

Shall We School the Preschoolers?

Ruth Beechick

I'll begin with the conclusion and follow with the article. If you have read me before, you probably know my conclusion that American middle class families do not need preschool or kindergarten at all. In fact, children's learning progresses more in a natural family setting than in a school setting. By natural setting, I do not mean homeschool in the home; I mean just normal family activities such as conversation, preparing and eating meals, shopping, running errands, taking trips, visiting friends, playing games, or whatever you do.

Research

There is no research that shows young children do better in classrooms. Some try to sound that way, as do the studies with children who do not have a good home. If those children receive loving attention in a good school, that can help. But the research is often misrepresented to pull in conscientious parents, too. Researchers can publicize just the improvement but fail to reveal that the children were below normal at the start.

A *Sesame Street* study in its early day tried home visits and gave parents instructions about what to do with the children with each program. On follow-up visits the parents had to report and turn in worksheets, and, sure enough, that "homeschooling" did help the children learn—at least the kind of facts taught on the program. The researchers publicized their conclusion that *Sesame Street* helps children learn, and by this means they obtained more government funding. Much research today is simply propaganda aimed at getting money or control through legislation.

Children learn thousands of words per year without ever having a "vocabulary" lesson. They learn grammar from conversing with people around them. By age seven they use the grammar level of their parents without ever having had a grammar lesson except occasional corrections, such as when you tell them to say "went" instead of "goed." Those vocabulary and grammar results are confirmed by many researches.

Children learn to understand numbers through games and handling ordinary things like blocks, cookies, or spoons. To put young children into books manipulating abstract symbols and memorizing rules is to slow down their understanding of the numbers behind the symbols. *Sesame Street*, at least in earlier days, specialized in helping children learn to count in order and to recognize and memorize the digits that stand for numbers. I asked a first grade teacher if she had to adjust her curriculum then since children came to school with that knowledge already. She said no, she still had to teach the meaning of numbers, as before.

Government Control

Just how rapidly the threatening government control will arrive is difficult to predict. They begin first by pre-schooling “poor” children, immigrant children, or whomever and hope to move on to everybody without much opposition. Coming elections will affect this.

If things get worse, you may have to take lessons from homeschoolers of the early 1980s. They evaded government in numerous ways. They were careful that a child was not out visibly playing or shopping during school hours. They made a name for their “school” and taught the children what to answer when a neighbor asked where they went to school. Some homeschoolers who were harassed by the government had to move to another state. Some were ready at an instant’s notice to put the kids in the car and drive to Wyoming. That was when social workers would take the kids first and ask questions later. In one state it was legal to homeschool up to seventh grade, so inventive parents registered their children as seventh graders until they graduated from high school. In those days the state laws prevailed. In the new movement, federal law will probably prevail, so it will be the same in all states.

A friend here did not get Social Security numbers for his children at birth, which meant he could not deduct for them on his income tax. He used a Christian “medical share” program for health coverage. The government makes the numbers necessary for any government benefits, and most insurance companies want them when adding children to the family health insurance. While the government is not seriously rounding up your children, the numbers may not be a big problem. Later, if they use them (or embedded chips) for keeping track of your children, you may need to find midwives of the kind that Moses’ mother had. Or be a midwife and help others.

Homeschooling is big business today. Many publishers, even major secular ones, make money from you all, and that will make it more difficult for government to stop homeschooling completely. They realize that, and they are adopting tricky procedures to lure you back into their clutches. For instance, a brazen plan now in operation is to let you enroll in public school but continue to teach at home. They offer books and computers and testing. If you fall for that, they now have you into government curriculum, which you wanted to avoid. Also, you will do the work and they will receive the tax money by counting your child as enrolled with them—many thousands of dollars per child. In Washington, D.C., it is now more than \$10,000 per child per year.

Many politicians are not concerned about quality education as you are. They are interested in raising little socialists who will depend on government and thus vote to keep them in power. Much of the education establishment, their textbooks and teacher training, is aimed at teaching one-world government instead of national sovereignty, as well as teaching about Islam and other religions but not Christianity.

Moses, after weaning, which could have been age five or later, was raised in the palace school. His mother apparently taught well during those early years—not

curriculum book facts, but about who God is and who His people are. Daniel's parents had more years to teach, but they apparently did a superb job too.

Let's not wait until things get that bad, but resist little controlling moves along the way so things do not continue to grow worse. Raise some legislators, or become one or help one, as some homeschool parents have already done. Raise media experts and lawyers and pastors with a strong Bible foundation to their thinking. We need all other talents, too, but some are more needed to restrain government control over education.

School Options

I am slow to suggest enrolling in a private school, even Christian, because for one, that deprives your children of the home environment they need and puts them in a classroom, which they don't need. For another, my observation is that even Christian schools follow too much of the government system. They may be free to teach Bible and to avoid bad morality, but academically they go along with the mistakes of today's education establishment. If they believe that school is good for your preschoolers that, in itself, shows their commitment to modern schooling.

Umbrella schools vary greatly. They must bow to certain government regulations in order to become licensed as schools. Some leave as much freedom to you as possible. Others want to help by doing as much of your work as they can from a distance. And some may not be run by true homeschoolers, as the online public school mentioned above.

Remember that preschoolers and kindergartners do not need a school of any kind. A school for preschoolers is a contradiction in terms. If they have older siblings and want to "school" along with them, keep a few books in their own school box for them to use when it is school time.

Traversing the maze of options may become more difficult with more government intrusion. On the other hand, we may be surprised that the breakdown of schooling becomes more obvious and the government becomes less able to keep track of all our children. To make it appear that government programs are working, they brag about the wrong things—low teacher-pupil ratio, graduation rates, and such. The low ratio requires more tax money and gives more government jobs, but private schools with higher ratios can achieve better results. To achieve higher graduation rates, districts lower the requirements and make the tests easier, and so forth. Teachers and schools have ways to raise their test scores, too. In one area that I know of they actually expel the low scorers and tell those parents that they should homeschool.

The schooling freedoms you enjoy were hard won by families twenty and thirty years ago. What might you contribute to the homeschoolers of twenty and thirty years from now?

Biographical Information

Copyright, 2009. All rights reserved by author below. Content provided by [The Old Schoolhouse® Magazine, LLC](#).

Dr. Ruth Beechick is a longtime teacher, editor, and author of numerous books and articles for homeschoolers. Most of them are available at www.Amazon.com or at www.HomeschoolingBooks.com. They all take a commonsense view and do not overwhelm with “educationese.”