

Fourteen Reasons to Homeschool a Child with a Learning Disability or ADHD Suzanne Day , *Neurotherapist*

After twenty plus years working with homeschoolers, I am convinced that homeschooling is a valid option for children with learning and attention inefficiencies.

FIRST: we know that a child with learning challenges needs an individualized program because he learns differently. Although experts do not easily agree on a definition of a learning disability, there are four points on which they do agree: they are average or above-average in intelligence, the basic cause is not a psychological or a physical handicap, and they do not learn satisfactorily from standard methods of instruction. These children do not learn like the other children and should be taught with a specially designed program to fit their learning strengths and weaknesses. The classroom with 20 to 30 students cannot easily provide an individualized program. The homeschooling setting can.

SECOND: this child will respond better one-on-one. This individualized program needs to be taught individually. Homeschooling can provide this one-to-one attention for at least an hour per day, even when the mother has other children to attend to.

THIRD: this child needs a quiet atmosphere because often his/her auditory processing is immature. It may not be easy to establish this at home with many children but the home is still the best place to control the “reception” of information.

FOURTH: the homeschool situation allows the parent the flexibility needed to adapt the curriculum or to change it according to the educational progress of the child as the parent-teacher increases his/her understanding of the learning style and needs of this child.

FIFTH: a child with learning and attentional inefficiencies needs a lot of repetition. He/she is often referred to as a “leaking bucket.” His/her memory, short-term and long-term, is not as efficient as it should be because of the anxiety created by certain information or the way the information is presented. God will provide the committed parents the patience and creativity to repeat the information in different forms.

SIXTH: he needs trained teachers to address his needs. One of the main questions often asked by parents who are considering the homeschooling option for their learning and attention challenged child is, “Wouldn’t it be better for my child to be at the public school with the specialized teachers to work with these children?” Yes, and no. Being “trained” does not mean only at the university level. God wants to train parents to address their child’s specific needs. He will use your prayers and other means. Using the data from professional testing, the parents can be educated to recognize the learning strengths and the weaknesses of their child. Specific educational and developmental techniques can be taught to the parents, making them the “specialized teacher” this specific child needs.

SEVENTH: these children are often vulnerable to low self-worth and desperately need thoughtful educators. He or she is often singled out as “lazy”: some days he can do it, some days he cannot do it. The difficulties are rooted in the central nervous system functions and need to be understood in order to wisely modify the presentation of the information. The parents should make every effort to ensure that their child understands that his reading, spelling, and language difficulties are not related to his value as God’s child and as a person, family, or church member. These children need their parents’, brothers’ and sisters’ help to discover his self-worth in God’s eyes. Thomas Edison, who had great difficulty with learning at school, was finally homeschooled. He was led to later say: “All that I am, all that I ever hope to be, I owe to my mother.”

EIGHTH: the homeschool setting allows the control of three important components in the learning process: the frequency, duration, and intensity. These children need short duration (short periods), more frequency

(more often), and a lot of intensity (energy level). The home situation can provide this flexibility . . . with God's grace.

NINTH: the parents of these children need to develop character qualities and God wants to use their child's weaknesses force them (the parents) to learn and change. Children usually will not advance any farther along the pathway to maturity than where their parents are at any given time. Learning disabilities are inherited. The solutions that parents find for their child can also bring a healing process for themselves. John Powel said, "The most magnificent opportunities come into our lives disguised as problems." Yes, homeschooling magnifies our weaknesses, but let's remember that God gives grace (energy) to the humble.

TENTH: these children perform better academically in an individualized instruction setting which the homeschooling provides. This is especially so when the strengths and the weaknesses of the child are identified so the parents can deal with the learning inefficiencies accordingly. . Our data over 20 years clearly confirms this (Case Studies, YouTube on our website:

<http://neuroclinicbarrie.com/neurodevelopment/> and
<http://neuroclinicbarrie.com/neurodevelopment/testimonies/>

ELEVENTH: home is the most affordable "tutoring" service. Individualized teaching at \$50.00 per hour (lower end of cost), for at least three hours per day, would cost you \$750.00 per week, \$2,800.00 per month, and \$28,000.00 per year!! However, parents should wisely consider investing in professional consultation to guide their teaching as well as character building efforts. Too often we meet homeschooling mothers who feel so guilty for not succeeding in bringing their child up to grade level. The mother who is teaching the child usually suspects that there are learning inefficiencies. By the time she seeks help, she has paid the high cost of frustration, defeat, and a battered self-esteem. The surgeon needs tests done, the home builder will look at his plans, and the marketing agent the data. It makes sense that the parent-teachers of a child with learning challenges assume that responsibility with a thorough assessment of the problems and specific techniques to guide their efforts.

TWELFTH: these children need to specifically learn social skills which are best learned in context with individualized attention provided by the homeschooling context. This child's learning and attentional challenges are affecting not only the academic domain but socially these children need more guidance to learn to reason and to understand social rules. Some of these rules are explicit and some much more subtle than we often assume!

THIRTEENTH: these children need to develop other gifts. Often the official psychological diagnosis may be seen as a "put down". These children have gifts that are not measured by standardized tests. The parent-teacher who spends longer periods with their child will discover these specific abilities and will find the means to encourage their expression. It is wise to aim for at least one hour a day for the child to do something at which he excels in order to strengthen his/her self-worth. Again, the flexibility of the homeschooling allows for including this in the curriculum.

FOURTEENTH: parents of these children need to discover a deeper meaning of the grace (energy) of God. God promises to give grace to the humble. Learning and attention inefficiencies are referred to as a "hidden handicap" because there is no outward appearance of a "disability". These children appear to be no different than their peers but they are often seen as "awkward", not behaving as "expected". It requires humility to work so hard at teaching a child who progresses slowly. It requires humility to face other people who do not necessarily understand why your child acts immaturely. The reality is that you cannot explain "why" to everybody and you have to carry hope in your heart for the future of these children so they will grow to meet your heart's vision according to God's plan.

FINALLY, God wants to use your life message. Parents who homeschool children with learning and attention inefficiencies need to be encouraged by the life message of other parents who understand. The reasons

described here can also be applied to special needs children including giftedness. To pursue homeschooling these children require courage, determination, and a large dose of humility which God provides for the parents' character growth.

I pray that this article has been an encouragement to your hearts.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for He cares for you." 1Peter 5:6-7

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