



Homeschooling Style and Parenting Style

By Judy Arnall

Homeschooling is a popular alternative in education and is growing at a rate of 2.5% every year. Many parents consider homeschooling their children, but the image of Mom at the blackboard in the kitchen and the children not listening around the kitchen table fills them with dread. Rightly so! Homeschooling is not like that at all. In fact, even the word, homeschooling, is a bit of a misdemeanor – it’s not anything like school and it’s usually not at home either. Perhaps it should be called “community education” because most homeschoolers are out in the community living, working, volunteering and learning every day, more so than being “stuck at home”. There are many ways for your child to learn at home. It’s important for parents to decide if their homeschooling style is a good fit with their parenting style as both have to align in philosophy, methods and goals. Online education is not included here because it’s technically not home schooling. Online education is governed under the School Act, not the Home Education Regulations.

Does your parenting style fit your homeschooling style?

Authoritarian Parenting Style– A blended or classical style of homeschooling would suit you best. You may wish to have workbooks,

textbooks, a classroom, uniforms, and a set schedule every day. Basically, you are doing "school-at-home." There are defined subjects, class times and assignments every day. Most of the core subjects; language arts, math, science and social studies are taught using textbook and workbook curriculum. The parent is the teacher and the child is the student and the home environment is set up as a school. This homeschooling style would work best within a blended or aligned program, which must follow the Alberta Program of Studies Outcomes under the School Act.

Authoritative Parenting Style– A homeschooling style using eclectic methods, or unit studies, of homeschooling might be more for you. This style has some structure but with a lot of give and flexibility, hence the eclectic term that describes the fact that not one way works all the time. One or more of the core subjects might be on paper-based curriculum (usually math and language arts) and the rest are learned through field trips, unit studies, experiments, travel, etc. The parent is the teacher but the child has a lot of input into what is taught and how it's taught.

Democratic Parenting Style– An Unschooling, Waldorf, inquiry-based or Montessori approach might be better for you. These styles embrace that the child leads the way in how, when and what he learns. The parent's job is to provide a rich, nurturing environment that stimulates all the child's senses and leads to a love of learning and inquiry. Resources are infinite and usually not based on workbook or textbook curriculum, but rather a hands-on, experiential approach. These homeschooling styles would work best under a Traditional Home Education program where the outcomes do not have to follow the Alberta Program of Studies Outcomes.

The important thing to remember is always to change what isn't working. You are homeschooling for the flexibility to accommodate your family and whatever your family needs, there is a school board, facilitator, and program plan that will apply to you and your unique child.



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