Homeschooling—that is, parent-led home-based education—is an age-old traditional educational practice that a decade ago appeared to be cutting-edge and “alternative” but is now bordering on “mainstream” in the United States. There are about 2.2 million home-educated students in the United States, and it appears the homeschool population is continuing to grow (at an estimated 2% to 8% per annum over the past few years) (Ray, 2011, USDE, 2013). It may be the fastest-growing form of education in the United States.

Academic Performance

- A 2016 (from Ray, 2010) analysis reveals that Illinois homeschool students are scoring at the 81st to 87th percentile across the subjects of reading (87th), language (82nd), math (83rd), science (84th), and social studies (81st). This is 31 to 37 percentile points above the U.S. public school average.
- Multiple studies by many researchers show that home-educated students average 15 to 30 percentile points above public-school students on standardized academic achievement tests (Murphy, 2012).
- These students score above average on achievement tests regardless of their parents’ level of education, family’s household income, or whether their parents were ever certified teachers.
- Degree of state control and regulation of homeschooling is not related to academic achievement.
- Home-educated students typically score above average on the college SAT and ACT tests and are increasingly being actively recruited by colleges.

Success in the “Real World” of Adulthood

The research base on adults who were home educated is growing; thus far it indicates that they:

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

Social, Emotional, and Psychological Development

- The home-educated are doing well, typically above average, on measures of social, emotional, and psychological development. Research measures include peer interaction, self-concept, leadership skills, family cohesion, participation in community service, and self-esteem.
- Homeschool students are regularly engaged in social and educational activities outside their homes and with people other than their nuclear-family members. They are commonly involved in activities such as field trips, scouting, 4-H, political drives, church ministry, sports teams, and community volunteer work.
• Only one research study has used original data directly related to homeschooling and child abuse, child neglect, and child fatalities (Ray, 2015). Adults who had been home educated reported being sexually abused at a lower rate than those from public schooling and one form of private schooling and at the same rate as those from a second form of private schooling.

**Reasons for Home Educating**
Most parents and youth decide to homeschool for more than one reason. The most common reasons given for choosing home-based education are the following:
• customize or individualize the curriculum and learning environment for each child,
• accomplish more academically than in schools,
• use pedagogical approaches other than those typical in institutional schools,
• enhance family relationships between children and parents and among siblings,
• provide guided and reasoned social interactions with youthful peers and adults,
• provide a safer environment for children and youth, because of physical violence, drugs and alcohol, psychological abuse, and improper and unhealthy sexuality associated with institutional schools, and
• teach and impart a particular set of values, beliefs, and worldview to children and youth.

**Homeschooling in Illinois**
• There were an estimated 60,000 to 82,000 K-12 homeschool students in Illinois during the spring 2010 (Ray, 2011; USDE, 2013), and it is likely these numbers have grown. (Note: The number of homeschooled children in most states represents roughly 3% to 4% of the school age population. The numbers for Kansas are based on most recent available statistics.)
• Public school per pupil expenditure in Illinois during 2013-14 was $13,372 plus capital expenditures (National Education Association, 2015). Therefore, it is estimated homeschool families have saved Illinois taxpayers $802 million to $1.096 billion per year since 2010 plus capital expenditures. The actual figures are likely higher due to homeschooling growth since 2010.

**Need More Information About Homeschooling?**

**In Illinois:**
• Illinois Christian Home Educators (ICHE), PO Box 617, Antioch IL 60002-0617, www.iche.org, 847-603-1259

**Nationally:**
• Home School Legal Defense Association P.O. Box 3000, Purcellville VA 20134, www.hslda.org, (540) 338-5600
• National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI) PO Box 13939, Salem OR 97309, www.nheri.org, (503) 364-1490, mail@nheri.org
References: