

Montana State Legislature

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“Home Schooling on the Threshold”

By: Brian D. Ray, Ph.D.

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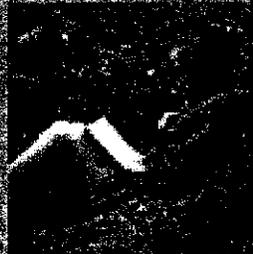
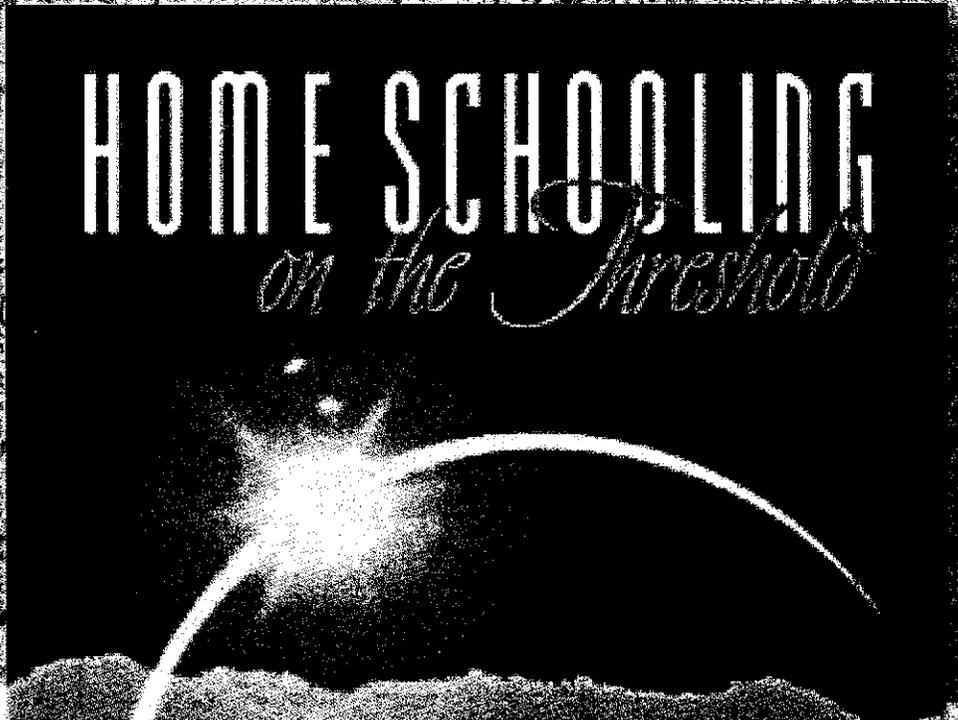
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HOME SCHOOLING

on the Threshold



A SURVEY OF
PURE RESEARCH
AT THE DAWN
OF THE NEW
MILLENNIUM

BRIAN D. RAY, Ph.D.

Introduction

Education has been a crucial concern of parents and society since the genesis of culture. Educational issues are passionately debated in America today, at the dawn of the new millennium. And at this unique point in history, it has become clear that home schooling will play an ever-increasing role in the fracas that surrounds educational debates, reforms, and choices. What some observers thought would be a passing fad—home schooling—has become a visible movement motivated by capable leaders and a robust mix of parents and children.¹

The home-school movement will likely exert influence in society that is disproportionate to its size. Why? A key reason is its successes. Research has made it apparent that the home educated are doing well in terms of academic achievement, socialization, and success in adulthood.² Multiple references will be provided later to support this statement and other conclusions made in this publication. In addition, these families are becoming a respected part of society that is politically active, savvy, and successful.³

Although home-school parents and their children are bucking the conventional practice of relying on typical educational institutions beginning at the age of 5 or 6 in groups of same-age peers with state-certified and largely state-trained teachers, the growing cadre of home-school parents are practicing what cultures have believed and practiced for centuries. That is, parents, families, and closely-tied social groups should be the ones to transmit culture, beliefs, and literacy (in reading and writing) with the utmost care and dedication.⁴

Both noble and ignoble persons in many countries value education. They recognize that the education (including indoctrination) of children—a country's future citizens—is the key to the path a nation will follow.⁵ Adolph Hitler, V. I.

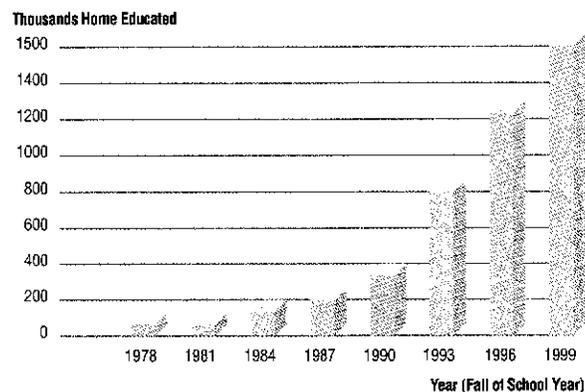
Lenin, and Benito Mussolini are known for their plans to use schools to advance their own base purposes. Martin Luther wanted to use schools to impress on children the word and mind of God. In America, educators such as John Dewey, Horace Mann, and Jane Addams, business leaders, and many other social leaders knew that if they were

to be able to enculturate, indoctrinate, and mold the thinking and behavior of the next generation then they would have to design and control the curriculum of the schools.⁶

Today, social thinkers, social tinkerers, and some parents still recognize the battle that exists for children's hearts and minds that is played out in their education. Some call for institutional schools to exert even more influence in and control over the lives of children.⁷ Contrariwise, others are sounding a clarion call that urges parents to be in charge, knowledgeably and intimately, of their offspring's education.

As one response, people of many cultural heritages, skin colors, and religious worldviews are moving quickly to engage their children in home-based education—for a broad array of reasons. By the end of the first decade of the 21st century, there may be well over two million children being home schooled in the United States alone (see Figure 1).⁸ Meanwhile, this educational practice is also resurgent in many other countries such as Mexico, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Germany.⁹

FIGURE 1
GRADES K-12 CHILDREN HOME EDUCATED IN THE U.S.
(estimated)



This booklet is designed to review important and representative research on home schooling to date. The review covers the topics that are generally the most important to parents, educators, policy makers, and society at large. For those who desire to conduct an in-depth examination of the methodology and quality of the cited studies, full citations are provided.



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Yarnall, Louise. (1998, October 29) Where the kitchen is also the classroom: Online courses have given a new impetus to the home-schooling movement. *New York Times* [online, www.nytimes.com].

* Back issues of the journal *Home School Researcher*, which is often cited in the above reference list, and reports by Brian Ray are available from the National Home Education Research Institute, PO Box 13939, Salem, Oregon 97309 USA, (503) 364-1490, www.nheri.org.

RESOURCES ON HOME SCHOOLING

National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI)

PO Box 13939, 925 Cottage Street NE, Salem OR 97309, phone: (503) 364-1490, fax: (503) 364-2827, www.nheri.org, mail@nheri.org. Research, statistics, expert witness, general information, consultation, marketing data, *Home School Researcher* journal, serves nationwide and internationally.

Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA)

PO Box 3000, Purcellville VA 20134, (540) 338-5600, www.hsllda.org, mailroom@hsllda.org. Legal support, *The Home School Court Report*.

The Teaching Home magazine

PO Box 20219, Portland OR 97294, (503) 253-9633, www.teachinghome.com, tt@teachinghome.com.

Practical Home Schooling magazine

PO Box 1250, Fenton MO 63026, (314) 343-6786, www.home-school.com.

STATE ORGANIZATIONS

Contact NHERI, *The Teaching Home*, or HSLDA to find state organizations.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Brian D. Ray, Ph.D., is president and founder of the National Home Education Research Institute (Salem, Oregon, U.S.A.), a

nonprofit research and educational organization dedicated to serving all educators and the public by conducting research on home-based education, maintaining a network of researchers, and educating the worldwide public about home- and family-based education. Dr. Ray has conducted numerous studies on home schooling, founded and serves as editor of the academic, refereed journal *Home School Researcher* (ISSN 1054-8033), speaks widely to the media, professional meetings, and home-school conferences, and provides expert testimony before many courts and legislatures.

Dr. Ray earned his Ph.D. in science education from Oregon State University (Corvallis, Oregon, U.S.A.), has served as a professor at the undergraduate and graduate levels at colleges and universities in the areas of research methodology, science, education, and statistics, has taught at the elementary and secondary levels in public and private schools, has published many articles, is author of *Strengths of Their Own—Home Schoolers Across America* and is co-author of *Home Schooling: Parents as Educators*. Dr. Ray is considered a leading expert on home education both in the United States and internationally.

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