wisconsin private schools, asking for government assistance in the form of public money, goods, or services blurs the line between homeschools and public schools.

Find additional information, including WHPA's Ten Principles, Protecting Wisconsin Law, and more at www.homeschooling-wpa.org.



**Wisconsin Homeschooling
Parents Association**

Homeschooling since 1984

How Can You Support WHPA's Work?

What Can You Do?

Join WHPA:

- ☐ Stay informed and updated; lend your voice to our collective voice. When we speak with one voice we are heard.
- ☐ Encourage other homeschoolers, and homeschool supporters, to join WHPA.
- ☐ Set up Automatic Renewal on our website next time you renew your membership.
- ☐ Gift a membership to another homeschooling family or supporter with the tools on our website.
- ☐ Encourage your local homeschooling support group to participate in our partnership program.

Communicate:

- ☐ Keep communicating with WHPA about your rights and responsibilities under the law. It's a tremendous help for WHPA to understand what's happening in your local communities and act appropriately, with one voice and one consistent message for parents, schools, districts, and government agencies.
- ☐ Contact your state legislators and let them know that Wisconsin's homeschooling law is working for you and your family and that you don't want any changes or special favors for homeschoolers.
- ☐ Attend WHPA's quarterly Board meetings to be an informed member and advocate.

Donate:

- ☐ \$15 covers our video-conferencing service for one month.
- ☐ \$25 pays for one month of membership renewal reminders.
- ☐ \$30 prints and mails 20 copies of the newsletter.
- ☐ \$35 sponsors a family for a 1 year WHPA membership.
- ☐ \$90 will pay for a month of email services to keep members, legislators, and other subscribers informed.
- ☐ \$200 makes the WHPA website available for one month.

Get Involved:

- ☐ Attend WHPA's quarterly Board meetings to learn about opportunities - both large and small - to share your time and talents with our all-volunteer organization!
- ☐ Sponsor a virtual WHPA 101 session in your area. You organize the group and WHPA will set up the Zoom meeting and facilitate the session.
- ☐ Submit a newsletter article, suggestion, or artwork for consideration.
- ☐ Share your suggestions for improving or expanding the WHPA website.
- ☐ Help plan Conference 2022.

Find additional information about joining, communicating, donating, and volunteering with WHPA at www.homeschooling-wpa.org.



**Wisconsin Homeschooling
Parents Association**

Homeschooling since 1984

Insights from The Handbook: Why Homeschooling Works (con't)

(continued from page 7)

or on the Internet, working with a mentor, taking a class, or some other approach.

Homeschooling emphasizes and builds on people's strengths. It starts with what people already know and are interested in and encourages them to learn more by using approaches to learning that work well for them. When people are given a chance to learn in ways that work well for them, at their own pace, they can learn instead of being labeled "learning disabled." But what about subjects that people need to learn that are difficult for them, perhaps reading or math? Homeschoolers find that when people are given opportunities to learn what interests them, using a variety of approaches including lots of hands-on experiences, and are allowed to work at their own pace, they often increase their ability to learn and also develop enough confidence and physical, mental, and neurological maturity that they can then learn at least some of the things that were challenging them before. Emphasizing strengths rather than weaknesses really works, and it builds strong people.

Homeschooling works because it's fun. Homeschoolers can spend extra time on the subjects and learning activities that they enjoy most. People who are happy about what they're doing are well motivated, have an easier time learning, and absorb and remember more of the ideas and information they're exposed to.

Homeschooling works because people and families are better than institutions at raising

children, giving them the love and support they need, and providing a place where they can learn. People are social creatures who do better in small groups than in large institutions. The family is the basic unit of society and provides a safe, secure, supportive place for people to learn. Throughout history, most people have learned at home. It is still the place where most people in our society learn two of the most complex skills, walking and talking.

Children are eager to learn about the world around them, especially when they feel safe and do not have to deal with excessive competition, ridicule, and bullying.

Homeschooling strengthens families. They have more time together, to share activities and work, to get to know each other better, and to develop strong bonds and meaningful relationships. They also get to be even better at homeschooling.

In a way, every family homeschools. Families whose children attend conventional schools do homeschooling kinds of activities when their children are out of school. Families who decide to homeschool do these things more of the time.

Parents are good at helping their children learn. Parents have the opportunity to work with one child or a small group of children they know well and to whom they are strongly committed. They love their children and are willing to work hard and make sacrifices for them. Parents are consciously and subconsciously tuned in to their children's strengths and the ways they learn well. They understand why

their children do some of the things they do. Love gives them extra patience and commitment.

Homeschoolers have time. When homeschooling parents make mistakes, either in helping their children learn or in interacting with them, they have time to think, apologize, make amends if necessary, and move on.

Homeschooling families have more control over their lives. They can eat foods that they prefer, create living and learning spaces that work well for them, and live according to their principles and beliefs.

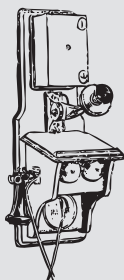
Homeschooling gives parents opportunities and encouragement to learn what interests them. When parents are unsure of something themselves (how to multiply fractions, for example), they often can learn with their children and make sense of something they didn't understand when they were in school. Homeschooling encourages whole families, not just children, to learn.

Homeschoolers learn about the world by being in it, in their homes where a lot happens and in their communities where even more is going on. They are not limited to what can be brought into a classroom. They have lots of opportunities to develop common sense.

Homeschooled children develop the social skills they need to function well in the real world. They form strong bonds with family members. They learn from and befriend people of all ages, from babies to the elderly. They

(continued on page 19)

Call for Submissions



Is there something you'd like to see in an upcoming WHPA Newsletter? Whether you have an *idea* for us, or a **completed original piece** you'd like to submit for publication, we look forward to hearing from you.

Ideas may include a homeschooling question you'd like answered, or a homeschooling topic you think would be useful to Wisconsin homeschoolers.

Completed original pieces of all types by any WHPA member - written or visual, by students or parents alike - are also welcome.

Submit your idea or piece via the Contact form at www.homeschooling-wpa.org for consideration! 🏠

Member Submission

Nature Everlasting

Leah F., age 12, Madison, WI

Dark red leaves
 Nature is my passion
 Water is my **soul**,
 and flows forever round me.
 Stone pine cones.
 ice arches.
 That is my **passion**.
 That is my *life!*
 My reason for being.
Water, wind, earth, sun,
 take away my work
But though no work is permanent,
 all is everlasting.
 As they drift, melt, and are whisked-away,
 they go back to
 Nature.
 They go back to the trees the **ground** the *sea*.
 This is my job, but it means more to me than money.
 This is my life, but there is so much to learn.
 Still so much to discover.
 So much to find.
 No work of mine is permanent. *all* is everlasting.
 This is me
 yes, nature is in me,
 Andy Goldsworthy.

Be A Fact-Finder!

Q: What vital resolution did WPA (now WHPA) pass at the 23rd annual conference in 2006?

Hint: You can find the answer to this and many more Wisconsin homeschooling questions using the handy SEARCH tool on our website at www.homeschooling-wpa.org.



Spread the Word!

To continue its work, WHPA needs a strong membership base. Our members both support and receive:

- Informative and helpful **newsletters** like this one
- In-depth and accurate **website**
- **Question Answering Committee** to respond to questions about homeschooling in Wisconsin
- Annual homeschooling **Conference and Resource Fair**
- **Legislative Watch Committee** to keep informed of legislative actions which could affect Wisconsin homeschoolers
- Statewide **WHPA 101** programs
- **Representation** of homeschoolers to the Legislature and DPI

Encourage your homeschooling friends and supporters to visit www.homeschooling-wpa.org/membership today!

(continued from page 4)

and shared that these parents will continue to do so if the microschool legislation is not passed.

The final personal testimony came from 14-year-old Ella Kaseman-Wold, who is a homeschooling student from a WHPA member family. She advocated for maintaining the strength of our current homeschooling law by maintaining the clear legal distinction between homeschools – for one family unit – and private schools – for multiple family units. Kaseman-Wold also adeptly fielded several questions from the committee regarding not only her personal homeschool experience, but also details of our homeschooling law.

The committee chair, who is also a co-sponsor of the bill, closed the public hearing by thanking WHPA for our dedication to protecting our homeschooling law, and acknowledging the difficult, full-time work we do. The committee did not vote on whether or not to pass the bill from the committee to the assembly floor.

AB 122 is authored by Rep. Sortwell, and introduced by Reps. Thiesfeldt, Allen, Brandtjen, Cabral-Guevara, Edming, Gundrum, Magnafici, Murphy, Ramthun, Rozar, Tittl, Tusler, and Wichgers; it is cosponsored by Sen. Nass (SB 201)

II. What happens next?

- The assembly bill will likely pass out of committee and be brought to the assembly floor.
- The senate bill is yet to be introduced in committee, and as of this writing, has only one senator attached to it. It may or may not get a public hearing in the senate, then may or may not be passed to the senate floor.
- WHPA continues to:
 - Monitor the progress of this legislation;
 - Work with legislators to communicate why this bill threatens our current homeschooling law, and is not necessary;
 - Update our membership on action needed to protect our reasonable, effective homeschooling law.

III. What can you do?

If you have not yet contacted your legislators to voice your opposition to “microschools,” please do so now.

As always, personal contact is the most meaningful way to reach out to your elected representatives. You can find your legislators at legis.wisconsin.gov by typing your address into the box under “Find My Legislators.”

- You can visit your legislators in person.
- You can call on the phone and speak to your legislators or their staff.
- You can write to your legislators by email.

Ask if your legislators support 2021 AB 122 / SB 201, the creation of “microschools” in Wisconsin.

Let your legislators know that Wisconsin’s reasonable homeschooling law works well for Wisconsin families. Let them know that you oppose this bill. Let them know that this bill:

- Undermines and weakens the fundamental right of parents to homeschool.
- Is creating confusion for parents, schools, lawmakers, and others by blurring the line between homeschools and private schools.
- Is unnecessary because anyone who wants to start a private school can already do so.
- Is unworkable because it does not explain how “microschools” would actually operate, including who is the administrator of a microschool, or how students are connected to a microschool.

Stay up to date on this and other important topics by reading WHPA emails and newsletters, and taking further action when needed. It is telling that only one member of the public with homeschool experience testified in support of this bill but, as of this writing, there is legislative support. Should this bill move forward, it will be **vital** for WHPA to speak up through our strong, statewide, grassroots membership. **We may call on members to show up in person, make more phone calls and visits to legislators, and more.** Although the pandemic found many Americans doing school from home, students receiving instruction in a homeschool under Wisconsin law account for only about 2.2% of all Wisconsin students. We are a minority. We must advocate for ourselves. It is fundamental that we all work together to preserve and protect our long-standing, reasonable homeschooling law.

When we speak with one voice, we are heard. 🏠

Who Is In Your Village? (con't)

(continued from page 9)

invited to explore the shop where our neighbor has a part-time machining business, to borrow and learn to use tools, and watch some very high-tech machinery in action.

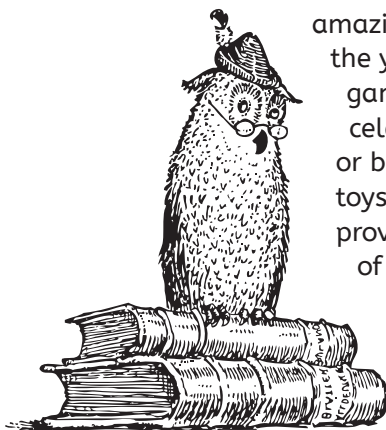
Librarians: I mean, obviously. Basically superheroes without capes, librarians have answered questions, found materials, and offered suggestions and encouragement. Even the rare terrible librarians have provided important life lessons about libraries, public spaces, and how children are viewed and treated.

Our closest friends: There is nothing that can compare with learning a new skill from a friend. I cannot begin to count the many skills and games my kids have learned from our close friends. Everything from needle-felting to puppy training, to making handmade books, to discovering special places to visit and explore.

Our neighbor who got a puppy: Being home during regular school hours meant a fantastic puppy-sitting opportunity for the kids, who learned so much about puppy care and raising, but also about negotiations around how to accept payment from a friend, and the importance of showing up for someone who is counting on you.

Those guys at the bowling alley: No, seriously. One day, my kiddo watched the pin-setter and said "I wonder how that actually works," and I said, "Why don't we ask?" The next thing we knew, we were getting a private behind-the-scenes tour of the amazing automated pin machines and ball returns.

Our extended family: Where would we be without our closest family members who have been a part of so many amazing projects over the years? From family game days, to special celebrations, to shared or borrowed games and toys, our family has provided countless hours of in-person instruction to our kids. Their uncle helped them build our Little Free Library. Their aunt taught them



about raising chickens, and helped pick many good reads over the years. Their cousins have helped them learn board games and role-playing games. They've learned new songs, cooking skills, and recipes at family gatherings. We've had deeply personal religious and cultural experiences together. We have traveled together and visited in many states, creating special, intimate opportunities to learn from each other throughout the years.

Our friend who is a DIY guy: We had many fun and educational adventures with a friend who just liked to make things.

That one really angry guy who yelled at us at the lake: No kidding, sometimes the teacher you get is not the teacher you wanted. But we learned a lot that day. We still talk about it.

The people our kids volunteer with: Over the years, the kids have been involved in several ongoing volunteer activities. While the time they spend "on-the-job" isn't always one-on-one instructional time, the conversations here and there over the years have added up to incredible instruction in everything from basic science concepts, to how nonprofit institutions are structured. They've learned how to use specific tools for specific jobs, and how many people it takes to run a large organization. They've learned a lot about the value of their charity: where money can really make an impact, and where in-person volunteering is most powerful.

Bus drivers, cab drivers, train conductors: No joke, if there is mass transit to be ridden, my kids will ride it, in every city and every train museum we ever get within fifty miles of. Those trips have included countless conversations with transit employees, who have graciously shared their knowledge and stories.

They say "It takes a village to raise a child," and it takes no less to educate a child. So who have you designated to instruct your children as part of your homeschool? Are you missing some opportunities, or undervaluing the opportunities you have? Homeschooling is a choice, and sometimes it can feel like a lot to take on. Especially during COVID times, it can feel like so many of the usual doors of opportunity are closed. Fortunately, the world is full of teachers, and you don't have to do it alone. 🏠

Springtime Reflections

A Wisconsin Homeschool Mom

Looking back at our family's homeschooling years (1993-2018), I remember common thoughts that sprouted in my mind almost every springtime: We are almost done for the year--how did we do and what can we do better next year?

During the busiest years, this could be a time of mixed emotions, especially for someone with a (slightly) perfectionist personality like me. Disappointment about unfulfilled plans was not uncommon. Still, with some input from my spouse and common sense learned from other homeschool parents over the years, I could apply some wisdom and start counting my blessings--the things (planned or unplanned) that turned out right.

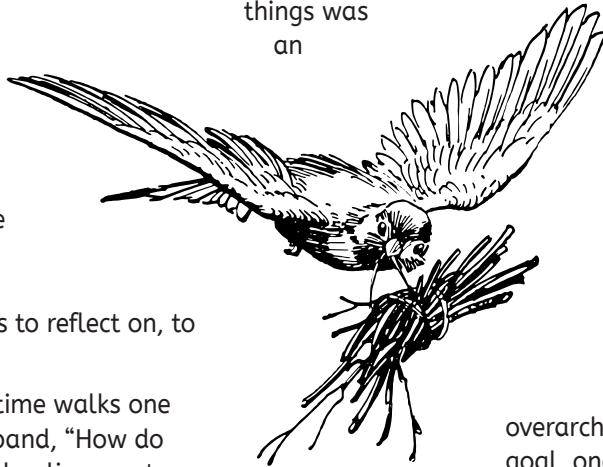
With children who have natural curiosity and a whole bunch of creativity, there were always many good memories to reflect on, to be thankful for.

On one of our springtime walks one year, I asked my husband, "How do you think the homeschooling went this year?" He, as he so often does, asked me a question in reply: "Do the kids love the things you love?"

My breathing rate slowed; my mind raced; my heart warmed. As usual, he had put his finger right on one of the main points of our lives together. We were not homeschooling so that our kids could learn all the things school curriculum writers wanted them to learn. No, we were homeschooling so that we could pass on to our children much more than that: ideas and activities that we love and value, those things that we ourselves find good, true, and beautiful in the world.

So, as I looked back at that year of homeschooling, I was able to put aside some of the stress that comes from focusing on, "Are there any gaps in the kids' education?" or "Why didn't we finish all the foreign language lessons?" or "How can we get more done next year?" Rather, I was able to look at homeschooling as a lifestyle, learning to live life together. This gave a much more satisfying way to evaluate how education was going in our home.

Granted, that isn't where the evaluation and the planning would stop. The goal of fostering a lifestyle of learning about and loving many things was an



overarching goal, one of the Big Goals.

As a homeschool parent, there were other goals, smaller goals, that I also took a look at. Some goals were accomplished--this child finished the lessons in Teach Your Child to Read, so we could move on to reading real books! Other goals needed to be carried into the next year--an older child would continue working through the algebra textbook. Or, goals could be dumped--he just isn't interested in music theory, so let's work with him to find out what he would prefer.

Lists were created, as I worked on planning what skills and subjects

would be appropriate for each child, and then which learning resources would be useful to help with those skills/subjects. Thoughts about how to best manage our time were also considered. Could we study one thing less often, in order to make room for something else just as worthwhile that we skipped this last year? What did I learn by trying to cram too many books into a year's history reading, and how will next year's book list be different?

Always, however, in evaluating the Small Goals, keeping the overarching goal in mind was necessary. Urgent things threaten to take my mind off the most important things, so if my goal was to pass on many good, true and beautiful things to my children, I sometimes had to rein in my desire for each child to be a great speller, a Latin scholar, a calculus whiz, and a musical prodigy (please note my sarcasm), as well as for each of them to read every book on every "Greatest Books" list ever published.

Please realize that I am not setting up my springtime evaluations as the method that every homeschooling parent must follow! I describe it to you knowing that every family's goals will be different (a little or a lot), and my purpose is to inspire you to set your own overarching goals and to stick to them, even when the Small Goals clamor to take first place. One of the biggest advantages of homeschooling is that the family can set their own goals, and, then, they can work on meeting those goals in a way that fits their own unique learning preferences. Springtime is a great time to pause, to think or to discuss, to be grateful for things achieved in the past few months, and to reset a course of action for the next little while. 🏠

Spring Coloring Page



Insights from The Handbook: Why Homeschooling Works (con't)

(continued from page 13)

can make choices and are not forced to spend long hours in relatively large groups of people who are all the same age, an artificial situation that exists only in schools and boot camp.

Homeschools work because they have one child or a small group of children of different ages. Therefore, homeschools don't need extensive rules for maintaining order or bureaucratic procedures that often don't respect children and their needs. Homeschools have more flexible schedules, so children can continue working on something they're excited about or take a break to take advantage of an unexpected opportunity.

Homeschooling works because by deciding to homeschool,

parents have had the courage to follow their convictions and do something that they feel is right, even though this means choosing something different from what most people do. Homeschooling parents are able to take responsibility for their families and to exercise more control over their time, space, and lives. Their example helps their children become strong, confident, and responsible.

Homeschooling works because it has sensible and meaningful goals. Compare homeschoolers' goals with those of most conventional schools, which include things like: keep the taxpayers happy so they will continue to pass bond issues; make sure that 25 students all try to learn the same list of spelling words at the same time;

respond to pressure from big business for schools to prepare students to work at boring and routine jobs for low pay; rank and label kids so a few are on the top, most are on the bottom, and no one is too unhappy about where they are; keep kids out of adults' way and make sure they don't do work that adults could do for pay.

Homeschooling works because it provides a means by which parents can reclaim some of the rights and responsibilities that have been taken from them by institutions.

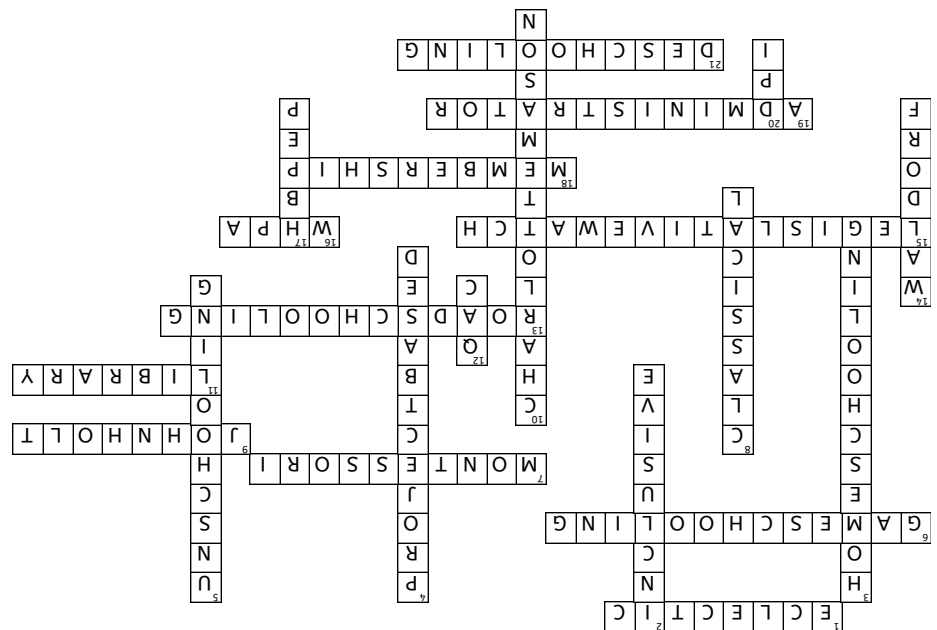
Homeschooling families have their own reasons to add. The point is that homeschooling is an approach to learning and living that works. We can trust the process and proceed with confidence. 🏠

WHPA 101

Our **WHPA 101** program is available to homeschooling groups, libraries, and interested parents throughout Wisconsin. This free 20- to 30-minute presentation by a WHPA-trained facilitator via Zoom focuses on providing accurate information about homeschooling in Wisconsin.

To request a **WHPA 101** session for your area, please visit www.homeschooling-wpa.org/whpa-101/. Keep in mind that we prefer to open up the program to as many homeschoolers and potential homeschoolers in the area as possible and we will count on you to help spread the word! 🏠

Homeschooling in Wisconsin Crossword Puzzle Answers (puzzle on page 10)





Homeschooling since 1984

PO Box 2502
Madison WI 53701
www.homeschooling-wpa.org

Coffee with the Board

Get your homeschooling questions answered.

Members only. Join today, then Register under Virtual Events!

www.homeschooling-wpa.org



Sessions at 7am and 7:30pm:

March 15 • April 12 • May 14 • June 21



Wisconsin Homeschooling
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Table Talks

Learn more about homeschooling in Wisconsin.

Free for members, \$5 for non-members. Register under Virtual Events!

www.homeschooling-wpa.org



March 22 at 10AM: 875 Hours and Recordkeeping

April 19 at 10AM: Finding Your Homeschool Style

May 5 at 10AM: Do No Harm (Protecting our Homeschool Law)

June 2 at 10AM: Socialization & Finding Your Homeschool Groups



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