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HOMESCHOOLING GROWS

**HSLDA's synopsis of a
new research study on adults
who were homeschooled,
conducted by Dr. Brian D. Ray**

Socialization? No problem!

Every parent who homeschools has been through the drill: “Oh, you homeschool. Aren’t you concerned about your child’s socialization?” Even *TIME* magazine picked up on the question: “Home schooling may turn out better students, but does it create better citizens?” (“Seceding from School,” *TIME*, August 2001.)

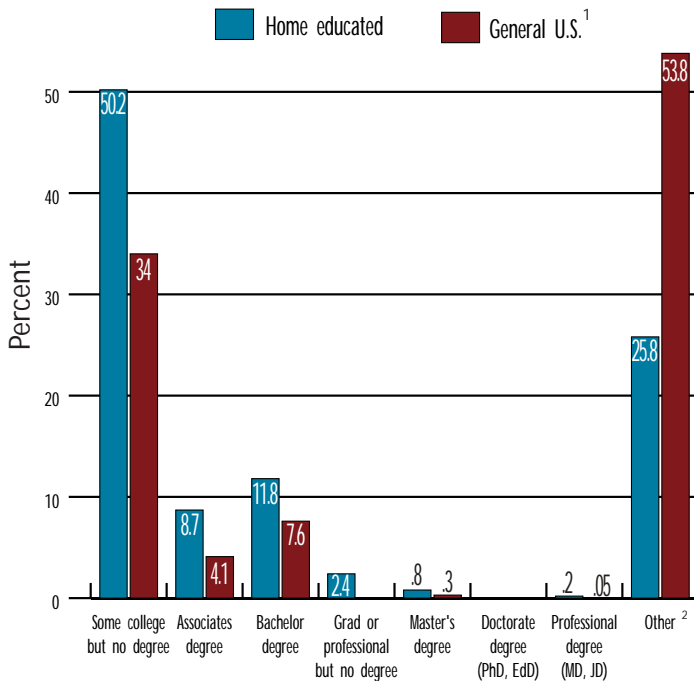
Homeschooling parents have known the answer for years: “No problem here!” But critics demand proof. Today, the first generation of homeschooled students has “grown up,” and there are enough homeschool graduates to begin to see how they are succeeding in their homes, in their work, and in their lives.

In 2003, the Home School Legal Defense Association commissioned the largest research survey to date of adults who were home educated. Conducted by Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute, the study surveyed over 7,300 adults who were homeschooled. Over 5,000 of these had been home educated at least seven years, and the statistics in this synopsis are based on their responses. The results confirm what homeschoolers have thought for years: “No problem here.”

Beyond graduation

Figure 1. Educational attainment of the home educated and the general population ages 18 through 24.

(This age range consisted of 78.6% of the respondents in this study.)



¹ Source: United States Census Bureau (2003, March 21). Educational attainment of people 18 years and over, by metropolitan and nonmetropolitan residence, age, sex, race and Hispanic origin: March 2002. Retrieved 8/27/03 online

<http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/education/pp1-169/tab11.pdf> Washington, DC: Author: n=27,312,000 for general U.S. and n=4,129 for homeschool sample size.

² Other = Less than high school, high school graduate, voc/tech program but no degree, and voc/tech diploma after high school.

Note: Total does not equal 100 due to rounding errors from original data source.

Continuing education: Can they get into college?

The end of formal homeschooling is not the end of the educational road for most homeschool graduates. Over 74% of home-educated adults ages 18–24 have taken college-level courses, compared to 46% of the general United States population (Figure 1). Note that nearly half (49%) of the respondents in this study were still full-time students and many of these had not yet received their degrees, possibly resulting in lower numbers of earned degrees actually reported by homeschoolers. Even so, homeschool graduates hold their own when compared to the general U.S. population.

Can they get a job? Sure!

Since the phenomenon of homeschooling is found in many settings, each reflecting the uniqueness of a particular family, it is not surprising to find homeschool graduates engaged in a wide variety of occupations (Table 1).

Table 1. Occupations of the home educated.

	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Farmer, farm manager	14	.3
Homemaker, home educator	383	7.3
Laborer	68	1.3
Manager	127	2.4
Military	68	1.3
Office worker	313	6.0
Operator of machines	8	.2
Owner small business/restaurant, contractor	129	2.5
Professional 1 (e.g., accountant, RN, artist)	359	6.8
Professional 2 (e.g., minister, doctor, college teacher)	103	2.0
Protective service	21	.4
Sales	91	1.7
School teacher (but not college)	82	1.6
Service worker (e.g., hair stylist, janitor)	179	3.4
Technical (e.g., computer programmer, draftsman)	232	4.4
Tradesperson (e.g., baker, mechanic, carpenter)	80	1.5
Full-time student	2573	49.0
Other	417	7.9
Total	5247	100.0

Table 2. Activities in local community and style of living.

	Number of respondents	% home educated	% U.S. adults ¹
Have you read any books (in English) in the past six months?	5254	98.5	69
Read a newspaper at least once a week.	5253	60.6	82
Read one or more magazines on a regular basis.	5254	100	89
Watch national news on TV or listen to national news radio almost every day.	5254	42.1	64
Read national news online almost everyday.	5254	29.5	NA
Do you participate in any ongoing community service activity, for example, coaching a sports team, volunteering at a school, or working with a church or neighborhood association?	5253	71.1	37
Are you a member of any organization, like a community group, church or synagogue, union, homeschool group, or professional organization?	5254	88.3	50
Attended religious services once a month or more.	5254	93.3	41
Politics and government are too complicated to understand.	5253	4.2	35
Own family has no say in what federal government does.	5251	6.2	44
A person should be allowed to make a speech against churches and religion.	5243	91.5	88
A book most people disapprove of should be kept out of a public library.	5244	40.8	36
A person should be able to make a speech against using taxes to feed people or to pay for medical assistance.	5240	95.9	NA
Could write a letter to government official that clearly states his/her opinion.	5249	98.4	94
Could make a comment or statement at a public meeting.	5254	96.5 ²	88 ²
Knows how to use the internet.	5251	99.6	37
Uses the internet at home for e-mail.	4956	94.3	NA
Uses the internet at home for school research or courses.	5254	73.9	NA
Uses the internet at home for information search.	4802	91.4	NA
Used a public library or public library program in the past month.	5253	68.5	32 ³
Used a public library or public library program in the past year.	5254	90.3	56 ³

¹ Source for U.S. comparative data, unless noted: Nolin, Mary Jo, Chapman, Chris, and Chandler, Kathryn (1997). Adult civic involvement in the United States: National Household Education Survey [NHES]. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Publication number NCES 97-906. Retrieved online 7/21/03 <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs97/97906.pdf>; used their findings for adults ages 18–39 for comparison purposes.

² In this study, a response of either “yes” or “it depends . . .” were considered a “yes” response. It is unclear in Nolin, Chapman, and Chandler which responses were considered “yes.”

³ Source for these two rows only: United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2001, June 2). National Household Education Survey of 1999 Data Files, Adult Education Survey, NHES:99. Retrieved 8/21/03 online <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2000079>.

NA = Data not available from this study.

Involved in their communities

Homeschool graduates are active and involved in their communities. Seventy-one percent participate in an ongoing community service activity (e.g., coaching a sports team, volunteering at a school, or working with a church or neighborhood association), compared to 37% of U.S. adults of similar ages (Table 2). Eighty-eight percent of the homeschool graduates surveyed were members of an organization (e.g., such as a community group,

church or synagogue, union, homeschool group, or professional organization), compared to 50% of U.S. adults.

Civic affairs: engaged citizens

Only 4.2% of the homeschool graduates surveyed consider politics and government too complicated to understand, compared to 35% of U.S. adults (Table 2). This may account for why homeschool graduates work for candidates, contribute to campaigns, and vote in much higher percentages

Civic involvement ^{1,2}

Figure 2. Contributed money to a candidate/political party/political cause.

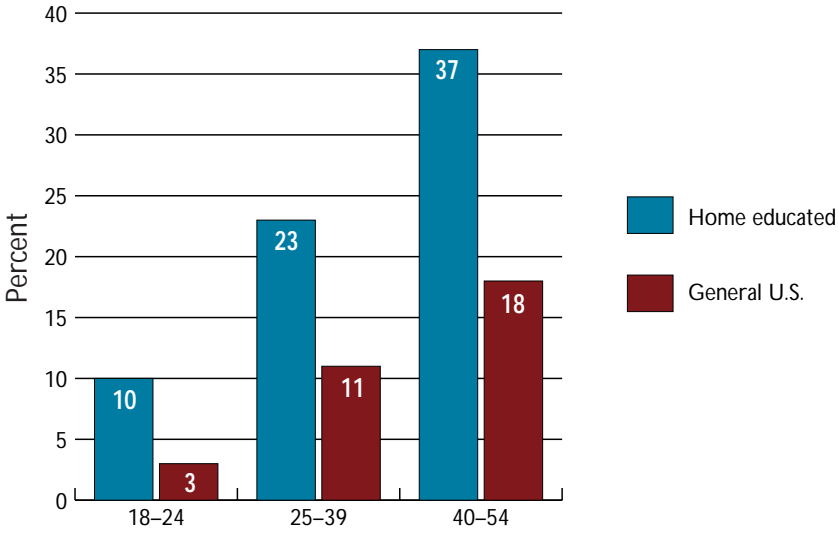


Figure 3. Worked for candidate/political party/political cause.

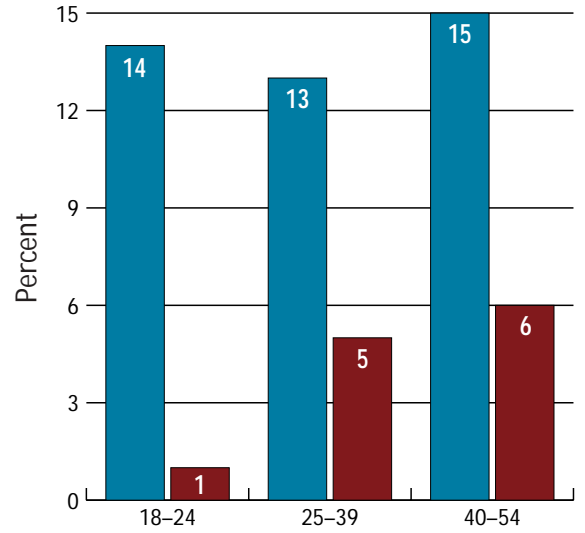


Figure 4. Attended a public meeting.

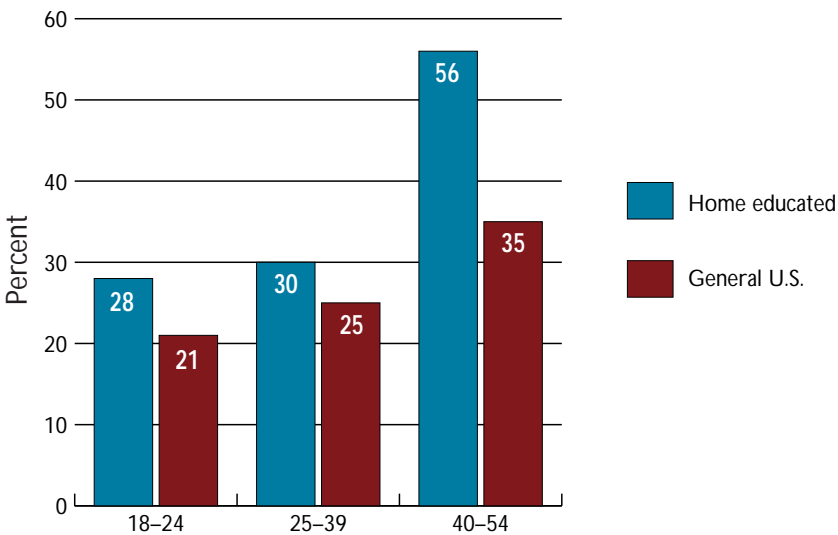


Figure 5. Wrote/telephoned editor/public official or signed a petition.

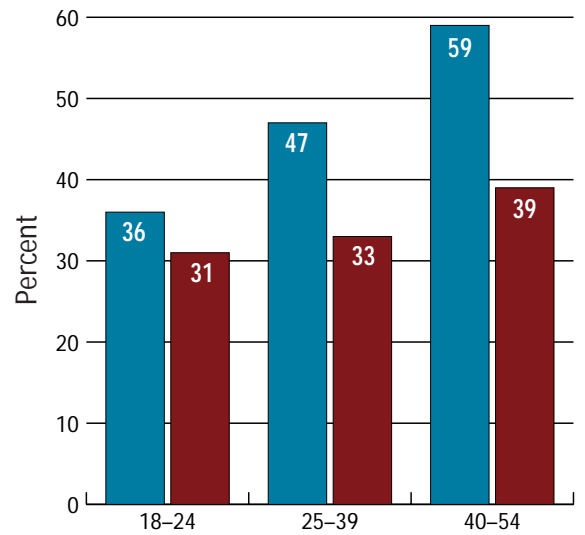


Figure 6. Participated in a protest or boycott.

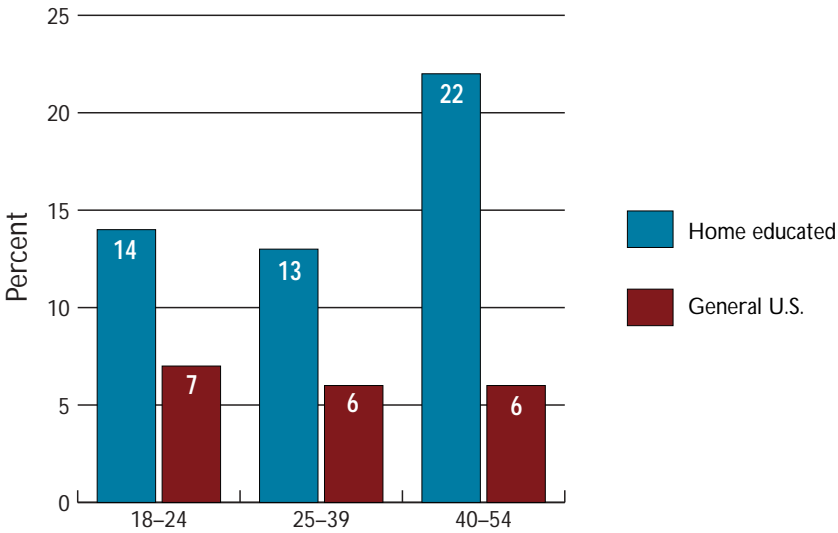
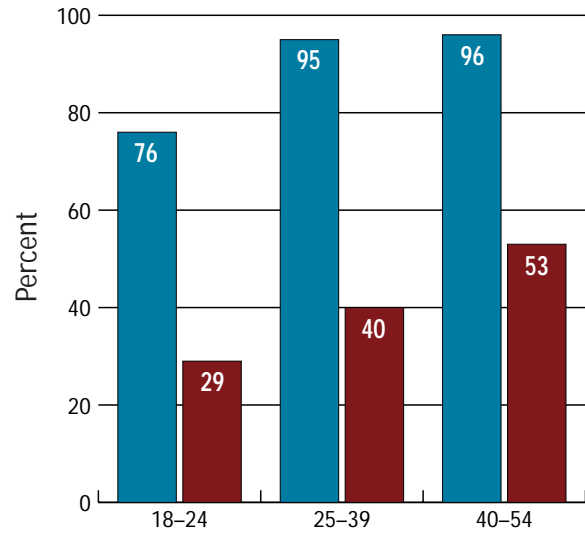


Figure 7. Voted in national/state election in U.S. in past 5 years.

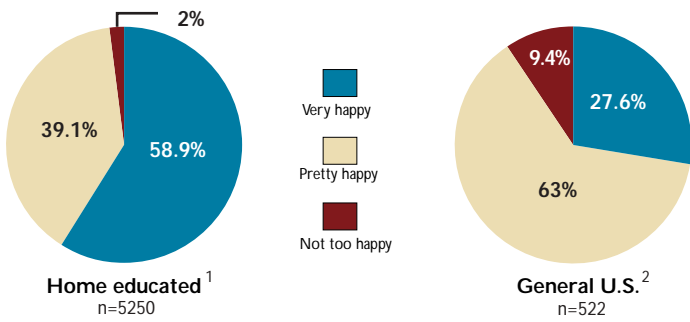


¹ Sample sizes for the home educated were as follow: ages 18-24, n=4121 to 4129; ages 25-39, n=752 to 753; ages 40-54, n=27; ages 55-69, n=3; ages 70+, n=0.

² U.S. nationwide statistics are from Nolin, Chapman, and Chandler, 1997.

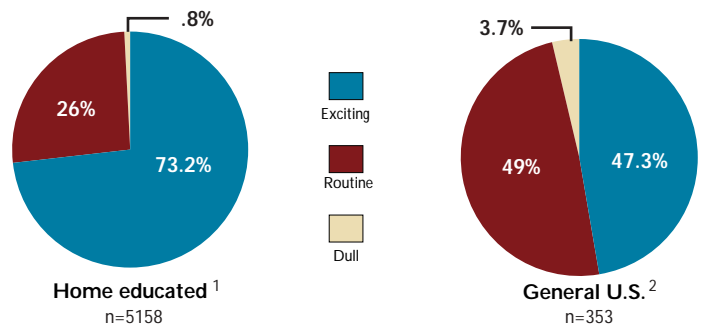
Enjoyment of life

Figure 8. Happiness quotient: "Taken all together, how would you say things are these days—would you say that you are ..."



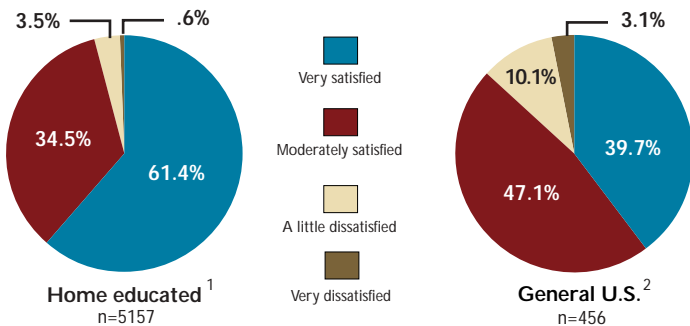
¹Source: National Opinion Research Center [NORC]. 2003. General Social Survey Codebook. Retrieved 8/27/03 online <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/gss>. Chicago, IL: Author. The best comparable data were obtained by using the General Social Survey (GSS) selection filters of "year(2000)" and "age(16-29)"; ages 16 to 29 capture about 98% of the respondents in this study of home-educated adults.

Figure 9. Perspective on life: "In general, do you find life exciting, pretty routine, or dull?"



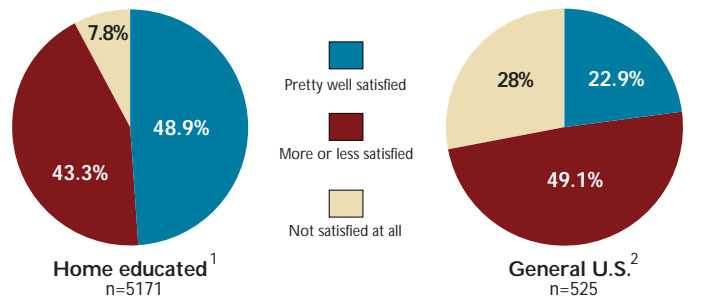
¹ Responses of "no opinion" (n=93) were omitted from these statistics in order to obtain a better comparison to the general U.S. statistics.
² Source: National Opinion Research Center [NORC]. 2003. General Social Survey Codebook. Retrieved 8/27/03 online <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/gss>. Chicago, IL: Author. The best comparable data were obtained by using the General Social Survey (GSS) selection filters of "year(2000)" and "age(16-29)"; ages 16 to 29 capture about 98% of the respondents in this study of home-educated adults.

Figure 10. Job satisfaction: "On the whole, how satisfied are you with the work you do?"



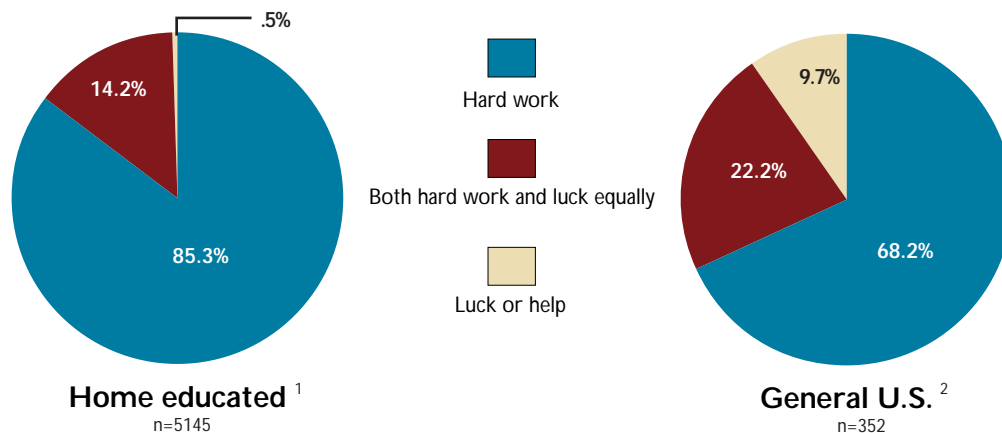
¹ Responses of "don't know" (n=90) were omitted from these statistics in order to obtain a better comparison to the general U.S. statistics.
² Source: National Opinion Research Center [NORC]. 2003. General Social Survey Codebook. Retrieved 8/27/03 online <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/gss>. Chicago, IL: Author. The best comparable data were obtained by using the General Social Survey (GSS) selection filters of "year(2000)" and "age(16-29)"; ages 16 to 29 capture about 98% of the respondents in this study of home-educated adults.

Figure 11. Financial situation: "So far as you and your family are concerned, would you say that you are pretty well satisfied with your present financial situation, more or less satisfied, or not satisfied at all?"



¹ Responses of "don't know" (n=78) were omitted from these statistics in order to obtain a better comparison to the general U.S. statistics.
² Source: National Opinion Research Center [NORC]. 2003. General Social Survey Codebook. Retrieved 8/27/03 online <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/gss>. Chicago, IL: Author. The best comparable data were obtained by using the General Social Survey (GSS) selection filters of "year(2000)" and "age(16-29)"; ages 16 to 29 capture about 98% of the respondents in this study of home-educated adults.

Figure 12. Most important factors for success: "Some people say that people get ahead by their own hard work; others say that lucky breaks or help from people are more important. Which do you think is most important?"



¹ Responses of "don't know" (n=100) were omitted from these statistics in order to obtain a better comparison to the general U.S. statistics.
² Source: National Opinion Research Center [NORC]. 2003. General Social Survey Codebook. Retrieved 8/27/03 online <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/gss>. Chicago, IL: Author. The best comparable data were obtained by using the General Social Survey (GSS) selection filters of "year(2000)" and "age(16-29)"; ages 16 to 29 capture about 98% of the respondents in this study of home-educated adults.

Table 3. How has home-schooling affected your life?	% strongly agree	% agree	% neither	% disagree	% strongly disagree
I am glad that I was homeschooled ¹	75.8	19.4	2.8	1.4	.6
Having been homeschooled is an advantage to me as an adult ¹	66.0	26.4	5.7	1.5	.4
Having been homeschooled has limited my educational opportunities ¹	1.0	4.2	6.6	29.2	58.9
Having been homeschooled has limited my career choices ¹	.9	1.2	3.9	18.8	75.3
I would homeschool my own children ¹	54.8	27.3	13.5	2.8	1.6

¹The sample sizes for these five items were 5253, 5251, 5252, 5251, and 5253, consecutively.

continued from pg. 3

than the general population of the United States (Figures 2 through 7). For example, 76% of homeschool graduates surveyed between the ages of 18–24 voted within the last five years, compared to only 29% of the relevant U.S. population (Figure 7). The numbers of homeschool graduates who vote are even greater in the older age brackets, with voting levels not falling below 95%, compared to a high of 53% for the corresponding U.S. populace. Interestingly, the three participants in the age-55–69 category were also more civically active than their peers nationwide (but the sample size was so small that this category was/is not included in the figures).

Enjoying life

Taking all things into consideration, 59% of the subjects reported that they were “very happy” with life, with another 39% declaring that they were “pretty happy” (Figure 8). Life is exciting for most (73%, Figure 9). When compared to the general population of the United States, homeschool graduates are just more content.

Appreciating their “alma mater” (and “pater”)

For parents who sometimes wonder whether they are doing the right thing by homeschooling their children, it will be an encouragement to know that 95% of the homeschool graduates surveyed are glad that they were homeschooled (Table 3). In the

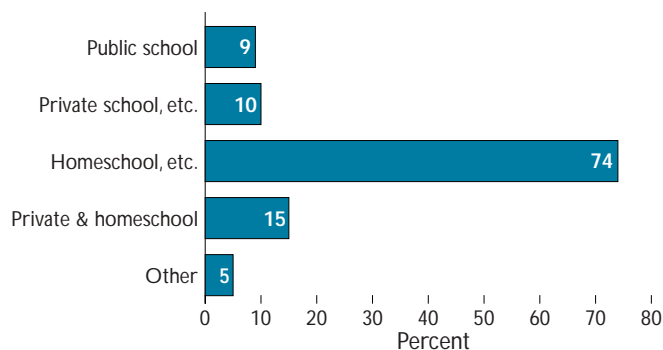
opinion of the homeschool graduates, homeschooling has not hindered them in their careers or education. Eighty-two percent would homeschool their own children. Of the 812 study participants who had children age 5 or older, 74% were already homeschooling (Figure 13).

Conclusion

The results of Dr. Ray’s cutting-edge research defuse long-held false criticisms of homeschooling and seem to indicate that homeschooling produces successful adults who are actively involved in their communities and who continue to value education for themselves and their children. ↑

The next generation of homeschoolers

Figure 13. Type of education adults who were home educated provided for their children^{1,2}



Key:
 Public school only = No, neither; all attend/attended public school (only)
 Private school etc. = Private school (at least one child for one year)
 Homeschool, etc. = Homeschooled (at least one child for one year)
 Private & homeschool = Private school and homeschooled (#2 and #3)
 Other = Other

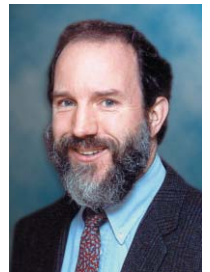
¹ Number of respondents: 807

² Respondents could mark more than one answer so the total may not equal 100.

HOMESCHOOLING GROWS UP

About the researcher

Dr. Brian D. Ray is president of the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI). He holds his Ph.D. in science education from Oregon State University. NHERI conducts basic data-gathering research; serves as a clearinghouse of information for researchers, home educators, attorneys, legislators, policy makers, media, and the public at-large; and provides speaker services on various topics. NHERI also publishes research reports and the unique, academic, refereed journal *Home School Researcher*.



Brian D. Ray, Ph.D.

Full-length report on this study

The complete research report on this study of home-educated adults is entitled *Home Educated and Now Adults: Their Community and Civic Involvement, Views About Homeschooling, and Other Traits* and is available from NHERI.

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