



Why Some Parents Choose to Home School

University of California, Los Angeles
RESEARCH

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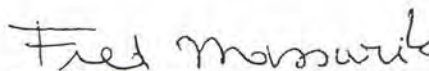
A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Education

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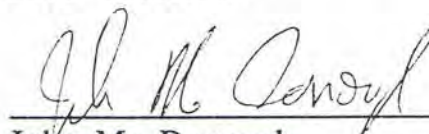
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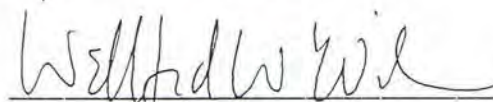
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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Home schools in America offer an alternative form of education to both traditional public and private schools for a growing number of school age children. As the trend towards home schooling increases, educational policy makers and professional educators are called upon to respond to this phenomenon as they search for ways to better serve children from a variety of educational arenas.

This study has investigated the reasons parents choose to home school their children. A select group of twenty-nine home school parents and eighteen non home school parents were studied.

This was a qualitative study. The primary method of investigation was the personal interview. While the study does provide for some quantitative analysis it has remained secondary to the qualitative aspects of the study.

During interviews home school parents cited nine overall reasons for beginning to home school. These ranged from a values conflict between home and school, to the child not succeeding academically in school. Often, however, it was a combination of these factors which finally led them to home school. Reasons for continuing to home school included increased family unity and the fact that some parents enjoyed being with their children.

Non home school parents discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional schools available to them. They discussed the advantages of home schooling, including one-on-one teaching and the benefit to children with special needs. The major objections of non home school parents to home schooling were a perception of social isolation and a lower standard of academics.

CHAPTER I: BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Home schools in America offer an alternative form of education to both traditional public and private schools for an estimated two-hundred and sixty thousand school age children.¹ This represents almost twenty times the number of students estimated in the early 1970's.² While this number is not large in relation to the total school age population of the United States, it represents a trend which is growing in popularity.

Home schooling is an area about which professional educators still know relatively little. Few research studies have been completed on the subject. Policy makers are unsure as to how to best respond to this growing phenomenon. This study has examined the major reasons why one group of home schoolers choose to educate their children at home. It has focused on the attitudes of home school parents toward the many forms of public and private schools available to them. In addition it has provided rich descriptions about the families that home school, including their daily schedules and the use of curriculum and teaching techniques.

¹Patricia M. Lines, "Home Instruction: An Overview," ERIC Document Reproduction Service, 294 453 (1986), p. 3.

²Ibid.

This study has also explored the factors that motivate parents to continue home schooling. It has probed the fears and frustrations of parents as they endeavor to home school and as well it has recorded their personal triumphs and victories. This information will greatly aid educators and policy makers as they seek to better serve children from a variety of educational arenas.

A home school may be defined as the instructional arrangement that results when a parent or group of parents choose to bear the full responsibility of educating their young at home apart from any traditional form of public or private school. Hours of instruction, curriculum materials, and subject matter differ greatly from one family to another. Reportedly, all fifty states allow for home schools, to a greater or lesser degree.³ While individual state requirements can be prohibitive to some extent, eighty percent of all legal cases brought against parents by state agencies are said to have resulted in judgements in favor of the home school parent.⁴ Concerns most often addressed by state legislation may be categorized into five areas:

1. Registration: All states require parents to communicate in some form their intention to educate their children at home. Twenty states require that local school authorities be notified as well. This notification may include registering as a private

³Ibid., p. 12.

⁴P. W. Biederman, "Parents Take Reins of Teaching into Their Own Hands," Los Angeles Times, IX:1-6, 29 November 1987.

or independent school. As part of this registration some states require immunization records.⁵

2. Minimum Attendance Requirements: Some states require that home schoolers complete a minimum number of instructional hours or days. In addition, attendance records must be kept by parents to verify compliance. All states require that children be enrolled in some educational program by a determined age.⁶
3. Teacher Certification: In most states parents themselves may directly teach their children without qualification. In other states parents must satisfactorily complete competency examinations. In still other states only state certificated teachers may instruct children at home.⁷
4. Curriculum: In addition to monitoring the number of hours and days of instruction, some states require that certain basic skills be taught as part of the curriculum. Parents must submit a written outline of the curriculum as well as provide progress reports. Standardized tests may also be required.⁸

⁵W. Konnert and J. Wendel, "What Your Parents Should Know When They Ask About Home Schooling," The American School Board Journal 175.5:45-46, 1988.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

5. Materials, Supplies, and Services: Most often when parents choose to educate their children at home they are no longer eligible to receive state supplied textbooks or materials. However, these parents may be eligible to receive services for their children which they are unable to supply. These resources may include psychological testing for learning handicaps or disabilities as provided by a trained school psychologist.⁹

Because home schools are accountable to legal requirements which vary from state to state, the make up of these schools can be greatly diversified. Individual parents may bear the full responsibility of the education process or small groups of parents may band together, sharing teaching responsibilities and resources. In addition, numerous home school parent support groups exist, some at the national level. These organizations supply curriculum material and suggestions, legal advice or services, and names and addresses of other home schooling parents for networking; and some produce their own periodical newsletters.

In a recent study of alternative forms of education by Patricia Lines, a former policy analyst for the United States Department of Education, parents who choose home school education for their children are viewed as falling into one of two categories.¹⁰ The first

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Patricia M. Lines, "Private Education Alternatives and State Regulations," Journal of Law and Education 12.2:180, 1983.

group view traditional forms of education as too conservative, lacking various resources to meet the needs of the total child. The second group are fundamental Christians who see traditional forms of education as too liberal and devoid of traditional values.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This part of the study will review two types of literature. The first of these is advocacy literature. This literature is for those involved in home schooling or for those considering home schooling. It is not within the scope of this study to examine the credibility of these viewpoints. However, the author believes that an understanding of these rationales will add much to an understanding of why some parents choose to home school their children. There are two major sources of this advocacy material, Raymond S. Moore of the Hewitt Research Foundation and the late John Holt of Holt Associates.¹¹

The second type of literature to be reviewed is data-based research studies. Only a modicum of these studies exist. Six of these studies which address the question of why parents choose to educate their children at home will be reviewed.

At the conclusion of the literature review the findings will be

¹¹M. A. Pittman, "Home Schooling: A Review of Literature," Journal of Thought, 21.4:11, 1986.

summarized. A discussion of the methods of investigation used by the studies will also be included. Finally, the limitations of the literature will be discussed.

ADVOCACY LITERATURE

Moore

The writings of Raymond S. Moore, a developmental psychologist, home school researcher, author, and founder of the Hewitt Research Foundation, outline a philosophical basis for home schooling. He encourages parents to home school their children, assertedly on the basis of research findings in education, psychology, and child development.

In recent years, according to Moore, there has been a trend to admit children to school at an earlier age than has been traditionally accepted. Preschools are in abundance. The reason parents are sending their children to learn in a formal setting at the tender age of three years and often younger, is that educators have insisted that children who attend school early are the highest achievers; those with a head start have an advantage over those who begin their formal education at a later stage of development. Moore believes that the exact opposite is true and that for higher achievement, later entry into formal educational programs is best.¹²

Moore states: "The quality of learning depends upon the maturity of the learner -- vision and hearing, consistent reasoning

¹²Raymond S. Moore, "The School at Home," Moody Monthly, p. 19, March 1984.

ability, balance ('lateralizing' of the brain hemispheres), and coordination. Once a child has achieved these in congruent proportions, he can learn in only weeks or months what other children learn in a number of years. For most children, including the brightest, this maturity seldom comes before ages eight to twelve.¹³

Another key factor, according to Moore is in the area of socialization. Some have challenged home schooling on the basis of social need. Moore believes that day care children are many times more aggressive than children cared for at home. He claims that young children who spend more of their elective time with peers rather than parents will be more peer dependent and have lower self esteem and that negative socialization is pervasive at the preschool level.¹⁴

Moore believes that the demands of any school system, regardless of academic or moral environment, are too rigorous for a child under the age of eight to twelve. He concludes that a child's physiological and neurological structure may actually be at risk when subjected to the expectations and demands of traditional educational environments. Moore also states that the social forces in operation at the traditional public or private school may result in negative socialization. He believes that children may be especially vulnerable when they first begin school at age five and again during the junior high school years.¹⁵

¹³Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 19-20.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 19.

Holt

In the early 1960's John Holt began to question the traditional American school system. He felt that children were subjected to a curriculum and environment which was boring and did not allow them the opportunity to explore their own desire for learning. The fixed curriculum did not allow students any choice of books, materials, subjects studied, or even the amount of study time. Holt believed that this situation left children with an indifferent feeling towards school. Children did not look forward to school, but instead began to hate it. Holt also believed that the traditional school system fostered failure in many students and left them feeling incompetent.¹⁶

In his writings, Holt encouraged educators to allow children more freedom in the selection of curriculum. He also stressed the importance of allowing students to evaluate their own work and work in groups. Holt believed that there was too much concern on the part of educators in the area of spelling and grammar. Educators were unduly concerned with pushing students through material and not with the overall quality of what was being taught or learned.¹⁷

Holt began to believe that the educational system itself was to blame for many of the problems that children were experiencing. He concluded that it was no longer possible to work with the system to resolve these problems.¹⁸ At this point Holt began to encourage

¹⁶Pittman, op. cit., p. 11.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 11-12.

¹⁸John C. Holt, How Children Fail, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1982), p. 23.

parents to take their children out of traditional forms of education and teach them at home, where parents could more easily control the child's learning environment, progress and pace. Holt believed that home schooling afforded parents and children the best opportunity to implement his philosophy of education.¹⁹

DATA BASED RESEARCH STUDIES

Gustavsen, 1981

Gustavsen's study of home school families ranks as the earliest formal investigation of home school families (Gustavsen, 1981). The study was designed to profile home school families who were members of the Hewitt Research Foundation. This organization is a national home school support group which offers literature and curriculum to a group of parents who are primarily fundamental Christians. There were five major goals of the study:

1. To discover the reasons parents choose to home school their children.
2. To outline the general characteristics of home schools.
3. To define the essential elements needed for home school success.
4. To highlight psychographic characteristics of home school families.
5. To highlight demographic characteristics of home school families.

¹⁹Ibid.

Parents in the Gustavsen study were mailed a thirty item researcher-designed questionnaire. The questions were closed ended and structured into two categories. In the first category parents were asked to rate statements on the importance or relevance of home schools. In this section parents were asked to rate with relevance to their decision to home school. The second category measured demographic characteristics of the parents and of the home schools.

Gustavsen used frequency distributions, percentages, and measures of central tendency for tabulating and reporting the data. Two hundred and twenty-one parents responded to the questionnaire, representing about a seventy-one percent return rate. These families were from forty-four states.

Upon analyzing the data collected Gustavsen concluded the following.

1. There were several major reasons parents home-schooled their children. First, parents were concerned about the moral health and character development of their children. Parents also felt there was too much competition and ridicule in the local public and private school. In addition parents believed that the overall educational quality of public and private schools was poor. Finally, parents enjoyed having their children at home with them.
2. The home schools themselves were typically small, with only two children. Both parents were involved in teaching the child;

however, the mother was the primary teacher. The curriculum was flexible and child-centered.

3. Parents believed there were several elements needed to make their home school successful. These included a deep love for their child, personal commitment and determination, support from both family and friends, and the ability to afford the additional expenses of home schooling.
4. A psychological profile of the parents indicated that most were politically conservative and attended church regularly. Parents also showed a deep concern over violence in schools and excessive governmental control of schools.
5. The demographic profile of families indicated that most lived in small rural communities. Most families regularly attended church. Most mothers were homemakers, while spouses were professional or skilled workers. Most parents had attended college from one to three years.²⁰

In conclusion Gustavsen states that these parents "...tend to be individualistic, law-abiding, concerned about their parental role, dissatisfied with available options in contemporary education... They desire to reestablish the home as the basic unit in a free enterprise

²⁰G. A. Gustavsen, "Selected Characteristics of Home Schools and Parents Who Operate Them" (Doctoral Dissertation, Andrews University, 1981), 4381A-432A.

society and are willing to confront social opposition in order to meet their personal goals."²¹

Linden, 1983

In this study sixty-six home school families, representing one hundred and twenty-four children living in the state of Texas, were investigated.²² A mailed questionnaire was used to probe many of the same areas of inquiry as Gustavsen's study, and with similar results.

Linden's study went beyond Gustavsen's by asking parents to comment on their general perception of local school authorities with regard to home schooling. Home school parents considered most school authorities to be non-cooperative. Unlike the families Gustavsen had studied, these parents were from suburban areas, were very active in community affairs, and often had no more than a high school education. The programs that these parents operated tended to be highly structured. In most families mothers taught their children for about three hours a day, and children worked for another two hours on independent school work.

Linden concluded that parents choose to home school their children for two general reasons. The first was to avoid the humanistic and progressive values they saw their children being exposed to at school. The second was simply that these parents

²¹Ibid., p. 4382A.

²²M. R. Linden, "An Investigation of Alternative Education: Home-Schooling" (Doctoral Dissertation, East Texas State University, 1983), p. 3547A.

loved their children and wanted to have a greater role in the education of their young.

Greene, 1984

In this study Greene investigated the Centralized Correspondence Study Program in the state of Alaska.²³ This program is a complete correspondence education program for children, kindergarten through grade twelve, offered by the Alaska Department of Education. Any child who has not completed the twelfth grade may enroll in the program, which is taught by a home teacher. This home teacher is most often the parent of the child.

Greene randomly selected two hundred parents from an available roster of four hundred and fifty-seven parents participating in the program. These families were mailed a two part questionnaire. One part of the questionnaire had sixteen items and was designed for the parent. The other part of the questionnaire had eleven items and was designed for the student.

Greene's items, like those in the Linden study, questioned parents in many of the same areas as Gutavsen's study. Greene used several different forms for the questions. In some cases closed ended questions were used and possible responses were included. In other cases parents were encouraged to add comments. Out of two hundred parents only forty-four percent of the families returned the questionnaire.

²³S. S. Greene, "Home Study In Alaska: A Profile of K-12 Students in the Alaska Centralized Correspondence Study Program" (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 255 494, 1984).

Greene's investigation provided results similar to those of Gustavsen and Linden; however, there were several differences. Parents in Green's study lived in more diverse areas. Over twenty-six percent of the parents lived in large communities, while thirty-one percent of the families lived in isolated situations. This same diversity was present when examining the educational background of parents. About twenty-six percent of the parents had completed a high school education, thirty-eight percent of the parents had completed some college, and twenty-four percent had college degrees.

Greene listed the following primary reasons as to why parents choose to be part of the program.

1. The family lived too far from an available school and transportation was not available.
2. The family had no permanent residence and traveled throughout the year.
3. The parents wanted to integrate daily practical life skill with schooling.
4. Children had unhappy experiences in regular school.
5. Home school was consistent with the parents' self-sufficient lifestyle.²⁴

²⁴B. D. Ray, "A Comparison of Home Schooling and Conventional Schooling: With a Focus on Learners Outcomes" (Doctoral Dissertation, Oregon State University, 1986), pp. 9-10.

Williams, Arnoldsen, and Reynolds, 1984

In April of 1984 Williams, Arnoldsen and Reynolds presented a paper on home schools at the annual meeting of the American Education Research Association.²⁵ The authors focused on three areas of inquiry, the first of which will be reviewed closely for the purposes of this study.

1. Why do home schoolers choose to teach their own children?
2. How do they conduct their home schools?
3. What are some of the participating parents' major concerns with this approach to education?

The authors list two types of research activities as a basis for their study:

1. The researchers used the descriptions of home school parents already published in several home schooling newsletters to help generate hypotheses concerning the operation of the home-schools.
2. The researchers conducted naturalistic case studies with several parents at various stages of home schooling. These observations were conducted over a ten month period. Interviews, both structured and unstructured, were conducted with parents and children.

²⁵D. D. Williams, L. M. Arnoldsen, and P. Reynolds, "Understanding Home Education: Case Studies of Home Schools. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 244 392, 1984).

The number of home school parents studied, along with demographic information, was not provided. Interview questions are also not available for review. Finally the researchers admit having little insight into methods for gathering the anecdotal records used by the home school newsletters.

Based primarily on the case studies, basic reasons as to why parents home school were reported as follows:

1. **Child Seems Unsuitd for School:** In this case parents felt that the schools were unable to provide the individual attention and care needed for their child. This may have been because the child was bored or unable to comprehend the material presented in the regular classroom; or the student may have been advanced academically beyond the classroom. Finally, the student may have been experiencing social difficulty with other students or even the teacher.
2. **Parents and Children Want to Feel in Control:** Some parents found that the school system was controlling their time and the time of their children. Children were not free to explore their own interests and parents lost control of what their children were learning. These parents, at times, tried to reform the schools, but this effort led to frustration. By home schooling, both parents and children felt they had maintained better control of what they were learning and of their lives in general.
3. **Socialization:** Some home school parents wanted their family to be the center of the child's social interaction. They did not

want their children exposed to peer pressure that they could not control. They believed that peer pressure could at times be damaging to the development of their children. In addition these parents did not want their children in an environment where rivalry and ridicule were commonplace and extreme competition was present. By protecting their children and providing for their moral development, these parent's believed their children would be better able to handle the pressures of a diverse society.

4. **Conceptualization of the Learning Process:** Based on their own experience with traditional public and private schools, home school parents believed that these schools did not foster independent thinking. Nor do they believe that these schools entertained the natural curiosity of children. Instead they saw the schools as focusing, many times, on the acquisition of information which was irrelevant to the needs of the child.
5. **Ideas About Content:** Some home school parents were concerned with teaching concepts such as God, honesty and freedom. They believed that these concepts were not taught in public schools with any degree of regularity. These parents also believed that there may have been other subjects taught in school which were in conflict with their own basic value system. These parents believed that they could selectively control the things that their children were learning and teach them with greater success because of the individualization home schooling could afford.

6. **Personal Interest:** Some parents enjoyed watching their children learn and wanted to be an active part of the process. Even when other concerns were not part of a parent's rationale for home schooling, some parents still felt they were compelled to play a major role in the education of their children. They felt that home schooling best afforded them this opportunity.

Mahan and Ware, 1987

In July of 1987 Mahan and Ware completed a study on home schooling, a master's research project for the School of Education at the University of Dayton.²⁶ The researchers had two main goals in mind.

The first of these goals was to determine the reasons parents choose to educate their children at home. The second goal was to investigate and compare the attitudes of home school parents and school superintendents concerning the benefits of home schooling. The setting for this study was a five county area in midwestern and southwestern Ohio.

Data were gathered in two ways. The first of these was a checklist which, according to the researchers, represented the ten most frequently mentioned reasons for home schooling based on a survey of home school literature. Parents were asked to pick from the list of ten their five top reasons for home schooling and then to

²⁶B. M. Mahan, B. J. Ware, "Home Schooling: Reasons Parents Choose This Alternative Form of Education and a Study of Attitudes of Home-Schooling Parents and Public School Superintendents Toward the Benefits of Home Schooling" (Master's Research Project, University of Dayton, 1987).

rank order these choices. This checklist was distributed by mail to forty-seven home school parents. Seventy percent of these parents responded.

According to Mahan and Ware the responses indicated that the following five reasons for home schooling were most important:

1. Parents desire to incorporate their religious beliefs into the educational program.
2. Parents desire to be involved with the child's education.
3. Parents fear the negative effect of peer pressure in traditional schools.
4. Parents desire a family life which is home-centered rather than one which revolves around school activities and schedules.
5. Parents believe that children are better socialized by their example than by other children.

The second method of data acquisition used by Mahan and Ware was to distribute a questionnaire to forty-seven home schooling parents and thirty-seven public school superintendents. Thirty-five parents responded, representing a seventy-four percent response rate. Seventeen superintendents replied, representing a forty-six percent response rate. The questionnaire consisted of twenty stated benefits of home schooling. For example, "...a home school environment provides a calm climate in which the child can develop as he or she should."²⁷ As with the checklist these stated beliefs

²⁷Ibid., p. 21.

were based on the authors' review of home school literature. These beliefs about the benefits of home schooling fell into six categories:

1. Physical development.
2. Cognitive development.
3. Emotional development.
4. Social development.
5. Integrated maturity level.
6. Personal convictions.

The respondents were asked to score each statement by circling one of five responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. According to the authors the scores demonstrate a consistent difference between the attitudes of parents and those of the school superintendents. Parents tended to agree with most belief statements, while school superintendents were more skeptical. The only items with which superintendents agreed had to do with teaching according to one's own personal convictions. They remained undecided on nine other statements and were in disagreement with nine others.

Mahan and Ware conclude that the study has demonstrated findings which are in agreement with recent home school literature with the exception that little emphasis was placed by parents on school readiness and the presence of harsh competition in traditional schools as factors for deciding to home school.

The researchers also conclude that although there is great disagreement between parents and school superintendents there is

still one area of agreement. School superintendents believe that moral and religious preferences are being served by the home schooling of children.

Van Galen, 1987

Van Galen, in a 1987 study of home school parents in Ohio, investigated the reasons parents choose to teach their own children.²⁸ The goals of the study were to examine the home school movement as an educational and sociological phenomenon. Van Galen sought to look closely at the effects of home schooling on the family unit. The study involved observation of home school parental meetings at the local, regional, and state level. All of the parents involved in this study were members of some type of home school support group.

In addition to these observations Van Galen interviewed twenty-three home school families. The author does not give the items used or the nature of the interview. The families were at different stages of home schooling; some had been home schooling for several years while others were just beginning. It is upon these interviews that most of the conclusions presented in the study are based. Van Galen examined the data collected from these interviews and concluded that parents begin home schooling for three general reasons.

²⁸J. Van Galen, "Explaining Home Education: Parents Accounts of Their Decisions to Teach Their Own Children", The Urban Review, 19(3):161-177, 1987.

The first of these reasons was to strengthen their family. The majority of parents studied believed that society is presently undermining the strength of the family unit. They believed that public and private schools were a reflection of society and helped to perpetuate it. Parents whose children had attended traditional public or private schools felt that the schools were competing with them for authority over their children. With the child's attentions being focused on school, parents felt that their influence was at risk. In addition parents believed that the time demands of traditional schooling took away too much precious family time.

Many mothers felt that their role as parent and homemaker took on new significance and value as a result of their decision to teach their own children. Van Galen discovered that several parents had taken their children out of public or private schools in an attempt to undo earlier emotional damage caused by family problems. These parents were committing themselves to be an active part of the emotional healing process of their own children.

These parents believed that the public or private school would return their children to them without their family values intact. They felt compelled to keep their children at home.

The second reason parents chose to home school was that they feared the influence of others who did not hold the same values that they did. These parents saw the schools as systematically teaching values and beliefs that were different from their own. Most of the parents studied were Christian fundamentalists, but even parents with other ideologies voiced concern. Christian families believed that

the schools approached subjects such as sex education and values clarification from a "humanistic" point of view. These parents were concerned that their children were being taught to solve problems and see the world without including a knowledge of God. For these parents no compromise was possible. Children could not be taught one system of values at home while being taught another at school. Included in this section were parental concerns about "peer pressure." Not only were parents worried about what their children were being exposed to in the classroom, but they were equally concerned about the influences their children might be exposed to on the playground. Many parents believed that this "negative socialization" was present at Christian schools as well. Parents felt that by sending their children to school they lost control over who their children were coming in contact with. These parents believed that young children were especially susceptible to the influence of other children, and that these influences were most often negative. Not all parents were in agreement as to what they were protecting their children from, but in light of their beliefs about traditional schools they felt compelled to distance themselves from them.

The final reason some parents chose to home school was that they felt that they knew the particular needs of their child better than school teachers did. They also felt that they were best suited to teach their children because they knew their child's learning style better than anyone. In addition, some children had physical problems which interfered with learning. Parents believed that schools were not prepared to deal with these problems. Parents

believed that children with learning problems could best overcome these problems in a loving home environment. These parents felt they were best able to teach their children because of their in-depth knowledge of them, their patience with them, and their love for them. In light of these beliefs parents felt that there was no option to home schooling.

SUMMARY AND LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA BASED LITERATURE

In reviewing the methodological base for the above presented literature several major concerns arise.

Gustavsen, Linden, and Greene exclusively used mail questionnaires to research home school parents. The advantage of such a research methodology is that it enables researchers to quickly measure the responses of numerous parents over a widespread area. It is an effective way to gather demographic information. Also it can be useful when one wants to assess the effects of certain attitudes on parental choice. In addition, data analysis is facilitated because responses are easily coded. However there are many difficulties. When parents are asked to respond to closed ended questions which measure other than demographic information they are forced to choose an answer which may not totally explain their intended response. In addition, no explanation of the response is possible. Parents are not free to ask for clarification of questions and likewise researchers are not able to probe. There is also the danger of solicitation of response. For example, while parents are reviewing a

list of possible answers provided by a researcher for a given question they may select an answer which they feel will impress the researcher; or these same parents may select an answer because it impresses them. In each case the answer was planted in the mind of the parent by the researcher and may not be the parent's true response.

The investigations of Gustavsen, Linden, Greene, and Mahan and Ware were not centered exclusively on why parents home school. In Greene's study, for example, it is difficult to see how a sixteen item questionnaire, no matter how carefully designed, could glean anything more than a glimpse of the thought process of parents as they make a decision to home school.

The remaining two studies, one by Williams, Arnoldsen, and Reynolds, the other by Van Galen, used the interview process as part of their investigation. Their use of the interview has enhanced our view of the thought process of parents as they make the decision to home school. The interview process, depending on its nature, can allow parents to ask questions of clarification and gives the researcher the opportunity to clarify and probe. Additionally, the interview permits the discovery of influences that did not occur to the researcher previously, and thus would not have been probed in a questionnaire. A review of these studies reveals more insight into the reasons parents choose to teach their children at home.

The sampling process of these studies predisposes certain response patterns. For example Gustavsen's research sample was drawn from a listing of parents belonging to the Hewitt Research

Association. This list represented the largest available source of home school parents at the time of Gustavsen's study. The majority of these parents were fundamental Christians and their rationale for home schooling might have been significantly different from families of another religious or philosophical persuasion. Greene's study sampled parents in Alaska. As was expected, one of the primary reasons parents home schooled was because they lived too far from available public or private schools. The sampling process of these studies has limited the applicability of their conclusions.

The reasons parents chose to educate their children at home, as suggested by the above presented literature, can be summarized into ten major categories.

1. **Physiological and Neurological Maturity:** There is concern on the part of some parents that young children lack the needed physiological and neurological maturity to attend school without damage. They believe that a child's brain is a complex mechanism which needs time to mature, and that children subjected to the rigors of a formal education system before the ages of eight to ten may be at risk.
2. **Psychological Damage and Peer Dependence:** Some parents believe that schools expose children to ridicule and harsh competition. In addition they fear that their children may become peer dependent. They believe that peer dependency can be especially damaging during two stages of a child's development, at the primary level when children begin to form and shape values and again during the junior high school years

where it may pressure them to reject the traditional values of the home.

3. **Moral or Philosophical Conflict:** Some parents believe that schools do not teach moral, religious or philosophical values. Some parents believe that schools teach a system of morality or philosophy which does not complement, and may even contradict, values expressed in the home.
4. **Curricular Concerns:** Some parents believe that the school does not offer the academic curriculum needed to meet the needs of the total child. Some believe that the system is not flexible enough and does not allow students to exercise their natural curiosity. Some parents are concerned about the selection of subjects, the scheduling of the daily activities, and the emphasis on testing and evaluation.
5. **Teaching Concerns:** Some parents question the ability of teachers to teach in a system where teacher to student ratios can average one to twenty-eight. These parents believe that they know their children better than any teacher. They believe they have a knowledge of their learning styles and needs. They believe they offer greater flexibility in teaching and disciplining their own children than does the local school.
6. **Governance Issues:** Some parents believe that they no longer have an active role in influencing the educational systems which serve their children. This may be due in part to administrative indifference or to the presence of an educational bureaucracy which intimidates them.

7. **Physical School Environment:** Some parents are concerned with the safety and cleanliness of the schools available to them.
8. **School Availability:** For some parents schools are simply not available because they live in remote areas or travel from place to place.
9. **Special Needs of the Child:** Some parents home school because their children have had unpleasant experiences in school. Others have children with emotional, psychological, or physical problems. They believe that the school can not fully service their children.
10. **Special Needs of the Parent:** Some parents want to play a greater role in the educating of their children. They enjoy being with their children and feel that their role as parent is enhanced by teaching their own children. They believe that home schooling strengthens the family.
Some parents feel that they are in competition with schools. These parents want to be the major influence on the lives of their children. They do not want the school system dictating to them a schedule for their lives or the lives of their children.

In summary, the above literature concludes that home school parents chose to teach their own children for one or more reasons. These rationales can be categorized into ten broad areas; however there are several limitations with this body of literature.

The first of these limitations is that there are so few research studies which have been done on home school families. The number

is growing each day, but as discussed above only a small number of data based research studies have been completed which deal with the question of why parents chose to educate their own children. A second problem is that a high percentage of these studies rely heavily and almost exclusively on questionnaires as a basis for their conclusions. These methodologies provide ample demographic information, as discussed above; however they only serve to provide introductory information as to why parents chose to home school. A third limitation, again discussed above, deals with the sampling process used in some of the studies. A limited sampling process predisposes certain response patterns.

CHAPTER II: RESEARCH DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

This section will discuss the purpose of the study, the setting for the study, the means of data acquisition, and the procedure for data analysis.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine why one group of parents has chosen to teach their own children at home. The above literature review has suggested several possible rationales as to why home school parents choose to teach their own children. These explanations have been categorized into ten broad areas:

1. Physiological and Neurological Maturity.
2. Psychological Damage and Peer Dependence.
3. Moral and/or Philosophical Conflict.
4. Curricular Concerns.
5. Teaching Concerns.
6. Governance Issues.
7. Physical School Environment.
8. School Availability.
9. Special Needs of the Child.
10. Special Needs of the Parent.

Each of these rationales has found support through the literature review. This study has focused on discovering the rationales that parents use for home schooling their children. The study has also investigated the rationales given by non home school parents for choosing not to home school their children.

The study began by creating a demographic profile of a select group of home school and non home school parents. This profile allowed the researcher to compare the groups of parents for similarities and differences which might have contributed to the decision-making process of parents in choosing the type of education that they did for their children.

The study investigated the attitudes of both home school and non home school parents toward the public and private schools available to them. In comparing and contrasting these two groups of parents a distinct difference between the two groups of parents was identified. This distinction, which the study examines and discusses at length, provides insight into the decision-making process of both groups of parents. This type of in-depth investigation will add clarification to the above rationales suggested by the literature. In addition to investigating each of these rationales the researcher will discuss other possible explanations for home schooling.

RESEARCH SETTING

Home school parents are spread throughout the United States in a wide variety of settings. No national directory of home school

parents exists. In light of this situation it is difficult to identify a population of parents from which to sample. However, many home school organizations have been formed as parents come together and seek support systems. The researcher believes that these organizations offer the best opportunity for investigating home school parents. These organizations offer a listing of home school parents who otherwise might be difficult to identify and contact. The following criteria were considered desirable in selecting an organization from which parents may be selected for inclusion in the study.

1. The home school parents in the organization must have a variety of schools available to them. The study focuses on why parents chose home schools above other forms of schooling. The parents studied should have reasonable choices available to them other than home schools. These schools should include public, private religious, and private nonreligious schools.
2. A sufficient number of home school parents should be available in the organization to allow for a sample of reasonable size.
3. Children should be represented, as much as possible, from grades K through 12 to allow the researcher to determine whether reasons for home schooling differ from one level to another.
4. Cooperation of the organization's administration must be assured including:
 - a) A reasonable use of records and documents.

- b) The use of the organization's name when reporting findings of the study.
- c) A willingness on the part of the administration to serve as a liaison between home school parents and the investigator.

Sunland Christian School, located in Sunland, California was selected for study because it closely met the above criteria and was accessible to the researcher because of its proximity. Sunland Christian School was designated as a private school in the State of California. Sunland Christian School was not a school in the traditional sense of the word. It provided oversight and counsel and allowed for a complete course of *independent study* in kindergarten through grade twelve. Parents were expected to serve as teachers for their own children at home. California officials have thus far allowed any parent or group of parents to register with the state as a private school and educate their children at home.

Sunland Christian School was an affiliate of Household of Faith Christian Church. It was originally formed in January of 1986 as a small group of parents sought resources and support for themselves and their home schooled children. Beginning with five children the organization grew to a 1989-90 enrollment of four hundred and seventy students representing two hundred and forty-five families.²⁹

²⁹Sunland Christian School, Informational Brochure, 1988-1989.

An enrollment fee of fifty dollars per family was required. Monthly tuition fees were twenty-five dollars for the first child, ten dollars for the second, and five dollars for the third. A family would incur a monthly fee of not more than forty dollars per month regardless of the number of additional students enrolled in the school.

Parents were required to attend monthly "accountability meetings." These meetings allowed parents to share ideas and information and to submit required paper work. These meetings also served as support to parents.

Sunland Christian School required that parents keep records that included attendance cards, an outline of semester objectives, quarterly report cards, and a recording of all books read by students. In addition a curriculum outline was required of each parent upon enrollment. These records were kept by the school and became part of the students' permanent record.

Support services offered to parents by Sunland Christian School included two full time credentialed teachers who assisted with teaching suggestions and curricular ideas, and oversaw record keeping. Each year Sunland Christian School tested students, using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. Parents used any of three different types of curriculum: ready-made home school curriculum offered by any number of publishers that had developed materials particularly for home use, a parent-devised curriculum, or a combination of these two.

Optional aspects of the program, which sometimes involved a modest additional cost to the parent, included the following:

1. Monthly "campus days" provided guest speakers for students from such organizations as the Fire Department, the Police Department, and the Los Angeles Zoo. Additionally, a science fair or oral student reports might be included.
2. Each month Sunland Christian School offered field trips to points of educational or cultural interest.
3. Each week "park days" provided opportunities for coordinated sports activities.
4. Throughout the year seminars were given to promote parent education. Examples of topics included childhood development, curricular ideas, or legal aspects of home schooling.
5. "Friday school" allowed for various group learning experiences for the children. Parents who participated in this activity usually met on four consecutive Fridays, dividing into four groups designated by student age.
6. There were special event programs for Christmas and other holidays. In addition there were also school programs for graduation, and the recognition of students. These programs were also optional.

The researcher contacted Terry Neven, principal of Sunland Christian School and pastor of Household of Faith, and discussed the proposed study during a two hour meeting. Pastor Neven responded enthusiastically and agreed to host and cooperate in the study.

PROCEDURE FOR GATHERING DATA

Information was gathered from Sunland Christian School families and from a comparison group of non home schooling families through the use of a demographic questionnaire, an attitude questionnaire, and primarily, through a personal interview.

It is important to note many parents had more than one child involved in home schooling. These parents were investigated as to their rationale for educational choice for each individual child. Any unnecessary duplicate questions used on the demographic or attitude questionnaires or in the interview were omitted.

Sampling Parents

A six-item questionnaire was used to gather preliminary information on home school parents. Terry Neven, principal of Sunland Christian School, agreed to serve as a liaison between the researcher and the home school parents. The researcher relied heavily on the charismatic leadership of Terry Neven to persuade as many parents as possible to participate in the study. At the final parent "accountability meeting" for the school year 1988 - 1989 the study was introduced to those parents currently enrolled in the home school program. These meetings were held at several locations throughout the Southern California area to accommodate parents from various geographical locations. During the presentation the researcher discussed the goals and procedure of the study and made

efforts to convince and assure parents of complete anonymity. Parents at various stages of home schooling, including those experiencing difficulty, were encouraged to participate.

The questionnaire gathered the names of those wishing to participate in the study along with their address, phone number, and the number and ages of children. From this group of responding parents a sample was generated. The actual questionnaire may be seen in Appendix A.

Sunland Christian Schools had two hundred and forty-five families registered at the close of the 1988 - 1989 school year. As a result of the presentations made at the various parent "accountability meetings," one hundred and twenty-five parents responded that they were interested in participating in the study. According to the records of Sunland Christian Schools, only sixty percent of all parents attended their designated final "accountability meeting." A letter, drafted by Terry Neven, was sent to those parents not in attendance and as a result of that letter an additional ten parents expressed interest in the study. A third letter, drafted by the researcher, was sent to parents who did not respond and an additional nine parents responded. The total number of responding parents was then one hundred and forty-four. This represents a response of fifty-eight percent.

While a higher response rate was hoped for, this low response rate can be explained for two reasons. First, home school parents are traditionally reserved. These parents may perceive outside investigations of any type as a threat to their privacy. Other parents

are fearful and are aware that even in California, where legislative indulgence has permitted home schooling, parents have been brought to court by several local school districts. Second, in order to protect the privacy of the parents of Sunland Christian Schools, Terry Neven never released the names of parents to the researcher. Thus rather than sampling all two hundred and forty-five parents and then contacting them to ask if they would participate in the study, all parents had to be addressed at "accountability meetings." To contact parents by phone or in person prior to their consent was not permitted. The researcher was only allowed to send a follow up letter, through the school office, to parents who had not expressed an interest in the study.

Information received through the initial questionnaire allowed the researcher to create a roster of home school parents willing to participate in the study. From this roster a stratified random sample of twenty-nine home school parents was drawn. This sample represented children from four age categories, allowing for possible variety in responses from parents based on this age difference. The twenty-nine home school families generated through the sampling process represented sixty-one children who were being home schooled.

Table 1: Sample of Home School Families

AGE OF CHILD	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	PERCENT OF CHILDREN
5 - 8	21	34
9 - 11	22	36
12 - 14	11	18
15 and older	7	11

Non home schooling parents were identified during the personal interview with home school parents. The interview closed by asking home school parents to identify parents who:

1. Were similar to them in overall value and belief system.
2. Were aware of home schooling.
3. Had decided not to educate their children at home. This did exclude the possibility of including parents who had previously home schooled but decided not to continue.

The researcher requested that the initial contact with non home school parents be made by the home school parents who identified them. The home school parents were asked to introduce the study to the non home school parents and request that they be part of the study. The researcher then contacted the home school parents and obtained the non home school parents' telephone numbers for those parents who agreed to be part of the study. Eighteen of the home school families, or sixty percent, were able to recruit non home school parents for the study.

These non home school parent candidates were contacted by telephone and the study was reintroduced as follows:

"Hello. My name is Steven Gray. I am currently doing research at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) on how parents feel about some of the schools in their area. In particular I am researching why some parents choose to teach their children at home and other parents do not.

"As part of the study we are interviewing parents who are aware of home schooling but have chosen to send their children to a private or public school. The study is being conducted under the direction of professors at the university and will include strict guidelines for anonymity. What would be a good date and time for us to meet?"

As with home school parents, a representative sample of non home school parents from a variety of age categories was obtained. Additionally, non home school parents represented a variety of traditional schools. This sampling process yielded a total of eighteen non home school families. Two of these non home school families had tried home schooling before moving to traditional schools.

Table 2: Sample of Non Home School Families

AGE OF CHILD	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	PERCENT OF CHILDREN
5 - 8	16	42
9 - 11	15	39
12 - 14	4	11
15 and older	3	8
TYPE OF SCHOOL PATRONIZED	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	PERCENT OF CHILDREN
Public	28	74
Private Religious	10	26
Private Nonreligious	0	0

Gathering Demographic and Attitudinal Information From Parents

The home school parents selected for the study were contacted by phone. The researcher discussed an appropriate time for a personal interview in their home or other convenient location. Parents were informed that they would be receiving a confirmation letter and a short background questionnaire which should be completed before the arrival of the researcher for the personal interview. The rationale was that parents and researcher would then be free to discuss more in depth aspects of home schooling with regard to parental choice.

A cover letter, seen in Appendix B, provided the following information:

1. Again introduced the study and the researcher.
2. Again assured parents of anonymity.
3. Confirmed the date and time of the personal interview.

4. Introduced the background questionnaire.
5. Thanked them for their participation.

The demographic questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions which served to provide basic information. It probed areas such as the length of time the child had been taught at school, the educational background of the parents, as well as other socio-economic information. The demographic questionnaire may be found in Appendix C.

The non home school parents selected for the study were contacted using the same procedure that was used for home school parents. The same confirmation letter received by home school parents was sent to each non home school parent.

All non home school parents who participated in the study were sent a demographic questionnaire. This questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions which served to provide basic demographic information. This questionnaire was similar to the one used earlier for home school parents with some modifications. The demographic questionnaire may be found in Appendix D.

Before interviewing parents the researcher administered a six-item attitude questionnaire to them. The questionnaire probed parents' knowledge or perception of the public, private nonreligious, and private religious schools in their area. The questionnaire measured the impressions of parents in areas such as teacher quality, discipline, academic standards, average class size, physical

facilities, and the quality of school administrators. The attitude questionnaire may be seen in Appendix E.

Interviewing Parents

The personal interview was selected as the data collection method to be given primary emphasis because it produced a richness and depth not available through other investigative mediums. Earlier studies had used the interview process to gather general information concerning home school parents. However these studies did not focus on and fully explore the attitudes of parents as to their rationale for educational selection. This study used the interview process systematically to question and probe parents in many different areas.

Twenty-nine home school parents were scheduled for sixty minute interviews. Actual interviews ranged in length from forty-five to ninety minutes. These interviews were taped and later transcribed verbatim.

Open-ended questions were used to probe parents' attitudes. These questions served only as prompts and allowed opportunity for explanation. The interviewer was free to move through the areas of inquiry in any order and questions were deleted or added as the interview progressed. The questions listed denote areas of interest only and were not used as a strict procedural guideline. A list of the possible prompts may be seen in Appendix F.

The interview was designed to allow the investigator to ask open-ended attitudinal questions first. This was to minimize

contamination by suggestion and avoid the solicitation of response. This procedure allowed the interviewer the opportunity to clarify open-ended questions while at the same time prodding for additional parental responses.

In the pre-test stage of the study, the demographic questionnaire, the attitude questionnaire, and the interview prompts were presented and administered to a group of three home school parents. Responses and recommendations were noted and changes in the questionnaires, interview prompts, or proceedings were made in light of these revelations.

The procedure for interviewing non home school parents was identical to that used for home school parents. However the interview prompts were tailored to non home school parents. The possible prompts may be seen in Appendix G. The attitudinal questionnaire was identical to that used with home school parents. Eighteen non home school parents were scheduled for sixty minute interviews, though actual interviews ranged in length from forty-five to ninety minutes.

The demographic questionnaire, the attitude questionnaire, and the interview prompts were presented and administered to a pre-test group of two non home school parents. Responses and recommendations were noted and changes in the questionnaires, interview prompts, or proceedings were made in light of these revelations.

PROCEDURE FOR ANALYZING THE DATA

This study is primarily qualitative in nature. The data evaluated are chiefly words as opposed to numbers, in this case the actual interviews with home school and non home school parents. Qualitative data were preferred because they yield well-grounded rich descriptions and explanations of the processes occurring in parents as they consider, select, and engage in a particular forms of education.³⁰

According to Miles and Huberman, (Miles and Huberman, 1984) qualitative studies allow for serendipitous findings and new theoretical integrations, they preserve a chronological flow and go beyond preconceptions and frameworks. As well, these words can be organized into stories that have a concrete, vivid and meaningful flavor. The arrangement of these qualitative data are often more interesting and convincing than numbers and figures.³¹

Finally if qualitative studies are done correctly and carefully they provide for conclusions that are convincing, (Smith, 1978), increasingly grounded and explicit (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

While this study does provide for some quantitative analysis it has remained secondary to the qualitative aspects of the study. The attitude questionnaire collected limited quantitative data. The

³⁰Matthew B. Mills and A. Michael Huberman, Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984), p. 15

³¹Ibid.

attitude questionnaire was designed to gather information which would introduce the reader and the researcher to the opinions that parents held with regard to the public, private nonreligious, and religious schools available. Similarities and differences between home school and non home school parents with regard to their attitude about the traditional schools available to them were highlighted by the researcher and then pursued during the interview process.

The actual procedure for analyzing data followed the *Interactive Model* as outlined by Miles and Huberman.³² This procedure consists of three distinct phases: Data Reduction, Data Display, and finally Conclusion Drawing and Verification.

Data reduction began at an anticipatory level before the actual contacting of parents. The selection of a particular site, in this case Sunland Christian Schools, the sampling of parents, and the selection of demographic and attitude questions and interview prompts did much to reduce the type of data collected. For example, by sampling parents exclusively from a home school organization affiliated with a Christian church, certain responses parents gave with regard to their decision to home school might almost certainly be biased. The majority of parents in the study expressed a particular religious and philosophical persuasion which was tied to their selection of Sunland Christian School. This can be seen as a limitation in that the results of the study are more difficult if not impossible to generalize to all home school parents at large. On the other hand this particular study

³²Ibid., pp. 21-23.

may do much to inform us concerning the motivation of home school parents from similar religious or philosophical persuasions. Thus the selection of a particular study site, in this case Sunland Christian School, limited the collection of data while at the same time allowing for the in-depth study of a unique group of parents.

The literature review allowed the researcher to gain an understanding of what prior research had explored and clarified with regard to home school parents and their decision to home school. It allowed the researcher to create interview prompts dealing with those areas unexplored by earlier studies. For example, while the literature review had cited reasons parents began to home school it failed to pursue the possibility that there might exist a difference between the reasons parents began to home school and why they continued to home school? This is significant for in pursuing the reasons that parents continued to home much new information previously undiscovered by earlier studies, especially with regard family interaction, was brought to light.

The clarification and selection of questions and prompts were allowed to emerge from the field. A sample of three home school and two non home school parents were studied to help produce additional and significant research questions, to help identify important actors, and to help assess which instruments would be most appropriate for evaluation.³³ The chi square test of independence, which was used to assess demographic and attitudinal differences did little more than reveal obvious and glaring

³³Ibid., p. 28.

differences between home school and non home school parents. This is due in part to the small sample used for the study. Rather than rely solely on this test to reveal difference worth pursuing the researcher carefully examined the responses parents gave on the demographic and attitudinal questionnaire for any hint of distinction which might prove significant in understanding the motivation of parents. For example, while tabulating the results of the demographic questionnaires it was noted that home school families listed a much higher level of religiosity as indicated by religious affiliation than non home school parents. The researcher therefore felt compelled to pursue an inquiry into the possible link between religiosity and or religious affiliation and the decision to home school. This method forms the basis for a *Grounded Theory* as exposed by Glaser and Strauss, (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

Once parents had been interviewed their responses were coded by the researcher. In forming categories of responses it was difficult to ignore the categorization suggested by earlier studies. Great similarity did emerge as expected. However the researcher was keenly aware of new emerging categorizations not suggested by earlier studies. When this study used investigative techniques similar to earlier studies the categorization of results remained similar. Where this study went beyond earlier studies in investigative technique a unique categorization of response also emerged. For example earlier studies suggested a moral and/or philosophical conflict between school and home as a reason for home schooling. This was confirmed by this study but also expanded upon

because of the nature of questioning used during the interview. This study, through the use of the interview, pursued the nature of this conflict of values which existed between local school and home. As coding progressed the researcher began to write small summaries, draw partitions, and form clusters. As new themes emerged the researcher pursued them to verify if they were a valid expression of parents or the isolated response of a parent or parents. The researcher submitted his initial interview transcripts and categorizations to the chairperson of his dissertation committee for categorization and review. The researcher and committee chair then compared categorizations for compatibility and correspondence. A viable method for categorization was thus achieved, agreed upon, and used for the remainder of the analysis.

The next step was the displaying of data. Quantitative information gathered from the demographic and attitude questionnaires was easily displayed for the reader's review through the use of simple frequency distributions, percentages and the chi square test of independence. The interviewing of parents, however, produced hundreds of pages of verbatim transcripts which would have been difficult for the reader to process (Faust, 1982). The researcher, having categorized the responses of parents, therefor selected interesting quotes which allowed the reader both access and assessability upon which to evaluate the conclusions drawn. The researcher provided an extensive appendix containing many of the transcripts for those readers interested in reviewing additional responses from parents.

The final aspect of analysis included the drawing of conclusions and the verification of these conclusions. The researcher noted the regularity of responses (in some sections summary charts were provided for the reader's review). In this study nine overall reasons were given by home school parents for beginning to home school. But more interestingly seven reasons previously unexplored were given by home school parents as to why they continued to home school. Patterns and explanations were highlighted. In other instances causal flows were suggested for the reader's consideration. During analysis the researcher tried to provide enough information so that the reader could judge for his/herself the plausibility and sturdiness of the conclusions drawn.

Finally the researcher included in the conclusions and recommendations section some thoughts with regard to present concerns about home schooling. These comments will be helpful in suggesting policy as it relates to home schooling families and will also help in proposing the direction of future research in the area of home schooling.

CHAPTER III: ANALYSIS OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRES

INTRODUCTION

This section of analysis serves two purposes. First, it provides basic background information on the parents selected for this study. A short discussion is provided which highlights important observations to be pursued during the interview process. Following this discussion is a summary table which lists home school and non home school parents together for easy comparison in demographic areas such as income, occupation, highest level of education, etc.

Second, the analysis of the attitude questionnaire is designed to give the reader an introduction to the feelings and opinions of parents about the local public, private nonreligious, and private religious schools available to them. The eighteen areas of inquiry were teacher quality, discipline, academic standards, average class size, physical facilities, and finally the quality of school administrators, each of which were measured with regard to the three types of schools. Charts are integrated in the discussion to help highlight statistically significant differences between home school and non home school parents. Two summary tables are included which help to present an overview of the difference between home school and non home school parent responses to the attitude

questionnaire. Complete tables for the demographic and attitudinal questionnaire are provided for the reader's review in Appendix H and Appendix I.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

An overview of the demographic questionnaire reveals remarkable similarities between home school and non home school families. The study was designed to pair home school families with non home school families of similar demographic backgrounds. Home school parents were very successful in identifying families who were like them in overall socio-economic background and family make-up. The chi square test of independence failed to reveal any statistically significant differences between the groups; however, this may be due in part to the small number of subjects sampled. There were slight differences between the groups which will be noted.

Income

Income levels for both groups of parents were medium to high. One hundred percent of both groups of parents had yearly income levels above thirty thousand dollars. Thirty-four percent of home school families and thirty-three percent of non home school families had earned yearly incomes above sixty thousand dollars.

The observation that home school parents had income levels that ranged from medium to high is significant. It serves to demonstrate the plausibility that private schools were an affordable option for home school parents. One of the criteria in selecting a sample of parents was that they have a variety of schools available to them for selection, including public, private religious and private nonreligious schools. However in the case of private religious or

private nonreligious schools, the simple availability of these schools did not guarantee the ability of parents to financially afford the schools. The demographic questionnaire did not reveal income levels which might make enrollment prohibitive. However, it must also be noted that affordability of education is often a relative term. Some parents, regardless of income level, may not consider an investment in private education "affordable." The workings of such a thought process in parents as they consider the financial cost of educational alternatives for their children will be explored during the interview section of this study.

Occupation

Mothers from both groups of parents were predominantly homemakers. Ninety-three percent of the home school mothers and eighty-three percent of non home school mothers stayed at home. While the percentage is high for both groups, it is ten percent higher for home school mothers, perhaps indicating the near-necessity that home schooling mothers be at home in order to home school successfully.

The occupations listed by fathers from both groups were similar. Two categories accounted for seventy-seven percent of the home school fathers and fifty-five percent of the non home school fathers. These occupation categories were the professional and executive administrator. All fathers were gainfully employed. There were no significant differences noted between home school and non home school fathers; they were quite similar in occupation.

Level of Education

Highest education levels for both groups of mothers were also similar; however home school mothers tended to have a higher level of educational achievement than non home school mothers. Seventy-nine percent of home school mothers and sixty-four percent of non home school mothers had received some education beyond high school. Fifty-one percent of home school mothers had received a four year college degree or a graduate degree as compared to forty-three percent of the non home school mothers.

There was some distinction between home school and non home school fathers in the area of education. Non home school fathers tended to have achieved higher levels of education than did home school fathers. Seventy-two percent of non home school fathers and fifty-eight percent of home school fathers had earned four year college degrees or graduate degrees. Seven percent of home school fathers listed only junior high school as their highest level of education.

The interview process will later demonstrate that the primary teacher of the home school child is the mother. Home schooling requires teachers to have achieved a level of academic confidence and self sufficiency to work independently. This group of home school mothers seemed well prepared for the task. Because fathers were not generally involved in directly teaching home school children it was not as significant that they have achieved this academic confidence.

Religious Affiliation

Sixty-six percent of home school fathers and seventy-two percent of home school mothers listed their religious affiliation as Evangelical Christian. This compares to forty-four percent of the non home school fathers and forty-four percent of the non home school mothers. The next highest percentage of response for both groups was Protestant, followed by Catholic.

Home school families indicated a higher level of religious affiliation than did non home school parents. This higher level of religious affiliation may have contributed to the parents' decision to home school. The literature review has demonstrated that some parents home school because of a moral or philosophical conflict between the values of the home and the values of the local school. It could be that as a family's level of religiosity increases so does the possibility for a conflict between the values of home and school.

Educational Background

There was almost no difference between home school and non home school parents in the area of type of school attended as a child. The greatest percentage of all parents, more than eighty percent, had attended a public school at one time or another. Thirty-eight percent of home school fathers and thirty-six percent of home school mothers had attended a private religious school. Thirty-three percent of non home school fathers and thirty-nine percent of non home school mothers had attended a private religious school. Only one parent, a non home school parent, had ever attended a private nonreligious school. This may account for the fact that these parents

had almost no opinion of the private nonreligious schools available to them as later indicated by the attitude questionnaire.

Summary

Table 3: Summary of Home School and Non Home School Responses to the Demographic Questionnaire

<u>AREA OF INQUIRY</u>	<u>NUMBER AND PERCENT OF HOME SCHOOL PARENTS</u>		<u>NUMBER AND PERCENT OF NON HOME SCHOOL PARENTS</u>	
1. Age of Children				
Ages 5 - 8	21	(34)	16	(42)
Ages 9 - 11	22	(36)	15	(39)
Ages 12 - 14	11	(18)	4	(11)
Ages 15 - 17	7	(11)	3	(8)
2. Total Household Income				
Under 20,000	0	(0)	0	(0)
20,000 - 29,000	0	(0)	0	(0)
30,000 - 39,000	6	(21)	2	(11)
40,000 - 49,000	7	(24)	7	(39)
50,000 - 59,000	6	(21)	3	(17)
Over 60,000	10	(34)	6	(33)
3. Occupation of Mothers				
Homemaker	27	(93)	15	(83)
Professional	2	(7)	2	(11)
Exec/Admin	0	(0)	0	(0)
Mid Management	0	(0)	0	(0)
Sales/Marketing	0	(0)	0	(0)
Clerical/Service	0	(0)	0	(0)
Tradesman/Mach Oper	0	(0)	0	(0)
Retiree	0	(0)	0	(0)
Student	0	(0)	0	(0)
Currently Not Working	0	(0)	1	(6)
4. Occupation of Fathers				
Homemaker	0	(0)	0	(0)
Professional	16	(56)	6	(33)
Exec/Admin	6	(21)	4	(22)
Mid Management	1	(3)	3	(17)
Sales/Marketing	1	(3)	2	(11)
Clerical/Service	0	(0)	0	(0)
Tradesman/Mach Oper	5	(17)	3	(17)
Retiree	0	(0)	0	(0)
Student	0	(0)	0	(0)
Currently not Working	0	(0)	0	(0)

Table 3
Continued

<u>AREA OF INQUIRY</u>	<u>NUMBER AND PERCENT OF HOME SCHOOL PARENTS</u>		<u>NUMBER AND PERCENT OF NON HOME SCHOOL PARENTS</u>	
5. Level of Mother's Education				
Grade School	0	(0)	0	(0)
Junior High	0	(0)	0	(0)
Senior High	6	(21)	6	(33)
Jr College/Trade School	8	(28)	4	(22)
4 Year College	10	(34)	6	(33)
Graduate Degree	5	(17)	2	(11)
6. Level of Father's Education				
Grade School	0	(0)	0	(0)
Junior High	2	(7)	0	(0)
Senior High	1	(3)	4	(22)
Jr College/Trade School	9	(31)	1	(6)
4 Year College	14	(48)	11	(61)
Graduate Degree	3	(10)	2	(11)
7. Mother's Religious Affiliation				
Protestant	5	(17)	4	(22)
Roman Catholic	2	(7)	3	(17)
Evangelical Christian	21	(72)	8	(44)
Jewish	0	(0)	0	(0)
Agnostic	0	(0)	0	(0)
No Preference	0	(0)	0	(0)
Other	1	(3)	3	(17)
Not Applicable	0	(0)	0	(0)
8. Father's Religious Affiliation				
Protestant	6	(21)	4	(22)
Roman Catholic	2	(7)	2	(11)
Evangelical Christian	19	(66)	8	(44)
Jewish	0	(0)	0	(0)
Agnostic	0	(0)	0	(0)
No Preference	1	(3)	1	(6)
Other	1	(3)	3	(17)
Not Applicable	0	(0)	0	(0)

Table 3
Continued

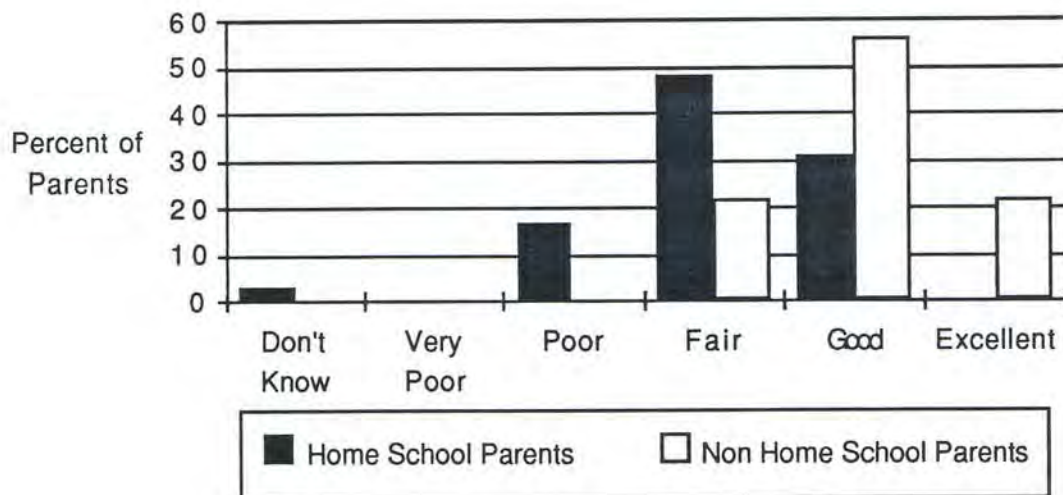
<u>AREA OF INQUIRY</u>	<u>NUMBER AND PERCENT OF HOME SCHOOL PARENTS</u>		<u>NUMBER AND PERCENT OF NON HOME SCHOOL PARENTS</u>	
9. Type of School Mother Attended				
Public	18	(62)	11	(61)
Private Religious	4	(14)	2	(11)
Private Nonreligious	0	(0)	0	(0)
Public & Private Non Rel	1	(3)	0	(0)
Public & Private Religious	6	(21)	5	(28)
Private Religious & Non Rel	0	(0)	0	(0)
Public, Religious & Non Rel	0	(0)	0	(0)
Never Enrolled	0	(0)	0	(0)
10. Type of School Father Attended				
Public	17	(59)	12	(67)
Private Religious	5	(17)	2	(11)
Private Nonreligious	0	(0)	0	(0)
Public & Private Non Rel	0	(0)	0	(0)
Public & Private Religious	6	(21)	4	(22)
Private Religious & Non Rel	0	(0)	0	(0)
Public, Religious & Non Rel	0	(0)	0	(0)
Never Enrolled	1	(3)	0	(0)

THE ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

Teacher Quality

There was a significant difference between home school and non home school parents with regard to their perception of teacher quality at the public schools available to them. Chart 1, listed below, categorizes the attitudes of parents about public school teacher quality.

Chart 1: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes About Public School Teacher Quality



While twenty-two percent of non home school parents rated teachers as excellent, there were no "excellent" ratings by home school parents. Additionally, seventeen percent of home school parents viewed teachers as "poor" while no non home school parent rated public school teachers as "poor". Non home school parents appeared to hold an overall positive view of public school teachers,

while more than two-thirds of home school parents viewed them as no better than "fair".

While both home school and non home school parents tended to rate teachers at private nonreligious schools better than teachers at public schools, there were a significant number of parents (thirty-eight percent of home school parents and fifty percent of non home school parents) who responded that they "didn't know" the quality of teachers in these schools.

Parents in both categories showed the highest rating for teachers at private religious schools. Sixty-five percent of home school parents and ninety-eight percent of non home school parents viewed these teachers as "good" to "excellent".

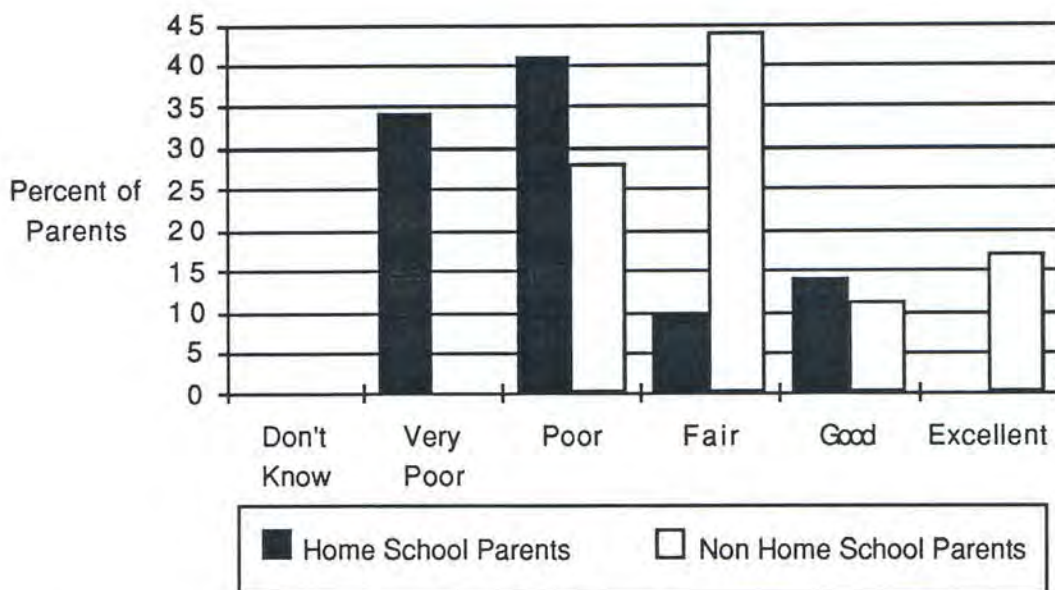
In reviewing the opinions of parents concerning teacher quality, it becomes clear that home school parents were generally dissatisfied with the quality of teachers available to them at public schools. This lack of confidence in teacher quality might certainly be a reason for not enrolling their children in the local public school. However, home school parents expressed general satisfaction in the quality of teachers at the private religious schools available to them. Therefore, a rationale was yet to be discovered which could reasonably explain why home school parents did not enroll their children in private religious schools.

Discipline

Home school and non home school parents differed greatly in their perception of discipline standards at the public, private nonreligious, and private religious schools available to them. The

most significant of these differences occurred at public and private religious schools. Charts 2 and 3, listed below, categorize the attitudes of parents about discipline at these schools.

Chart 2: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes About Public School Discipline Standards



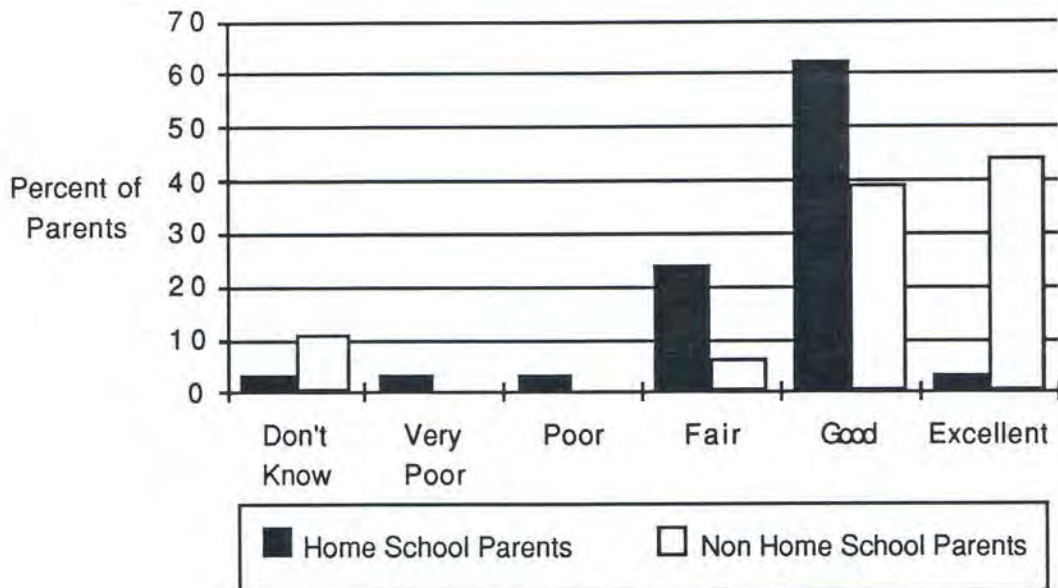
The majority (seventy-five percent) of home school parents rated discipline standards as "poor" to "very poor" at the local public schools, while only twenty-four percent perceived discipline standards as "good" to "fair". By contrast, twenty-eight percent of non home school parents viewed discipline in the public schools available to them as "good" to "excellent", and forty-four percent rated it "fair". Overall, non home school parents had a more favorable view of public school discipline.

A very high percentage of parents (both home school and non home school) chose not to rate discipline in private nonreligious

schools because they "didn't know". The remainder of parents questioned generally felt that discipline was "fair" to "good". Non home school parents had a slightly higher opinion of discipline standards than their home school counterparts.

The overall ratings of discipline standards for private religious schools were higher than for any other type of school. Non home school parents rated private religious school discipline as "excellent" (forty-four percent) or "good" (thirty-nine percent), while home school parents opted for "good" (sixty-two percent) or "fair" (twenty-four percent).

Chart 3: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes About Private Religious School Discipline Standards



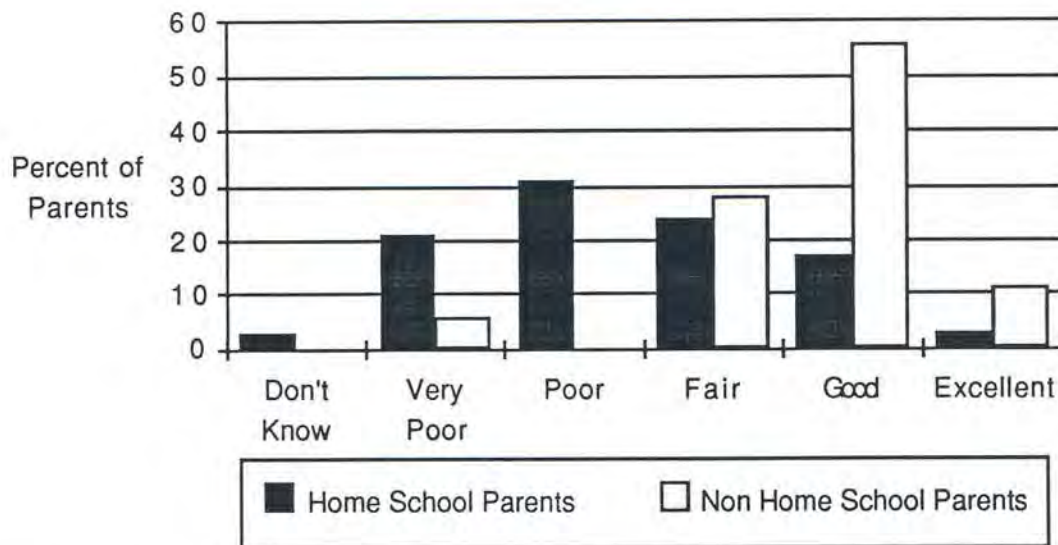
As in the area of teacher quality home school parents were generally dissatisfied with the discipline of public schools. Again this might serve as a motivation for not enrolling their children in public

schools. However, home school parents rated the discipline of private religious schools very strongly. Again while a dissatisfaction of discipline standards might serve as a motivation for home school parents to not enroll their children in public schools, it failed to explain why they did not enroll them in private religious schools.

Academic Standards

While home school parents showed greater overall dissatisfaction with academics in schools available to them than did non home school parents, the greatest contrast in attitude was seen in the area of public school academics. Chart 4, listed below, categorizes the attitudes of parents about the academic standards at public schools.

Chart 4: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes About Public School Academic Standards



Fifty-two percent of home school parents rated the local public schools as "poor" to "very poor", as compared to only six percent of

the non home school parents. Additionally, sixty-seven percent of non home school parents rated academic standards as "good" to "excellent" in public schools, contrasted to only twenty percent of the home school parents. Generally the ratings for private nonreligious schools were relatively high for both groupings of parents questioned, though a large number of parents "didn't know" about the academic standards of these schools.

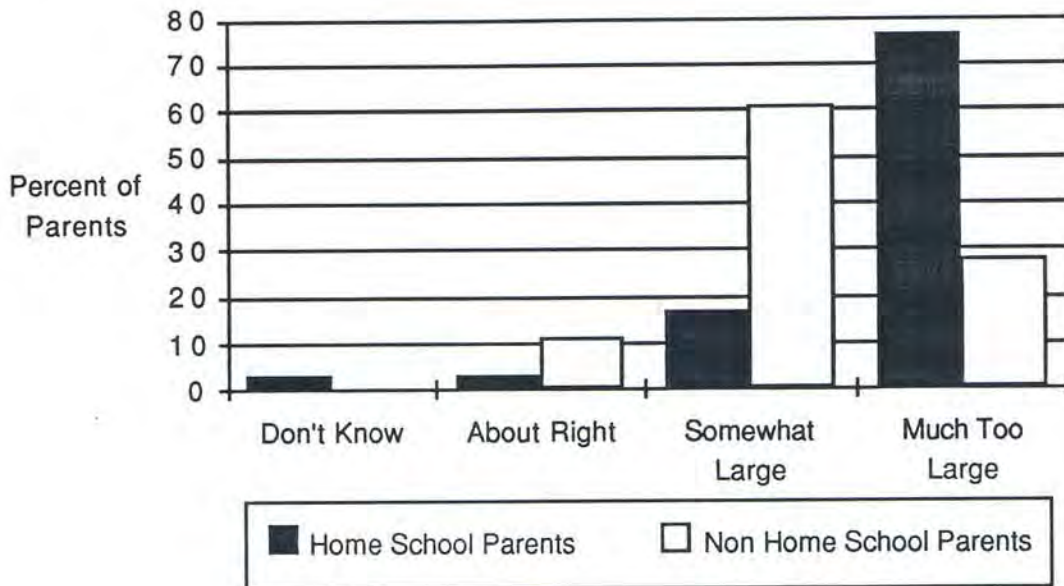
As in the area of discipline standards, both groups of parents gave their highest rating to private religious schools. While all parents rated the academic standards of private religious schools relatively high, fifty percent of non home school parents rated them "excellent", versus fourteen percent of home school parents.

As in the areas of teacher quality and discipline, home school parents were satisfied with the academic quality of the private religious schools available to them.

Class Size

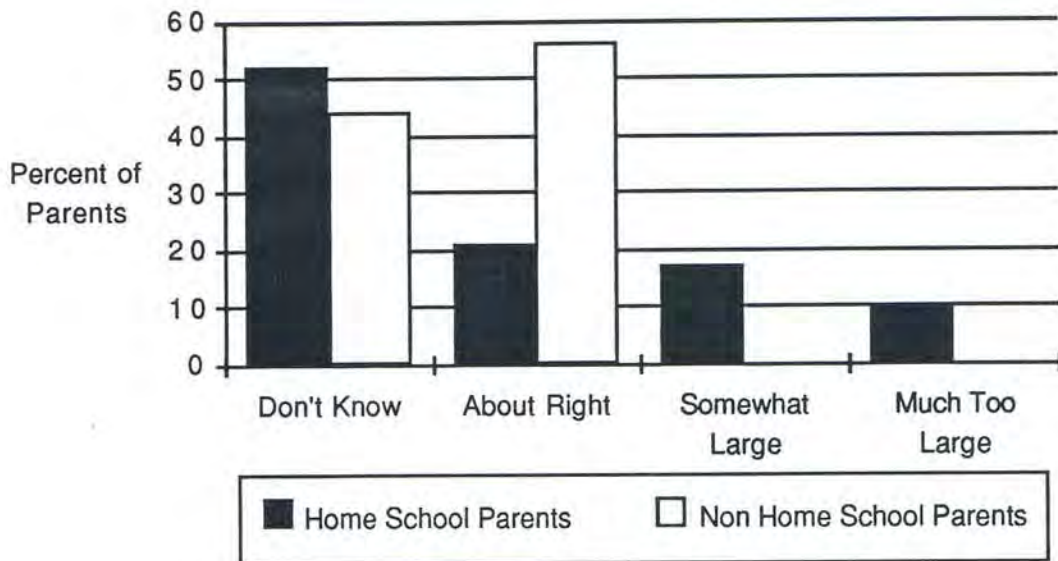
While both groups of parents felt that the average class size in public school was large, home school parents showed the greatest dissatisfaction with seventy-six percent rating class size as "much too large" versus only twenty-eight percent of non home school parents. Chart 5, listed below, categorizes the attitudes of parents about public school class size.

Chart 5: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes About Public School Class Size



In rating private nonreligious schools. A large number of parents from both groups (fifty-two percent of home school and forty-four percent of non home school) said they "didn't know" about class size in this type of school. Non home school parents viewed class size in this category favorably (fifty-six percent) while twenty-seven percent of home school parents thought class size was "too large". Chart 6, listed below, categorizes the attitudes of parents about private nonreligious school class size.

Chart 6: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes About Private Nonreligious School Class Size



Home school parents remained discontented with class size at private religious schools, with fifty-five percent of these parents saying class size was "somewhat" to "much too large", compared to only thirty-four percent of the non home school parents. It should be noted that thirty-eight of home school parents and forty-four percent of non home school parents thought class size to be "about right".

Class size was the only area in which home school parents expressed discontent with private religious schools. Whether this observation plays a significant role in determining the decision of home school parents not to send their children to private religious schools will be explored during the interview process.

Physical Facilities

The majority of parents from both groups viewed the public schools available to them as having quality physical facilities. Only fourteen percent of home school parents and six percent of non home school parents considered the physical facilities as "poor" to "very poor".

While many parents, from both groups, rated the facilities of private nonreligious schools well, a large percentage had no knowledge of these schools and expressed no opinion on the quality of their facilities.

Home school and non home school parents were slightly less impressed with the physical facilities of the private religious schools. More responses were in the "good" to "fair" range with less in the "excellent" category.

In exploring the responses of parents to the issue of physical facilities no suggestion as to why home school parents decided not to place their children in the traditional schools available to them surfaced.

Administrators

Home school parents were split in their rating of public school administrators, ranging from "excellent" (seven percent) to "very poor" (three percent) with thirty-eight percent rating administration as "fair". By contrast, non home school parents rated administrators as "fair" to "excellent", with forty-four percent offering a "good" rating.

A large percentage of parents, fifty-five percent of home school and seventy-two percent of non home school, said they "didn't know" about private nonreligious school administrators.

Home school parents and non home school parents responded similarly in rating public religious school administrators. The majority of parents in both categories rated administrators as "good".

As in several other areas, home school parents found that private religious schools were at least satisfactory with regard to quality of administrators.

Summary

Following are summary tables reflecting the difference in responses between home school and non home school parents to the attitude questionnaire.

Table 4 categorizes the responses of home school and non home school parents by the degree of difference in their responses. The areas of inquiry are listed from the greatest difference to the least (top to bottom) between parents' responses.

Table 4: Summary of Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes About Schools by Area of Inquiry

<u>AREA OF INQUIRY</u>	<u>TYPE OF SCHOOL</u>
Discipline	Public**#
Class Size	Public**#
Discipline	Private Religious**#
Academic Standards	Public*#
Teacher Quality	Public*#
Class Size	Private Nonreligious*#
Administrators	Public
Academic Standards	Private Nonreligious
Physical Facilities	Private Nonreligious
Physical Facilities	Private Religious
Teacher Quality	Private Religious
Academic Standards	Private Religious
Class Size	Private Religious
Discipline	Private Nonreligious
Physical Facilities	Public
Administrators	Private Nonreligious
Teacher Quality	Private Nonreligious
Administrators	Private Religious
** Indicates a Significant Difference Between Home School at Non Home School Parents at the 0.01 Level	
* Indicates a Significant Difference Between Home School at Non Home School Parents at the 0.05 Level	
# Indicates a More Positive Attitude by Non Home School Parents	

Table 5 categorizes the responses of home school and non home school parents by the type of school within each category. The areas of inquiry are listed from the greatest difference to the least (top to bottom) in parent responses.

Table 5: Summary of Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes About Public, Private Nonreligious, and Private Religious Schools

<u>TYPE OF SCHOOL</u>	<u>AREA OF INQUIRY</u>
Public	Discipline**# Class Size**# Academic Standards*# Teacher Quality*# School Administrators Physical Facilities
Private Non Religious Schools	Class Size*# Physical Facilities Academic Standards Discipline School Administrators Teacher Quality
Private Religious Schools	Discipline**# Academic Standards Physical Facilities Class Size Teacher Quality School Administrators
** Indicates a Significant Difference Between Home School at Non Home School Parents at the 0.01 Level	
* Indicates a Significant Difference Between Home School at Non Home School Parents at the 0.05 Level	
# Indicates a More Positive Attitude by Non Home School Parents	

Analysis of the attitude questionnaire has revealed differences between home school and non home school parents with regard to their opinions about the local schools available to them. In addition, results indicate that home school parents are generally more dissatisfied than non home school parents with these schools. The exact nature of this dissatisfaction and its power to influence parents in the direction of home schooling can not be fully assessed while using only the attitude questionnaire as a tool of inquiry. However several important observations can be made, which, when paired with findings from the interviewing of parents may contribute to a more complete profile of home school parents.

There were eighteen areas of inquiry. These included teacher quality, discipline standards, academic standards, average class size, physical facilities, and the quality of school administrators. Parents were asked to give their opinions about these areas in rating three different types of schools. In most areas home school parents consistently rated all types of schools more unfavorably than did non home school parents. Out of these eighteen areas there was a statistically significant difference between home school and non home school parents indicated in six areas. In each of these areas home school parents indicated greater dissatisfaction than did non home school parents. These six areas have been highlighted for the reader's review in Charts 1 through 6 listed above.

This greater difference between parents and the greater dissatisfaction of home school parents was most apparent when parents rated public schools. Data indicates that out of the six areas

of inquiry found to be statistically different, four are with reference to public schools. These include discipline, class size, academic standards, and teacher quality. The greatest difference and dissatisfaction occurred in the areas of discipline. Only in the areas of the quality of public school administrators and the public schools' facilities were home school and non home school parents similar in their responses. Both groups showed satisfaction in these areas. It is interesting to note that these two areas show the least direct influence upon the child. The areas of discipline, class size, academic standards and teacher quality more directly impacted the child and were of more critical concern to home school parents.

Both groups of parents had very little knowledge or opinion about the private nonreligious schools available to them. In spite of this, home school parents still perceived that class size was too large.

With regard to private religious schools, only one area showed a significant difference between home school and non home school parents. This was in the area of discipline. Home school parents indicated greater dissatisfaction than did non home school parents. As noted earlier, home school parents discussed that a values conflict between home and school was a major reason for deciding to begin home schooling. Discipline standards and values are closely related. The way a particular school or teacher may choose to discipline or withhold discipline may reflect a value which is in conflict with what some parents hold as acceptable or unacceptable behavior.

The analysis of the attitude questionnaire provided some information which aides in understanding the motivation of parents

to home school. Home school parents were greatly dissatisfied with teacher quality, discipline, and academic standards at the local public schools available to them. In addition home school parents conceded that they knew relatively little about the private nonreligious schools available to them.

Home school parents indicated overall satisfaction with the private religious schools available to them. The objection of these parents to sending their children to these local private religious school was not clear. The demographic questionnaire, in assessing family income levels, did not seem to preclude this groups from enrolling because parents could not afford the tuition and fees.

The attitude questionnaire shed some light on why parents chose to home school their children, but it was limited. Apparently there are other factors not addressed by the attitude questionnaire, which motivate parents to home school.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS OF HOME SCHOOL PARENT INTERVIEWS

INTRODUCTION

This section of analysis reports the responses of the twenty-nine home school parents interviewed. Each interview ranged in length from forty-five to ninety minutes. The interviewer used open ended questions to probe the attitudes of parents in eight major areas:

1. Why parents begin to home school.
2. Why parents continue to home school.
3. The inconveniences and hardships of home schooling.
4. What parents believed would happen to their children if they could not home school.
5. What home school parents believe their children miss by not attending traditional schools.
6. What family, friends, and neighbors think about home schooling.
7. What home school children think about home school.
8. What the average home school day is like, and what kind of teaching materials are used.

The researcher has provided a brief rationale for the selection of each area of inquiry. The actual interview prompts are listed in italics. Summary statements describe significant observations within each area of inquiry. A sampling of relevant and representative transcripts from the parent interviews are provided for the reader's review.

Why Parents Begin to Home School

One of the major goals of this study was to discover the reasons parents choose to educate their children at home. The first question asked during the personal interview was designed to gain insight into this area.

Thinking back on when you first started home schooling, can you tell me what was your main reason for home schooling?

Although the question asked only for the parents' main reason, parents consistently responded with a comprehensive and eclectic answer. This reflects the fact, apparently, that for almost all parents in this sample there remained no single reason for home schooling. The choice to home school was the result of a combination of factors, perceptions, and events.

Some parents indicated that there were particular circumstances which finally compelled them to seek home schooling as an alternative -- "the straw that broke the camel's back." Although these circumstances may have been the determining factor, they never occurred in isolation. They were often part of a long chain of events.

This first question allowed parents an arena to voice their opinions in a number of areas concerning traditional schooling and home schooling. There emerged a clear delineation between parents who had initially started their children in home schooling and those who had moved to home schooling from public or private schools with regard to the means they used for evaluating the schools available to them. (Fifty-two percent of the study's children had been enrolled in some kind of public or private school before moving to home schooling, while forty-eight percent of the children had never been enrolled in a public or private school.)

Although the opinions for these two sub groups of home schooling parents remained consistent with each other, parents who initially began their children's schooling at home based their opinions primarily on their *perception* of the school systems available to them. This was because their children had never been enrolled or exposed to traditional schools. These parents had no first hand experiences upon which to base their conclusions and perceptions, apart from anything they may have experienced themselves as children in school. For parents who had moved their children to home schooling from public or private schools these opinions were based, often times, on some actual *experience*.

The areas of concern which arose served as a basis for the rationales that parents used for selecting home schooling. These concerns often overlapped each other and at times a clear distinction between them, even among individual parents, was not present. In spite of this, nine overall themes for home schooling did emerge.

Listed below in Table 6 is a summary of the reasons that parents gave for beginning to home school.

Table 6: Number and Percentage of Parents Citing Each of Nine Reasons For Beginning to Home School

REASON	PERCENT OF PARENTS	NUMBER OF PARENTS
Values Conflict Between Home and School	52	15
Personality Changes in the Child	38	11
Parents Dissatisfied with School Quality	38	11
Outside Influences	38	11
Parents Feel a Sense of Duty	24	7
Child Has Special Problems	24	7
Financial Constraints, Convenience and Availability	21	6
Lack of Parental Control	17	5
Child Not Academically Successful	14	4

1. Child Not Academically Successful in School: Fourteen percent of parents (four of twenty-nine) said that they decided to home school because their children were not succeeding academically in the public or private school previously attended. In these instances many of the children were failing. Because of the severity of the situation these parents felt compelled to take some kind of action. Many times parents approached the child's teacher or the school administrator. Some parents even went so far as to change schools. But in each case the failure continued. At times parents were at a loss as to why their children were not succeeding. Sometimes the parents laid the responsibility of failure on the child, citing a basic lack of ability or an absence of motivation. At other times the parents blamed the child's teacher for inadequately

teaching the child or for failing to give the the child the attention needed to insure success. This academic failure often led to frustration and anger in the child which further compounded the problem. The children were unhappy and lacked motivation. This often led to disruptive behavior and further academic failure.

Subject #001:

(Father): We were unhappy with what we were seeing with our child at school even though he was in a private school. We found that he was getting behind in school and the size of the class wasn't giving him any individual attention, so therefore he was getting further and further behind....

Subject # 009

My daughter was not making it in public school and she was not making it in a Christian private school. I really didn't know what other direction to go into... It got to be if she felt like trying she did it, if she didn't she didn't. So it really was a challenge. ...She had been a good student up until I guess the fifth grade. And the only thing that I can say that showed that she was in trouble was the CTBS scores that we got. But I wasn't quick enough to pick up on that. And so that is the last time that we have recorded, in the fifth grade CTBS, that she was beginning to slip. And when it finally came down to it one day I realized that on the bottom of the challenging and the disruptive behavior was a kid who honestly didn't know what she was doing.

Subject #034

He had failed a grammar test. Now Bryan is one to not particularly care what the teacher says all the time. Jason is a little sponge, he soaks up anything that passes by, good, bad, or indifferent, he remembers it all. I said, well, he hasn't been taught that. I looked at his homework and I hadn't seen anything on that stuff. So I knew why he failed the test -- he hadn't had any of it.*

2. Child Has Special Problems and Needs: Twenty-four percent of parents (seven out of twenty-nine) mentioned that they began home schooling because of the special needs of their children. These special needs included emotional, physical and/or learning handicaps. Some parents believed that their children were not

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

developmentally ready to learn. Parents mentioned distractibility, dyslexia, hyperactivity, reoccurring seizures, and far sighted eyesight as reasons that led to poor school performance. Some children were on medication which made them unable to function in the regular classroom. Some adopted children had entered the family with severe emotional problems as a result of abuse or neglect.

These handicaps resulted, at times, not only in academic failure, but in a breakdown of social skills as some children were unable to function in the school environment. As with other children who had experienced academic failure, these children manifested a sense of frustration and anger.

Parents believed that their children were not fitting into the regular education programs offered by local schools. Many parents had children who were in special education programs, but even these programs failed to produce many positive results. Having tried both the regular and special education programs available, and seeing little or no progress, these parents sometimes changed schools. However the problems persisted and compelled them to seek other alternatives, such as home schooling.

Subject #011

(Husband): we felt that children are not developmentally ready to learn until they are about eight or ten. A male particularly isn't ready to read until he's age ten. It varies from child to child. The trend of education is to start them much earlier and we felt that's too soon. It certainly has been true of our children. Our son wouldn't read hardly at all until he was nine. All of a sudden the light came on. He is probably superior to anyone his age. He's 11. You put a child in class at age five or six and let him read, he may have problems and may be labelled a slapstick. You put him in Special Ed. and the child gets a self image that something is wrong with me. I must be retarded. That is a big factor in all our kids.

(Mother): Our girls are the same way. They didn't read until after fourth grade and all of a sudden it clicked.

Subject #021

... But when it came time for him to go to school I thought well I'll have him tested and make sure that he's ready to start school. I had him tested and he did have some problems. He was real behind on his development. She recommended that he take gymnastic lessons for his development.

...well, at the lessons they said he needs more than we can deal with. So they recommended another place where he was further tested and had a year of sensory motor training. So that was the year that I had thought I was holding him out of school.

...[He was] slow in his development. He was two and a half when he began to walk. I felt I could keep his self esteem intact by teaching him at home rather than having go into a classroom and not being able to keep up with thirty kids.

Subject #024

(Mother): One thing that you should probably know is that both of our children were adopted as older children. Sarah was nine and Jason was five. Actually, they weren't adopted at that age. They came into our home as foster children at that age. At that time, they were both in special education classes. Jason mostly because of distractibility. ... And Sarah because she has been switched from school to school and had a lot of emotional things she was dealing with from being separated from her parents and everything she really hadn't been able to concentrate on learning. ... She was evaluated for special ed. when she was still at her other foster home...And we had no experience as parents so we just did what they said to do which was to put them in school and Jason started in a regular class but was put into special ed. within a semester.... Sarah could neither read nor write when she came to us so she's been perpetually behind.... Also Sarah was the only girl in the class of six to seven students.She doesn't need to have people giving her obscenities on the playground and the teacher could not seem to control that, the principal could not seem to control that. They were never there and we felt it was not a very good environment.*

3. Personality Changes in the Child: Thirty-eight percent of home school parents (eleven out of twenty-nine) mentioned that they saw changes in the attitude or personality of their children as they began attending public or private schools. Also these parents mentioned that some of their children, in spite of the fact that they were succeeding academically, began to dislike school and learning.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Some parents said that they began to see other subtle attitudinal changes which did not reflect the families' values. Children would become disruptive, disrespectful, violent, angry, frustrated, depressed, anxious, and withdrawn. At times these attitude changes were even in direct conflict with family values. Often parents noted that there was a communication breakdown between the child and other family members, including the parent.

Subject #001

He was a frustrated child. His personality was taking a nose dive. He just would cry and there was a lot of anger there. We really had to do something.

You know, he wouldn't look at anybody in the eye, he wouldn't talk to people, he wouldn't talk to us, he would look down, you know, and no communication through the eyes or any way. He didn't want to talk to you, just leave him alone, you know?

Subject #010

I've got many many reasons. I think my main one is that once my children started going to a public school, even a private school, they've gone to both, I saw a change in their character and they weren't the kids that I had sent to school. So I felt like I wanted them back.

So I sent her to kindergarten and she came home after awhile. She was getting different. She was flirtatious and I didn't like that.

Subject #027

....First two grades were pretty successful then we moved to LA and second and third grades were beset with a lot of witchcraft, seances, prostitution being the main topics of playground discussion -- two families that were active Satan worshippers. One child in a third fourth combination class Christine was in had a step-sister who was practicing prostitution out of the garage and the fourth grader that Christine was with couldn't wait till she was old enough to earn money in such a fun way. So, Christine was coming home under such depression... So we decided at that point that we had to step in. Our reasons were not so much religious reasons or value differences or anything like that. It was really what was needed for this one child at that particular point.

Subject #029

I don't think Jessica was ready to be put in school either. She is very shy. Actually I did put her in a little private school two mornings a week, there was one by Youth With A Mission when she was little because it was the thing to do. All the moms were doing it, my friends were doing it with their kids. I thought, okay, I put her in school and I cried the whole day. She started crying towards the end of it and I took her out and I didn't put her back in school.

Subject #043

My daughter had gotten to the point that she would get up in the morning and vomit; she's so nervous that she couldn't eat. We had bed wetting and all the signs of extreme stress and at the time she was seven. That's too much for a seven year old. We just felt that there was no need for that. So we took her out and began home schooling. *

4. Values Conflict Between Home and School: Fifty-two percent of home school parents (fifteen of twenty-nine) said that they began to home school because of a conflict that arose between the home and school. This conflict had two sources. The first was the school system itself which included teachers and the curriculum. The second source of conflict occurred as children came in contact with and/or interacted with other students and peers at school.

Those conflicts, particularly originating from the public school system, dealt with the implementation of a secular curriculum, the lack of prayer in the classroom, and the general religious void created by the public schools. This conflict, understandably, was not a significant factor for parents who had had their children in private religious schools. For these parents, and others as well, the objection arose as a result of peer pressure.

There was great fear on the part of both groups of parents that no matter what the qualities of the school, be it public or private, this peer pressure could not be controlled. Parental concerns were varied and spanned from the dislike of competitive pressure in the classroom to the pressure to use drugs or alcohol or become involved in sexual activity.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Subject #008

A good example is the kid next door brought his Halloween mask over, a Freddie Crugger mask and glove a complete mass murderer, maniac movie and they're making a hero out of him, for a seven year old. when you bring a child into a group of peers, their view of authority is gleaned from their peers. So you got a six year old whose view of authority came from another six year old whose parent's might be an alcoholic,(or) the guy with the biggest gun is the big boss. So then you try to raise them that God is the authority of the universe and they think God's a big bully or he's some kind of guy that would strike somebody dead for no apparent reason. It's just a total perversion. God has ordained that God the Father is first and then Christ, then father in that proper order. Authority needs to be transmitted that way. Perfect or imperfect, I'm the dad and I'm God ordained authority and they have to recognize that in order to control the family. You want to limit their interaction, you don't want to just throw them off into this peer group situation.

Subject #011

As the kids got older, you look around and you say you see so many of these traits you don't like to see in kids you know. They are sassing back their parents and I wasn't too worried with drugs at that point just the kid's attitude. As time went on, I started worrying about drugs and I guess I was really concerned about whether I really knew what these teachers are teaching my children. I have certain philosophies. I want my children to be helpful around the community. I don't always want them to go to Magic Mountain, Disneyland or whatever. So I just didn't quite like some of of input.

...At that time when I took her out in seventh grade she was faced with drugs and with two girls in her class, incest. You know, I'm saying why does my kid have to face this stuff? Why can't she stay innocent for awhile.

Subject #028

In a public school you have teachers that have their own morals and beliefs and philosophies. I just don't think they can help knowingly or unknowingly those ideas that are going to come out one way or another.

I have a concern not so much what was taught or what wasn't taught. What I mean by that is because there's a lot of pressure on educators and administrators to really keep religion out of school I think that children that are taken there seven hours a day and everyday nine months out of a year to give them an education that completely not schooled in the references to the religious heritage of our country or any ethical or value judgement that may be based on religious principals, to me give them an unbalance view. I don't expect public school to teach Christian religion, they can, but on the other hand it's clearly apart of our history and part of understanding where we are and why we are and who we are and how we got to be where we are. We're concerned that they would be getting an unbalanced view. Obviously we're Christians, we believe in God and we believe it in a way that means that it reflects itself in our daily life and in our values and judgements.... If we could find a public school that can relate those values in an open way we might consider it. At this point it's kind of hard to find.

Subject #044

It's interesting to me, back tracking, that Carl Marx's first plan of overthrowing a government was the production of public schools, to pull the children away from the

influence of the family, thereby undermining whatever influence might be there and getting the children at a very young and tender age when they're very weak and didn't have the strength of character nor the will nor the education to be able to reason out what they were getting or filter good from bad. Therefore, in his plot he would be able to pull the minds away. I believe that's what's happening

We don't plant our young, tender flowers and trees and expose them to all the elements of the world. We plant them and we shelter them and nurse them and take care of them until their root structure is strong enough to withstand whatever winds and hurricanes and forces that they have to be strong enough to take and I feel that children are the same way. Their root structures and their capability of filtering out good from bad is just not there. We need to shelter them in a sense that to let their root structures grow strong enough to withstand the world. They will be stronger, they will know what they want. They will not be peer dependent and they will be strong enough and because they've been in an area where they can grow straight and tall and search for light and truth and knowledge.... So that's basically why I home school and that's why I feel it's important for me to do that.*

5. Lack of Parental Control: Seventeen percent of home school parents (five of twenty-nine) who started home schooling or had moved to home schooling said that they did so because they felt that they were losing control over the lives of their children. These concerns sometimes overlapped with concerns about a conflict in values; however there were some distinctions. The traditional public or private schools set demands of time and regimented the child's daily schedule. These time demands, especially for children who had been enrolled at private schools, extended beyond the requirements of compulsory attendance and included homework requirements. These demands also interfered with family time.

In addition parents said they felt that they often had little or no influence in the selection of teachers, curriculum, and scheduling. They felt that they were at the mercy of the system and forced to respond to its dictation. Parents felt that they were no longer a primary influence in the lives of their children.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Subject #011

So at that point I thought this is kind of silly to plead for a child and then let somebody else raise them for essentially eight hours a day. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

She would leave here by eight-twenty a.m. plus it takes time for her to get ready to leave so there's not much input. She's up by six-thirty a.m. and home by three-thirty p.m. and has two to three hours of study in seventh grade. It's crazy! There's no time to climb a tree, mow the lawn or just simply read a book.

Subject #023

I still thought that the intensity of the religious schooling after all the work in the day they come home with three to four hours of homework at night.... it just burns out your desire to learn.

Subject #035

(Father): We were spending an average of four to six hours a night re-teaching the kids what they were suppose to have learned in six hours in the school.it would get to the point to where we said if we spend six hours a day re-teaching the kids, why don't we just spend six hours a day teaching them right the first time and then we get six hours free. We said we can do a lot more in twelve hours than a school system can.

(Mother): Also when they bring their homework home it really divides the family. This one is requiring attention, this one is requiring attention, just a minute, I'll be over there with you, I've got to get dinner on, got to get the chores done and all that and you're just pulled and there's just no family time where we just sit down and relax and enjoy the evening.

(Father): For us the family time is very important. When you have to divide the quality time that normally is spent at home together either around the dinner table or interacting with the six of us. We wanted to spend the time doing what we want, to do not necessarily going through homework night after night.*

6. Parents Dissatisfied with School Quality: Thirty-eight percent of home school parents (eleven of twenty-nine) said they decided to home school because they were dissatisfied with the schools available to them in three specific areas.

The first of these areas was curriculum. Some parents said they felt that the curriculum lacked academic excellence. Others felt

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

that it was not creative or flexible enough to meet the needs of the total child.

The second area was teaching. Some parents said they had experienced teachers who they believed lacked the basic communication and interpersonal skills needed to successfully teach their child. Other parents felt that even when teachers did have the needed skills the large size of the classroom enrollment still hindered the teacher's effectiveness.

Finally, some parents said they were concerned about the safety of their children. Parents said they feared gang violence.

Subject #005

Well, my main reason for home schooling is purely academic.... I put my son in school for the first and second grade and home school for kindergarten just to give him a good base in phonics for reading and we were very disappointed with the school system, especially in the second grade; we had some real problems. And that's what prompted us to pull him out of third and keep my daughter home from kindergarten on. She has never been in the school system. So it's purely academic. The school system failed my son. I just couldn't allow that to happen.

Subject #010

I took some books to school and showed her teacher that these are the books that Gretchen is reading at home and she just put me off and said, "There's nothing I can do about that, we're on this book". "The bus went up, up. Up, up went the bus. Look at the bus go up." That's what her classroom was reading. She was in the highest reading group in her class.

... They were great teachers. I'm not putting down the whole staff. But the majority of them had a problem and they had this attitude that you were a kid.

...I kid you not, I was in this woman's classroom every week I didn't find out until the last week of school that his report card showed that he was not at grade level in reading. And I said to her, "You got to be kidding me, you've seen me all year!" She just looked at me like, you know, she was dealing with it and I didn't really need to know.

Subject #013

Basically, they're just not ready for all this paper work and secretarial stuff.They wanted her to write her alphabet and she learned to handwriting....so she's handwriting her name. Well, the teacher tells me you know, she can't do this. She's got to do these big letters and can't handwrite. She says, this is terrible! I said, well, I don't

think this is terrible, I think it's very good that she's doing that. I kept her home and didn't do anything with her until she was nine.

Subject #035

(Mother): They have what's called their Bambi line where the good kids go and if the good kids wander over to the other line they're beat up. Girls beat up in the bathroom because they have they happen to walk in at the wrong time. I just didn't feel that it was necessary for my kids to have to deal with that.

(Father): The kids that have graduated don't seem to have the academic scholastic background that is needed to hold them through college. They've been baby sat and pacified for years and then they've been graduated. I would like my kids to have the responsibility of knowing that when they go out and they accept a job from an employer and he expects certain things from them. I want my kids to be respectable responsible citizens when they graduate from high school. I want them to know how to read, write and be able to tell you what you're pointing to when you spin a globe.*

7. Parents Feel a Sense of Duty: Twenty-four percent of home school parents (seven out of twenty-nine) said that they held the overwhelming conviction that it was their right and duty to educate their children. For most of these parents this responsibility was religiously based. They said that they believed that to delegate the responsibility of educating their children to a public or private school was to skirt their responsibility as parents.

These parents also said that they believed they were best qualified to teach their own children. They felt that they knew their children, with their particular strengths and weaknesses, better than anyone.

Subject #008

(Mother): ...we feel that as parents we know our children's strengths and weaknesses. We believe we are the ones that God has ordained to help them along in those areas to encourage their strengths and help them strengthen their weakness.

(Father): Another thing, we have a mandate from the Lord to train up our children which is in Deuteronomy Chapter six, that we are the one's to train our children, not the State.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Subject #013

....if I send my child somewhere else, the teacher and the children there have the biggest influence. I want to have the biggest influence on my children. We really are responsible for our children.... we need to take it seriously and not just say the school will do it.

Subject #040

.... it turned out that we really felt that our priorities were changing ...and we really believe that God had mandated the training of the child to parents. Parents have felt that they're unqualified so they had then deferred that training to someone else. They believe that maybe they should develop character in the home but when it comes to the academics that belongs to someone else. We question why and we know very well that we are as qualified if not more so than some of the teachers that are teaching these kids. So we sort of developed our perspective from Proverbs "train up a child in the way he should go". That became part of the training. No one separated the religious from the secular. Even the Jews, if you study their history, they didn't send their children to school until they were after twelve years old. All that initial training was in the home.*

8. Financial Constraints, Convenience, and Availability:

Twenty-one percent of home school parents (six out of twenty-nine) who were dissatisfied with the local public schools available to them mentioned that private schools would have been an acceptable alternative for them. However, they said that the financial cost of these schools were either prohibitive or unworthy of the sacrifices needed to be made to accommodate this expense in the family budget.

Another small group of parents said that they moved or traveled frequently. For these parents home schooling was more convenient than the constant shuffling of children in and out of schools through the enrollment and reenrollment process.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

A final group of parents said that they simply could not find the type of traditional school available to them that they desired for their children.

Subject #007

...at the same time my husband got a job at a different State. We moved so there was nothing near us that I liked. I felt confident and at the same time my sister needed someone to watch their children. So beside my daughter, I had nephews with me that were five, four, four, three, two year olds and an infant. At the time I decided the only way I would survive the day was to structure their activities. So my husband went to a school auction and bought desks and we bought art materials, we just sort of did pre-school activities, while I was looking for pre-schools. We listened to classical music while we learned our primary colors. We started in unstructured fun ways started learning the letters, which I know now it goes against the law of home school theory to start them so early, but it was really unpressured. It was in the home. The kids thrived and did really well and learned a lot and I had a lot of fun. So I started thinkingwhy should I ever put her in school you know, she's doing well...

Subject #024

(Mother): ...the administrators at that school decided that it wasn't economically viable and they were going to close it next year, ...so that left me looking all over.... for another school and I haven't found one yet that really seemed right for either of the children.

...we discovered that we had a lot more flexibility in his kind of work where we never know whether we're going to take off for six months, a year or whatever. We don't want their education interrupted every time we change, neither do we want to not be a family because he's got to work at a different state somewhere. So that was probably the main reason we started...

Subject #028

(Mother): Private school was too expensive for us.*

9. Outside Influences: Thirty-eight percent of home school parents (eleven out of twenty-nine) said that there were outside factors which served to influence them in the direction of home schooling. These factors were family and friends who home schooled, home school organizations, books and periodicals discussing the

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

benefits of home schooling, and conventions, radio or television programs.

Subject #013

I was listening to (Dr. James) Dobson and Dr. Moore was on. The first time I ever heard him and this is probably ten years ago. He was talking about Better Late than Early or School Can Wait. In those books the things he said were a perfect description of my son.... When I heard that I would have not sent him because he had so many of the problems Dr. Moore had described.

Subject #015

(Father): We had basic background, we have a lot of friends who home school. There's a lot of support in the church for home schooling. That was really a preference for a lot of the parents. There's a variety of parents, some home schooling, some public and some Christian school. There was a lot of support there for us.

(Mother): I was looking forward to my kids going off to school and having some free time. It's the last thing I want to do. Then I went to Greg Harris's seminar and it just sounded so good. All the things he said was so good, yeah, it's right, we're responsible for our kids.

Subject #025

(Father): I was interested in it because I had seen it in the lives of other people we knew and I was really attracted by the children. The children's character was really turning out wonderfully.

Subject #040

My personal friendsdecided to home school. We formed our own little support group and it was wonderful. After that we started hearing Mike Smith, and people who are home schooling and receive the teaching home magazines and we started realizing that there are different reasons why people home school.*

Why Parents Continue to Home School

It must be noted that the thought processes of parents evolved over the course of time. The reasons parents decided to home school were not necessarily the same reasons that led parents to continue home schooling.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

As a follow up to the initial question, parents were asked to explain their current reasons for home schooling.

Now that you have been home schooling for a time, have your reasons for home schooling changed?

While the first question often revealed the negative feelings of parents towards the traditional schools available to them, the second question allowed parents to focus on the positive aspects of home schooling. Home school parents gave seven reasons for continuing to home school. These are listed below in Table 7. In some cases parents had the opportunity to confirm earlier convictions. In other cases parents cited new and even unexpected rationales for home schooling of which they were not originally aware.

Table 7: Number and Percentage of Parents Citing Each of Seven Reasons For Continuing to Home School

REASON	PERCENT OF PARENTS	NUMBER OF PARENTS
Family Unity and Socialization	31	9
Flexibility of Home Schooling	28	8
Emotional Healing of the Child	21	6
Parental Control	14	4
Academic Success	14	4
Parents Enjoy Being with the Child	14	4
Parents Learning About the Child	7	2

1. Family Unity and Socialization: Thirty-one percent of home school parents (nine out of twenty-nine) said that as they began home schooling they became aware of the increased communication

Subject #044

It is incomparable, the strength and unity that we have as a family. My kids are best friends. They actually not only love each other, they like each other. They like spending time with each other. They are more secure at home which then frees them up to have relationships beyond the family unit. It's funny because I had a lot of my friends say to me, oh, you're doing a horrible mistake because socially they're just going to be damaged for life. I have friends coming up to me now asking me to help them put a program together for their kids...*

2. Emotional Healing of the Child: Twenty-one percent of home school parents (six out of twenty-nine) indicated that they continued home schooling because of the emotional healing of their child. As noted above, many parents said that their children had experienced frustration, anger, and a sense of failure as a result of their educational experience with traditional schools. Other children had experienced negative attitude changes. As parents withdrew their children from school and taught them at home they said they began to see a reversal of these problems. Over the course of time parents noted a restoration of self-esteem in these children. A renewed interest in schooling and a positive demeanor began to establish itself in the children.

Subject #007

We started noticing a difference in their behavior.We started to notice pretty early on when we get her around her age mates that her behavior and self confidence would be a lot better than most of them, so then I say the social part of it started to reinforce that.

Subject #013

He after being home for a year had learned to entertain himself and not be so peer dependent. Before it was like he could not function without someone to play with, he had to be around kids all the time.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Subject #015

(Father): I guess through a combination of things with some real soul searching I came around to the point I began to appreciate the advantages of at least at the elementary level in terms of her own self esteem and the quality of learning experience. When I looked at children involved in some of the private Christian schools that we were thinking of, my reaction of their educational experience was that it was probably better than public schools but it still fell way short of what we are doing at home.

Subject #023

We found that, both my husband and I, that there was a big difference in her attitude. She was much happier.

...My son at this point I was home schooling him and he was just thriving, he loved it. He never wanted to go to school. He never had the desire for the schooling atmosphere but he was willing to sit down and do the work with me but he was just young. I can see such a difference between my daughter who was looking for the right answer to give me and my son who didn't care what the right answer was. He was just trying to learn. I can see the difference with that.

Subject #035

(Father): When the kids were in school they almost became introverts because of peer pressure. The criticism that was directed within the public school, there didn't seem to be a lot of praise, always a lot of criticism. I found that having the kids home and being able to praise them and let them know that they are doing the best they can, they have become so open now. It's like they've never met anyone that's a stranger. They would go up and introduce themselves to people and talk to people and they've done a complete turn around personality wise. I think it's been a big boost to their self-esteem and self-confidence.

Subject #043

She's become a relaxed child. She's able to sleep at night. She has good self-esteem at this point, which she did not have before. She is a good student. She has her bad days like anybody does but on the average she is a good student. She gives me extra effort for which I'm really thankful for which we didn't have to start with. She didn't want to give anybody any effort, it wasn't worth it. We've seen her grow up. She's nine years old and in the last six months we've seen her become a little girl instead of a baby.

3. Academic Success: Fourteen percent of home school parents (four out of twenty-nine) mentioned that they were pleased with the academic success and progress their children were making.

Subject #005

Well, there are thousands of things I like about it. Every year I do it I enjoy it more and it gets easier. The more competent they become in reading and comprehension it gets easier. They are more and more independent.

Subject #008

(Father): I see more fully the impact of what we originally had in our hearts. I think it's more, every advantage that we've attained I think we've gotten in stages.

(Mother): I have nothing negative to say. I can only say that I'm proud of my children. I really see how they are accelerating. It's really a blessing to me. They're good learners.

Subject #018

....Talking to the parents and listening to the people who have home schooled all the way through Elementary School and High School.... A lot of them are very bright and they know where they are going.

Subject #023

Since she had been home she began reading fluently in the third grade, pretty much on her own and she got involved in some books she liked and now she can't get her face out of a book.... Last year at the end of the year we had her tested with the IOWA skills and she tested, fourth, fifth and sixth grade level which is ideal and perfect. I was so glad.

4. Parental Control: Another fourteen percent of home school parents (four out of twenty-nine) mentioned that home schooling allowed them to gain better control of their environment in two areas.

The first of these areas was curriculum. Parents now believed that they could better control what subjects and materials their children used while learning. Often this included the addition of subjects and materials that parents felt were missing in the traditional schools. In addition parents felt free to exclude materials they believed were redundant, non-productive or even damaging to the child.

The second area was in the exposure of the child to influences which were not in agreement with family values. Most notably parents felt that they could better shield their children from negative peer influence. Parents did not wish to isolate their children, rather they felt that home schooling allowed them the opportunity to expose their children with discretion to values and opinions other than their own.

Subject #005

The biggest advantage is that I have total control over the type of materials he learns, and we incorporate our Christian beliefs into their school so that they have a real awareness of the Lord and they grow in their understanding of how important the Lord is to us, my husband and I.

Subject #015

(Mother): I think I just have seen the big effects of peer pressure with some of my neighbors or friends who have put their kids in school; peer pressure even at a young age, negative habits. I have a neighbor whose little boy is picked on constantly and the mom has gone to the teacher to see what they can do about it they just didn't care. He has trouble in school, he really shouldn't be in there, he should be in a special school. He's hyperactive. I see the negative in all that and I don't want my children to get all this negative input with their self-esteem basically. I don't want them to be compared to other children, our children don't know how they are doing in comparison to other people, she's doing the best to her ability. We'll do it at her pace.

Subject #028

(Father): A lot of the criticisms of home schooling is that we're isolating our children and we have a very narrow way of thinking. We have really tried to be just the opposite. The only thing is we want to be in control a little more. All those issues that she would of gotten in school, drugs, peer pressures come up anyway, but they come up in a time when we're sensitive and we know what just happened. It's not something that's going on without us knowing and realizing it. We just like to have a little more control.

Subject #040

But attitudes, peer orientation, just a lot of different things that can bring grief to a family. All of a sudden that element is removed. We're not living under some kind of glass dome. We're not totally sheltered but the thing of it is that it's not the daily grind of constant, constant, constant attack from those kinds of pressures. It may be Wednesday night, it may be Sunday morning, Sunday evening and an occasional field trip, but it's not the same as a constant diet. So the parents have a better opportunity to instill that and work on character.

5. Flexibility: Twenty-four percent of home school parents (seven out of twenty-nine) said that home schooling allowed them broad flexibility in two areas.

The first of these areas was curriculum and teaching. In addition to being able to control and limit the curriculum their children were exposed to, parents now felt that they could tailor it, along with the emphasis of their teaching, to the specific needs of the child. Because parents felt they knew the specific strengths and weaknesses of their children they were able to design a flexible home school day which catered to the best interest of the child.

The second area was family priorities. Home schooling allowed parents the flexibility to change schedules as their priorities changed. Vacations, illness, and important family events such as births no longer competed with the demands of the traditional schools for the time of the family and child.

Subject #018

David's forte is Science. Susan's forte is dance and poetry. She loves them. Joyce is movement, she hasn't started school yet. But to be able to zero in on what's really their favorite thing and like David, we can do numbers around science. We can do science and include all kinds of things. Same thing with dance. Being able to zero in and make those things enjoyable, it's not just drudgery.

Subject #025

(Mother): It's given up a lot of flexibility too. Like last year we were going through the school year and then we decided about 3/4 or way through that we were going to Norway this summer so I quit teaching basically everything that would consider standard stuff and we started studying Norway, a little bit of Norwegian and the food and they're much more formal country and we started practicing those different thing that we needed to know. It was wonderful. If they would of been in school I would of had to push harder in after school hours and it would of been more tight and stressful for them and it really wasn't that. It was a wonderful time.

(Father): I really like the no home work in the evening. I don't know if we have seen other families where the dad had his books open or his nine year old son up late at night teaching them. I'm just glad that I don't have to do that.

Subject #027

They can be sick for two days and not count it and go ahead till you get your one hundred and seventy-five, you know, have a Saturday field trip and get another day of school in, you know, the whole flexibility thing. The ability to take the children and travel with them and not have the clock ticking or a meter running behind you and all those things are wonderful for us. We've been considering buying a mountain cabin and living part of the week up there and if we do that we'll have to take Jeremy out of school again in order to flip around like that. With that flexibility and the opportunity for creative learning for me far outweighs any hardship that exists.

Subject #032

The joy of being able to see them start reading and know that we sort of worked on that together to get to that point. They just love learning. I mean learning goes on even when we don't have specific curriculum or whatever. They bring me things from the garden going, "Mom, look at this, can I look at this bug under the microscope". We go to somebody else's house that has books or something and they sit down and they want to look at things. I go to the library with them. We go to the bookstore and they'll think we're in the library because we can check out like fifty books and they think when they go to the bookstore they can do the same thing. I don't know if the kids get so squelched sometimes in school that all they want to do is play when they get out. Since we have quite a bit of play time during the day time too they are just more attentive to learn. That's been real positive. I love the field trips we'll do as a family.*

6. Parents Learning About Their Child: Seven percent of home school parents (two out of twenty-nine) said that home schooling allowed them a concentrated and abundant amount of time with their children. As a result of this time spent together parents felt they gained an in-depth insight into the personality and learning styles of their children. These parents felt that they knew best the unique qualities and characteristics of their children. This knowledge compelled parents to resist delegating their teaching responsibilities to others.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Subject #028

(Mother): I have to say that in the beginning of the last year or so I had a lot of ups and downs. Jim would come home and I would say this is great, I love it! We're doing great and then he would come home and I would say, oh gosh, I don't know, maybe we're making a big a mistake here. It took a little while for me to get used to how to teach and comfortable with my daughter and know how to teach her. That convinced me even more that I wanted to keep on. I realized that you changed teachers every year, how long does it take for them to know my child and know how to teach her. Now, for so long it's just has been so smooth and I'm really happy with it. I would hate to see somebody have to spend several months just to get to know her before they feel they know. It's too much expected if somebody has 40 kids to get to know each one and how they learn and know what level they're at and know what frustrates them.

Subject #040

I'll tell you what, if you spend as much time with your kids as I spend with mine, you really learn what your children are all about. Where as my others had them fooled in school....you really know from "A" to "Z" on your children, there's no excuse, there's no backing out. You're aware of their flaws and you know what you need to work on.

7. Parents Enjoy Being with the Child: Ten percent of home school parents (three out of twenty-nine) said that home schooling allowed increased interaction of parent and child. As parents began to spend extended time with their children, they began to enjoy them more and more. These parents felt comfortable being with their children and gained great personal satisfaction by home schooling.

Subject #028

...I love knowing what they know and what they're learning. I wouldn't want to miss that. I wouldn't miss the time with them. I don't want to sound like a clingy mother that can't let go of their child. There's some of that, but basically my goal is to teach my children how to get along completely without me. That's my goal. I want them to learn to get into this world when I'm gone.

Subject #029

I guess I became aware of the fact that I really enjoyed my kids. I always had this longing to be a mother for years. It took a long time for me to conceive and have a baby. So I started feeling that gosh, it's sad to get to the point where they're five or six years old and you're really starting to have a lot of fun going and doing things with them and they're learning, they're fun to talk to to. The toddling years are fun too but you can't do as much

as you want to. So why would you want to at this point send them off for six hours a day, most of their day, when you're just finally getting to enjoy each other's company.

...I enjoy the kids, I don't see why anybody would want to send their kids to school.

Subject #032

I always thought that the teachers in school sometimes got the best aspect of the kids.

Subject #043

I really don't feel that it's a hardship. I feel that it's a privilege for me to have the opportunity and the availability to work with my children. I'm a mom that doesn't really believe in working outside the home. I've worked outside the home since I've been married but only because of a necessity had called for it at one point and it was only a part time job. I didn't like it then and I don't like it now. I'd rather stay home. My days are very long when the children aren't here. I like having them close to me....

The Inconveniences and Hardships of Home Schooling

Question number two had allowed parents the opportunity to focus in on the positive aspects of home schooling which compelled them to continue. Question number three asked parents to reflect on the problems created by home schooling.

Can you describe any inconvenience or hardship you have experienced as a result of your decision to home school?

For some parents these inconveniences and hardships were minimal. For other parents they constituted the sacrifice and personal compromise needed to continue home schooling. These problems formed in two broad areas.

1. Time: Fifty-two percent of home school parents (fifteen out of twenty-nine) said that home schooling involved a large time commitment. The preparation of lesson plans and the gathering of materials for schooling was ongoing. The school day itself, which

included teaching, field trips, and other educational functions, took much time away from parents who would otherwise be free to pursue other activities. Parents had to re-prioritize their daily schedules. Household duties, outside commitments, and even personal goals had to be delayed or in some cases eliminated. Parents often had no relief time away from their children for relaxation or recreation.

For the most part this groups of parents did not discuss any overwhelming hardships or inconveniences experienced as a result of home schooling. It stands to reason that any parents suffering from excessive hardships or inconveniences would chose not to continue with home schooling and therefor not be included in the study. This group of parents had found the problems presented by home schooling limited and within their ability to tolerate or overcome.

Subject #005

The inconvenience obviously is for schedules. It is an inconvenience to sit down and do lesson planning and gather materials, plan and execute things. I'm in a very active support group which is a lot of time involvement. The hardship sometimes is that it's hard to be with your children twenty-four hours a day.

Subject #016

Yes, it's been stressful. I have some high expectations of myself and my children. I found that in the last couple of years I seem to be less patient and stressed. I'm hoping that's going to improve. It's really hard to isolate what is the cause of that among so many other things. It's been a hard couple of years in our marriage. I don't know whether that's related to home school or the other way around. I think it's an added stress, another thing that I have to do and accomplish. My house is never really clean and there's other things I like to do also. But when I look at them they're not really as important as what I'm doing. It's just won't fit, there are only so many hours in a day.

Subject #020

It was more difficult. It was hard for me I think to have my children home, but now that's not a problem. To get to where I can home school and do other things... It was just a real frustration on my part. It's only because of my disorganization. I had to learn to be more organized.

I had to personally be tutored in order to teach some subjects. You think you're well rounded until you actually have to sit down with them. You find out that you know a certain subject but there can be holes in that subject that he needs help with and you don't know the answers. So you do one of two things, you either call someone in or you go and learn it and come back and teach it.

Subject #040

....You don't have time. That's the fact. I would like to be lying in bed with my feet kicked up right now....read a magazine or doing something and I'm constantly bombarded with questions. I don't know how I manage to do it but my five kids are the most mother oriented children that I have ever met. So they're constantly at me. That gets to be rather wary. If my husband and I want to take off and spend some time together, I feel guilty because my lessons aren't done. I haven't pre-read the next assignment. The house doesn't get clean. That kind of thing, the more they're home the more it gets messed up. Having to do all the studies and the lesson plans and all of that, the constant attachment to the kids and the lack of time for my self.

Subject #042

There's a certain lack of privacy for me, lack of ever being home alone. Most of the time I like them here, but ever once in awhile I feel that I need a little space. I don't have it as easy as housewives who have their kids in school all day, but I probably have it easier than women who are trying to work full-time and raise their children.*

2. Expense and Financial Sacrifice: Thirty-one percent of home school parents (nine out of twenty-nine) mentioned that the financial cost of home schooling had two sources. The first of these was the nominal cost of books, materials, and supplies needed for home schooling. The second source was a loss of income. Some parents would have opted to work full or part time if they had no commitment to home school.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Subject #005

Financially, of course we are living on a single income in a double income world. We are doing OK but we are just keeping our heads above water....but it's working.

Subject #011

I was willing to go into a less expensive home. We had just bought a new home and I gave up my job. I would of lived in a tent to be home. I mean what's ten year out of my life to be with my kids and really make them so they can function in this world. They don't have to be on welfare. They can help people around them. What's life if we don't do that kind of stuff?

Subject #018

It is difficult, it's not easy. It's definitely a sacrifice, maybe that's too big of a word. It's inconvenient, but that's alright. That's a choice, we made that choice. We've decided that the kids need me at home. My husband works awful hours just to try to keep me home. We decided that's what's important at this point. If something is important, isn't it always a sacrifice.*

What Home School Parent Believed Would Happen To Their Children If They Could Not Home School.

Many parents said that the decision to home school was not easy. They said that they often vacillated over a period of time before finally committing to home schooling.

With the decision made, a small sample of parents were asked to project what the outcome for their children might have been had they decided not to home school.

What would have happened if you had left your child in (sent your child to) a traditional school?

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

The responses from all parents described a dismal scenario for the child ranging from low self-esteem to complete academic and/or social failure.

Subject #009

I think she would of been lost in the school system and not just in the school system academically, I think I was loosing her even as a parent... I was loosing her.

Subject #034

I don't know, I wouldn't have given up. I was to the point of telling Bryan that I realized that it was too much to ask a child to continue to turn the other cheek when people are mean to him.

Subject #043

I really think she probably would have withdrawn even more so than she was at that point. And probably would have ended up being handicapped to the point of needing specialized education, maybe even special therapy. She's timid anyway. What I think would have happened is she would become a failing child and they would not know what to do with her. Eventually she would have probably ended up in alternative education somewhere...*

What Home School Parents Believe Their Children Miss By Not Attending Traditional Schools

Question number four elicited negative responses from parents as they considered the possible ramifications of a decision not to home school their children.

In an attempt to balance this line of inquiry, question number five asked parents to consider the positive experiences offered by traditional public or private schools.

Are your children missing anything by not being part of a traditional public or private school?

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

The responses of parents were both positive and negative, with negative responses echoing concerns discussed above. With regard to positive observations, parents felt that traditional public and private schools offered experiences and opportunities in the areas of interaction of children, the exposure of children to a broader spectrum of people; independence from the parent; sports, chorus, and other social clubs; and positive competition.

Parents were quick to point out, however, that they were clearly interested in providing these experiences through the attendance and enrollment of children in after-school activities and sports in any number of church or community sponsored programs.

Subject #015

(Mother): They're missing the bad things.

(Father): The positive things (they are missing) at this age I would think nothing. They get a lot of positive social interactions with other kids through other contact. Probably the one thing is in the first grade is learning to be more independent of mom and dad, for better or for worse. That's an important thing we talk about quite a bit, ...where the transition to young adulthood takes place. By the time they're eighteen they have to be able to function independent and not have mom and dad make the decisions for you so they can be healthy adults.

Subject 018

No, I don't think so. The only thing I can guess would be like sports and choir. We have occasionally choirs at Friday Schools³⁴, which is with our home school, we have activities with them. Sports, my kids are in T-ball, soccer, baseball. As a home school parent, you have to be willing to go out and find those things and a lot of parents are not and I think a lot of kids are missing out. No, I don't think we're missing out on anything. I think if we were to home school both kids through High School there's still all those activities you can get involved in.

³⁴ "Friday School" is an activity sponsored by Sunland Christian Schools. It provided various group learning experiences for the home school children. Parents who participated in this activity usually met on four consecutive Fridays, dividing into four groups designated by age.

Subject #028

(Father): The only thing I feel that she would be missing would be more exposure to a broader spectrum of people. That can be good or can be bad. If I could somehow give her that and still home school I think that will be good. There are good kids and bad kids in Sunday school just like in school. Really the ratio mixture in our church is great. It's not by any means a one class of people. There are people of all ranges economically, social and ethnically.

We like to keep these formative years kind of sheltered, but it's not a mental sheltering. It's a social sheltering. We want her to understand the problems that are out there in the world. We don't believe that we just make up your own ethical values and they'll work fine for you, because we believe there are eternal and moral principals in the Universe because of our faith. So if people think that's narrow, that's true, it is narrow in that sense. Things work a certain way because they were designed that way not only physically in the natural realm but spiritually in the way we live our lives.

Subject #043

They're not missing anything. In reference to what? What would they miss? Maybe missing being ostracized by other children, by adults, which I don't think we need anyway. No, I really don't think they are. I think they have the best of both worlds to be honest with you. We are extremely involved at Grace Community Church. We work with the mentally handicapped program on Tuesday nights and these are individuals from eighteen to fifty, all of them are mentally handicapped. Many of them are physically handicapped as well. The girls participate in that as much as my husband and I. They see that as an opportunity of giving. They see the Sunday schools that they go to and the children's program on Sunday nights and a point of receiving, so it's a very balanced program. No, I don't think they miss anything.*

What Family, Friends and Neighbors Think About Home Schooling

Most parents said that the decision to home school was a personal one not initially shared with outside family, friends, or neighbors. However, no parent lived in a social vacuum and their decision to home school often fostered strong opinions even when unsolicited.

Question number six sought to better understand the responses and reactions of family members outside the immediate family, friends, and neighbors to the issue of home schooling. This also gave

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

parents the opportunity to discuss how they dealt with these sometimes hostile or resistant responses.

How did your family, friends, and neighbors react to your decision to home school?

Home school parents said that the responses and reactions of family, friends, and neighbors were mixed. Overall the strongest reactions were from those socially closest to the home school family; thus neighbors were the least opinionated while family members were the most reactionary.

Neighbors were sometimes confused and puzzled as to why parents were home schooling, although there were isolated instances of caustic or reactionary behavior.

Friends that were not home schooling often offered sympathy but questioned whether or not parents had the stamina and endurance to carry out the responsibilities of schooling. Friends that home schooled offered great support and encouragement.

Outside family members were mixed in their responses but highly opinionated. While some offered support and encouragement to home schoolers, others were openly opposed to home schooling and questioned the better judgement of parents. Still other family members adopted a reserve or wait and see attitude. Many of these family members would closely monitor the academic and social progress of the home school child. Some would even 'test' the child at every given opportunity by asking questions or requesting that they read or work math problems for them.

Home school parents pointed out that all three groups tended to shift and change their opinions of home schooling over the course of time. Where individuals had been opposed, they often now showed support as they saw for themselves the outcome and results of home schooling.

Subject #005

Most of my friends didn't think I would make it. They just thought it was a whim. And they were very surprised because it was calling for so much self discipline, sacrifice of my time andnot being able to go to work or whatever. They all thought it was very odd.

My mother lives with us so she is very much involved in this. She thought it was odd at first but as the years progress she has found the definite advantages of it. And my father is a very intelligent genius, professional man and he had reservations about it but he had enough respect to sit back and watch before he made too many options. And my sister she was a home schooler at one point and so she was one hundred percent for it. And my husband's side of the family is probably five hundred percent for it. They just think it is terrific.

Subject #010

I think [my friends] they're pretty supportive. In the beginning they weren't. But my friends that I did go out to lunch with those were the ones that are supportive. At first they were like, oh, "when are we going to see you?"

My mom and dad were violently opposed. They watched our two kids while we went to the convention last year. They didn't know what we had gone to and when we came home we told them. My mom was in a fit of rage only because my mother raised me purely on what will people think and what will people say... So I took it with a grain of salt and didn't let it bother me too much and before long she seemed like she was supporting me too.

Subject #011

Oh, I think they (my friends) thought I was nuts.

Subject #016

My parents were pretty comfortable with it. They are Christians and we are pretty close to them in a lot of ways and they have never really discussed it, which I take as a sort of a negative. I get a lot of questions about how my day goes. My one sister is very liberal and is maybe a Christian and maybe not and she, I think was also very critical but also didn't say a whole lot. But I think as times goes on people are feeling a little more positive about it. My other sister has started home schooling her child this year. I feel that most people just think we're sort of odd.

Subject #017

Most of my friends think it's real neat. My mother is another story. It's taking her this long to kind of understand what's happening. She has in the last couple of years gotten a little more vocal about itI found that when she comes over she's almost testing them, like, what is this and what is that? to see if they're learning anything. I think she found out that well I guess they are learning something because they can answer the questions right. My mother-in-law, she's really supportive. She doesn't quite understand it either but she's very supportive about.

Subject #044

My mom, I was actually frightened. I did not want to say anything to anybody. I, there again, I know myself fairly well in the sense that I have to be strong enough in my own mind before I can come up to anybody else's ridicule and criticism and be able to stand firm. So I had to develop a testimony myself. I had to fully decide this is best. I had to develop that testimony with what I felt, there again being religious, what I felt what the Lord wanted me to do with my kids. And after talking to my husband and my kids, and we kept it a secret for a long time because I had first decided, it was about March or April, so I had all the rest of that school year and all the summer before I even made it very well known to anyone outside of our immediate family. I didn't even speak to my mother about it until I was strong enough to come under whatever condemnation there might be, which I think was probably was one of the wisest things I could have done because I did get a lot of it... I was amazed at how outspoken people were and their out and out meanness to me. But when I finally approached my mom, she was supportive only in a sense that she said Mary, I know you, and I know you would never do anything unless you knew it was right. She didn't have faith in home schooling. She had faith in my ability to do what was right for my family. I think she stood back and watched, not wanting to say anything, but I think she thought it was a mistake..... Then after watching them, she has said, "Mary, I wish your sisters would do this..."

My mother-in-law was the same way.... I've had nothing but praise and confidence from her. When things have gotten hard, she would call up and, "How are you doing," "Fine," or "It's tough". "Mary, you can do it, hang in there, it's worth it, you're doing what's right for these kids, I just know it."

My sisters were skeptical, I think because they thought if you do this, does this mean I'm going to have to or do you think I'm a bad person because I'm not. I believe that if my sisters don't want to or my best friend doesn't want, fine, and I will defend to the death her right to be able to say I don't want to do that. I don't believe it's for every child and I don't believe it's for every parent.*

What Home School Children Think About Home School

Parents said that the reactions and responses of their children to home schooling influenced them as they evaluated and considered

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

decisions to continue home schooling. Question number seven investigated the perception of parents with regard to their children's thoughts about home schooling.

How do you think your children feel about being home schooled?

Though this question was not designed to confine responses to a comparison of home schools and traditional schools, a natural contrast occurred. With great frequency parents said their children enjoyed home schooling. For the most part children did not want to return to or start traditional schools even when they were experiencing difficulty with home schooling.

Some children were curious about traditional schools. This was especially true for children who had never attended a traditional school. Sometimes home school children felt different from other children in their community. Sometimes they felt left out socially as they often longed to be with other children. As mentioned above, however, parents tried to compensate for this isolation by enrolling the children in church or community sponsored activities.

In spite of these hardships most children expressed and maintained positive attitudes toward home schooling. They believed that there was something not only different, but special about it. It must be noted that the children themselves did not respond to the question. Most were not present during the interview. Perhaps if the children themselves were questioned a different response might have been recorded.

Subject #002

My children love it. Neither one of them asks to go to school.

Subject #009

I think she really enjoyed it. We had a good time. When it was school like I said it was school, but it was on such a different level, it was relaxed. She knew what was expected of her and she did okay. I think that she was motivated, plus God was healing the two of us so we can begin to relax more with each other and it was just a fantastic experience.

Subject #015

Marilyn tells everyone that it's great and she's having fun. Back East I can be very embarrassed about it myself. Oh, I've got to struggle through this whole conversation. It's just a big pain, I didn't like to talk about it. I've been changing here because people are so much more supportive here and it's easier. Marilyn just belts it out, she tells everybody. A lot of her neighborhood friends are very jealous because mom spends that much time with you and you don't have to spend all day at school, she gets to play a lot. She feels that she's the luckiest kid on the block. Emily doesn't think she's in school yet.

Subject #029

They like being home schooled. I'm sure they like it. They don't know how to compare it to anything. I think they enjoy it, I try to make it fun. Sometimes it's kind of hard. Sometimes it's pulling teeth to get them to do their math, Bryan loves it though. She's doing much better since I've actually cut back the actual doing the math paper to only two to three day a week. She enjoys better playing the games and other methods. That's one thing about home schooling is that you can find the way that your child enjoys learning or learns best and you can teach them that. Where in school they're almost all taught by looking and writing. There's not a lot of hands on. So that's what's nice about home schooling because you can gear it towards your children.

Subject #040

They're at times bored, at times excited. My son is a very shy person. He tends to make one friend and that's it. Although he likes to participate with other boys, he's so shy he's not aggressive enough to go out and say, hey, let's do something together. So he doesn't complain too much. He has his best friend across the street. My girls, every single one of the four are extreme extroverts. So they have a difficult time not being with their peers all the time. They do enjoy it. They do see benefits. We get to do field trips that most schools do not go on. Because of the flexibility of our time and the kinds of the things we can do we have magnificent field trips and there are several a year. We do divide according to our age. The junior high and high school group does their thing and the little ones have their own activities. So they do get to see kids. They think they're missing a lot but my oldest one knows, she fought it for a few year. She really missed it but after going through Bill Gothard's seminars. She just had recently a trip back to Michigan by herself.... to a counselling session with three hundred other girls and she came back from there as a different individual. She realized the difference in the quality

level of the people who go through these programs compared to even some of her close friends in church.*

The Average Home School Day and the Type of Teaching Materials Home Schoolers Use

In an attempt to better understand the components and process of home schooling, parents were asked to discuss a typical home school day.

Describe what your average home school day is like.

As a follow up to this request parents were asked to describe the curriculum and supplemental materials they used to help in the education process.

What kind of curriculum do you use?

In responding, many parents pointed out that they did not have an average school day. Rather the very nature of home schooling allowed parents flexibility in the use of time and materials. In spite of this each parent seemed to have an awareness of what they would ideally like their home school day to include. Often the responses of parents were a combination of what was actually taking place and what they were moving toward in light of this ideal expectation.

Many parents expressed an evolution of thought with regard to their daily schedule. Often a highly structured and regimented schedule gave way to a more flexible child centered schedule.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

It is difficult to conclude if this was truly an attempt by parents to tailor a program to the needs of the child or if it was a rationalization by parents to deal with a difficult and regimented schedule. In all likelihood it may have been a combination of the two.

Typical components of a home school day included a morning work time. Many parents included household and domestic chores as part of the home school day. Family Bible studies, prayer and worship were also commonly included. The average day ranged from two hours to five and one half hours in length, including breaks. There was no clear delineation of time schedule between older and younger students. However, older children tended to have longer and more regimented days, while younger students experienced shorter, more flexible days. All parents allowed time for work in the basic subjects of reading, language arts and math. Science, history, the arts, and physical education were approached with less regimentation. Some parents focused on an integrated curriculum, teaching not only the academics but the aesthetics and character building as well.

Concerning curriculum materials, many parents said that they were in a constant process of evaluation and experimentation as they sought a curriculum that would meet their needs and the needs of the child. While some parents were satisfied with one curriculum publisher, others either combined several different curricula or designed their own.

Subject #002

We started high school last year. So our days are longer for the older one than they ever have been. The first year I was very structured. I think a lot of it is my personality because I am a perfectionist. I do everything according to the book. I was running school at home, eight-thirty a.m. to three-thirty p.m. We had bells and the whole shot. Everything. And each year I've become more and more lax. Instead of my determining what the kids are studying, I'm more letting the kids feed me what their interests are. But that's taken five years to get to where I am at now to be more relaxed about it. We start on time everyday, because I am a structured person. We do have break time, lunch time and that kind of thing, but our school is over about two p.m. and lots of field trips.

...Sometimes we'll do school on weekends, sometimes we'll do school during the summer. ...We had school at all different weird hours that year. My ideal is to have it be structured but not real structured. Structured in the time setting but be more free with other times.

Subject #009

We basically had a very loose schedule. I knew that the law required three hours a day and we were told at that time that we can take it anywhere we wanted to basically. By trial and error we found that her best schooling hours were early in the morning. So we would get her up and that was all she did until eleven a.m. There was also an understanding that because she was going to mainstream back to a school system that she wasn't going to be getting up at eleven a.m. to twelve noon. She had assignments basically and she would just progress on those levels the next page and the next page. We set goals on what to accomplish during the week. And the time frame is up to her, if she chose to do all week's work in two days then she was free the rest of the time and also we've had times where things were getting a little bit hard we would stop and go and do a beach trip and take her aside and say next time and using full utilization relaxing and just being out instead of being homebound.

Subject #014

When I did my planning for this coming year I took into account that we are in the midst of a major project and there are extra things that I didn't want them to miss out on. If we are pouring cement that day, it's too much to ask for them to cram in school or try to finish it up at the end of the day because I want to count all these things in as a part of their education. Our typical school day will start out with personal hygiene, household chores and they each get their resource book. I call it a resource book, I don't call it a note book because I wanted to develop an attitude that everything you have learned is something you build upon and for you to refer back to. So they each have a resource book divided into sections with curriculum that I have hand picked for that particular child at their particular level in that particular subject. They get them out and they work independently in the areas they can and with assistance in the areas they can't. The older can help the younger ones. And typically, by eleven a.m. we are done with that portion of it. The afternoon is reserved for errands, extra chores, projects. Yesterday we started stripping a chest of drawers and everybody participated. Afternoons are reserved for foreign language or anything that's not done with a paper and pencil. Our history, science, and art we do all together and that's in the afternoon.

Subject #024

We have two typical home school days. One when I'm here and one when I'm not. And one when we are on the road. I say that a typical home school day when everybody is here and on normal schedule is that we have breakfast and we have Bible together as a family and usually they have Math with him in the morning. Some of it is individual work and some of it is actual instruction time and they have various assignments in the other subjects they work on. We don't have a rigid, you'll work on math from this time to this time and English from this time to this time. I did last year pretty much but things got so integrated that a lot of times English becomes figuring out how to outline the Bible assignment and get it organized and put it in final paragraph form and revising it. We make lesson plans, formal lesson plans. We don't always cover everything we intended to anymore than a classroom teacher does. I've been on both sides of it and sometimes you discover they're having more trouble and stop at a certain concept and sometimes not as much. Last year, as I said, the history or social studies curriculum was almost entirely teacher made because we were studying the Westward movement; but we had a unit called Pacific Coast states. Since we had just been up and down I-5 from Seattle to California several times, we took advantage of driving time in order to point out where we were, agricultural products, observe what you can and when we got home from all of that experience I think it culminated with a week in the Olympia Peninsula. Then we came home and wrote about it, made maps and reports so that we can remember what it was. They were tested, you know, which river was in Oregon, Washington, California, and capitals and all those things, and economic issues. I think they learn better that way than just reading in a text book. Technically we should be studying world history this year, but because we had this deal in Massachusetts in the summer so we thought this is a logical time to study American History. When we went back there we visited Plymouth and Salem and the pioneer villages, Boston. On the trips they were keeping a journal of where we went and what we did, some of the highlights of the places that we went through. Part of their test is identifying what this, this, and that is and geological formations, why is this rock split. It's going to integrate a lot of things. Things like that are a lot more fun for them than reading a chapter of Massachusetts. We know our test scores came up quite a bit like two or three levels of Math. As far as their typical day goes, it starts out with Bible and it goes into Math and we have their plans. It is organized, it's planned, it's structured but flexible during the day. We go out walking when it's cool in the morning. On the days we plan PE, the kids might go jogging or whatever and maybe when we're on a trip, it'll be a hike. We had science camp through our home school support group which I don't think they will have the same kind of thing this year.

Subject #042

I don't really have an average school day. We're unstructured in some ways and structured in others. I'm very heavily in the academics. We demand a high academic standard. I'm not one that just goes to the store and has the child add up a few things and figure that's math for the day. We do pages and things like that. But I'm unstructured as to time; our schedule changes and days off change. The one thing I did try to do is try to get math pretty early because if it's too late in the day their brains don't want to do that. I try to do that right about the same time every morning. The rest just fits around whatever errands we have to run, or whatever outside lessons that we have. That's real loose.*

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Are Home School Parents Satisfied With Their Programs

Question number nine allowed parents the opportunity to reflect on their overall satisfaction level with their home school program.

Are you satisfied with your home school program?

Parents responded by going beyond a simple yes or no answer and expanded upon their particular area of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. All but one parent responded in the affirmative. Parents used the opportunity to restate some of the particular aspects of home schooling that they found most rewarding. Examples included the flexibility of schedule and the academic growth of children. As a general observation most parents became more satisfied with their programs with the passage of time as they tailored them and gained experience.

As pleased as parents were they almost always pointed out certain areas in which they hoped to improve. These areas included greater organization skills, better teaching methods and skills, and the addition of new and more effective educational materials.

Subject #005

I'm satisfied. It can always be improved.....I don't know how to get around the dull boring part of the school. There are some parts of it that are dull and boring and you just have to come and grit your teeth and get through it. And I think that about sixty percent of our school is fun, but thirty percent is just you have to do it. So I don't know if it is possible to make it all fun, but we keep our eyes open.

Subject #007

(Husband): Not entirely, in some respects we are. In the spiritual aspect, having the time to be with them, especially me, periodically through the day just talk with them and walk with them just try to tie in situations with what the Lord would do or experience that might happen. Like putting our daughter to sleep, praying is a real education for them both spiritually and emotionally and everything else. In that respect, it's great. I'm really happy. Academically, we need to work more in the mathematics area. Socialization, I see the kids really giving us joy.

Subject #034

Yes. It's working out really well. It's also giving him a chance to accept some responsibilities, more like college. At the beginning of the year, this year, we had some things that were not textbook, they were Y-camp counselors in training. They hand raised five baby goats, they bottled them four times a day and milked the mother, fixed the bottles, feed the babies, clean up after the babies, wash the bottles; by then it's almost time to milk again. So they learned a lot about family life in a short time. That took about seven weeks. Then we got our textbooks and we looked at how many pages there were in a book and we divided by how many weeks were left in the school year, I think it was 28 at that time. We said that's how much they had to do in a week to get done by the end of school. Then I just listed out every week. I want them to work more than most high school kids do toward the syllabus approach they have in college, where they just hand you what you have to have done by a certain date and how you get there is your business. If you have trouble, these are my office hours, so that's how we kind of work it, if you have trouble you know where to find me. I'm always here, but I'm not always sitting doing paper work. So office hours are much more flexible than college and I check their work more often than college profs do, but they have the freedom to be ahead or behind. If they get very far behind, I get after them before college would. I let them get behind if they want to for a ways so that they see that the pinch is worse and they don't do it. I want them to discover as much as they can for themselves; they believe what they discover.*

Summary

In reviewing the responses that home schooling parents gave during the personal interview, several important conclusions may be drawn.

For this group of parents there remained no single reason for home schooling. Overall there were nine reasons parents cited for home schooling. These were:

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

1. Values Conflict Between Home and School
2. Personality Changes in the Child
3. Parents Dissatisfied with School Quality
4. Outside Influences
5. Parents Feel a Sense of Duty
6. Child Has Special Problems
7. Financial Constraints, Convenience and Availability
8. Lack of Parental Control
9. Child Not Academically Successful

For most parents it was a combination of factors which finally led them to home school.

Most of the nine reasons that home school parents gave for beginning to home schooling were applicable to the public schools. Parents clearly believed that the public schools were failing to meet the academic, emotional, social, and in some cases spiritual needs of their child. They had very little faith in the public school system and its ability to educate children.

With regard to private religious schools, home school parents cited academic failure and pressure, peer pressure, personality changes in the child, and special problems of the child as reasons for not enrolling. While the parents viewed these private religious schools with esteem, they still felt they were unable to meet the needs of their child.

The reasons parents gave for beginning to home school were not always the same reasons that kept them home schooling. As

parents home schooled they became aware of new factors, of which they were not originally aware. Overall there were seven reasons parents cited for continuing to home schooling. These were:

1. Family Unity and Socialization
2. Flexibility of Home Schooling
3. Emotional Healing of the Child
4. Parental Control
5. Academic Success
6. Parents Enjoy Being with the Child
7. Parents Learning About the Child

The most surprising of these and the most commonly noted by home school parents (nine of twenty nine or thirty-one percent) was a new sense of family unity and socialization. Just as parents had no single reason for beginning to home school, however, they had no single reason for continuing to home school.

It is interesting to note that the number one reason for beginning to home school, a values conflict between home and school (fifteen of twenty-nine or fifty-two percent), and the number one reason for continuing to home school, family unity and socialization, may be related. Both may show a high regard for family influence. One deals with the desire to have the school reinforce the family's influence with regard to philosophical, religious, or moral convictions. The second addresses a harmonious interaction between all family members on a social level, one that would enhance the family's impact on the child.

The main inconvenience cited by home schooling parents was time (fifteen of twenty-nine or fifty-two percent). The main hardship was financial (nine of twenty-nine or thirty-one percent). This financial hardship was in the area of costs for books, supplies, and in loss of income.

Parents were asked how their children would grow and mature if they could not home school. Almost all parents projected some kind of failure for their children. Parents believed that their children were missing very little or nothing by not attending a traditional school. While they admitted that there may be a few elements their children were missing, they felt that the benefits of home schooling far outweighed and compensated for this.

Home schooling families expressed that they had experienced mixed reactions from friends and outside family members concerning their decision to home school. Family members, however, seemed the most opinionated. They were either strongly in favor or strongly against home schooling. Friends and neighbors may have been equally opinioned but they did not often voice their beliefs.

According to home schooling parents, their children all greatly enjoyed being home schooled. Children who had never been enrolled in a public or private school expressed some curiosity and desire to attend school. However the consensus was that these children had little or no desire to attend traditional schools.

Average home school days varied in length and structure. Curriculum was also diverse and flexible. Many parents said they evolved to a less structured, more child centered curriculum.

In general, home school parents said that they were satisfied with their program, but always on the lookout as to how they could improve.

CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS OF NON HOME SCHOOL PARENT INTERVIEWS

INTRODUCTION

This section of analysis reports the responses of the eighteen non home school parents interviewed. Two of the eighteen non home school parents had briefly home schooled their children before moving to traditional public or private schools. Although the opinions of these two sub groups of non home school parents remained consistent with each other, parents who had never home schooled based their opinions primary on their *perception* of home schools. For the parents who had previously home schooled their children before placing them in public or private schools these opinions were based, often times, on some actual *experience* with home schooling. Each interview ranged in length from forty-five to ninety minutes. The interviewer used open ended questions to probe the attitudes of parents in four major areas:

1. What non home school parents think about home schools.
2. Would non home school parents ever consider or reconsider home schooling.
3. The decision process that non home school parents used in deciding where to first enroll their child in school.
4. Non home school parents' impression of the public, private

and private religious schools available to them.

The researcher has provided a brief rationale for the selection of each area of inquiry. The actual interview prompts are listed in italics. Summary statements describe significant observations within each area of inquiry. A sampling of relevant and representative transcripts from the parent interviews is provided for the reader's review.

What Non Home School Parents Think About Home Schooling

Question number one asked non home school parents for their thoughts about home schooling.

What is your impression of home schooling?

Parents used the opportunity to voice their opinions about home schooling in a variety of areas. Most parents went on to discuss why they personally had decided not to home school. Since two of the families had previously home schooled they discussed why they had moved away from home schooling to public or private schools. Parents addressed the strengths and weaknesses of home schooling and often discussed their opinion of the home school parents and children they came in contact with.

The major concerns of non home school parents with regard to home schooling fell into five areas of disadvantage and two areas of advantage. Listed below in Table 8 is a summary of the

disadvantages and advantages that non home school parents expressed.

Table 8: Number and Percentage of Non Home School Parents' Citing the Disadvantages and Advantages of Home Schooling

DISADVANTAGES	PERCENT OF PARENTS	NUMBER OF PARENTS
Socially Isolating	61	11
Academically Questionable	44	8
A Large Time Commitment	39	7
Conflicts Between Parent and Child	28	5
Economically Costly	11	2
ADVANTAGES		
	PERCENT OF PARENTS	NUMBER OF PARENTS
Teaching	17	3
Special Benefits	11	2

1. Social Isolation: One of the major concerns of non home school parents was socialization. Sixty-one percent of non home school parents (eleven of eighteen) said that home schooling isolated children from the outside world. They felt that children were not being exposed to a variety of children and adults from diverse backgrounds. They felt that home school children, therefore, would be unable to successfully interact and relate to others. They believed that social skills would be limited and stunted.

In addition non home school families often felt that home school families themselves were socially isolated and different.

Non home school parents sometimes expressed negative concerns about the peer pressure at local schools. They acknowledged that their children were exposed to ideas and experiences which were not necessarily in harmony with their own personal family values. However these parents saw these exposures as opportunities for social growth. They felt that their children would have to learn to deal with and stand up against beliefs that were different than those expressed at home. They wanted to teach their children how to deal with these negative peer influences while still allowing their children to be part of the regular school system.

Other parents were concerned about what home school children might be missing at the local school. They believed that band, sports, and other extracurricular activities fostered healthy peer relations and constructive competition. Many parents felt that home schooling promoted an unhealthy child-parent dependency.

Subject #101

My own impression is from my own children, it wasn't the right choice. For them, it was not good, because I felt it was too smothering for them. ...I'm a real controlling mom, we used to call them the velcro kid, like they're stuck to me all the time, okay. It was reinforcing that having home schooling, it was just like feeding that more and it wasn't really getting them out into the world. Even though I don't believe that at five you have to get out into the world, but I think it's one step toward the beginning of independence, so that was important for me with the kids, especially with my son.

...Even so, I would not have chosen to continue it because I felt it was important for them to get away from me and to be in another environment with other adults and start getting accustomed that way. I'm torn about it somewhat because I know there's a big issue about peer pressure and that's one of their big tenets of the program for home schooling.

Subject #108

The children on our block who have been in home school since day one..... there is one girl I know, I see some real just almost craving for friendships that she does not have a chance to develop. They're out for their recess and they're out on the street, two of her brothers and her and another child with her mom. I think there's some things that way they miss...

Subject #111

I only know two families that home school. Neither family was very well adjusted. I know people have said that there are quite a few that are well adjusted. It's funny because most parents decide to home school because one or two children are having trouble, but they pull all the kids out, even the child that wasn't having the struggle. They don't really homogenize as well. You know the family at church quite well, but not great. I really like them and they're my friends but they are a little different than anyone else.

Subject #117

My only other concern in observing kids that are home schooled, our experience with kids in Sunday School, both kids, some were home schooled and some were not, seeing how they interact. The majority of them just seem a little bit socially handicapped, more than the other kids. ...They keep to themselves. We had a children's church so it was first through sixth grade. They didn't mingle well with kids older than them or if they had siblings and they were together because of the grade span that we're dealing with, they always stay together because they're home together and they feel safe together and they didn't interact with other kids as much. I'm sure there are things you can do about that if you get involved in social things like church or physical stuff. You have to be real disciplined to get them involved in organized athletics, sports and things like that. I don't know if I am enough to do it.*

2. Time and Commitment: Thirty-nine percent (seven out of eighteen) of non home school parents perceived the demands of time, energy, and sacrifice as being beyond what they personally could commit to and endure. These parents acknowledged positive features of home schooling, but felt that the personal cost was beyond the return of benefits.

Subject #106

My other thing was having three of them in such close ages, I didn't know if I can handle all of them at one time. And I wouldn't single out one and only do one, unless there was a year or two for some reason. But if I was to home school, I know they would all want to be.

Subject #107

...I think it requires a considerable effort on both the husband and the wife and they have to work together toward that goal and it takes a great deal of organization skills

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

and it takes a definite unselfishness on the part of of the mother and both parents, because a lot of things won't get done in the house. You have to be willing to give up free time, certain things you get to do when your children are in school. You have to take the whole family, too, during the day, it takes sacrifices that you would make for the education of your child when you're solely responsible.

...Curt and I have talked about it, I guess it's just the privilege that I have with my free time now. I'm free to go to my Bible study, I'm free to work at the school. There's a lot of running around that's easier to do without the children. My husband and I work cooperatively together and sometimes I have to run that are easier for me to do without the children. And that's basically the decision that we've made as long as we've been pleased with the education that the children are getting.

Subject #110

If Emily and I were home eight hours a day to teach I'm not sure that would work... I think that it takes a special kind of person. They have to mother them, they have to be a teacher, that takes a special kind of person in a relationship to make that happen.*

3. Economic Costs: A small group of non home school parents, two of eighteen (eleven percent), cited the cost of lost employment as a factor in determining their decision not to home school. Another group of parents discussed the cost of home school materials and supplies as being a deterrent.

Subject #101

...it was an economic factor. I needed to get out to work because at that time my husband was changing jobs, so that was something along the way.

Subject #105

It's expensive too. It got a little expensive having to wait for the materials to arrive and paying for the materials, it got costly too.

4. Academic Concerns: Forty-four percent of non home school parents (eight out of eighteen) believed that they did not have the needed skills to effectively teach their children. The saw home school parents as providing a sub par education which did not have the academic strength of the local schools.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Subject #106

My biggest reason that I didn't home school my children was I didn't feel like I could give him maybe as many things as they can learn from a public school. I was always strong in science and math but not as well in history and I didn't enjoy history, although I enjoy it now. In some ways I thought that it would be good too that we can learn together. Now all of my friends that I have that do home school, they've always said that they felt the same way, they didn't feel that adequate, but the program is so well set up and where they get their information and they have people to talk with and support groups so that they really feel that their children are getting what they need.

Subject #114

(Mother): I can understand that not wanting to push them out too soon. If you home school them in preschool, kindergarten and put them in school in first grade I think it's okay. I think when you start to get into what's really needed for the academic down here is where it would really come in. I don't think in home schooling you can offer what a good school can, scholastically.

Subject #115

My impression is that probably a lot of people are doing it right now that maybe shouldn't be doing it. That's my opinion. I think parents who want to especially academically prepare, trying to prepare their children for school, not necessarily knowing what they should be teaching their child.*

5. Parent-Child Conflict: Twenty-eight percent of non home school parents (five out of eighteen) felt that home schooling would create conflict. This conflict was generated at times by a power struggle between parent and child. At other times parents simply expressed that they did not feel that they had the patience to teach their own child or be with them for extended periods of time.

Subject #102

My overall impression and my first reaction to it is that I personally would not have the patience to do it. I think it takes a very special type of person to be able to educate their children. I know I don't have the patience. I do well to get through the homework. I couldn't imagine a half day of that or more at home. I know I can't.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Subject #106

I think after he had been in kindergarten he wasn't like my other two. They're both A students also but he's just a little bit brighter and quicker. After being in school I think he, like a lot of children, think mommy doesn't know what she's talking about.... The teacher is smart, mommy is dumb. ...He just wanted to fight back with me.Am I going to sit here and have a three hour battle all day, because if I am that's not what I choose to do. I have to say, I just honestly didn't give it a try.Physically, I wasn't able to tackle him, he was six and my daughter was two.

Subject #118

I just feel that I couldn't handle it myself. Just dealing with homework and my son, we're at each other's throat to get it done.*

In addition to voicing concerns about home schooling, non home school parents also expressed what they saw as the advantages of home schooling. Two areas were highlighted by non home school parents.

1. Teaching: Seventeen percent of non home school parents (three out of eighteen) indicated that home schooling offered a concentrated learning environment which included a one-on-one teaching situation. They felt that this kind of teaching offered an advantage over traditional schooling.

Subject #108

...I think it's terrific as far as from the stand point of teaching children in a very short period of time you can probably get through with what you can with a classroom of thirty kids and you can probably get through that work in less than one and one half hours what the kids get for a whole day, because it's more concentrated, they're less distracted. From that stand point I think it's very good.

Subject #112

I realized that I can give her so much more at home than she can get in a classroom with thirty kids.

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Subject #113

It requires a lot less time to get as much education as your children get. They spend a lot of time in school learning the same thing but on one-on-one you can teach your child a lot more.

2. Special Benefits: Eleven percent of non home school parents (two out of eighteen) believed that home schooling was an acceptable alternative for children that were not having their needs met by the local school. These parents believed that children with special learning or emotional problems could benefit from a time of home schooling.

Subject #109

...Sometimes I might see the value in it if your child is having so many problems in school and there just doesn't seem to be anything to work out. Maybe it's not bad for a time out and come home and home school and try to get down to a part time level...

Subject #114

(Mother): There again, it could be our own particular situation, because we have a child who has an attention span disorder. We never home schooled that child. Now they say children like that work better on a one-on-one, yet if that someone else is someone other than their mother, you know, we just couldn't get Timmy to sit down to color, to make letters, to do any of that until he was in Kindergarten. In preschool pretty much he would just flip from one project to another, he's very very bright, so he would pick up things. He's real learning finally came in Kindergarten. So we have a particular situation there. I know some children can sit down and are more compliant and you can work with them and teach them and it doesn't need to be a structured classroom.

Would Non Home School Parents Ever Consider Home Schooling

As a follow up to the first question, non home school parents were asked to consider the possibility of home schooling.

Would you ever consider home schooling?

The responses from parents were varied. In some cases the question gave parents another opportunity to restate their reasons for choosing not to home school. Many parents said that they would

consider home schooling under certain circumstances. These circumstances included the possibility of busing; the inability of parents to afford private schooling; the failure of children to succeed at school; or in their view the continued academic or moral decline of traditional schools. Other parents felt that they would have chosen home schooling if their children were younger and not already established at local traditional schools. Still other parents cited the need for spousal support or financial assistance.

Another group of parents said they would not consider home schooling. These parents were satisfied with the progress and growth their children were making in school. Other parents felt that the demands of home schooling were too rigorous for them. They did not feel confident with their teaching ability. Other parents simply needed time away from their children.

Subject #102

Again, no, I do not believe that I'm the type of personality to really make that work.

Subject #104

If I felt that the school system that we lived with was not doing my kids right, either scholastically or morally or whatever. I've never been up against that yet so it's hard for me to. But my friends who have, I really see their view and I'm thankful that my kids can go to a good school...

Subject #105

Not again, no. We wouldn't. Now that I have four children I feel that it's really important that they get away from each other for awhile, make friends outside the home. My children interact really wonderfully, they get along good and they behave but they need to be outside. No I wouldn't consider it again.

Subject #111

Yes, I've been pretty frustrated sometimes. Last year I had two kids with teachers that I didn't like. Two out of three is not very good. I was frustrated because I was having

to pick up the pieces after school, and they were spending more time after school and I wanted them to be able to play. At that time, I was just saying, "I'm just going to take them out!" But then when I started to think about what I would do to myself.... I guess it was selfish but I didn't really feel like I can provide them with a very good atmosphere if I was so frustrated.That really makes me mad when the teacher is just there handing out the papers,and I don't like it when the teachers have poor valuesor amoral or immoral and shares that with the kids..... I've been pretty successful in just confronting the teacher with it and sometimes they get kind of mad, but..... There's been one time when I had to have one of kids removed from the class but I try not to ever do that because public school is notorious for remembering that and it travels with you. But I feel like it balances out, if you have a bad teacher this year, you'll probably get a good one next year.

Subject #117

No. No. Well, I have and so now I decided I wouldn't. I don't know if I can handle both of my girls all day and all night and all weekend. I like the summer.....because we have fun. I think it's because it's not all the time.....if it was all year it would stop being fun. I don't know if I can differentiate between the role of now I'm you teacher, now I'm your mother, now I'm your nurse, now I'm your helper. I don't know if I can make those transitions clear enough so they would know who they were talking to when they were. I would have to go to school for a couple of years. I'm not willing to do that. Right now the job that I have lends itself very well to their schedule and to our finances. Like I said, I just work part time.

Subject #118

I'm really apprehensive about trying to teach my son totally all by myself. If it was necessary I would. And it wouldn't be an enjoyable thing, not like the other mothers who enjoy doing it.*

The Decision of Non Home School Parents to Enroll Their Children in School and Their Impression of the Schools Available to Them

Home school parents had the opportunity to express their opinions about the traditional schools available to them as they discussed their reasons for home schooling. Questions number three and four gave non home school parents the opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions concerning the local traditional schools available to them:

Thinking back on when you first enrolled your child in school, what kind of decision process did you go through?

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

What is your impression of the public, private and private religious schools available to you in this area?

1. Public Schools: The opinions of non home school parents concerning the public schools available to them were mixed. Parents who had their children enrolled in private religious schools often pointed out what they saw as the religious void created by the public schools. However criticism of public schools was not confined to parents who sent their children to private religious schools. The concerns of parents included an academic environment which was not creative, challenging, or stimulating; the lack of organization and materials; fighting, drugs, and the use of foul language by children; and poor teachers and administrators.

Another group of parents was pleased with the public schools available to them. They believed that their children were learning from good teachers with the support of effective administrators. Many parents had moved to specific socio-economic areas in order to enroll their children in public schools they felt were of better quality. Other parents took full advantage of optional educational programs offered by some public schools.

Subject #104

The ones available to me I like very much because that's where my kids all go. They all go to public school. I'm very involved in the school so I know about what's going on in the schools. I've had very good relationships with teachers and principals and everything so far. I'm very involved in the PTA and that kind of stuff and I like them. I have had people who's had children in the same class as mine that say things that they hate about them and I'm shocked. I don't know if I'm naive or what but personally my children, I and my husband have had very good relationships with these public schools in Arcadia.

Subject #105

My children go to public school. I was really hesitant, I wanted them to go to private Christian school but we couldn't afford it.....was way out of our budget. We put them in public school. We've been incredibly pleased. In fact I told you I had a daughter who is going deaf and last week we went before the school board and they're going out of their way to help us. I'm very pleased with the public school system.

Subject #110

(Father): Well, our particular school, we love it. We're very involved in it. I feel very positive about it.

(Mother): I work at the school. I'm an aide. This is my third year, so I didn't start right away when she went to school. I am also on the PTA board and Larry is now on the shared decision committee they put in all LA city schools. With what we've become involved with and know who we know at the school, we're both very pleased with the school and the education.

(Father): We do like the people that are running the program there. That's been one of the most positive things about the school particularly since we have a new principal. She's turned the school around, morally, and control of the teachers and the students is much better.

(Mother): Discipline has become a real real good thing.

Subject #116

Basically, the world and society are decaying. They get enough of the bad language just in the neighborhood with the kids. That's the main thing. The education when it comes to things like leaving Christian holidays out of their education, prayer and stuff, that was real important to me.

Subject #117

They both started at Village Christian in kindergarten. I think what motivated us most out of the public system is the public school across the street. Being on the playground side, what we hear from those kids was distressing to me during recess time. It seems like there's an incredible amount of foul language, which was not as much a problem to me as to the fact that it was never corrected and addressed that we could observe. It's just accepted behavior... I think Kelley was only two but we decided for sure we weren't going there. We didn't know what we were going to do but we knew we weren't going to do that. So we considered selling our home and moving into the Glendale school system which is where I grew up in but the more we investigated it didn't seem that much better or consistent with our values, so we decided on Village (Christian School).*

2. Private Religious Schools: As a whole, non home schools parents had a much more favorable view of private religious schools

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

than they did of public schools. Parents believed that these schools offered a more protective environment; a better and more challenging academic setting; and a protective shelter away from drugs and violence. Parents additionally felt that many times private religious schools offered greater congruity of home and school values.

Another group of parents felt that the private religious schools available to them were too protective and did not supply children with the opportunity to interact with children of diverse backgrounds. Extreme academic pressure was a concern for other parents. Still other parents found these schools employing teachers without credentials, teachers not qualified to teach. Many parents found the private religious schools attractive, but were unable to enroll their children because of the financial burden it would have created.

A final group of parents believed that they could supplement their child's public school education with religious training in the home or at church. These parents felt comfortable sending their children to public schools.

Subject #101

At first I wasn't real clear, I knew I wanted that for them, but I wasn't as clear as I am now. Now I see it not as much as a religious thing, because I really feel that they could attend a public school and we can function just very fine -- our Christian training in our home and in our church. More now I see it as an enrichment, because both of them have turned out to read real well and to do their academic subjects real well. I didn't know that starting in. I always had the feeling that if it's too hard for them I wasn't going to frustrate them, you know, the public school would be easier for them. But now I see that they need challenge and they need things that are going to enrich them. They have a special art program, special P.E. program, special teachers. Some are departmentalized even in elementary, so that's exciting for them and for me. It's good to see that. They are pretty much challenged. Even there though, they don't shoot for the gifted, they go

through the middle line.It's a more difficult academic program, but they don't really challenge the gifted kids as much as I like to see. So far it's been all right, a little bit of struggle, but it's been okay.

Subject #105

I don't really know too well because all I did was investigate the financial and found out that it was totally unaffordable for middle income families. It's just not even an option.

Subject #106

...We have one Christian school. My biggest concern when I considered putting them in there was if this was going to hinder their college education. Were these schools accredited. I know several people who have sent their children there and they are very pleased with those schools. My cousin's kids go to Village Christian down in the Valley which is not cheap by any means. In seeing her girls and seeing my children, education wise, I don't feel that my children are missing anything... The only thing..... in public school (or) the Christian school is the attitude of the teacher, where they're coming from. The discipline, if there, I think it's even stronger in private school. At least I know it is at Village. Most of the children that your kids are going to school with are from homes that think the way you do. That would probably be one of my bigger things that I don't like about public school is the fact that some of the children or some of the language or some of the home life that they're subjected to. But my feeling is that sometimes my husband and I talk about it and we felt that somewhere down the line they're going to be approached with this anyway and we'll just have to be here to guard them. It probably would have been nice if it would have been later, but financially that was not something that we can choose.

Subject #115

I know that for us they were expensive. When we first moved out here I was really afraid to put my children in the public school. I'm from back East, I experienced a lot of cultural shock moving to California. I was really scared to send to kids to public school, but we found out we really couldn't afford to put them in the Christian schools we wanted to send them to. When these other options came open, we tried that and it was fine.

...I feel that the Christian value that they would receive in a Christian curriculum would have been good. But I also felt like we could supplement and work on that at home, which we were already doing. I really felt like the values at home were more important than what we were going to get in a classroom.*

3. Private Nonreligious Schools: Non home school parents were not overly impressed by private nonreligious schools. This may be reflected, in part, by the fact that none of the sampled parents enrolled their children in this type of school. There might also be a

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

connection between the high indication of religious affiliation of these parents and the fact that they chose not to patronize nonreligious schools. Still as part of the investigative process these parents were asked for their impressions of these schools.

Parents acknowledged that these schools offered a stricter academic environment which might foster academic success. However, some parents were concerned about the religious void created by these schools. Another concern was the financial cost of these schools.

Another group of parents simply had not investigated the private nonreligious schools available to them.

Subject #102

Those I'm not as familiar with. Pinecrest is the only one I know. My biggest problem with private nonreligious is that they tend to be day care as well as school. They have extended day care and I personally thank God I don't have to worry about that and don't like it either.

Subject #104

I was going to say I don't know anything about private nonreligious schools at all except I guess they're for the elite. But other than that I don't know anything.

Subject #114

(Mother): As far as we're concerned, some of them academically are very good, but academics is not our only concern; spiritual aspect is what we would be looking for. We would be looking for a school that would offer both, excel academically and offer the spiritual direction in addition. We really weren't interested at all in them.

(Father): It would definitely be an advantage over the public school from the standpoint of being around other children who came from families that consider it a very high priority that their children are well educated..... but still they would be missing that basic element.*

* Additional quotations on this topic may be found in Appendix J.

Summary

Non home school parents articulated five disadvantages to home schooling. The most prominent of these concerns was what they perceived to be as the social isolation of the home schooled child. They feared that home schooling separated the child from a variety of rich and valuable experiences available through the local schools. They felt that home school children would in some ways be socially stunted since their interaction with other children was curtailed. They felt that healthy competition and an exposure to peer pressure were opportunities for social growth, rather than situations to be feared. Finally some parents believed that home schooling could potentially develop unhealthy child-parent relationships.

Academic disadvantage was the second most often mentioned concern by non home school parents. Parents, often times, did not have confidence in their own teaching ability or in the ability of other parents to successfully teach. In addition they felt that public and private schools could offer enrichment activities not normally found at home.

A third area concerned the time commitment needed to home school. Parents felt that they simply did not have the time or energy to home school and still carry out the other responsibilities of life. They recognized the possible benefits of home schooling, but did not feel they could justify the personal cost.

The fourth area of concern voiced by non home school parents was a conflict between parent and child. Some parents expressed their need to be away from their children for part of the day. Non home school parents expressed great love and concern for their children, but they believed that the additional hours of interaction needed to home school would place a strain on their relations.

The final area of concern, expressed by only a small number of non home schooler parents, was the economic cost of home schooling. Some parents worked and felt that to give up their employment in order to home school was not desirable. Another group felt that the cost of materials and supplies was too expensive.

While non home school parent were critical of home schooling they also pointed out what they believed to be two advantages of home schooling.

The first of these was the one-on-one teaching opportunity provided by home schooling and the second was the benefit to children with special learning or emotional problems who were not having their needs met at the local public or private school.

Non home school parents would not consider home schooling unless compelled by one of several reasons. These included the compulsory busing of their children to other school locations, an inability to afford private schooling, the academic or moral decline of the public schools available to them, or the failure of the child to succeed academically in school.

Non home school parents viewed the public schools available to them with mixed reaction. Some parents viewed the schools with

suspicion. They cited several areas of dissatisfaction. These included poor quality with regard to academics, teachers, and administrators, the use of drugs and the presence of violence, and negative peer pressure.

Another group of non home school parents were satisfied with the public schools available to them. Both groups felt that they could overcome any negative influences.

Overall, non home school parents held a high regard for private religious schools. Some parents were concerned about the rigors of some academic programs and the pressure to succeed. Others questioned the academic qualifications of some private school teachers.

Non home school parents acknowledged the academic excellence of private nonreligious schools. However, they were concerned about the possibility of a religious void as well as the high financial cost of these schools.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This section of the paper discusses the limitations of the study, summary and conclusions, the implications for educational policy and future studies.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher chose to study the parents of Sunland Christian School. Because this is a church organization a majority of the parents in this study expressed a particular religious and philosophical persuasion. There is reasonable evidence to suggest that the responses of these parents were biased and in line with their religious beliefs. Because of this it is difficult, if not impossible, to generalize the results of this study to parents with differing religious or philosophical persuasions.

A second area of concern deals with the selection of parents to be part of the study. In this case parents themselves volunteered to be part of the study. It cannot be confirmed with any degree of certainty that the parents who agreed to participate in the study are representative. For example, home school parents who were experiencing difficulty in home schooling might have hesitated in volunteering to be part of the study and reluctant in sharing their experiences.

A third limitation concerns the possible bias of the researcher. The researcher has worked extensively in both public and private schools for more than ten years as a teacher, mentor and master teacher, and school coordinator. While the researcher has had broad exposure to traditional schools he has chosen to home school his own children.

The final limitation of the study is that it relies almost exclusively on the expressions of parents gathered during the personal interview. How much of what is said by parents and can be taken at face value must be assessed with caution.

In spite of these limitations the researcher chose to investigate the parents of Sunland Christian School. To selectively sample a larger group of home school parents nation wide would have been impossible since no national registry of home school parents exists. In addition, most home school organizations express a particular philosophical, religious or political persuasion. This persuasion serves to both attract and rally home school parents of similar disposition. The statements made by parents during the interview process should not be accepted by the researcher without caution. On the other hand one cannot dismiss the statements of parents or devalue them by being overly sceptical. By carefully assessing them an insight is gained into thinking processes of parents that can be attained by no other investigative method. Finally to gain a broader picture of home schooling further research will have to be done which moves beyond the limitations of this study. Suggestions will be discussed at the close of this chapter.

SUMMARY

This was a qualitative study. The primary method of investigation was the personal interview. While the study does provide for some quantitative analysis it has remained secondary to the qualitative aspects of the study. The demographic questionnaire has given the reader an introduction in the socio-economic status of parents. The attitude questionnaire has given the reader a feeling for the opinions that parents held with regard to the traditional public and private schools available to them.

Demographic Questionnaire

As the researcher reviewed the information gathered from the demographic questionnaire several important observations were made.

First, there was a remarkable similarity between home school and non home school families. The two groups were similar in socio-economic make-up and family structure. This would seem to suggest that the reasons parents chose to home school were not identifiable solely within the limits of demography.

Second, the demographic questionnaire revealed that home school parents had middle to high family incomes. This is significant because it does not preclude parents from selecting private schools as an alternative to public schools for their children. As discussed earlier, however, "affordability" is a relative term. Some parents,

regardless of income level may not consider an investment in private education within their means.

Third, home school mothers may have been somewhat better educated than their non home school counterparts. As primary teachers of the home school child, these mothers needed to possess academic confidence and self sufficiency. Almost eighty percent of the mothers studied had training beyond a high school education with more than fifty percent earning at least a four year college degree.

Fourth, home school families had a high frequency of religious affiliation as Evangelical Christians. This seems to be consistent with the findings of the interview, which demonstrate that the number one reason parents gave for beginning to home school was a values conflict between home and school.

Attitudinal Questionnaire

As the researcher reviewed the information gathered from the attitude questionnaire several important observations were made.

In most areas home school parents consistently rated all types of schools more unfavorably than did non home school parents. Data indicates that out of the eighteen areas of inquiry six were found to provide a statistically significant difference. The most significant differences occurred between parents when they discussed public schools. Four areas found to reveal statistical difference referred to the local public schools. These included discipline, class size, academic standards, and teacher quality. The greatest difference and

dissatisfaction occurred in the area of discipline. Only in the areas of the quality of school administrators and the public schools' facilities were home school and non home school parents similar in their responses. Both groups showed satisfaction in these areas. It is interesting to note that these two areas show the least direct influence upon the child. The areas of discipline, class size, academic standards and teacher quality more directly impacted the child and were of more critical concern to home school parents.

Both groups of parents had very little knowledge or opinion about the private nonreligious schools available to them. In spite of this, home school parents still perceived that class size was too large.

With regard to private religious schools, only one out of the eighteen areas showed a significant difference between home school and non home school parents. This was in the area of discipline. Home school parents indicated greater dissatisfaction than did non home school parents. As noted earlier, home school parents discussed that a values conflict between home and school was a major reason for deciding to begin home schooling. Discipline standards and values are closely related. The way a particular school or teacher may choose to discipline or withhold discipline may reflect a value which is in conflict with what some parents hold as acceptable or unacceptable behavior.

The analysis of the attitude questionnaire provided much information which aided in understanding the motivation of parents to home school. Home school parents were greatly dissatisfied with teacher quality, discipline, and academic standards at the local public

schools available to them. In addition home school parents conceded that they knew relatively little about the private nonreligious schools available to them.

Home school parents indicated overall satisfaction with the private religious schools available to them. The objection of these parents to sending their children to these local private religious school was not clear. The demographic questionnaire, in assessing family income levels, did not seem to preclude this groups from enrolling because parents could not afford the tuition and fees.

The attitude questionnaire shed some light on why parents chose to home school their children, but it was limited. Apparently there are other factors not addressed by the attitude questionnaire, which motivate parents to home school.

Home School Parent Interviews

The primary method of investigation was the personal interview with both home school and non home school parents. In reviewing the responses that home schooling parents gave during the personal interview, several important conclusions may be drawn.

For this group of parents there seemed to be no single reason for home schooling. Overall there were nine reasons parents cited for home schooling. For most parents it was a combination of factors which finally led them to home school. A summary of the reasons that parents gave for beginning to home school may be found listed below in Table 9.

Table 9: Number and Percentage of Parents Citing Each of Nine Reasons For Beginning to Home School

REASON	PERCENT OF PARENTS	NUMBER OF PARENTS
Values Conflict Between Home and School	52	15
Personality Changes in the Child	38	11
Parents Dissatisfied with School Quality	38	11
Outside Influences	38	11
Parents Feel a Sense of Duty	24	7
Child Has Special Problems	24	7
Financial Constraints, Convenience and Availability	21	6
Lack of Parental Control	17	5
Child Not Academically Successful	14	4

Most of the nine reasons that home school parents gave for beginning to home schooling were applicable to the public schools. Interviews indicated that most parents believed that the public schools were failing to meet the academic, emotional, social, and in some cases spiritual needs of their child. They had very little faith in the public school system and its ability to educate children.

With regard to private religious schools, home school parents cited academic failure, academic pressure, peer pressure, personality changes in the child, and special problems of the child as reasons for not enrolling. While the parents viewed these private religious schools with esteem, they still felt they were unable to meet the needs of their child.

The reasons parents gave for beginning to home school were not always the same reasons that kept them home schooling. As

parents home schooled they became aware of new factors, of which they were not originally aware. The most surprising of these and the most commonly noted by home school parents was a new sense of family unity and socialization. Just as parents had no single reason for beginning to home school, however, they had no single reason for continuing to home school. A summary of the reasons that parents gave for continuing to home school may be found listed below in Table 10.

Table 10: Number and Percentage of Parents Citing Each of Seven Reasons For Continuing to Home School

REASON	PERCENT OF PARENTS	NUMBER OF PARENTS
Family Unity and Socialization	31	9
Flexibility of Home Schooling	28	8
Emotional Healing of the Child	21	6
Parental Control	14	4
Academic Success	14	4
Parents Enjoy Being with the Child	14	4
Parents Learning About the Child	7	2

It is interesting to note that the number one reason for beginning to home school, a values conflict between home and school, and the number one reason for continuing to home school, family unity and socialization, may be related. Both may show a high regard for family influence. One deals with the desire to have the school reinforce the family's influence with regard to philosophical, religious, or moral convictions. The second addresses a harmonious

interaction between all family members on a social level, one that would enhance the family's impact on the child.

The main inconvenience cited by home schooling parents was time. The main hardship was financial. This financial hardship was in the area of costs for books, supplies, and in loss of income.

Parents were asked how their children would grow and mature if they could not home school. Almost all parents projected some kind of failure for their children. Parents believed that their children were missing very little or nothing by not attending a traditional school. While they admitted that there might be a few elements their children were missing, they felt that the benefits of home schooling far outweighed and compensated for this.

Home schooling families expressed that they had experienced mixed reactions from friends and outside family members concerning their decision to home school. Family members, however, seemed the most opinionated. They were either strongly in favor or strongly against home schooling. Friends and neighbors may have been equally opinionated but they did not often voice their beliefs.

According to home schooling parents, their children all greatly enjoyed being home schooled. Children who had never been enrolled in a public or private school expressed some curiosity and desire to attend school. However the consensus was that these children had little or no desire to attend traditional schools.

Average home school days varied in length and structure. According to parents the curriculum was also diverse and flexible.

Many parents said they evolved to a less structured, more child centered curriculum.

In general, home school parents said they were satisfied with their program, but always on the lookout as to how they could improve.

Non Home School Parent Interviews

Most non home school parents held some kind of skepticism about home schooling. They listed five disadvantages to home schooling. A summary of these disadvantages may be seen listed below in Table 11.

Table 11: Number and Percentage of Non Home School Parents Citing Disadvantages to Home Schooling

DISADVANTAGES	PERCENT OF PARENTS	NUMBER OF PARENTS
Socially Isolating	61	11
Academically Questionable	44	8
A Large Time Commitment	39	7
Conflicts Between Parent and Child	28	5
Economically Costly	11	2

The greatest concern was in the area of socialization. Non home school parents feared that home school children would somehow be stunted in their social development as a result of their social isolation. They felt children were missing something by not being part of a regular school environment. Some non home school parents had interaction with home school children. They observed them to be wanting in the area of social interaction and friendship.

It is interesting to note that social interaction was a concern for both home school and non home school parents. However, home school parents said they became aware of the unique socialization availed by home schooling, including what they said was greater family interaction and family unity. According to them, this served as a contributive factor in their decision to continue home schooling. Thus while both groups of parents were initially concerned about social interaction, home schooling parents began to see it as an advantage rather than a disadvantage.

The second largest concern was academics. Non home school parents questioned the ability of home school parents to provide a quality educational program for their children. Non home school parents also listed three other concerns that they had. These included the large time commitment that home schooling demanded, the conflicts between parent and child, and the economic cost of the program.

While non home school parents were critical of home schooling, a small number recognized advantages. A summary of these advantages may be seen listed below in Table 12.

Table 12: Number and Percentage of Non Home School Parents Citing Advantages to Home Schooling

ADVANTAGES	PERCENT OF PARENTS	NUMBER OF PARENTS
Teaching	17	3
Special Benefits	11	2

Most non home school parents would not consider home schooling. Some had considered the possibility but were presently convinced that they would not home school. Another small group of parents said that if they were forced by some situation or circumstance they would home school.

Non home school parents had concerns about the schools available to them. With regard to public schools, non home school parents said that they were concerned most often with the religious void created by these schools. They also saw a conflict between the values of the home and the school. However, they felt that this was a learning opportunity and that it was not a problem that could not be overcome.

Non home school parents had a high opinion of the religious schools available to them. However some parents thought they could be over protective and another group thought that they could be too academically demanding.

Non home school parents were not overly impressed with private nonreligious schools. They recognized the academic strength of these schools but felt concern about a religious void they perceived to be present at these school. The high financial cost of these private schools also served as a deterrent.

Although not completely satisfied with the schools available to them, non home school parents said they did not feel they were confronted with issues and concerns they could not overcome. They believed strongly in the ability of their children to grow and mature

as well rounded persons, even within the limitations of the school systems available to them. These parents said they encouraged and supported their children and realized that the school systems could not do the job alone. They partnered with the their children and the available schools to provided the kind of education they felt necessary to insure success.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A recent article in *USA Today* featured a debate on the issue of home schooling.³⁵ The column is of interest because it represents some of the popular concerns which adversaries of home schools cite as reasons for opposing the movement. Three major concerns are articulated in the column.*³⁶

The first of these concerns deals with the qualification of parents to teach their own children and provide enrichment activities. This is not a new question. Recently the Iowa State Supreme Court rejected arguments that challenged the state teacher's certification laws which require all parents who home school to possess state certification.³⁷ This challenge is indeed of great importance.

According to parents interviewed, they spent hours in preparation for teaching as well as the researching of curricular material. One home school mother said that she spent numerous hours each day for months researching and studying prior to even beginning to home school. Other parents said that they supplemented their reading by attending workshops or seminars on

³⁵"Teaching Children At Home," *USA Today*, October 22, 1990, p. 6D.

* Some ideas expressed in this concluding section originate with a discussion of this debate which may be found in The Home School Court Reporter, footnote directly following.

³⁶Home School Legal Defence Association, Publishers, The Home School Court Reporter, Volume 7, Number 1 (January, February 1991).

³⁷"Iowa Supreme Court Rejects Historical Challenge to Teacher's Certification," The Home School Court Report, Volume 7, Number 1 (January, February 1991), 1-2.

teaching. During the interviews, parents often demonstrated a working knowledge of various curricular materials, programs, and resources. In addition, parents said that they were constantly evaluating these techniques and materials for their effectiveness. Parents often dialogued with confidence about what they believed to be the strengths and weaknesses of various curricula and teaching techniques.

While the average teacher in a public or private school spends years training to teach, a high percentage of that time is spent mastering management techniques peculiar to large classrooms representing children of various abilities and backgrounds. The home school teacher is not faced with such a challenge and admittedly would be poorly equipped to handle the demands of the classroom situation. A clear delineation must be made, therefore, between the skills required to effectively teach thirty-two children, spanning several grade levels and representing diverse languages and cultures, and the requirements of teaching one's own child.

Home school parents said that they were free to discover the intricacies of their own children. Interviews reveal the excitement of discovery as parents uncovered what they believed to be the unique learning styles and dispositions of their children. Parents felt that they had the greatest insight into the strengths and weaknesses of their children. During interviews parents communicated in detail what they considered to be the abilities and attributes of their children as well as their shortcomings and limitations. Parents

believed that they were able to accurately assess the academic and emotional state of their children.

Many parents said that they customized the learning environment in order to illicit and promote the best in their children. It could be that this customization was really compromise as parents became frustrated with some aspects of home schooling. Parents said that they held high expectations for themselves and their children. The home school parents interviewed said that by educating their children at home they were not attempting to "bail out" their children from their responsibility to learn. They simply were trying to place their children in an environment which optimized their ability to learn.

Home school parents said that they recognized their own failures and shortcomings. These parents said that they tried to adjust their teaching techniques wherever and whenever possible to provide the best education for their children. Many parents were part of accountability groups and networked with other home school parents in an attempt to offer support and be supported. One group of five home school families met together on Fridays. Together they studied the early explorers of the Americas. The children wrote and acted out plays on the Vikings, Christopher Columbus and Magellan. They had a "Viking Day Feast" where the families cooked and ate goat's cheese, ginger ale (in lieu of beer) and roast chicken in place of puffin.

Parents defended themselves as teachers. They cited the consistent academic growth of their children as measured through

observation, progress through curricular materials and in some cases by standardized testing. In each case, according to parents, children were making reasonable if not outstanding progress.

The parents represented by this study discussed teaching techniques and learning environments not available to public or private school teachers. They felt that life became the classroom and that they were not limited to a traditional classroom. According to parents, home schooling allows parents to teach using every day life experiences that directly impact the child. The supermarket may become a lesson on buying, the kitchen a science class that emphasizes measurement and, in one case, a family reported constructing a home together while the children, whenever possible, participated in the building. One family said it used its vacation as a history and geography lesson. As they drove up the coast of California, Oregon and Washington these parents pointed out important historical landmarks, and agricultural and urban centers. The children made maps of areas they had seen, drew pictures of the countryside and wrote essays on the experience. Another Lancaster, California family lived on several acres of land on which they grew various fruit trees and raised farm animals. The children were involved in the daily activity of caring for almost every aspect of the small farm, from initial planing to marketing of livestock and produce.

Another measure of teaching success is the desire of students to learn. Home school parents cited example after example of children frustrated by the public or private school systems and

burned out on learning. In one case a young child was failing reading and had lost the desire to learn. The child had lost all desire to attend school. After much thought and consideration and after trying several other conventional methods of remediation, the parents decided to pull the child out of school. These parents made no demand on the child academically for the first several weeks of home schooling. Gradually her desire to study and read returned. Over the course of several months she gained a new perspective on reading and the joy of learning emerged. Today that young child is succeeding academically.

Other parents talked about the great enthusiasm for learning their preschool children had had before starting in traditional public or private schools. These parents painfully expressed how they saw that enthusiasm slowly die until school became a drudgery to the child. It became a time to be endured. Parents felt as though they were forcing their children to attend schools that the child had no desire to attend. In several other cases children actually became physically ill or lethargic. Only by home schooling did parents believe that they had redeemed the vibrant and spirited child they had once known.

According to parents, home school children were occasionally curious about traditional schools. However they said that their children had little or no desire to attend school outside the home. During the study no opportunity was afforded to interview home school children. The researcher was not able to assess if the responses of home school children would have been consistent with

the remarks of parents. During the interview parents consistently and unequivocally said their children enjoyed home school.

A second concern raised by the *USA Today* article was the contention that unless children are allowed to interact with peers on a daily basis, they will suffer from inadequate social skills. This concern was voiced often by home schooling parents before they began teaching their children at home; however as time in home schooling increased they said this concern all but disappeared.

It should first of all be understood that home school parents do not appear, judging by their interviews, to be isolationists. On the contrary, they said that they sought enriching activities for their children such as after school sports, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, AWANA, and dance or gymnastic lessons. Parents said that they were attempting to expose their children to healthy environments which would foster social interaction. According to these parents their goal was to control their child's level of exposure to people and activities they believed best reflected the values they cherished and wished to instill. Parents said that they were keenly aware that society does not and will not always reflect the values they most highly revere. Their goal was to prepare children to enter this world as healthy adults, confident in their own value system.

However this study did not assess the socialability of the home school children. Some non home school parents had said that they observed home school children to be socially isolated and withdrawn. They believed that band, sports, and other extracurricular activities fostered healthy peer relations and constructive competition.

Home school parents, on the other hand, gave example after example of behaviors, habits and values that their children had been exposed to in traditional schools which were in conflict with those of the family. One home school mother told the story of how she basically saw her daughter's innocence ebb away. As the young girl began the first grade her conversation became more sexually provocative. The mother knew that many of the thoughts, ideas and expressions of the child were foreign to what had been taught in the home. She felt that her daughter was being exposed to a culture which did not allow children to be children and to experience a time of innocence. She felt her daughter was compelled to grow up much too quickly, in a system which unnaturally accelerated the social maturing of young children.

Home school parents said that they questioned the assumption that as children are exposed to other children, they grow in positive social skills. They felt that by providing a strong and secure home environment they could contribute to the emotional stability and health of their children and thus promote social skills. Families interviewed in this study said that they were overwhelmingly committed to family unity and strength. Many home school parents said that the traditional schooling did more to pull the family apart, isolate siblings, and destroy the opportunities for communication between parents and children. Other parents felt that they were losing their children to school systems they could not influence.

As parents home schooled they said that became aware of greater family unity and interaction. They felt that traditional school

systems artificially segregated children by age. They observed how children often had trouble relating to children who were younger or older. In the minds of these parents home schooling removed these limitations and freed children to interact and relate to people of all ages without the stigma of peer pressure to confine interaction to a peer level.

Based on an analysis of the interviews this awareness of family unity was observed by almost a third of the home school parents (nine out of twenty nine parents or thirty-one percent). It was the reason home school parents most often cited for continuing to home school.

One home school family told the story of their two daughters. Before beginning school the girls had been very close, playing and working together with ease. The family had enjoyed many close and intimate times together as well. As the girls began school, however, a change occurred. According to these parents there seemed to be little time for family activities. Because of the demands of school and homework, family time, which had been spontaneous, now had to be carefully planned. Often there was no significant quality or quantity time left after the demands of school. The sisters began to form separate worlds because they shared so little in common. They spoke less and less to each other and seemed only to tolerate one another's presence. As the family began to home school this changed. The sisters again interacted with each other on a regular basis. The parents no longer felt that the school system dictated and

controlled their family life. The family had grown close and secure again.

A third concern listed in the article is that home schooling is "artificial." Home schooling is considered by some to be illusionary or unrealistic in its approach to educating children. This argument assumes that all traditional experiences offered to children are the same. Even a cursory glance at educational opportunities available across the nation reveals tremendous differences in both the quality and structure of public and private schools.

In the traditional sense of the word, most of the home school families interviewed in this study seemed to reveal a great deal of democratic patriotism. Based on the interviews, the vast majority of families held a strong belief in God and worshiped regularly at their local church. As discussed above, many families were involved in community organizations such as the Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts. The curriculum used to teach children almost always included history lessons which, according to parents, were patriotic in nature. Parents said that they believed all of this worked together to instill in children a high regard for God and country.

It must be conceded that this study does not preclude the fact that some parents may choose to home school for less than laudable reasons. Although interviews were designed to probe the attitudes and feelings of parents there is no way that a forty-five minute interview process can reveal the intricacy of any human being. Some parents may have chosen to home school their children out of their own great need for control, dominance, or selfish endeavor. Others

may have been harboring unreasonable fears or resentments toward society. Still others might have been unable to cope with the demands of a diverse society.

However, more than half the home school families interviewed (fifteen out of twenty-nine or fifty-two percent), said they chose to home school because they believed that the traditional public and private schools available to them did not teach the values and beliefs they most cherished. Many parents feared that schools did a great deal to destroy democratic values. They cited schools in which pupils had no regard for authority, where teachers were free to teach with a humanistic curriculum devoid of any belief in God. They saw the results of such value-free schools and were frightened -- frightened by the rampant use of drugs, sexual diseases, and in some cases a constant threat of violence.

In conclusion, parents who choose to educate their children at home do so for many reasons. Common to these parents is the belief that the traditional schools available to them are not meeting the needs of the total child. Parents feel the school system is failing to preserve traditional values. These parents see the traditional school as encouraging the decline of the nuclear family. In addition, they see their children being introduced to pluralistic values which often conflict with the personal values they hold. Coupled with this, parents are dissatisfied with the quality of education they see. Teachers and academic programs are held suspect in the minds of many of these parents.

Home school parents in this study do not appear to have taken the decision to home school lightly. Often they have carefully examined the alternatives available to them and have found them unacceptable. Their decision to home school comes only after great forethought and questioning.

To recommend that traditional schools be modified to express the particular beliefs of home school parents would be difficult at best. To do so would certainly infringe upon the individual rights of some. Currently, schools reflect the beliefs of a diverse society. Clearly, however, the rights and needs of home school parents are not being addressed by traditional school systems.

One possible alternative would be to suggest that educational policy be formulated which recognizes home schooling not as a problem, but as a solution -- a way to meet the needs of a diverse society. Traditional educational systems would then be free to expand their boundaries and embrace home schooling as a reasonable alternative for some parents.

As in every movement involving children there will be the ignorant, the incompetent, the neglectful, and the abusive. However most studies completed on home schooling to date have cited the concern, dedication, and competence of home school parents as educators. There is little reason, at present, to suggest that home school children are receiving a sub par education. Arguments focusing on social isolation as an issue have failed to completely examine the unique socializing dynamics at work in home school families.

Certainly the state does have a responsibility to guarantee the rights of children to a comprehensive and enriching education. However at present, and sadly, there is more evidence of public school failure than of home school failure.

Another possible consideration is that legislation be enacted which teams with home school parents to provide assistance to them. Requiring the credentialing of parents or attempts to direct curriculum may be counterproductive. Such legislation might force home school parents underground. Educators would then lose opportunities to contribute to the educational process of home school children.

Educational policy makers should remain concerned about home schooling. The emphasis of this concern, however, might be better shifted from the current stance of skepticism to one of openness and partnership, and reconciliation.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Recent studies have done much to illuminate some of the mystery surrounding home school families. There currently exists a better understanding of who home schoolers are and why they are home schooling. Insight has been gained into the daily operation of home schools, including scheduling, teaching, activities, and curriculum.

There can be no doubt that the educational experience of home school children is unique. The question remains -- what are the ramifications of such an experience on the social development of the child? Home school children are not exposed to the rigors of the traditional classroom where competition and adherence to regimentation are fostered. Home school children are not segregated from children of different ages as they are in traditional classrooms. They are not removed from the home for extended periods of time each day as are children who attend public or private schools. They are not exposed to a variety of values and beliefs without direct parental control.

According to parent interviews the school day of a home school child offers greater flexibility. Parents stress that curriculum and scheduling are often child centered and that there is greater interaction between the child and the parent/teacher. Family values and interaction are not only stressed, but necessitated by the nature of the endeavor. Many home school families have indicated the

emergence of a form of social interaction not available except through home schooling. The dimensions of this unique experience are yet to be explored and understood. One suggestion for future studies is that systematic research be dedicated to this area of inquiry.

In this study home school parents were free to discuss their thoughts and feeling concerning not only home schooling, but the local public and private schools available to them. Home school children were not interviewed. The conclusions of this study were based on these parental responses, however different conclusions may have been suggested had home school children also been interviewed. While parents felt that their families were more socially healthy as a result of their decision to home school it is not known if home school children shared these same thoughts. The majority of home school parents said their children were satisfied and happy being home schooled. Do home children share these feelings? This study does not preclude the possibility that home school children and home school parents do not share the same thoughts and feelings with regard to home schooling. Research might be designed which probes the distinct thought processes of home school children.

Another area of concern is the long range effect of home schooling on a child's social, academic, and emotional development. The majority of home school children in this study were under eleven years of age (forty-three out of sixty-one children or seventy percent). Are there a particular benefits or hindrances to home

schooling a child during certain ages of development? And are certain lengths of home schooling more beneficial or harmful than others? While longitudinal studies are costly in time and money they might be able to suggest answers to these questions.

Finally as discussed in the section on limitations of the study, Sunland Christian School represented one group of home school parents out of many. The comments of these parents might be particular only to them. Would home school families in different geographical areas, with different socio-economic backgrounds, or with different traditional schools available to them have the same reasons for home schooling? A variety of research venues might be investigated to help understand which thought processes are general and which are specific to home school parents.

APPENDIX A
HOME SCHOOL FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

Name of home school parent(s):

Address:

Telephone number:

(_____)_____

Number of children you are currently home schooling:

Child's or children's age(s):

Best time to be contacted by phone:

APPENDIX B
CONFIRMATION LETTER TO PARENT SELECTED FOR THE STUDY

June 1, 1989

Mr. and Mrs. _____
Street address
City, State, Zip

Dear Mr. and Mrs. _____,

I would again like to take this opportunity to thank you for your time and effort with regard to this study of why parents choose the form of education they do for their children.

As discussed during our phone conversation, I have enclosed a short background questionnaire. This may be completed at your leisure before we meet. If there are any questions concerning the questionnaire we can discuss them at that time.

The date and time for your personal interview is scheduled for:

Date:

Time:

If for some reason we need to re-schedule the appointment please do not hesitate to call me.

I am looking forward to meeting with you soon.

Sincerely,

Steven Gray
(213) 258-3723

APPENDIX C
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOME SCHOOL PARENTS

Has your home schooled child ever been enrolled in another school?

1. yes, public
2. yes, private religious
3. yes, private nonreligious
4. yes, both public and private nonreligious
5. yes, both public and private religious
6. yes, both private religious and private nonreligious
7. yes, public, private nonreligious, and private religious
8. no

Please check the kind of school the father of the child attended as a child.

- _____ public
- _____ private religious
- _____ private nonreligious
- _____ both public and private nonreligious
- _____ both public and private religious
- _____ both private religious and private nonreligious
- _____ public, private nonreligious and private religious
- _____ not applicable

Please check the kind of school the mother of the child attended as a child.

- _____ public
- _____ private religious
- _____ private nonreligious
- _____ both public and private nonreligious
- _____ both public and private religious
- _____ both private religious and private nonreligious
- _____ public, private nonreligious and private religious
- _____ not applicable

Please check the occupation of the father of the child.

- ☐ homemaker
- ☐ professional
- ☐ executive/administrator
- ☐ middle management
- ☐ sales/marketing
- ☐ clerical/service worker
- ☐ tradesman/machine operator/laborer
- ☐ retired
- ☐ student
- ☐ currently not working
- ☐ not applicable

Please check the occupation of the mother of the child.

- ☐ homemaker
- ☐ professional
- ☐ executive/administrator
- ☐ middle management
- ☐ sales/marketing
- ☐ clerical/service worker
- ☐ tradesman/machine operator/laborer
- ☐ retired
- ☐ student
- ☐ currently not working
- ☐ not applicable

Please check the group which best represents your total household income before taxes.

- ☐ under \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 to \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 to \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$59,999
- ☐ over \$60,000

Which of the following best describes the religious affiliation of the child's parents?

<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>
_____ Protestant	_____ Protestant
_____ Catholic	_____ Catholic
_____ Evangelical Christian	_____ Evangelical Christian
_____ Jewish	_____ Jewish
_____ agnostic	_____ agnostic
_____ no preference	_____ no preference
_____ other	_____ other
_____ not applicable	_____ not applicable

What is the highest level of education of the parents of the child?

<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>
_____ grade school	_____ grade school
_____ junior high school	_____ junior high school
_____ high school	_____ high school
_____ junior college/	_____ junior college/
business/trade school	business/trade school
_____ four year college	_____ four year college
_____ graduate school	_____ graduate school

APPENDIX D
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR NON HOME SCHOOL PARENTS

What kind of school is your child currently enrolled in?

- | | | | |
|-------|--------------|----|----------------------|
| _____ | First Child | A. | public |
| _____ | Second Child | B. | private religious |
| _____ | Third Child | C. | private nonreligious |
| _____ | Fourth Child | | |

What are the ages of your children?

- | | |
|-------|--------------|
| _____ | First Child |
| _____ | Second Child |
| _____ | Third Child |
| _____ | Fourth Child |

Please check the kind of school the father of the child attended as a child.

- | | |
|-------|--|
| _____ | public |
| _____ | private religious |
| _____ | private nonreligious |
| _____ | both public and private nonreligious |
| _____ | both public and private religious |
| _____ | both private religious and private nonreligious |
| _____ | public, private nonreligious and private religious |
| _____ | not applicable |

Please check the kind of school the mother of the child attended as a child.

- | | |
|-------|--|
| _____ | public |
| _____ | private religious |
| _____ | private nonreligious |
| _____ | both public and private nonreligious |
| _____ | both public and private religious |
| _____ | both private religious and private nonreligious |
| _____ | public, private nonreligious and private religious |
| _____ | not applicable |

Please check the occupation of the father of the child.

- ☐ homemaker
- ☐ professional
- ☐ executive/administrator
- ☐ middle management
- ☐ sales/marketing
- ☐ clerical/service worker
- ☐ tradesman/machine operator/laborer
- ☐ retired
- ☐ student
- ☐ currently not working
- ☐ not applicable

Please check the occupation of the mother of the child.

- ☐ homemaker
- ☐ professional
- ☐ executive/administrator
- ☐ middle management
- ☐ sales/marketing
- ☐ clerical/service worker
- ☐ tradesman/machine operator/laborer
- ☐ retired
- ☐ student
- ☐ currently not working
- ☐ not applicable

Please check the group which best represents your total household income before taxes.

- ☐ under \$20,000
- ☐ \$20,000 to \$29,999
- ☐ \$30,000 to \$39,999
- ☐ \$40,000 to \$49,999
- ☐ \$50,000 to \$59,999
- ☐ over \$60,000

Which of the following best describes the religious affiliation of the child's parents?

<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>
☐ Protestant	☐ Protestant
☐ Catholic	☐ Catholic
☐ Evangelical Christian	☐ Evangelical Christian
☐ Jewish	☐ Jewish
☐ agnostic	☐ agnostic
☐ no preference	☐ no preference
☐ other	☐ other
☐ not applicable	☐ not applicable

What is the highest level of education of the parents of the child?

<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>
☐ grade school	☐ grade school
☐ junior high school	☐ junior high school
☐ high school	☐ high school
☐ junior college/	☐ junior college/
business/trade school	business/trade school
☐ four year college	☐ four year college
☐ graduate school	☐ graduate school

APPENDIX E

ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your impression of **teacher quality** at each of the following types of schools?

<u>Public</u>	<u>Private Nonreligious</u>	<u>Private Religious</u>
_____ excellent	_____ excellent	_____ excellent
_____ good	_____ good	_____ good
_____ fair	_____ fair	_____ fair
_____ poor	_____ poor	_____ poor
_____ very poor	_____ very poor	_____ very poor
_____ don't know	_____ don't know	_____ don't know

2. What is your impression of the **quality of discipline** at each of the following types of schools?

<u>Public</u>	<u>Private Nonreligious</u>	<u>Private Religious</u>
_____ excellent	_____ excellent	_____ excellent
_____ good	_____ good	_____ good
_____ fair	_____ fair	_____ fair
_____ poor	_____ poor	_____ poor
_____ very poor	_____ very poor	_____ very poor
_____ don't know	_____ don't know	_____ don't know

3. What is your impression of the **academic standards** at each of the following types of schools?

<u>Public</u>	<u>Private Nonreligious</u>	<u>Private Religious</u>
_____ excellent	_____ excellent	_____ excellent
_____ good	_____ good	_____ good
_____ fair	_____ fair	_____ fair
_____ poor	_____ poor	_____ poor
_____ very poor	_____ very poor	_____ very poor
_____ don't know	_____ don't know	_____ don't know

4. How would you describe the average class size in each of the following types of schools?

<u>Public</u>	<u>Private Nonreligious</u>	<u>Private Religious</u>
_____ much too large	_____ much too large	_____ much too large
_____ somewhat large	_____ somewhat large	_____ somewhat large
_____ about right	_____ about right	_____ about right
_____ don't know	_____ don't know	_____ don't know

5. What is your impression of the physical facilities at each of the following types of schools?

<u>Public</u>	<u>Private Nonreligious</u>	<u>Private Religious</u>
_____ excellent	_____ excellent	_____ excellent
_____ good	_____ good	_____ good
_____ fair	_____ fair	_____ fair
_____ poor	_____ poor	_____ poor
_____ very poor	_____ very poor	_____ very poor
_____ don't know	_____ don't know	_____ don't know

6. What is your impression of the quality of school administrators at each of following types of schools?

<u>Public</u>	<u>Private Nonreligious</u>	<u>Private Religious</u>
_____ excellent	_____ excellent	_____ excellent
_____ good	_____ good	_____ good
_____ fair	_____ fair	_____ fair
_____ poor	_____ poor	_____ poor
_____ very poor	_____ very poor	_____ very poor
_____ don't know	_____ don't know	_____ don't know

APPENDIX F
POSSIBLE INTERVIEW PROMPTS FOR HOME SCHOOL PARENTS

- * Thinking back on when you first began home schooling, can you tell me what was your main reason for home schooling?
- * Now that you have been home schooling for a while, have your reasons for home schooling changed?
- * Can you describe to me the process that you and your family used in coming to the decision to home school?
- * Can you describe what your typical home school day is like?
- * What kind of curriculum do you use?
- * Can you describe an inconvenience or hardship you have experienced as a result of your decision to home school?
- * How would you describe your overall satisfaction level with regard to your current home school program?
- * What would have happened if you had left your child in (sent your child to) a traditional school?
- * Are your children missing anything by not being part of a traditional public or private school?
- * How did your family, friends and neighbors react to your decision to home school?
- * How do you think your children feel about home schooling?
- * Can you think of one or two families in your community that are similar to yours in overall values and belief, that know about home schooling, but have decided not to educate their children at home?

APPENDIX G
POSSIBLE INTERVIEW PROMPTS FOR NON HOME SCHOOL PARENTS

- * Thinking back on when you first enrolled your child in school, what kind of decision process did you go through?
- * What is your impression of the public, private and private religious schools available to you in this area?
- * What is your overall impression of home schooling?
- * Would you ever consider home schooling your child?

APPENDIX H
SUMMARY TABLES FOR THE DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Table H-1: Ages of Home School and Non Home School Children.

	AGES 5-8		AGES 9-11		AGES 12-14		AGES 15-17		TOTALS
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>
H.S.	21	(34)	22	(36)	11	(18)	7	(11)	61
N.H.S.P.	16	(42)	15	(39)	4	(11)	3	(8)	38
TOTALS	37		37		15		10		99
CHI SQUARE = 1.61 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 7.82, 0.01 = 11.34									

Table H-2: Total Household Income Before Taxes of Home School and Non Home School Parents

	UNDER <u>\$20,000</u>		\$20,000 - <u>\$29,999</u>		\$30,000 - <u>\$39,999</u>		\$40,000 - <u>\$49,999</u>		\$50,000 - <u>\$59,999</u>	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
H.S.P.	0	(0)	0	(0)	6	(21)	7	(24)	6	(21)
N.H.S.P.	0	(0)	0	(0)	2	(11)	7	(39)	3	(17)
TOTALS	0		0		8		14		9	

	OVER <u>\$60,000</u>		<u>TOTALS</u>	
	n	%	n	
H.S.P.	0	(34)	29	
N.H.S.P.	6	(33)	18	
TOTALS	5		47	

CHI SQUARE = 1.51 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05=11.07, 0.01=15.09

Table H-3: Occupation of Home School and Non Home School Mothers

	HOME MAKER <u>n</u> <u>%</u>	PROFESSIONAL <u>n</u> <u>%</u>	EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR <u>n</u> <u>%</u>	MIDDLE MANAGEMENT <u>n</u> <u>%</u>
H.S.P.	27 (93)	2 (7)	0 (0)	0 (0)
N.H.S.P.	15 (83)	2 (11)	0 (0)	0 (0)
TOTALS	42	4	0	0
	SALES MARKETING <u>n</u> <u>%</u>	CLERICAL SERVICE <u>n</u> <u>%</u>	TRADESMAN MACHINE OPER <u>n</u> <u>%</u>	RETIREE <u>n</u> <u>%</u>
H.S.P.	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
N.H.S.P.	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
TOTALS	0	0	0	0
	STUDENT <u>n</u> <u>%</u>	CURRENTLY NOT WORKING <u>n</u> <u>%</u>	TOTALS <u>n</u>	
H.S.P.	0 (0)	0 (0)	29	
N.H.S.P.	0 (0)	1 (6)	18	
TOTALS	0	1	47	
CHI SQUARE = 1.96 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05=16.92, 0.01=21.67				

Table H-4: Occupation of Home School and Non Home School Fathers

	HOME MAKER		PROFESSIONAL		EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR		MIDDLE MANAGEMENT	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
H.S.P.	0	(0)	16	(56)	6	(21)	1	(3)
N.H.S.P.	0	(0)	6	(33)	4	(22)	3	(17)
TOTALS	0		22		10		4	
	SALES MARKETING		CLERICAL SERVICE		TRADESMAN MACHINE OPER		RETIREE	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
H.S.P.	1	(3)	0	(0)	5	(17)	0	(0)
N.H.S.P.	2	(11)	0	(0)	3	(17)	0	(0)
TOTALS	3		0		8		0	
	STUDENT		CURRENTLY NOT WORKING		TOTALS			
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>			
H.S.P.	0	(0)	0	(0)	29			
N.H.S.P.	0	(0)	0	(0)	18			
TOTALS	0		0		47			
CHI SQUARE = 4.45 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05=16.92, 0.01=21.67								

Table H-5: Highest Education Level of Home School and Non Home School Mothers

	GRADE SCHOOL		JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL		SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL		JR COLLEGE OR TRADE		4 YEAR COLLEGE	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
H.S.P.	0	(0)	0	(0)	6	(21)	8	(28)	10	(34)
N.H.S.P.	0	(0)	0	(0)	6	(33)	4	(22)	6	(33)
TOTALS	0		0		12		12		16	

	GRADUATE DEGREE		TOTALS
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>
H.S.P.	5	(17)	29
N.H.S.P.	2	(11)	18
TOTALS	7		47

CHI SQUARE = 1.11 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05=11.07, 0.01=15.09

Table H-6: Highest Education Level of Home School and Non Home School Fathers

	GRADE SCHOOL		JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL		SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL		JR COLLEGE OR TRADE		4 YEAR COLLEGE	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
H.S.P.	0	(0)	2	(7)	1	(3)	9	(31)	14	(48)
N.H.S.P.	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(22)	1	(6)	11	(61)
TOTALS	0		2		5		10		25	

	GRADUATE DEGREE		TOTALS
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>
H.S.P.	3	(10)	29
N.H.S.P.	2	(11)	18
TOTALS	5		47

CHI SQUARE = 8.66 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05=11.07, 0.01=15.09

Table H-7: Religious Affiliation of Home School and Non Home School Mothers

	PROTESTANT	ROMAN CATHOLIC	EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN	JEWISH
	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>
H.S.P.	5 (17)	2 (7)	21 (72)	0 (0)
N.H.S.P.	4 (22)	3 (17)	8 (44)	0 (0)
TOTALS	9	5	29	0

	AGNOSTIC	NO PREFERENCE	OTHER	NOT APPLICABLE
	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>
H.S.P.	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (3)	0 (0)
N.H.S.P.	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (17)	0 (0)
TOTALS	0	0	4	0

TOTALS	<u>n</u>
H.S.P.	29
N.H.S.P.	18
TOTALS	47

CHI SQUARE = 4.83 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05=14.07, 0.01=18.48

Table H-8: Religious Affiliation of Home School and Non Home School Fathers

	PROTESTANT	ROMAN CATHOLIC	EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN	JEWISH
	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>
H.S.P.	6 (21)	2 (7)	19 (66)	0 (0)
N.H.S.P.	4 (22)	2 (11)	8 (44)	0 (0)
TOTALS	10	4	27	0

	AGNOSTIC	NO PREFERENCE	OTHER	NOT APPLICABLE
	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>	<u>n</u> <u>%</u>
H.S.P.	0 (0)	1 (3)	1 (3)	0 (0)
N.H.S.P.	0 (0)	1 (6)	3 (17)	0 (0)
TOTALS	0	2	4	0

TOTALS	
	<u>n</u>
H.S.P.	29
N.H.S.P.	18
TOTALS	47

CHI SQUARE = 3.50 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05=14.07, 0.01=18.48

Table H-9: Type of School That Home School and Non Home School Mothers Attended as Children

	PUBLIC		PRIVATE RELIGIOUS		PRIVATE NONRELIGIOUS		PUBLIC & PRIVATE NON RELIGIOUS	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
H.S.P.	18	(62)	4	(14)	0	(0)	1	(3)
N.H.S.P.	11	(61)	2	(11)	0	(0)	0	(0)
TOTALS	29		6		0		1	

	PUBLIC & PRIVATE RELIGIOUS		PRIVATE RELIGIOUS & NONRELIGIOUS		PUBLIC RELIGIOUS & NONRELIGIOUS		NEVER ENROLLED	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
H.S.P.	6	(21)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
N.H.S.P.	5	(28)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
TOTALS	11		0		0		0	

TOTALS	
	<u>n</u>
H.S.P.	29
N.H.S.P.	18
TOTALS	47

CHI SQUARE = 0.92 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05=14.07, 0.01=18.48

Table H-10: Type of School That Home School and Non Home School Fathers Attended as Children

	PUBLIC		PRIVATE RELIGIOUS		PRIVATE NONRELIGIOUS		PUBLIC & PRIVATE NON RELIGIOUS	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
H.S.P.	17	(59)	5	(17)	0	(0)	0	(0)
N.H.S.P.	12	(67)	2	(11)	0	(0)	0	(0)
TOTALS	29		7		0		0	

	PUBLIC & PRIVATE RELIGIOUS		PRIVATE RELIGIOUS & NONRELIGIOUS		PUBLIC RELIGIOUS & NONRELIGIOUS		NEVER ENROLLED	
	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>%</u>
H.S.P.	6	(21)	0	(0)	0	(0)	1	(3)
N.H.S.P.	4	(22)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)
TOTALS	10		0		0		1	

TOTALS	
<u>n</u>	
H.S.P.	29
N.H.S.P.	18
TOTALS	47

CHI SQUARE = 1.03 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05=14.07, 0.01=18.48

APPENDIX I
SUMMARY TABLES FOR THE ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

Table I-1 : Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Public School Teacher Quality

PUBLIC SCHOOLS													
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR	DONT KNOW	TOTAL		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n		
H.S.P.	0	(0)	9	(31)	14	(48)	5	(17)	0	(0)	1	(3)	29
N.H.S.P.	4	(22)	10	(56)	4	(22)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	18
TOTALS	4		19		18		5		0		1		47

CHI SQUARE = 13.79 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09

Table I-2: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Private Nonreligious School Teacher Quality

PRIVATE NONRELIGIOUS SCHOOLS												
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	
H.S.P.	1	(3)	11	(38)	6	(21)	0	(0)	0	(0)	11 (38)	29
N.H.S.P.	0	(0)	7	(39)	2	(11)	0	(0)	0	(0)	9 (50)	18
TOTALS	1		18		8		0		0		20	47

CHI SQUARE = 1.6 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09

Table I-3: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Private Religious School Teacher Quality

PRIVATE RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS													
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR	DONT KNOW	TOTAL		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n		
H.S.P.	3	(10)	16	(55)	9	(31)	0	(0)	0	(0)	1	(3)	29
N.H.S.P.	3	(17)	11	(61)	1	(6)	0	(0)	1	(6)	2	(11)	18
TOTALS	6		27		10		0		1		3		47
CHI SQUARE = 6.44 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09													

Table I-4: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Public School Discipline Standards

PUBLIC SCHOOLS													
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR		DONT KNOW		TOTAL
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
H.S.P.	0	(0)	4	(14)	3	(10)	12	(41)	10	(34)	0	(0)	29
N.H.S.P.	3	(17)	2	(11)	8	(44)	5	(28)	0	(0)	0	(0)	18
TOTALS	3		6		11		17		10		0		47
CHI SQUARE = 17.19 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09													

Table I-5: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Private Nonreligious School Discipline Standards

PRIVATE NONRELIGIOUS SCHOOLS								
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
H.S.P.	1	(3)	5	(17)	5	(17)	0	(0)
N.H.S.P.	1	(6)	6	(33)	2	(11)	1	(6)
TOTALS	2		11		7		1	
							1	
								25
								47

CHI SQUARE = 4.28 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09

Table I-6: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Private Religious School Discipline Standards

PRIVATE RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS								
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
H.S.P.	1	(3)	18	(62)	7	(24)	1	(3)
N.H.S.P.	8	(44)	7	(39)	1	(6)	0	(0)
TOTALS	9		25		8		1	
							1	
								3
								47

CHI SQUARE = 15.39 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09

Table I-7: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Public School Academic Standards

PUBLIC SCHOOLS													
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR		DONT KNOW		TOTAL
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
H.S.P.	1	(3)	5	(17)	7	(24)	9	(31)	6	(21)	1	(3)	29
N.H.S.P.	2	(11)	10	(56)	5	(28)	0	(0)	1	(6)	0	(0)	18
TOTALS	3		15		12		9		7		1		47
CHI SQUARE = 14.10 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09													

Table I-8: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Private Nonreligious School Academic Standards

PRIVATE NONRELIGIOUS SCHOOLS											
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR	DONT KNOW	TOTAL
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
H.S.P.	2	(7)	13	(45)	4	(14)	0	(0)	0	(0)	29
N.H.S.P.	6	(33)	5	(28)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	18
TOTALS	8		18		4		0		0		47
CHI SQUARE = 6.41 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09											

Table I-9: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Private Religious School Academic Standards

PRIVATE RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS								
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
H.S.P.	4	(14)	19	(66)	6	(21)	0	(0)
N.H.S.P.	9	(50)	6	(33)	2	(11)	0	(0)
TOTALS	13		25		8		0	
CHI SQUARE = 8.64 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09								

Table I-10: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Public School Class Size

PUBLIC SCHOOLS					
	MUCH TOO LARGE		SOMEWHAT LARGE		TOTALS
	n	%	n	%	
H.S.P.	22	(76)	5	(17)	29
N.H.S.P.	5	(28)	11	(61)	18
TOTALS	27		16		47
CHI SQUARE = 12.39 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 7.82, 0.01 = 11.34					

Table I-11: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Private Nonreligious School Class Size

PRIVATE NONRELIGIOUS SCHOOLS					
	MUCH TOO LARGE		SOMEWHAT LARGE		TOTALS
	n	%	n	%	
H.S.P.	3	(10)	5	(17)	29
N.H.S.P.	0	(0)	0	(0)	18
TOTALS	3		5		47
CHI SQUARE = 9.05 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 7.82, 0.01 = 11.34					

Table I-12: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Private Religious School Class Size

PRIVATE RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS					
	MUCH TOO LARGE		SOMEWHAT LARGE		TOTALS
	n	%	n	%	
H.S.P.	7	(24)	9	(31)	29
N.H.S.P.	1	(6)	5	(28)	18
TOTALS	8		14		47
CHI SQUARE = 4.45 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 7.82, 0.01 = 11.34					

Table I-13: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Public School Physical Facilities

PUBLIC SCHOOLS													
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR		DONT KNOW		TOTAL
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
H.S.P.	8	(28)	11	(38)	4	(14)	4	(14)	1	(3)	1	(3)	29
N.H.S.P.	6	(33)	8	(44)	3	(17)	0	(0)	1	(6)	0	(0)	18
TOTALS	14		19		7		4		2		1		47
CHI SQUARE = 3.52 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09													

Table I-14: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Private Nonreligious School Physical Facilities

PRIVATE NONRELIGIOUS SCHOOLS												
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR	DONT KNOW	TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	
H.S.P.	2	(7)	13	(45)	3	(10)	1	(3)	0	(0)	10 (34)	29
N.H.S.P.	3	(17)	2	(11)	3	(17)	0	(0)	0	(0)	10 (56)	18
TOTALS	5		15		6		1		0		20	47
CHI SQUARE = 7.08 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09												

Table I-15: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes About Private Religious School Physical Facilities

PRIVATE RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS											
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
H.S.P.	3	(10)	10	(34)	11	(38)	4	(14)	0	(0)	29
N.H.S.P.	0	(0)	8	(44)	5	(28)	1	(6)	0	(0)	18
TOTALS	3		18		16		5		0		47

CHI SQUARE = 6.87 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09

Table I-16: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes About Public School Administrators

PUBLIC SCHOOLS													
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR		DONT KNOW		TOTAL
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
H.S.P.	2	(7)	8	(28)	11	(38)	4	(14)	1	(3)	3	(10)	29
N.H.S.P.	4	(22)	8	(44)	6	(33)	0	(0)	0	(0)	0	(0)	18
TOTALS	6		16		17		4		1		3		47

CHI SQUARE = 8.00 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09

Table I-17: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes About Private Nonreligious School Administrators

PRIVATE NONRELIGIOUS SCHOOLS												
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	
H.S.P.	1	(3)	7	(24)	3	(10)	1	(3)	0	(0)	17 (59)	29
N.H.S.P.	1	(6)	3	(17)	1	(6)	0	(0)	0	(0)	13 (72)	18
TOTALS	2		10		4		1		0		30	47

CHI SQUARE = 1.65 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09

Table I-18: Home School and Non Home School Parents' Attitudes
About Private Religious School Administrators

PRIVATE RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS													
	EXCELLENT		GOOD		FAIR		POOR		VERY POOR	DON'T KNOW	TOTAL		
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n		
H.S.P.	3	(10)	17	(59)	5	(17)	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(14)	29
N.H.S.P.	2	(11)	10	(56)	2	(11)	0	(0)	0	(0)	4	(22)	18
TOTALS	5		27		7		0		0		8		47

CHI SQUARE = 0.77 LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: 0.05 = 11.07, 0.01 = 15.09

APPENDIX J
ADDITIONAL QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS
WITH HOME SCHOOL AND
NON HOME SCHOOL PARENTS

HOME SCHOOL PARENTS:

Thinking back on when you first started home schooling, can you tell me what was your main reason for home schooling?

1. Child Not Academically Successful in School:

Subject #001

(Mother):in arithmetic it was very difficult. If you did your math facts, a certain row of math facts, you got a scoop on your cone and if you didn't do it well enough you didn't get a scoop. When everybody else had seven, eight or nine scoops and you have one scoop, you know, so here was this visible failure sign up on the wall for everybody to see and for him to feel embarrassed about. So he hated (them) and didn't want to practice them, then he was just uptight.

(Father): The other area that was low was reading. He was behind in reading. At home we would try to encourage him to read and he wasn't interested at all.

Subject #027

...and finally when the first quarter grades came out, she had a D- going in reading and D- in language and this is a child with a post high school reading vocabulary at that point in time and a prolific writer working on her fourth novel and about the eightieth short story and two hundred poems.

2. Child Has Special Problems and Needs:

Subject #013:

Well, he's dyslexic he was behind, he was hyper and couldn't sit still and couldn't grasp the stuff. We found out later that he had a vision problem. He was a typical immature boy, not being able to keep his hands to himself and touching the other kids, and behavior problems, there's just so many problems that could of been avoided had he not been put in that situation.

...I watched her [the teacher] and it just kind of fell apart by the end of the year. He was a total different kid and she didn't know how to handle him and the principal didn't know what to do and it wasn't like he had a terrible discipline problem, he wasn't. They just didn't know how to handle a kid that doesn't stay in his seat and had to go to the bathroom every five minutes there were no solutions. There was really

never anything really wrong, he was just a classic slow starting, dyslexic hyperactive little boy.

...I don't know really why. I did take him out later in the third grade because by then he was so far behind academically that it was getting harder and harder. ... So he starts walking around the class and he was always bringing notes and finally we just got tired of it and we just pulled him out and put him in a private school and it was an ACE school. They did try to work with him at his own level but he had too many problems in spelling and math so finally after that year I just decided I'm not going to put him back. So I just kept him out.

Subject #032

My first child, Matthew, seems more hyperactive. I thought that if I put him in a school situation he would be disruptive and I didn't want to give him that negative start so I thought I would hold him out a year. During the first year when he was in kindergarten he developed Teddy Mal Seizures. So that first year we ended up starting him on medication ...They put him on Phenobarbital, first they put him on Retaline. There were times that I thought he was just day dreaming and my mother-in-law said, "Oh yeah, Joe did that and dad did that, don't worry about it." I would say "Matt" and he would click out of it and it would only be a few seconds. So I kept asking everybody else to see that if they're seeing what I'm seeing.... By the time we got in to see the neurologist and have an EEG he was having about one hundred a day and everybody was noticing because he was having typical ones that would last fifteen to twenty seconds. You couldn't call him out it.A lot of things that started building and we were looking into it before that as an alternative because I wasn't happy with the schools in our area...

Subject #034

He was a bright kid that didn't fit in. We later found out that he was too far sighted to see well enough, but he had passed his pre-school physical and they hadn't caught it. He was not a kid that sits still, which is required even in kindergarten.

Subject #043

The main reason we began to home school was we were thoroughly convinced that the public school system here did not know what they were doing. My eight year old was in a second grade class. She had been tested for special ed. She has a reading deficiency. I had asked the school the year before to test her and it was though I knew nothing of what was going on. Well, with my education background, I knew there was a problem. They wouldn't do anything. So the teacher came to me and was all upset because Amy was not progressing the way she wanted her to and wanted to know if they could test her. I said, yes. So finally, it took them over ninety days to take care of that, which is against state regulations and finally I got the testing results back and their solution to the problem was no solution. They were going to put her through the same reading book that she had been through twice unsuccessfully for the third time with the same teacher who displayed erratic behavior. When they told me that I just looked at them and said that's not satisfactory. What else do you have to offer? Nothing! I said fine and I walked out of the meeting convinced that I can do that by myself.

They couldn't tell me what her problem was it has something to do with her vision so her coordination is involved. She has improved with a tremendous amount of therapy through swimming lesson and things like that. But they were going to give her adaptive P.E. twice a week, which was jumping rope and walking on a balance beam and this kind of things, well, you can do that at home. Still, being eight years old, she still doesn't ride a bicycle and it has to do with that particular problem. As far as defining what the problem was and coming up with a direct answer, they did not and they did not want to pursue doing anything more testing because it was too costly.

3. Personality Changes in the Child:

Subject #009

She would get angry. She would get resentful. She would clam up. She would become disruptive. Whatever the situation was, she would react.

Subject #014

I placed Melissa in pre-school for several years and in kindergarten. She has a November birthday but because she was always so bright and caught on to things so quickly I put her in kindergarten when she was four. She went through some emotionally difficult times not wanting to leave me. I thought I had this confident preschooler and in kindergarten emotionally she did a real reversal. Although academically she was at the top of her class. She had an excellent kindergarten teacher (who) suggested that maybe I just take her home which I thought no, we need to follow through. We followed through with that year also with the advice of this teacher we kept her in kindergarten a second year. So there were indications already that I had over done it early on and now we were trying to repair that. By the time she got into second grade, which was a private Christian school, she was coming home with a lot of anxiety. Because she is the kind of child that likes to get all "A's", likes to achieve, has had the responsibility of an oldest child, even though she's not the oldest child. With the older one being handicapped, she's had a lot of responsibilities. The troubles she would bring home were always with the kids. It wasn't so much that she was having trouble getting along with anybody. She was having stress and anxiety because she was taking responsibility for everyone else's behavior.

Subject #023

...when she went into this K-1 class, my daughter would come home from kindergarten, I would say two out of three days in tears, she was a mess. My daughter did well in school but she would come home and fall apart for 1 hour to two. She would cry and whine. It was a rough time.

Subject #025

We had experienced certain amount of trouble with our oldest daughter who was in school then. When she would come home from school she would be very angry. She didn't have much trouble with school work, but she was having trouble with the social end of the world on the playground. If people wouldn't play with her the way she wanted to be played with or certain people wouldn't spend time with her she would be very upset and she didn't know how to cope with it very well.

Subject # 040

My only reason for home schooling at time was because I had a child who was not doing well in school. The report card indicated that she's been getting mostly "A"s and that's great but they didn't reflect what was really happening Other children her age were reading very well and she was stumbling on putting phonics together. I just saw the seeds of problems developing. She was beginning to feel inferior...

Subject #042

I would have pulled her out (of school) about half way through kindergarten, she liked it and wanted to stay and then wanted to go on to first grade because she loved school. One morning she came down with a sore throat and couldn't talk and I told her that she isn't going to school and she cried. After she got a little way into first grade, it was, "Mommy, I have a headache, maybe I shouldn't go to school today?" We got totally fed up with the school thing...

4. Values Conflict Between Home and School:

Subject #002

She was in school for about five years and I started seeing the change in personality that she was having to adapt to at the age of seven we decided to bring her home. Not for academic reasons. She was doing great. She was in the top academic level in her class. And in seeing how my younger child has developed differently from my older child, I really think that my theory is correct. Because I am spending a lot of time undoing damage that had been done to the older child that I'm not having to do with the younger because she has never entered school.

I was very active in the school. I was a girl scout leader. I ran the parent's group. I was there every day. I knew all the teachers. I was good friends with the principal. I was in constant contact with the kids in the whole classroom. One day there was a group of children in my home.And I just felt that at seven years old she was talking about things that you would expect a sixteen or seventeen year old to talk about. So that was the kind of peer pressure I was talking about. And when she was in third and fourth grade there was a lot of talk about drugs. And then there was a situation where there were some kids who were dabbling in Satanism. They were etching pentagrams on my daughter's notebook and writing letters saying they were putting hexes on her I can go on an on, she had a lot of bad experiences, even though I was there.

Subject #010

Well, the school that they went to is in a Monrovia school district, most of the kids' parents never even came to open house or any of the conferences with the teachers.they were just not as family oriented. So they were surrounded by those kinds of kids and they came home with those kind of messages.

Subject #015

(Mother): In our neighborhood elementary school in the class there are over thirty students, to us that's just day care. So you got poor quality education combined with negative peer pressure and essentially poor role model and poor self-esteem. What's the benefit now? You go to a Christian school, basically you have same exact peer situation, it's no different from Christian families than anyone else. You have a better positive ethical environment and moral environment and certain more supportive to our Christian faith, but I think a lot of those kind of things seemsuperficial. Parents assume that school will take care of it, it's not my job. I'll let them do it.

Subject #016

I know with my oldest daughter, she is very vulnerable to peer pressure.... She wants to pleaseand she broke into a car just because she was so eager to please someone who she calls her best friend.... I just can see that she can be very easily influenced by people.

Subject #017

We just really felt like we wanted our children to have a real grounding in character building in the Lord so that when they are out there, they will be able to stand for the things they know are right. Because of the peer pressure and all the secular things out of humanism and drugs and alcohol and sex and all that, before they are able to understand it and to make a moral judgement.my oldest is ten,every year when it comes time to decide, we're still having a hard time putting him somewhere else. I don't know, I'm sure there will come a time when we feel confident that they would be able to stand on their own. I know when I was in high school I tended to be a follower. That doesn't mean that all my children will be that way. We wanted to make sure that that wasn't the case as much as we can. You can't protect them from everything, just until they're old enough to say no. That's our main reason.

Subject #018

We wanted to give David the opportunity to... know who he is in Jesus and to be secure in who he is and that he's loved and he's accepted. Basically that's it and know what's right or wrong and know absolutes. That was the main reason why we started home school and that's pretty much the same reason why we are doing it now... That's very important to me that they'll have a chance to have positive influence. ...My mother's a lower Elementary school teacher, fourth grade, and the kids swear -- it's really atrocious. I didn't like that. There's a lot of peer pressure, there's a lot of teasing. Kids are not merciful, they're quite merciless. The teachers either don't catch what's going on or they don't stop it and sometimes some teachers are very cruel. I personally never run into that but I heard many many horror stories.

Subject #020

The fact that we're Christians and the fact that the social make up of the whole United States Government and system is almost anti-Christian today and so consequently it reflects in some of the teachings that's going on. We really didn't care for that atmosphere there. Not the atmosphere of immorality or drugs but just the atmosphere

of what we call secular humanism introduced through some of the teachings, not just the attitude. We think many things of history has been left out because they have too much to do with religion,many things about Benjamin Franklin, John F., Jefferson and others aren't being taught because if they taught those things they would have to introduce religion. We thought the kids ought to know those things as well. I just want to clarify, it's not just that we're against public school, you know, I served on a school board, I understand some of the frustrations and problems. I wish that we can change some of those things.

Subject #021

...I just know that I can keep her self esteem intact so we can spend more time on Godly valuesand just having the time to nurture her.

...the love of Jesus Christ. Learning of His values and the Fruits of His Spirit.

Learning about Jesus and who he is. There are some parents that I've talked to who believe that you put a kid right out in the world and face the world and deal with the world, but I think that if you can have as long as you can to instill your own family and religious values into them, they'll be better equipped later on in life to go out into the world.

Subject #029

I think all our kids are put into school too young. I don't think they're ready for all that socialization with that many children. I don't think they're ready to deal with things, they get their feelings hurt and they feel uncomfortable, they feel scared. I don't think they're ready for that yet at five and six years old. I think I home school to kind of protect them in a way until they reach the age of reason really, when they can decide and not to do things just because other children are doing it. I think if you home school your children you can bring them up with a certain moral strength where they wouldn't be lead into things that they shouldn't be lead into. I think if you give your kids a lot of time and let them know how important they are then they won't feel like that. Also, I think children can be really cruel to one another.if they're in school and learning something from somebody else and then they come home and you're telling them we do not lie, we do not cheat, we honor one another, we respect other people's feelings. I think that way at home they can learn those rules. Eventually they're going to start to pick up all kinds of things from other people but if they have a strong background I think they can take what is right and what is wrong. Plus if you are with them most of the time, you're the most important person to them. They will go by your values rather than someone else's.

Subject #032

The kids in our neighborhood that go to school have picked up a lot of.... more sexual type of things even some of the sex education starting too early, the kids come home and they giggle about it and then they use those things on all their friends. It wasn't maybe presented that way but their level of maturity....

We wanted to develop values where we were the ones setting their standards and their friends weren't. Most of the schools have taken religion out completely and they're into the evolution thing.

Subject #035

(Mother): The most important reason for home schooling was the oldest children who just graduated from the local junior high school and were going to the Palmdale High School and all the notorious things that it's known for. They have been eight years down here at this little school, kind of in a little protective environment and they really were not prepared to deal with what Palmdale High School had to offer...

(Father): There is an exceptional amount of drugs.

(Mother): I mean in an adult world that isn't a situation that you're involved in. When you go out into the working world you're not beat up if you go to the bathroom. They're just not ready for warfare.

5. Lack of Parental Control:

Subject #002

She was starting to conform to the ideas of other children rather than the views we have and that we want to foster in her. She was only in the home maybe four or five of her waking hours and she was away from my control for about seven to eight hours a day. So it would stand to reason in my mind that she would pick up their view points more than my view points. I think that they (parents) do have a big influence but I don't think it is the primary influence when they are not even here that much.

Subject #024

(Mother): ...but in the middle of ...second grade her teacher went on sabbatical and another teacher came in who was a male and also definitely was not a Christian. This was evident in his use of taking the Lord's name in vain. She would come home and say why does he say God all the time. And he wasn't praying. I said, "Why don't you ask him?" and she did and he said different families have different standards on how they use language and everything was relative.

6. Parents Dissatisfied with School Quality:

Subject #005

Well, my main reason for home schooling is purely academic.... I put my son in school for the first and second grade and home school for kindergarten just to give him a good base in phonics for reading and we were very disappointed with the school system especially in the second grade, we had some real problems. And that's what prompted us to pull him out of third and keep my daughter home from kindergarten on. She has never been in the school system. So it's purely academic. The school system failed my son. I just couldn't allow that to happen.

Well, mainly it was in second grade. The teacher he had was waiting for retirement and did nothing creative or incentive wise.We found out the teacher was not correcting anything so he had done chapters wrong and just reinforce the wrong methods he had been using in both English and Math. So I found myself teaching him

at night. He was in essence home schooled along with his public school education. So that's how the school failed him, he could of gone a lot further.

Subject #020

One of the things we didn't like is that you have one teacher for forty-five students. That just creates problems within itself. I don't think I should say I don't like the school, I don't like what the school has to handle.where one teacher does have to take care of a lot of students....there's no possible way to spend some time with a kid that is slow.

Subject #024

(Mother): She doesn't need to have people giving her obscenities on the playground and the teacher could not seem to control that, the principal could not seem to control that. They were never there and we felt it was not a very good environment.

Subject #027

I was really unhappy with the way my daughter was being handled at the private school she was attending. I felt that the fourth grade year was acceptable. The fifth grade year, the lady that she had.... wasn't playing with the full deck anymore. So she was very schizophrenic and one day she would be highly praising her and the next day she would be humiliating her.

Subject #032

...nobody lets their kids walk home from school, even though school is probably not any farther than when you and I had to walk when we went to school. The kids weren't protected enough to be able to walk by themselves.

Subject #034

...she [the teacher] started punishing him and ridiculing him and making (him) stay in at recess and mocking that he hadn't done his homework in spite of the fact that when we went through the papers at home there's the homework, marked with her mark, it had been handed in and checked off and handed back to Jason, yet when the end of the time period came he was punished for not having that piece of homework in. That happened more than once. I found out after he started being punished for that that she was having children check off the homework and having the children make up the punishment work and then she would punish them. I told the principal that you either had to put her up or move my child and that was the only sixth grade in that school.

...I already knew what the junior high that Jason would be going to is like because Bryan was there. Bryan had to contend with boys who would gather around him in a group and taunt him to fight with one of them and call him names because he wouldn't. It's not good socially at all.

...I always felt that I had to make sure that my children already knew what was the right answer before some teacher told them the wrong answer. That was hard on us all. I let the public schools have the best hours of the day and the left over time I was trying to teach my children like they didn't even know.

Subject #042

(Father): Well, the lack of academic excellence, academics in general for that matter. It was more that they were interested in teaching social philosophy and moral values. They weren't pushing academics and making a real effort to get the kids ready for even higher academics.

Subject # 043

I don't believe that cursing at children is acceptable. I don't think that demoralizing a child verbally is acceptable. She stood Amy in front of the class and told them how dumb she was. One day she told her that she was an ugly little girl because you won't do your work and I have no place in my world for people like that.

7. Parents Feel a Sense of Duty:

Subject #007

(Mother): My main reason for home schooling now is the spiritual conviction that it's what we're suppose to do in training our children ,that I can't send them away with the majority of the day and still fulfill the training requirement of parenting.

...it's not quality time that imparts values to your child but it's whoever spends that quantity of time with them, that's whose values they'll take on; you want to be liked and respected by whoever you spend most of your time with. We finally came to a decision that no matter what else happened in our lives we want to stand before God and know that they'll spend eternity with God and that everything else we accomplished doesn't mean anything if we don't get that job done.

(Husband): I guess that as a father I've gone under a revolution too in my way of thinking to the point that I started my business at home now. In everything, home business, home school, how you prioritize your time, what we concentrate our efforts in, how we value our family, prayer group teaching, everything it's really based on what the Lord's doing inside of us. He's showing that I as the head of the household really am responsible even if I'm not involved in the nitty gritty of seeing that it all happens. I'm responsible for my own kids.

Subject #016

I think the main reason would have to be that because I feel that that's what God wants me to do... Well I feel like it's a conviction I have in my heart that this is what I have to do. I really want them to understand as much of God as possible and it frustrated me that I'm still struggling with my understanding of God but I want to give them all that I have. I wish I can give them more.

Subject #025

(Father): I also felt a real compulsion to get involved in my children's lives and felt the responsibility to God to raise them and teach them and couldn't see where anybody else can do a better job in that than Terry and I, so we had had teaching at church toward that attitude. Our pastor really stressed our responsibilities, although he didn't promote home schooling at all, that's just the conclusion that we came to.

Subject #029

...I feel that it really was something God told me to do. He wanted me to do this because it's for the children. Because he wants them to grow up and know him. I think they're going to be wiser for it.

8. Financial Constraints, Convenience, and Availability

Subject #010

I mean my hands were tied and that meant that I would of had to put them in private school and I couldn't afford it. And that's the reason I took him out of the private school after first grade.

Subject #014

When we initially started, it was kind of a casual decision of convenience.I had enrolled both of my kids in a private school.... We decided to move and the market wasn't good for our house and we ended up pulling out of the whole deal. By that time we had lost our enrollment. So then we were faced with the decision to either put them in public school or home school so I just casually made a decision to home school. Then the more we started doing it the more I realize that this is a decision I wish I had made earlier.

Subject #016

Our finances are such that I couldn't really think of sending my children to private schools and public schools aren't a good place for children in general.

Subject #020

(Father): Finances. We had our kids in a private school. We switched them from one private school to another.

9. Outside Influences:

Subject #002

After doing some research I had somehow heard of Raymond Moore. I knew He was speaking down at San Diego so I asked my husband if he could go along. He did not want to go to this seminar....but he gave in and went anyway. All the way home he was very quiet. He was angry and when I asked why he was upset he said because everything he heard them say was making him mad and he didn't want to change his opinion. Over the next couple of months I asked him to be open minded for just a little while longer and after the (CHEA) convention (national home school organization), if you absolutely say no I'll shut up about it and won't say any more about it.

Subject #010

Well, he [husband] prayed with me about it and he went to the CHEA convention with me and we got our eyes opened by a lot of things and we got to see a lot of accomplished kids, kids that have been home schooled all their lives. We personally knew a family that home schooled before this and just thought gosh, you know, not that I knew any academic achievements on their part but they were neat kids.

Subject #016

I don't know how the transition came about.... my interest got peaked by different people and meetings. I started reading Raymond Moore's books and collecting information. I met with a friend and she gave me lots of references as far as people to mail to and I just sort of compiled information on it. I more and more became clear to me that this was what I was going to be doing and as time progressed it became more something I really wanted to do.

Subject #017

When I first heard about it my son was about four. It sounded a little strange to me at first but the more I listened to the reasons why other people home schooled and listened to the tapes from Dr. Moore... We just really felt like we wanted our children to have a real grounding in character building in the Lord so that when they are out there, they will be able to stand for the things they know are right.

Subject #021

I had heard Dr. Raymond Moore on *Focus on the Family* (radio program) and thought, oh, I could never do this.

Subject #023

I heard about home schooling from Focus on the Family by Dr. Dobson.

Subject #029

Well, he [husband] prayed with me about it and he went to the CHEA convention with me.... I would bring him parts of the books to read to him and articles and things that Dr. Dobson has written about home schooling. Michael respects Dr. Dobson and when I would tell him different things about what goes on in school these days, I mean, some of these things they teach them in school. He thought, yes, we should definitely home school. His reasons are probably different than mine.

Now that you have been home schooling for a time, have your reasons for home schooling changed?

1. Family Unity and Socialization:

Subject #007

(Mother): We wanted to keep the family close knit. We were much closer to her than a lot of parents were.

(Husband): I think one thing I do see though is that in overall family bonding and relationship between the siblings they're noticeably closer and tighter than most.

(Mother): Not in an insecure way but in a real caring way. Other people have commented on that.

(Husband): I was talking to another home school father....and they just began last year. He works at home as a contractor and he says now he's got older boys and a couple of younger girls and before they just had nothing to do with each other. The older ones would go off to school and they would come home and play till dinner time with their friends and maybe a little TV or something and that was that. Now, he sees them working together and learning together. There's really a lot more bonding there. They even look after each other when they're outside playing.

Subject #025

(Father): I appreciate the relationships that the children have with one another. That's something we didn't see at the beginning that we definitely see now. The twelve year old now has a very strong relationship with the four year old that we wouldn't have if she had been in school. They were singing a song from a musical that they're working on that Laura isn't involved in but she still knew the song. So those kind of experiences we see now as being bonding and beneficial that we wouldn't of know about exactly. I suppose we would of thought well the individualism of the child but I don't think individualism is what we necessarily come up with.

(Mother): They really work well together. They're all very creative children. They'll often put on a show for us of their own accord. They'll put on their leotard and tights and they'll have a modeling show where they'll use other people's clothes and sing songs to go with it or little character sketches. This is the four year old participating, this is been going on since she can talk. Erica has a wonderful rapport with all the big kids and she can talk with them. They listen to her, she's not a little kid and get out of here. If the others have someone come over whether it's a friend for Neil or Chris, they all play with Erica for a time. I know when I was growing up when my friends came over, they never talked to my little brothers or sisters they didn't exist.

(Father): I do see that as the breaking of the age limit here. I think it's positive. I like it because it just doesn't seem unnatural.... I also think that we've gotten to know as a family better because we do a certain amount of social things together.... We go a lot on field trips I think that we wouldn't of if we had been in a school situation.For our children to get to know each other better is a major reason.

Subject #028

(Father): One of the chief objections we always hear is the socialization. That's probably the one thing we talked about the most. What would she be missing by not being in schooling, in that environment. She would be missing more people that she knew, maybe not as close to as some of the people that she knows now. We decided that if we were going to do it we would have to make sure that she has plenty of interactions with children her own age and others as well. We also recognized that in a way from our experience in school, there's kind of a unnatural socialization that takes place in schools as well which is fact that everybody is segregated within one year of their age level. I can't really see anything positive about that aspect of it -- if it's strongly enforced that way.... Sometimes kids do it themselves and other times the structure kind of keeps them that way. I think it's been really good for Hannah to never feel that age is kind of separation. She plays well with young and older children. She relates well with the adult. As far as the socialization goes we tried our best to make sure that she has plenty of outside activities where she's with other children. That's why she has AWANA's on Wednesday nights and other activities where she has classes with her friends. I think we feel comfortable with the socialization aspects.

Subject #040

What has happened is that it's pulled our family together... and I don't have to prepare school lunches every morning. That was a big factor! Our children are very different. I have five of them but they are so different in personality. Yet I saw that it forces us to work together. Some children they know, they blend, they do well, they have all those Godly qualities that somehow we're still lacking. It can be a daily head butting in confrontation, but it really is challenging us to work together to find solutions. For myself, I have five kids but I'm not the mother of five. I told my friends I have a personality that is not child oriented. I like my space, I like my time. I like to kick my feet up and I like total quiet. I am finding that that is not what a mother does or needs to do to minister to her family. So what it has done is put me in a position of total dependency on God. I have allowed Him to change those things in my life. I'm still in the process of allowing Him to change my life where it needs to be change. How better than through children. So there really is a bonding there that we've never had before. Also what I see is that the children learn to relate to children of their ages. Where as you have a school situation, even in the best school situation, it's age integrated. You separate them according to age. Here you have to learn to deal with everybody. The oldest has to deal with the youngest and everybody in between. It's not easy, not for us, not with our temperaments but it's something that's essential and something that they are undergoing.

5. Flexibility:

Subject #005

We do a lot of field trips and a lot of hands on stuff and fun stuff. It allows more time for more things.

Subject #007

First we studied the academic advantage of tutoring and knowing that if our daughter had a weakness we would be therebeing able to free her up, she has more time for the things she's interested in. She does a lot with art and sewing. She takes violin lessons. She has time for those things without feeling burned out at a young age.

Subject #015

(Mother): It's working out fine for her, she's probably in third grade reading now and first grade math and phonics. Actually the more I thought about putting her back into traditional school, the longer we go the more impossible that becomes. She'd be so miss matched in terms of standard grade tracking I don't know how she would fit in. If we do this a couple of more years she's going to be ruined for school.

Subject #042

(Father): It certainly gives us a lot more freedom in doing things. We can take off and have our vacations in spring time and the fall, we don't have those kinds of restrictions.

Can you describe any inconvenience or hardship you have experienced as a result of your decision to home school?

1. Time:

Subject #007

(Husband): It's a commitment, because you're running a home, you're trying to schedule a lot of inconveniences. We only have one car.

There's a lot of compromise we each have to do. I have to try to make sure I'm here when Dee's violin lessons are scheduled, when Joan needs to go somewhere with her. Saturday morning gymnastics or whatever.

Subject #010

As far as inconvenience, I don't get to go to lunch with my friends anytime I want to because I don't leave my kids alone, they're too young, ten and eight? I don't get to go lunch with my friends at the drop of a hat...

Subject #013

You have to make up your mind and do it. I wanted to go back to school and I had to give up that. Until I get her in high school I won't be able to do that. It's hard to get anything else done. I want to clean my cupboard out, I just can't do it.

Subject #017

There are strings to home schooling your kids. Because they're there 24 hours a day. I feel like they need time away from mom and dad too. You kind of have to arrange that a little more. It's more work to have to arrange it instead of sending him at eight a.m. and bring him home at three p.m. I have four children, I have a baby, a three year old, eight and ten. It's a challenge, it's not easy. But just because it's not easy it doesn't mean that I'm to give up on it..... that means I can find more creative ways to work it out.

Subject #025

(Mother): It's a real challenge to get through everything that I want to get through. When I first started home schooling I laid out a plan. I was teaching school at home and that isn't the basic philosophy of home schooling at all. So I've mellowed out. I've also gone to teaching year round so I can take more time to smell the roses along the way. I think the hardest thing for me in home schooling is that I don't have a lot of time to myself. I have to take time behind closed doors just to be by myself. Or I set the time and say it's mom's recess, don't bother me. I like to do hand crafts and make quilts and sew for my family. That takes a lot of time and I just try to incorporate all of that in home schooling.

Subject #027

One of the hardships of home schooling is just the adjustment.....when your children are little you have them all the time twenty-four hours a day but when your children get bigger you look forward to them being gone for segments of the day and you having, if nothing else, silence to deal with. I think that was my biggest adjustment....having the responsibility of them back in my life just like it was when they were babies.

Subject #028

(Father): Yes, number one is that we haven't had as much time for the other children. We don't have the same time for Rachel and the youngest as we had with Hannah. I consider that a hardship, but on the other hand we wouldn't want to have it any other way.

(Mother): It's hard to call it a hardship but I can see, "Gee the kids are in school and I can sit around and eat bon bons and watch junk on TV and I can visit my girl friends" -- oh, life of leisure.

Subject #029

I don't really experience any inconvenience. The only thing is maybethat I don't get to sew as much as I used to. I love to sew but I don't have time for it now. I can take a couple weeks off of Christmas and sew. I don't get to work with Michael [husband] as much, I used to work with him more with the jewelry because schooling does take a lot of time preparing and actually doing it. I don't really feel like it's an inconvenience.

Subject #032

Getting house work, meals and errands run can be a real problem.....trying to keep the house clean and when they're there all day it gets dirtier than if they were gone at school. The mom doesn't get probably as much down time or away time or whatever....sort of have to plan to get away with him (my husband).
Subject #044

It's inconvenient not being able to get up and go to the store, go run errands or whatever because my loyalties are first to my children's education. It's inconvenient in a sense having them home all the time, because there isn't any place where you can escape. But because of that, because of that negative, that wonderful ability of tolerating has emerged from that.

2. Expense and Financial Sacrifice:

Subject #007

We've always been a one car family because we're a one income family.

Subject #010

I think if I had more time....but I did create a business that I call Custom Stenciling Service, by which I go to people's homes and offices and stencil their walls or their curtains, furniture or whatever it is they want. I can't do that now and I was making good money doing it. It was all on my own creation. It's not really an inconvenience, but it's just something I can't do right now.

Subject #017

I'm not a professionally trained person so any kind of job I get I wouldn't be making that much money any way. We felt that for our children it would be better off to do that. It is hard sometimes. I have at times in the last five years worked in the home, I've baby sat. I've made extra money that way.

Subject #028

Maybe I can go out and have a bunch of money and we can live in another house on a hill somewhere but none of those things are important compared to what we've gained....

Subject #035

(Mother): We quit my income and bought a van so we can have something big enough to take the kids on field trips. Then we were so short on money there was no money to go on field trips. So we decided the babysitting probably our best bet, even the kids have the benefit of learning to deal with little ones and babies.

(Father): Like I said, there might be some negative aspects now, but we feel that the trade off later on will outweigh whatever we have now. By negative I mean maybe we can't go out to dinner as often as we did or things like that. But with the kids home schooling we can go on vacation at anytime and we can make that vacation a learning

experience. We just had to learn to adjust our lives to the home schooling. It just fits right into our plans.

Subject #040

Home schooling for us is not cheap. It's not as expensive perhaps as going to private school but I'm a book nut. I don't like to go to the library and borrow. I have a problem with buying books. I don't buy clothes for myself but when it comes to curriculum and books I'm right there. Not that I used ten percent of them but I like to have it if I do need to use it. So it can be expensive it's definitely not as cheap as I thought it was.

Subject #042

(Father): Certain additional financial expenses. It's not too bad of a thing. Going out and buying few extra books is not that big of a deal.

What would have happened if you had left your child in (sent your child to) a traditional school?

Subject #001

When I first mentioned to Michael about home schooling, he didn't know what it was, but he begged to do it before his dad ever wanted to do it. He wanted anything different than what he was in. He didn't care, he just wanted to get out of school. I think that we would have a real handful, a real problem child, a very burnt out. He wouldn't want to learn anything. He would not have a thirst for knowledge. He would not be curious and be creative and the happy boy that he is.

Subject #013

It would of been a chore and a fight everyday.

Subject #021

I don't know. I just know that it would have been very hard on his self-esteem. I feel that he probably would have been teased as one having a hard time reading. As it is right now he has buck teeth which we want to take care of when he gets to be a little bit older. He gets teased by the kids in the neighborhood and that really hurts him a lot.

Subject #027

...I can see once I had her home and I was working with her how the reading teachers would have been frustrated with her and the language teachers would have been frustrated.

Are your children missing anything by not being part of a traditional public or private school?

Subject #001

No, nothing. They're around friends who go to public schools and private schools enough that they're in touch with the rest of the world.One boy who he used to play with down the street, his mom was always in tears about her son and she would go down to the public school and talk to them and the teachers would put her downand put her sons down so badand then they put him in a remedial class, the dummy class.....He's very bright but... he didn't fit in the certain categories that they(the school) expect.....it was really tough on him, on his esteem.

Subject #008

(Father): Trouble. That's what they're missing out on, there's a whole lot of trouble and grief and a whole lot of confusion. The educational system has essentially left God out of the study of Science entirely. There's no possible way to study Science any other way then by studying the creator of all physical life. I really don't feel they're missing out on anything. They've lost nothing and gained everything.

(Mother): One thing Michael asks which indicates him missing being around children more..... It has crossed my mind maybe around sixth grade or something like that. When I feel that character traits have been developed well and they could be in a classroom situation.

Subject #020

(Mother): I don't.

(Father): Possibly, there's a certain amount of competition that goes on with the regular school. To some degree that's minimized here. You get it in other ways but it's not quite the same. Our daughter goes to gymnastics at the YMCA so she gets competition there. She gets self-esteem and self-worth in being with the other kids in practicing gymnastics and working out. My son scuba dives and works too. He's gotten promotions and so forth and he didn't get passed over this last time. So he knows if he doesn't put out, he doesn't get the promotion. I don't think he's missing a whole lot. There are times that I feel there is something about that competition that might be missing.

Subject #034

Yes, they're missing lockers slammed on their arms and their stuff being stolen and kids calling them names and they're missing having to sift through somebody telling them evolution is the correct way. They're missing out people who send home memos with grammar mistakes in them and people who can't look up things in an index. They're missing out on a lot of children with bad values.

Subject #040

No. They are not. They really are not missing a thing.The elements of a traditional school,how much attention can each of them get per teacher per day..... less than five minutes per day per child. How much of that is correction or talking or doing something negative. In home school, there's lots of negative but I'm also very

busy rewarding them and praising them. So it balances out. We belong to a home school choir that our church does allow them to use the facility....it is hosted and taught by a couple of professional singers at our church. They minister at convalescent homes. That's what my daughter is baking cookies for right now because tomorrow is a singing performance. Whatever programs and fun things they have in school on a regular basis we provide, the necessary ones. If it's centered around just pure entertainment, forget it, it's not important. If it's centered around ministry, praising and worshipping, we do that. Field trips.....science camps, over night thing, just magnificent things. We do some things that over schools do as well, but we do other things that they can't even begin to touch. We offer them hands on science projects and speaker. We have a once a year June celebration-- the kids do talents, they do art, they do a production; we have a barbecue; the family is involved; everybody knows everybody; the sense of community is so fulfilling that I can't even begin to imagine anything on a regular school that can begin to compete.

Subject #042

(Mother): Maybe a club or two?

(Father): I'm not even sure about that. We do that with the outside things. Maybe there's going to be a bit of a rude awakening when they get out in the real world to see that not everybody is a nice person. I think we pretty well handle that.

(Mother): The only thing I would think would be something like if they are musically inclined they can miss out by not being in a band or a chorus or something like that. Other than that I really don't see anything.

Subject #044

No, I have honestly given that thought. One lady said to me over the Halloween holiday, that's one thing bad about home school, you know your kids missed all these Halloween parties! My kids got invited to different parties with their kids that they were not home schooled. They were kids that they knew from church or from school before and had plenty of little parties they went to without having to go to the school carnival because we are very involved at church, now, if there is a family that is home schooling and was not involved in any community organizations, their children did not play in any kind of sports situation, were not a boy scout or girl scout or whatever and children were segregated from everything my answers might be different. I might say that they were missing because then they're not given the opportunity to feel apart of something bigger than the family to be important to somebody outside of mom and dad's eyes. They are in scouts, they are in girl scout and boy scout. They do play city league teams and do go outside the home and have music lessons and whatever. I don't think there's anything positive at all they're missing. They make friends easily. They don't feel odd. I know my sister was worried, don't you think they're going to feel odd? Actually my kids feel special, they tell me all the time I'm so glad I have a mother that's willing to do this, that's willing to take the time to do this for me. So, NO, that's an emphatic NO!

How did your family, friends, and neighbors react to your decision to home school?

Subject #002

...before we started school that first year I went and talked to all my neighbors and explained that they would probably be seeing our kids during the day. They all had big question marks on their faces, but they were all very accepting of it. The typical comment I get from people is that's weird. Then they start telling me of horror stories of nieces, nephews or grandchildren or something like that. I very very seldom run into anybody who gives me a hard time about it.

My relatives are probably the most concerned, for my sake, because I'm such a type 'A' personality. They thought that I would be burning out, which I tend to walk a fine line. I think they were afraid that the kids will miss a lot of the social things. I had a grandmother who was very much opposed to it, and argued quite a bit about it. She thought school today was like when she was a little girl. When I told her the things that were happening with my daughter at school, she would not believe it. She thought I was exaggerating.

Subject #007

(Father): My family was very irrational because my mother was a vice president of the teacher's union so she was trained to look at things a certain way....she likes to have things rigid.

(Mother): Well, they were shocked and quite an uneasiness.... And she (mother) brewed and stewed inside of her and when it was Christmas when our daughter was six years old, they came out.... They were suppose to be staying here for a week but they had just been here that one day. Her mission was to convert us to public school I guess and it turned into a big fight. Our parenting and everything was attacked. One of the things she said that night was that, "I think it's just a shame that when I come here and my granddaughter can't even pick up a book and read it to me". ...So the next Christmas we went off to their house and I said by the way Deana knows how to read.So his dad, testing her, opened up a King James Bible, the original King James, and she read out of it without skipping a beat and he was very impressed.

She vowed never ever to condone it or support it in anyway but she's backed down.

(Father): She's done little things to help out.

(Mother): They send us workbooks in math, busy work type things you know.

(Father): In their own way, they're being supportive.

(Mother): I typed a letter thathad a lot to do with home schooling and basically I was saying to them that you've had children you made decisions on how to raise them, now we have children and we're making decisions on how to bring them up. I understand that you don't agree but I won't accept being attacked.

(Father): Anyway, since that time, my parents radically changed their point of view. They finally admitted that they missed the grandkids. They sold their home, quit their careers. They moved out to where they said they'll never want to live, in Southern California. So we know the Lord's working. Since then, if they really do have some feelings about it they haven't acknowledged it. Well, they do hint constantly that they're worried.

(Mother): Especially in certain areas like mathematics. I'll see dad playing a game and he'll test them... They acknowledge now that our children in their opinion

are better behaved and easier to have around. They acknowledge a lot of the fruits without acknowledging the source. I don't know if that will ever happen.

Subject #008

(Mother): I would say most of our neighbors know. I think more than critical it's "you're such a miracle worker to be doing that!", which is not that way at all. Other people can do it if they really wanted to. I don't think I've had any negative, other than "how is their socializing?" Something from someone at a grocery store. The immediate family, I get encouragement. My neighbors ask about it but they don't criticize and become negative.

Subject #009

My friends coincidentally are also parents whose kids had problems that were lost in school,they were the ones that were really encouraging and supportive and positive.

Subject #013

Well, most of my friends respect me so I don't have any trouble with that. Some people have a lot of trouble because their attitude says that if you're not doing it (home schooling) then you're in error or you don't want what's best for your child. That's a lot of the home schooler's attitude. I don't have any trouble. The only problem I ever had is with my neighbor across the street who was a principal and a teacher and when we decided to do this we gave him a tape on the subject and they basically just reject the whole idea. I did have a teacher who turned me in.

Subject #014

Mostly, [my friends say] oh, I can see you doing it. Yeah, that makes sense and fits right in with you guys. I really didn't get any flack other than a particular relative who is a teacher. I mean I have no education, it's inconceivable that I can have all the skills that she's got with all her education. So it's just something that's not even discussed.

[My family] they're all for it. Nobody really worries about it. Some of them just don't understand it. We've always been a close family on both sides. My husband and I have always made an effort to acknowledge and support our nieces and nephews in what they're doingso they don't get the feeling that what we are doing is better or we're judging them. So we found that they are free to say "look what I did in school". So we encourage them as much as we can.

The neighborhood we lived in we didn't get any flack from because we had such a good rapport with all our neighbors. There were more questions like, "Is it legal? How do you do it?" So like I said for the most part people kind of expected something like this from us.

Subject #018

At first everybody felt we were crazy. Like I said everybody in my family are all educators, public schools. They were rather appalled because I'm the only one that doesn't have that, neither of us have a college education. So they were kind of ah, what are you doing? Peter's mom was a little leery but his brother and sisters were right

behind it. They thought it was great. Now, the friends, we've always been kind of nuttsy anyway so they just kind of chalk it up and we'll wait and see, you know. Now, the family is just kind of quiet. They're not against it, they kind of see us and we're really trying and the kids seem fine. Now more and more friends are home schooling. We have one gal who is very vocal against home schooling who is now home schooling, so it's kind of interesting to see the change on that.

Subject #021

Contrary to a lot of what I've read, I have mainly, I would say ninety to ninety-five percent of the people I have talked with have been supportive of me and have talked highly of it. I don't have any problems really with relatives. My oldest one who I did home school two years. Last year she was home schooled for her eighth grade year and up until last summer I was going to continue to do so in high school. I know my mother-in-law probably raised some eye brows over that. Although she didn't really come out and say so. That really is it.

Subject #023

My mother is supportive and has known about it all the way along the line. My father thinks that well, it's okay. My father is a doctor and my mom is a mainly a homemaker. Now he thinks it's great. Now my in-laws. I never talked that much with them about it. I shared a little about it and they're not real sure what it is so they stay away from it. They think it's okay, they think it's alright because I'm a teacher and I know what I'm doing. My husband was not real supportive.... Last year he was supportive and this year, and next year he may decide that we should put her in school. We're open to anything.

Subject #024

...I haven't seen real oppositions from my parents and my mother was a teacher. The people at church don't really understand why, most of them.

Subject #027

Mixed. Real mixed. People that know me well that are close to me as a rule don't have any concerns because they know that I'm a school-a-holic. They know my kids are going to go to a university when I'm done. They don't worry about it. A few friends have felt offended that the children don't put in the hours that their own children do in school. ...a lot of people are realizing that we have serious problems going in our schools. I think the violence factor is a big concern to a lot of parents. The gang drive-by shootings indicate to most people that our society is in trouble. So given those things people can understand. I think the biggest question that people always ask, the first thing they ask, is well how do they have a social life? How do they learn to relate to other children?

Subject #028

(Mother): Most of them are doing it.

(Father): Some people thought we're awfully bold.

(Mother): Some people think, wow, that's great, I'm glad for you. I can never do it. We really haven't gotten anything negative from our friends.

(Mother): I say most friends reacted real well. They either wanted to do it themselves or maybe that sounds real good and I've been thinking about it myself. Some just said you guys are real brave. Relatives is a whole other reaction. Some thought it was great. In fact we were surprised at some of the ones that thought it was great and encouraged us. Others were very fearful. They told us it was illegal.

(Father): I think some of them thought it was the fanatical thing to do and we would damage our child mainly on the socialization aspect. I don't think they were worried so much about the academics. I think my dad was worried all around. Your dad is pretty positive.

(Mother): But they do live in New York.

(Father): My mom was skeptical but now she's pretty happy with it. Just the way Hannah is turning out, she's encouraged.

(Mother): At first my sister wasn't real sure. She thinks it's great. In fact, she acts like she agreed with it all along. She's real happy with it now, especially when I show her Hannah's test scores.

Subject #032

My families, they'll keep on saying well is there going to be a certain time that you're going to put them in school. We just keep on saying we're just taking one year at a time... Some of my neighbors thinks that we may be religious fanatics or something. "Aren't you going to expose your kids to the worldyou have to learn to deal with that!"

Subject #034

My parents were very supportive. My mother especially thought that it was an excellent idea in the beginning, but she didn't know anyway to get around the sheriff.... she was very glad and so was my dad when we finally took them out of public school. My grandfather thought it was okay, his second wife, my grandmother, worked in public school system for thirty or forty years and she thought it was a terrible idea, but she was just kind of a peripheral irritation.

The friends who know are mostly home schoolers. I don't have many friends who aren't home schooling. We had a lot of trouble getting acquainted when we first moved here about five years ago. The neighbors I suppose know but it doesn't come up.

Subject #035

(Father): When we first let everybody know, there really wasn't any adverse criticism. It's more like, "if anybody can do it, you guys can."

(Mother): I had a number of people call and wanted to come up and visit us while we school. So I have invited some of them over while the kids are doing their work and they say, "Wow, this is great!" We had a lot of friends say, it's great for you but I can never do it. I can't take my kids that long...

(Mother): [Relatives were] all praises. They think it's really great. In fact his mom is trying to get his sisters to do it...

(Father): We had relatives who had started home schooling after seeing how we had done...

Everybody has been real thrilled and supportive. I can't think of anybody who is negative...

(Mother): In fact I've had a number of people who asked if I can take their kids. I'm not a school I can't do that. They even said maybe we can talk to Sunland and maybe they can arrange it so you can take mine. No! No! four is enough. Thank you.

Subject #040

Initially one of my closest friends reacted negatively. The funny thing, next year, she began home schooling. My personal friend, my closest group, I had not had that problem, but other people in the church have questions, you know people you respect. There is that slight hostility..... and you realize that not everybody loves home schooling, not even in your church. There are reasons why they don't like it. My mother-in-law has been incredibly supportive, she and her husband are not Christians. She knows that I'm in the home. Her oldest son is divorced, her youngest daughter is divorced, the one older than my husband is in a shaky situation, they're not going to get a divorce, but they're not real happy. I'm the only one that is really family oriented, that has stuck to her guns and is doing things for the husband and for the children. So she's real supportive. My dad is also very supportive because he sees that I'm home oriented. My aunt is supportive of what I do it's just that she thinks I'm biting off too much, she feels sorry for me and that kind of thing. I have one neighbor come to the door, a boy whom I did not know, he was a friend of another neighbor. He said, oh, you're home schooling, I can't wait to go home and tell my mother, she loves to turn in home schoolers. That's when I joined Sunland for the protection on a local level.... My biggest heartache is knowing that some of the most highly respected people in my church don't agree with it and are non-supportive and not giving us the leeway to do these thing with our children. That's a major hurt. We feel that we've been misunderstood and let down. I do have some far away friends who think, "Put your kids in school!" but they haven't caused any problems.

Subject #042

(Father): Most of the family is definitely mixed. Although I think they've accepted it. A surprising number of friends say it's interesting and know someone else that's doing that. A lot of people are very positive. They think it's a good idea.

(Mother): More and moreit gets more publicity, it gets more acceptable. I don't know about your mom, it's funny, his dad comes in and he'll ask the kids questions to see if they're learning anything. My parents live closer to us and see more and they totally accepted it now and tell everybody that it's great that we home school. They were not accepting it at first. They say, okay, it's your kids you can do what you want, but.

Subject #043

Most of them understand why we have home school. The friends we have for the most part are close friends. So we never really run into anybody who looks at us and says, "How stupid you are." More people, even on an occasional acquaintance type situation, they're more interested in well, what caused you to do this? And then you begin to explain to them, they say well, you know what, that might not be such a bad thing after all. So we really have no negative input.

How do you think your children feel about being home schooled?

Subject #005

Well my son appreciates it after spending two years in school and going all day. He appreciates being done by noon, and being able to go on vacations when we want.... in fact he asked me to come home the second grade year. My daughter is very curious about going to school. She would like to try it but she was not upset that I said no, not right now.

Subject #007

First of all, I hadn't planned on doing anything structured with him (our son) for even another year or two as all the studies are pouring out about the fact that boys are not ready. He's requested to learn to read and he's progressing pretty well, except we're not going at the same concentrated pace I did with my daughter. When he loses interest we don't do it. But there's no way he would want to leave home or would be ready to leave home at this point... Our daughter, her outside activities are important. She's in girl scouts and AWANA (non-denominational neighborhood children's Bible lesson program) and she takes violin lessons and she's getting to the age where she's socializing more.....inviting her friends home, or go home with them. That's fine, it's pretty normal at this age. This only thing that I noticed with her is sometime if the group of girls she's with are all in public school and all start talking about school related things whether it's lunch tickets or gym class or whatever it is, something she can't share in the discussion. I know that's hard for her. So I know it's important for us to have social activities and fellowship with other home schooling families and realizing that need to do that.

Subject #008

I asked several times since we started, he really likes it. Sometimes he wishes we can do more projects and not just serious kind of things but he's learning that that has to be there to. I begin each subject by saying that it's God ordained that we learn and learn it right and we need to learn to read and take them back to scriptures to see so there's really no excuse for not learning. It's a discipline.

Subject #014

Yes, they do now. I think the oldest one had the most difficult time adjusting because of the transition from one manner of doing things. It's not school unless you are doing it a certain way. Unless you have to worry, sweat and grind over it, it doesn't represent education, which she has learned that it's not true. You can be very happy and relaxed and you can learn something that's valuable that you can keep for the rest of your life and it doesn't have to be like swallowing a bad pill.

Subject #016

I think they feel special, but because of the variety of things we do besides home school, we have to sort of encourage that thinking. We don't have TV, we have to keep

allowing them to feel compensated some how..... They've never been exposed to school so I don't think they really know what they are missing or bother them a whole lot. There were times when we would drive by a school and I think they see all the kids out playing at recess and it seems like a desirable thing to be at school because they love to be out with kids. But they aren't deprived because we do so many other things and we are very involved in our church, they play with their cousins and they get to play with neighbor kids but it's under a lot of supervision usually. I would say they don't feel negatively about it.

Subject #017

My eight year old really likes it. My ten year old, he's fighting school whether it's somewhere else or here he just doesn't want to do it. I don't know if it's part of his age. He's having a problem with his attitude right now. It's like I told my husband, I don't think it would make a difference whether he's here or at a public school, he would still be having a problem and still something that needs to be worked on. He does fine, he'll complain about it and he'll sit down and be very proud of what he's done. So I'll say, "what was the big deal?"

Subject #020

(Father): They're probably mixed up in a sense that one week they think it's the greatest thing in the world and next week they think it's boring, and one week they think we're tyrants and another week they think we're lax.

(Mother): But I think for the most part they're very happyit's one day at a time they can change their minds. I know my daughter really likes it, my son is a little hard. He does have a hard time in school, he has a hard time reading. I think he likes it because he's able to take his time without so much pressure and for that reason he likes it.

(Father): Sports wise, one of things we did to compensate for sports is we did scuba diving together and we went through all the classes and so forth and that took care of about six months worth where sports didn't matter so much and he's still an avid scuba diver so we still try to take some trips. You do need something.

Subject #028

(Mother): I asked her before and I think she's had some concerns too because she sees most children going off to school and it's hard for a child that they think what they're doing is different from the norm..... The way she expresses things to me now is, "I'm really glad that you guys do that you think is best for me". I think she's learning something from that, that you have to stand up for what you believe in. Hopefully that's something she will carry with her. She seems very happy.

(Father): If we had just kept her home and didn't have any outside activities I'm sure she would feel like she was really missing out on a lot. She's really busy.

(Mother): I think in the beginning she was concerned that there was really nobody out there doing this either. I think it helped her a lot more to know that she wasn't the only one. It's not the norm but she knows there's lots of people doing it.

Subject #034

They like it. Bryan had trouble getting along with me first, it was kind of a power struggle between who is going to have the say, him or me, but he didn't like public

school so much and he wanted the freedom of home school... He likes to be able to choose for himself rather than being told that he can read. He had to be able to spend a lot of time on things that are important but aren't in a regular school curriculum. He reads two computer magazines and parts of his science magazines, parts of National Geographic, so that's the kind of freedom that he likes. He likes to be able to negotiate his courses when we first put him in algebra he just wasn't getting along very well with that so we looked for something else and what I found was Mortonson Math. It's got algebra topics, calculus topics but he was very much impressed with the calculus lingo. So what do I care, it's all the same arithmetic. It doesn't matter to me how he gets it. Jason does not like to be held back. Jason likes to know what's expected of him and then be left alone to do it in his own way and in his own time which is quite quick. If he wants to know if he wants to go ahead he can and his grade level will go up accordingly. Lest you think I pushed these children unreasonably, all I knew was that four year olds weren't suppose to know how to multiply. They're not suppose to handle that concept, so when my four year old started asking me things about multiplication, I assumed from my training that he must be asking some other questions and he wouldn't be able to understand that concept but it finally became clear that he was perfectly capable of understanding math concepts. I wouldn't have figured it out if I didn't help him. Jason is very ahead in reading. So I don't have to push them.

Subject #042

They love it. Wendy misses having quite so many people around. We don't have a lot of children in the neighborhood for her to play with. She misses having people and seeing people as much the time. But she wouldn't go back for the world.

Subject #044

One time,we had had a really rough time and it was last year towards the end of the school year. I said, "You guys, forget it. You know, I'm not one to give up, but hey, we can't do this or you guys are going to be back at public school." No-o-o-o, they did not want that and we've asked again at the end of the year we had a family fast and a prayer and I said we need to find out what the Lord's will is and what we all want to do now that we've gone through a year do we want to do this again? We separated on a Saturday night and said let's not discuss this among yourselves, not anything and we'll come back and have a family council Sunday night and we will decide and talk then. We did, we kept our feelings to ourselves and it was surprising because I was wondering, they're going to tell me no because you never know. My husband sat us down and said ok, lets start with the youngest who was applicable (my little one is two year old). Jennifer who was going into third grade said, no, I do not want to go to school. My middle one said the same thing and Sean. Some of their reasons were different and some were the same.My husband saidit's really up to the kids and I. He was willing to do whatever we thought was best so the kids were looking at me like, mom can veto this in a second and they knew that. When I said, yeah, we're going to, it was like a visible, audible, tangible relief. They know we are close, they know that they have it good and they're not about to do anything to jeopardize that. They now have friends coming up to them saying I wish my mom would do that.

***Describe what your average home school day is like.
What kind of curriculum do you use?***

Subject #001

(Mother): My ideal school day would be we get up and the kids do their jobs and I go for a walk. When I come back the breakfast is to be ready and we all sit down and eat together. Then we have our Bible time and prayer time together, then we salute the flag and sing God bless America and a couple of other songs. I try to work it where when Michael is doing KP with Christy I take Holly and listen to her read. Like this morning, I had Holly go brush her teeth and I listened to Christy read, then I listen to Michael read; and they take a break and go play and I put laundry in. So we take one subject at a time and have a break in between the subjects. We'll do spelling outside while Holly is running around riding her bike; Michael and Christy are taking spelling words alternating. With doing three in school I kind of had to learn how to do it where it works out each bit at a time.

(Father): We haven't been very structured anyway.

(Mother): They do best when it's nice outside, they get outside. They learn much better outside than they do inside..... not much better but it just seems to make it a lot more fun.

...We're doing the Bob Jones reading, Bob Jones math, as a guide. I try and look at the book and see what they need to work on. Michael's enjoyed just..... writing his own division problems and answering it. He's really thrived on doing that. Maybe I'll give him five or six problems but he learned from those five problems and that was his whole math for the the day. The next day he may even have forgotten all of it. For some it didn't stick with him. But when he wrote down the problem and he worked and showed me and explained it for some reason it reinforced him much better than using a workbook. Michael loves History, he'll read it in two days, where it's supposed to be a lesson each day but he'll go through it. So I don't have to say Michael, it's time for History; it's more like Michael, put down the History and do your spelling. He does the Abeka spelling and they love the fun books. They love doing their notebooks. They've got all their subjects in their, they feel that they are official.

Subject #005

We go from nine a.m. to twelve noon. We have one break in there. Everyday we have character builders and Bible memorizations. We have oral reading everyday. We have a unit study which we encompass everyday which we are going through time liner Early American History for both kids. Monday, Wednesday and Friday we focus on our Math. Tuesdays and Thursday we focus on Phonics and Language.

...I've tried [teaming] last Spring. It just wasn't a workable situation. This other child just wasn't ready to sit down to do a unit study on colonial background. So it didn't work. I've kind of kept to myself just because it is easier. I don't have to meet anyone else's schedule, but I'm open to it. I just haven't found anyone to be cohesive with.

Subject #007

(Father): Pretty unaverage this year. We've had to really lay aside at this point a lot of things that, with the baby coming in November and like I said there's been a lot

of changes around here with work on the house, recarpeting, organizing. We don't have an average day... We don't have anything set up yet.

(Mother): But in the past, an average day would be that we would begin sometime between the time we finish breakfast and feeding the pets, we have a lot of pets, more than most families. We just had our dog put to sleep, we had three dogs, two cats and two canary. For awhile, we had twenty-four canaries. We were breeding as a home school project a couple of years ago now we're down to two. So by the time we get breakfast, making beds, and pet chores which we incorporated into home schooling, we spend about an average of one and one half to a couple of hours doing school, whatever that happens to be that day. We were usually done by lunch time. Although a lot of times things we've been working on with our daughter, who is older, would carry on to the afternoon, if it was a book she was interested in or some project she was working on. So I will tell you honestly that it doesn't take that much time.

Subject #008

Actually the curriculum in music is Konos curriculum and it takes the character traits. For instance, we started with attentiveness, being attentive to God's word, and of course how you become attentive to your parents. Right now we're on obedience, instilling obedience to God, obedience to your parents, your authorities, whoever they might be. After that we're doing honor, orderliness, these are some of them. We started with attentiveness because we feel that a child needs to be attentive before he knows how to obedient. Of course the orderliness, their chores and things that we feel school is not just sitting down at a desk all day long, we do other things. They have outside art class, they learn how to do chores around the house and they are a part of this family, field trips and things like that.

We start out with our beds, getting dressed and eating breakfast, we make sure our home is in order. Then we start with praise and worship, pledge of allegiance, then go into Bible and that usually is centered on the character traits that we're working on for the month. We then go into phonics and then writing, then they have a recess, they go outside and play. Sometimes I have an organized activity, T-ball, baseball, something like that. Then, we come in after ten, twenty minutes, they'll have a snack before that. Then we'll have language and spelling, then another recess. I don't like to keep them in for long periods of time at six years old. Then we have math and reading then lunch. Then in the afternoon we do that Konos program that involves Science, History. Right now we're on horses, discussing how horses need to be trained, be obedient. So we're discussing parts of a horse and how their trained. Thursday we are going to a horse ranch. We're involved with three other families, so that they do get exposure to the world. They'll be discussing how a horse is trained and tacked all kinds of things. They're going to be making stick horses. We barbecue afterwards like the cowboys did. That's pretty much the day. I have free time after that so I can get my house work done.

Subject #010

Roughly four hours. It depends on the kids. We used to call him the farmer because he would be up at the crack of dawn, you know, great mood, breakfast done by six a.m. So he gets up early and likes to get right into his books. But there are things that I really need to spend time with and teach him. The three of us do Bible together and we do it everyday and that's something that they're working on now in their own character. That's been really good for them because they're sharing that part.

Subject #013

I would say a minimum of two hours probably three. I start with the reading program and phonics and math, so maybe three.

I use Bob Jones readers and a lot of Dr. Seuss books. We have a lot of things for reading. I have Bob Jones English. We also team teach with two other families, which has been the highlight. We meet together one day a week. Right now we're studying Rome. We were only going to do it for two months but the more we get into it the more there is to learn. We pick certain things to study about Rome. We used the textbook as our guide. With Rome we learning about the government, the empire, just taking the topics. Each week we cover a topic. The way we do it is we go to the library and check out all the books we can get on Rome we check out. The first week when we just tell about it and the kids go through the books and they might find five things they don't know about Rome and they share about. Then we do a lot of hands on things, making a villa, getting all the thing we need, the armor, maybe the mosaic. There's no paperwork on it, no test, no questions, they just absorb all of it. We went to J. Paul Getty's museum because we knew of an actual replica of the villa.....they had a tour around the garden. We are reading the life of Cleopatra right now. We dress in the costumes and we're going be doing the play. Then we have a big party and invite all our friends. Each kid is responsible for a speech of all we've studied. She's doing art, she's doing the other. We have a party and we study the kind of foods they ate, the kind of furniture, the costumes. The more they learn the more they want to read. We started with Egypt and kind of followed the cultures. Now we're on all the Roman governments and the influence of Greece on Rome. Every week after we've covered something then the next week when we come back to class we had games. We play win, loose or draw, or other ones and the games reinforced what we learned before. It's amazing how much more they learn.

Subject #015

(Mother): It's changed in the last two years. I try to make sure the kids are up at seven a.m., put their pajamas away, brush their teeth comb their hair, make their beds, get dressed. We cooperate, that's lesson number one. Then we have breakfast, the two older girls help getting breakfast ready. We usually start by eight-thirty a.m. or nine a.m., the formal sit down, let's do math, English. Last year was the first grade. As far as math, she really struggles with it. Greg convinced me to stop the math until she was ready for it. So we kind of threw that out this year and did a phonic program, Spaldings. She already knows how to read but we introduced that to Emily and we reviewed with Marilyn, and now I'm doing spelling. While Marilyn is practicing her spelling words, I'll have Emily read a book to me maybe for 20 minutes or so and some math concepts.

(Father): We really treated her as pre-kindergarten after going through it with Marilyn.....we were tracking her more essentially as a young kindergartner. She's reading great but is not very mature so basically continued first grade this year. As a result, the younger sister kind of essentially holds her back in a lot of the formal.

(Mother): So if she doesn't feel like doing school she doesn't do school. You say do you want to do this today? Yes, she's totally driven by her interest. She really wanted to learn to read. She wants to do some math. I really don't want to push her. I'd rather that she plays. We do spelling words, we review the phonograms, I make sure Marilyn reads at least one book everyday. Usually she reads to her sister. We go to the library. Mom keeps mailing us books, the typical Fisher books that adults read to

the children. And I mix all the stuff up and I make sure they do their spelling words, read, math, right now she's gotten almost all her additions and subtractions to ten. We also do a character curriculum. We do every week, enrichments like social studies, science, history. I don't like to use grade levels. She's learning punctuations. That's basically the core of it. They have a good foundation on math and the other things are just extra. We go on field trips every two weeks and they getting a lot of that. She takes an art class every Wednesday morning. She's doing techniques and art history. Emily takes gymnastics once a week and Marilyn is in an All American Girl club. She's getting her contacts with other children.

(Father): We're trying in the evenings to have Bible class which has been much more regular than last year. Using a formal curriculum spending twenty minutes to a half hour. What is essentially in first grade level Bible survey things along with scripture memorization and basic facts of our faith. It's been a lot of fun. I was doing a formal social studies curriculum last year and decided it was kind of silly; we learned more from the normal course of life than this curriculum ever hoped to cover.

(Mother): We talk about what goes on in the newspaper and what's happening in the world and show them on the globe where everything is.

(Father): Where a certain missionary is that we're supporting, where grandpa is. The field trips just in the local area, Sequoia national park, Big Sur. I have a job that is semi-unusual and it's typically a four day work week, so I can spend some extra time with the family. It's nice.

(Mother): I think in a couple of more years we will have a much more formal and much longer time. Right now is two hours max. That's gives them time to do the things they like after doing "real school" as some would call it. They get to pretend, do their art work and crafts, ride bikes, just being together as a family. They are so creative, and they need that time when mom is not telling them what to do and the teacher is not telling them what to do.

Subject #016

I wish I could tell you. Right now our average day, we try to get most of our chores and breakfast and dress done before nine a.m. and we try to begin by nine a.m. and nine-thirty a.m. It seems like that because of adjusting to new curriculums and just putting some things together we didn't do last year it's taking two and one half to three hours for us to complete school and that's sort of more than I had in mind because my oldest one is seven and I'm only teaching a five and seven year old. After that we usually would do errands or what ever else that needs to be done here or we'll get together with cousins or friends. Our schedule is still in the process as far as being real consistent.

Subject #017

My average school days have changed since I've started. They're older now. When they were younger we didn't have too much book work type stuff. We did a few but it was more working with mom in the house, cooking and that kind of things. Now that they're older, especially the ten year old, I feel that he needs more book work to make sure that he is up with the other kids as much as possible. We get up, have breakfast, the boys do their chores, making their beds, brushing their teeth, taking care of their animals. We usually start by nine a.m. We have books for language, spelling, math, social studies and history. We have it planned out where we usually work from ten a.m. to twelve noon doing their spelling and language arts and math and after that we also have Bible. I found that my ten year old, I have to work a little more with him on

punctuation and language skills. After reading Dr. Moore's books, I know that until you are about eight you don't stress that much on academics. I kind of feel bad that I did that, but he's catching up now. He's not having any trouble. My eight year old, he's just moving right along. Most of the morning is for Language arts and math and certain days, like two days a week we do science, world history, California history. The only thing I feel that I'm lacking is the art and more PE type thing. With the little ones it's very hard to do that....they've taken Martial arts classes for six months, they took tennis. We started doing more field trips. It helps to break things up more. In home school, you don't have to spend as much time in the book work, it can get kind of old. They don't have to have quite as much because it's more one on one. I know in public school or in any other school they don't get to take too many field trips any more.It could be next year (put oldest in school), but we would not put him in public school, probably private Christian school. I have a public school here one block away, but we're not putting him in there.

Subject #018

We home school about three and one half hours approximately, depending on if they're in a slow mood and the baby. There are all kinds of variables. We usually read the Bible and then Susan will read to me and David will go do his math and English book, then we'll do our writing. We kind of go back and forth and then do math games, then we'll do spelling and then David will run through his multiplications.We'll have a couple of breaks in between and lunch, plus they each have quite a few daily jobs. They have responsibilities around the house that they do enough. We have one day a week we do house cleaning....that's important to learn too, in terms of help.

...We use some Abeka and just a smattering is all kinds of different things. We're using the weekly reader California curriculum. I like that a lot.

Subject #020

(Mother): Very slow. At first we started out really rigid. At eight a.m. we had to be at the desk and they had to have all their chores and beds made. Now it's nine a.m. We're not as strict. We started out just like school does.

(Father): We say the pledge to the flag.

(Mother): Not that that's not necessary. I'm not saying that, it's just that we were trying to copy the school, you know, have break time at certain times, and that was last year. This year it's just more relaxed. We learned a lot.

(Father): Last year they had a certain number of hours, this year is different. It could be eight p.m. and they're doing school work because it's scattered throughout the day.

(Mother): Never till eight p.m. though.

(Father): Well, there's not a sit down time. If we keep track of the time because they have to put in a certain number of hours a day. We are not nearly as strict as it all being done in the mornings. If there's something that's going on, we take them and do whatever activities we may or may not have and we'll have school in the afternoon instead of the mornings.

(Mother): This year is more relaxed and I feel better about it. I don't feel as incompetent. Last year I just felt that I'm just not going to get this together. This year is a lot easier.

(Father): More flexible.

(Mother): ...We make up our own. I use a lot of Abeka but we don't follow it that strictly.

Subject #021

We don't start until nine-thirty a.m. in the morning. It's just easier for me to do what I want to do, get exercising done in the morning. It creates less stress for all of us to start at that time. I start out and we have Bible memory. We do the pledge first and the memory. Then my son goes to his desk and does some independent work and I spend anywhere from one hour to one and one half hours working with my kindergartner. Then I go back to my son and do what he needs to have done with me right there with him. I work with him until usually about one p.m. then we stop for lunch until one-forty-five p.m. Then he continues through his work, it's usually about three p.m. by the time we're finished.

...I put together different curriculums. Mainly I put together at least for my son but in talking with other people what they recommended as far as math and reading goes. The rest is just on my own.

Subject #023

Usually academically it goes from about nine a.m. to noon. The kids get up, feed the cat, dust, sweep and whatever has to be done and then we usually take the dog to the park and run a little bit..... We come back home and start out together. Oh, during breakfast time is when we have our devotions and we have a story and they have their memory verses. The children are involved in a church program so they have their memory verses from that. We start together and work on whatever memorization we're doing, it maybe on the Declaration of Independence, the states, capitals. We do a little bit of that. If we're working together in a unit study. For instance I purchased a Konos curriculum. We're doing social studies and science with this Konos curriculum so if we're going to do a science experiment we do that together. The baby usually takes a nap at ten a.m. so he goes to sleep and my son goes off and plays for awhile while my oldest and I sit down and go through what she has to do. Now I can sit down and say this is what you need to do, this and this and this, your math, reading and penmanship and she has a lesson plan and goes through and does whatever she can and then when she doesn't understand something she'll come down stairs and asks me. Then I work with my son, he needs one on one all the time. I'm using a writing road to reading with him, he does his reading and practices his spelling and we do math. He needs a lot of contact, a lot of physical manipulation. I only worked academically about one hour to one and a half hours and that doesn't include the Konos stuff. That's in between the baby's change of diapers, laundry or a phone call. Then he's free to go play with Melanie or Lego. It works out pretty well, the down side to that is we probably don't fly through the material as quickly as you would in a regular school, where Abeka will be going through science or social studies, it's much more relaxed and loose. So she's probably isn't getting the same intensity of the subject matter and yet I think her learning is better in that we're doing a more improved level. The unit study works well with her, it's fantastic, and I know it works well with my son. That's pretty much it. By noon we eat lunch, clean up, afternoon we have reading. The kids read quietly or I read to them. Then if we have any special extras, that's when the kids have choir or gymnastics; that's usually in the afternoon.

Subject #025

(Mother): Would you like to know what I would like my typical day to be like? Very often it's very close. Normally we start getting up around six-thirty a.m. Breakfast is usually on the table around six-forty-five a.m. We have our Bible reading with daddy and we sing. I usually go to my room after breakfast or take a shower or whatever. Between eight a.m. and nine a.m. the children pick up in their room, other chores and take care of the dog and at nine a.m. we start. We usually start with oral reading. I read to them. Rick reads something different at night. I read from the Jungle book. I read the Secret Garden, Black Beauty and Heidi and different classics like that. Then Laura goes and does some of her work that has been assigned from the day before. I lecture her usually in the afternoon. The mornings I spend doing their work, then they have the afternoon to do whatever their written work is. The one thing that they've really been enjoying a lot is math. We started a Spanish class last week. They usually listen to music, I would say 1 hour to one and a half hours a day while they're doing the dishes or chores usually there's music going on. Neil and Chris are both in a musical in a home school choir so they've been singing a lot from that. Erica and Laura sing along with them. I would say a couple of days a week we spend time outside working in the yard or doing chores like that. When it's warmer they swim usually right before lunch or after three p.m. Usually one or two of them prepares part of the dinner. They kind of choose the different chores. When we were talking about a country or reading something from the Bible or the newspaper article or whatever and we look at everything on the globe. So many kids don't know where anything is, geography doesn't exist. On Thursdays I'm not home in the mornings and they study basically by themselves. I started this year where they write two stories to different family members, or two letters and that's been really exciting. They really enjoy that, they're getting their own mail now. We're working on the book of Matthew to memorize that so everyday we have to write out the three verses that they don't know three or four times. They're really improving in penmanship. It's been fun for the kids to see how well they can memorize.

(Father): They're actually working on Matthew chapter five.

(Mother): We have problems with science because I'm not really, I've been using home science, economics and all that, garden and life science. We just got started on that.

Subject #027

Now that I have him in school it starts a little bit later because I can't start until about eight a.m. We use to start about eight a.m. when both of them were home. We would aim at being done by noon with some afternoon reading or whatever for Christine. I have a model day, do you want to see it? This is for Christine, she's eighth grade. Monday, we do all subjects everyday, seven subjects and Bible. For Bible, I have a textbook she also uses. She works with that the first thing. Usually the second thing that happens is pre-algebra, and she's using Saxon for that and that usually takes about forty or forty-five minutes because problems involved. We usually do fifteen or twenty problems, that's all. She's been very pleased with her progress because of the constant review in the Saxon. I say if there's one subject that frustrated her the most is math. When she first came home she was irate that the problem had to be correct to the number or the decimal point or the exact thing. She's a very free spirit, very creative, and math seems terrifically legalistic to her. But we're making adjustments and she's now very proud of her progress. We usually do Bible, math, and probably one other subject either earth science or American history just straight, so we work until nine-thirty a.m. or ten a.m. I would say without any kind of let up. Some of that time, I'm loading the dishwasher and doing laundry, but

I'm here, I'm very very present in the math because problem by problem things arise that she wants to consult. With the American History and the Earth Science, she reads the textbook, she does some high lighting. I have her making note cards because I feel her studies skills really need strengthening and she's able to cope with that idea, she wasn't last year. Now we're beginning to make note cards on terms and people and definitions and that kind of thing.

Then after she's had a break, usually she wants to go read or write. That's her idea of a break. So she'll go work on a story she's involved in or write a poem or whatever she's got, she's got a million ideas popping every morning for the next thing is in the story that she's working on. So if I can postpone her until we get math and social studies done, before she gets writing, I try, it's not always possible. Sometimes the ideas are so pressing that she has to write first. Then after she's had a break and sometimes by then she wants something to eat then I say in twenty minutes or forty-five minutes if she's been writing. Then we come back and we work on whatever is left be it American History or Science and she has P. E. and we're doing kind of a conglomerate elective that I'm calling applied arts which involves her piano practicing, I have a wonderful book called, "Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain" and she's loving seeing her sketching really improve. So we do art kind of projects and things like that, not everyday. We're usually done about one-thirty p.m. by the time we do everything and she reading all she wants to read and then at that time she often gets involved in the writing some more. That's a pretty typical day.

We're also involved in a small little co-op Friday school situation with five families. That's been going on here for the month of October for the first three Fridays and we don't have it on the last. So we've been studying the explorers. So we started with the Viking day the first time, and then we did Christopher Columbus for the second time, and we just finished last Friday Magellan. So Christine has also been preparing things for that school. For the Viking's day she wrote about a five minute dramatic scene that she performed with one of the other girl who is a year younger than she is that's also home schooled this year, really fine serious scene. So she's been absorbing and internationalizing the things that she was studying about them and converting it into some kind of a teaching vehicle for the sake of the younger children that are here. She's also been managing one of the learning stations after we've had an hour of teaching with them when they come. Then we have snacks outside, for example, the Viking's day we had a Viking's feast. We had roast chicken that I picked up at Vons and threw on the grill (puffin?) and we had goat's milk and we had Vernor's ginger ale for beer and cheese and things like that. We had our snack related to the study. We had like a Viking's relay race which was a bag of clothing items that had to be put on and run down to the end take it off you know things like one wool sock, necklaces, a piece of animal skin thrown over your shoulder or to carry it while you go. So that's what she's done on the Friday school. Sometimes on Thursday, in fact every time that Friday school is here on Thursdays and the other girl comes in afternoon and they work four or five hours together helping me get ready writing things and rehearsing Thursday evening and then the two of them each manages a station and the way we have it set up there are three moms on each team and fifteen children. So that's what it's typically like.

Subject #029

Usually I get up really early and do my Bible stuff.Then about seven-thirty a.m. the kids are usually up but I'll call them out and do a Bible story, do a character development story, we talk about it. We have these rules for our house. We go over one of the rules and we go over the Bible verses they have in AWANA. That usually takes

about one half hour than we have breakfast and the kids do their chores. They both have chores and do that for one half hour. Then we start about nine a.m. and sing and praise God, then the flag salute, then we do phonics. I'll do Jessica or Bryan first. We take turns and sit and do phonics. The other one comes and does some writing or paperwork. Then we'll read,then we'll switch,then we do math. We'll do usually together the teaching then I give them paperwork, we do that a couple days a week, and a lot of times we play games, Dominos and Yahztee, you know, adding up kind of games for math. We'll play games for reading too. I have a game called Spellingo, which is like Bingo, but you call a word and they have to spell. Then after than we usually have a snack. A lot of times if I have an appointment or something I juggle things around.But on Monday's we have PE, we usually play baseball or jumping jacking, or I have them run around. They get physical exercise. Sometimes we will read out of this health book about health, once or couple of times a week. Usually when they're having a snack, we'll listen to music and read poetry or something so they get some art in that time. We also do music three days a week. I'm teaching them to play the recorder and they're really enjoying it. On Tuesday's we do Heritage study. This week we learned about Christopher Columbus because tomorrow is his day. I have some Bob Jones Character study books so we've been reading out of both the first and second this year. We did that and I also get Sharing God's World magazine, it's a newspaper. So that's another social study, we do that magazine. A lot of times I'll get good little ideas to do craft from there. We also just do crafts. My kids really like craft and art. This week we're going to clay and they designed book marks for the book mobile for art. We're also learning to draw dimensions in art. I'm trying to teach them to draw something that looks real. We do nature studies on Friday's. I have a little book on nature study. We go out and exam the ground and the trees and observe and write down on what we observe. Michael teaches sometimes. He will often do something with them with science. They've gone the the zoo a couple of times to see animals. I guess in August when the stars were during a meteorite shower we got up in the middle of the night and laid out there two nights and watched those, there was also an eclipse, we watched that. We're going to get some sheep and chickens this weekend, and the kids will learn about their growth and taking care of animals. Right now we're trying to fix up the shed and get the fences put up and that will be fun. They learn a lot about responsibility, taking care of things. If we have to go to the doctor's or something, we do oral stuff in the car, math problems, counting, phonics, so we can still count it as a schooling day. I have to say that I'm very diligent in my schooling and I feel like I don't really sluff off on it because I feel like it's important to do that.

Subject #032

Well, with a two year old this year it's been very interesting. I try to let them do some things in the morning. Right now they're a little more independent while I'm working trying to keep her out of the way. We have a block building program for math and she seems to like to sit over there independently and work with those. Other wise if she won't cooperate or whatever we just stop for awhile. They can work independent on their handwriting. I have them do some of the things that I don't maybe necessarily need to instruct them with while I'm continuing doing some of the morning chores and getting the laundry done. We'll take little recesses here and there to break things up and we run the vacuum, I mean we get in and move around and do some of those kinds of things for fifteen or twenty minutes. If my husband's home he'll take them out and play football with them for fifteen minutes or baseball. Then in the afternoon when I have her down for a nap we'll do map making, California History, right now we're doing a unit on the body where they're laying down on poster paper and we're cutting out all

their body parts explaining the spleen and the liver. I didn't have any of that until I was in physiology in high school and then I had to learn everything. I'm trying to get some of the stuff to them so they are familiar with the terms, not that they're going to remember everything. Then we do reading and we also have an Apple computer. My oldest one gets up fairly early and he usually will start on the computer playing games or like this morning he was up at six-thirty a.m. I said okay, put on Word Attack, I want you to do adjective and nouns and verbs and come back and tell me what the definition of some of the words are. He's got Math Blasters and they work on that and sometimes they'll sit down with the younger ones to help them learn the numbers of the alphabet. We've got a lot of different computer programs that really help them.

Subject #034

When they came out of public school, Jason was going into seventh grade and Bryan was going in the eighth grade. Since I had teacher's training, I was thinking was I would teach some lessons and have them read the book, not for everything, but I thought for some things. We started out that way but they hated it. They're very good readers. They asked if I would just give them the book and then talk to them only about the things that I thought were very important, but it would be a discussion not a lesson. After they already read the material through and have something to add. Or they would ask me something that they didn't quite understand. So typically I write down the assignments for the week, like they're in History and Spanish and whatever else.....in literature, it's about thirty-five pages a week that they're instructed to read..... In our writing books, it's already mapped out in assignments by days, so I write those down. At the beginning of the week, they look at the lesson list and they just do them however they want. Jason, usually does the whole week's work in one subject and then he moves on.....so does Bryan usually. We only buy one textbook so they have to share. We can't use the same thing at the same time. Usually they just read the list and do their reading. Discussions are in the car, it seems to be easier for them because they're used to having lots of time in the car. Most of the discussions are while we're waiting at the dentist office or while we're waiting in the car. Written work they do when they come to it. It's not very structured, but they don't like having an hour of each subject a day.

Subject #035

(Mother): We usually start about nine a.m. They usually work until one to two p.m. We're very relaxed and not rigid and have to sit in their seats for that amount time. The kids have starting out Monday with the work they have to do for the week. The older kids have gone maybe two or three weeks to finish chapters in Chemistry or whatever subject. They have a dead line but they already figured out they have to do two to three pages a day to get it completed. The younger ones, there work for the week depends on how fast and how much work they want to put in to get it finished. I want at least three hours put in each day. Their schedule also includes Bible and music which to them is just kind of a restful period. Friday, they have to give their spelling test or math from finishing the chapter they were on. We go year round so if they're not done by June they can continue on to summer. If they finish before summer is out they're free until September starts. It's really a lot on their own, their own self motivation. If they get it done fine. If they take out my time on the weekend, I take out theirs. We have to have days off.

(Father): They have their rules and guidelines that they have to work within. We want weekends free. Monday through Friday they have to complete a certain amount of

work in each subject. If you go into my time, I'm going to take your time. The kids realize that okay, this has to be done by Friday. They have to budget their time in what has to be done.

(Mother): So their work has to be done. I don't do a whole lot of oral instruction, standing in front of the classroom type situation. Since I've got three different grades, they come to me when they're ready to start into a new subject or a new chapter. I watch two other children during the day, two and three year olds. So they have to disappear to their rooms to get their work done. It's working out real well.

Subject #040

I seem to be more motivated toward the beginning of the week. We have a great Monday. Tuesday is okay, by Wednesday I'm losing it, Thursday and Friday, I'm pulling hair. That's typical. We're not a typical home schooling family. My son has had Rheumatic fever for two years; he's just recovered but we just had a bout again. Our health is our number one priority and our health has been through the mill. So for us, we have to maintain a very flexible schedule. We like to get up at six a.m. and we'll go for a long time doing it and then health will hinder it and we'll fall out of it again and I'll struggle to get back. But typically what our desire is and what we're doing again now is that at six a.m. my husband, through the ATIA Program, has certain devotional educational type things that he does with them. He reads from scripture and then they do an analysis of something and discuss certain character quality. We have breakfast with the family and then he goes off to work and he takes my oldest daughter with him. They do chores and at nine a.m. we start with our school day, if I can start at eight-thirty a.m. I will. We work until ten a.m. and have a little break then we work until noon then we have our lunch then around one we resume it and then we work until about three. If the older ones need to work and get into something in more depth then they do then the kids play. Our best friends across the street home school so they play with their kids. Occasional we have to run errand, so it's not a nine a.m. to three p.m., everyday sending them off to school. It doesn't work that way, you have to take advantage of shopping, do errand, doctor's appointments and health has been our worst enemy. So we really have to work along that.

My curriculum is ATIA, Advance Training Institute Academics. The training that we undergo as parents of ATIA first of all is based on the father's role in participation. Without that, you don't go. You have to have gone through Bill Gothard's Basic Youth seminar, you have to have gone through his advance seminar and you have to fill out a very detailed questionnaire and then go through a week's training. There are, to date, forty-seven to forty-nine booklets. Each one can take anywhere from a month to six weeks. If you really want to get into it you can take longer, just depends on the age of your children and how much they can handle it. The number one question is do we every get through this? The answer by Bill Gothard is "Yeah, maybe when you're a grandparent". It's cyclical; if you do about one a month or one every six weeks or so you can get through in seven years and then start again. They will be adding on. At this point I'm cranking out one at every two weeks. So we're not covering all the depth because of my children's ages. I'm giving them an overview knowing that the younger ones will come into it again. The older ones, right now, because we're behind last year because of our illness, I want to get it to a certain point, and then I plan on really getting into this stuff. This is excellent material. The belief of this program is that an educated adult has to know how to relate to this world. There are five areas that they have decided that you really have to master in order to relate to people and know the world around you and that's the area of Linguistics, History, Science, Law and Medicine. That way when the doctor tells you to that you

need a certain prescribed course of action you have the wisdom and the knowledge to question them and ask important questions and we have actually had students give counsel to people and have prevented them in taking unnecessary surgeries. We have had magnificent reports because of the kids learning this stuff and knowing the right questions to ask and really making their parents or family members or adults that they have come in contact with very wise to what medicine is all about. It's written by doctors, the law resources are written by lawyers and people that are even judges, senators and congressmen.

Subject #043

Our average school day begins about nine a.m. They get up about eight a.m. They're responsible to have their breakfast and their bathroom chores done and their bedrooms straightened up before nine a.m. They raise hamsters. Right now we have thirty-two, so they're responsible to keep their cages clean and feed them and just their general responsibilities that's all to be taken care of before school time. At nine a.m. we usually have devotions together and we will work simultaneous with Math, Reading, and Grammar; Phonics and Science twice a week. They have workbooks that they can use. We also have mark up boards that we do a lot of work on as far as doing Math problems that kind of thing. I don't think the paper is necessarily the sacred symbol of school. We've worn out two to three markers already this year because they like to mark the board better than paper. The one workbook that is almost an essential is the writing workbook. We go through that pretty rapidly but we have pretty much just a standard curriculum that we work with. It's a curriculum I chose, not one that was set down by anybody. We are usually done about twelve-thirty p.m. I don't have a definite period of time for reading and definite period of time for this or that. We kind of take it as it flows together for the day. Some days it goes real smooth, other days we can start out and you're getting nowhere so we say, okay, we're going to do something else, we'll go shopping, we'll go to the store we'll talk about why we buy certain things and why we use coupons and all those different kinds of things. We go visiting, we have grandparents close and we go check on them. It just depends on what the day is like. They help me get ready for company. That's part of their schooling. They've been responsible to take care of their garden that their uncle Dan, he lives with us, and their dad planted in the back yard. They're responsible to make sure it's watered three times a week. They are excited when of course, the produce is there and they have the opportunity to pick or whatever. But all of those things are involved in there. Mostly our textbook work is done between nine a.m. and noon and then our activities are done after lunch, if we're baking or going to go visiting or sewing or whatever they're going to do. Art projects are usually in the afternoon, then they have their free time and they do reading in the evenings. We try to get them to read at least a half hour each evening.

Are you satisfied with your home school program?

Subject #002

Very. There have been times when I have been frustrated but for the most part yeah. But in the beginning when I didn't know what I was doing I was overseen by a school that was very helpful. They taught me how to pick and choose.

Subject #008

I'm always looking for new things and more things to do but I'm really happy.

Subject #010

Yes. I am. From last year I've done things different this year. But overall, I'm pretty happy with it.

Subject #013

Very satisfied. I wish when I first started, the more it's pushed me to study. Not being trained a teacher I just could not visualize what we were to do. There's such a security in text books that I got a fortune in books. There's a real security that comes from those books. Everything is there, at least you feel like you're doing something. Most of the home schoolers I know always go back to the textbook because they're just not confident to do it themselves. But after doing one and seeing how to do it there's no problem. When we studied Greece they were so into their bodies that we did a unit on the body. We would incorporate different things. It's the only way to do it. But most people don't realize how to do it. My group has been sharing at a lot of the home school meetings so that there are several families that are getting together too. Also with other families you've got three people putting ideas, you're not having to do so much work. The way we're doing it it's really aiming at mostly the younger kids. But I find even for myself it's much more interesting to check in some of the children's books than it is to go with some of the adult things, it's so dry.

Subject #014

Yes. There are some holes right now but I've learned that I would rather each year put an emphasis on one or more disciplines. Last year because we were in our travel trailer and to have to get out a bunch of stuff, I had to keep certain things on a minimum. Last year we put a great emphasis on History. We were reading all together. We were studying Roman History and Ancient History. We did our Math and Language arts and some Science with a good emphasis on History. I tried to plug the History into whatever we might be doing casually during field trips, a movie we might see, or what we might be studying in Sunday School at the time and how it all fits in. Right now my main emphasis is on Language arts and Writing skills and Reading. In the first part of the year we will pretty much do the bulk of that. When spring time comes, I want to spend more time on Science...

Subject #017

Yes. So far this year I am. This is the first time I've really gotten a curriculum going. I was afraid that it would be too much at first because I don't like them to do work books for hours. We've been able to get into a schedule and I've been giving them breaks so it's not just the books. I think it's been good, especially my older one, I've seen him farther than I thought, which encouraged me. Every summer comes I think, "I'm not going to quit I'm going to keep going" but I always quit, it's a nice break. When September comes it's hard to get back into the routine, hard for the kids and hard for me but we've gotten back into it.

Subject #020

No. I would like to be a little more organized. I think we've gotten real lax but I like things organized yet it's hard for me to get organized. So in that part for me, that's not their fault. That's my fault. So I would like to see myself more organized. Other than that, yes.

Subject #023

Oh, yes. I'm more so this year than last year. This year I'm thrilled with this Konos, I just love it. I was afraid of it last year because it looked very imposing and overwhelming but the more I get into it I realize it's a wonderful program. I love it. It's just social studies and science, you have to do your reading and math separate.

Subject #025

Mostly yes. I feel more relaxed with it now because I was using accelerated Christian education for the first three years and last year I went straight to Bob Jones but previously we kind of stopped Bob Jones and did just independent study. So I'm finishing up the things they've had and I'm getting away from some of the things that I thought really that you had to do. A lot of the busy work. I just don't do that any more. We play games. I realize this year I haven't done a whole lot as far as PE. So several days a week we try to walk and lots of times that walk is before nine a.m. in the morning. We walk to Lucky's here on Woodman and back. Even if all I need is a bunch of bananas we all walk over there. We walk to and from church as much as possible. Laura has voice on Monday afternoons and Neil and Chris both have choir on Monday afternoons. It's been fun and Laura is joining another choir because she needs more practice for her voice lessons on Wednesdays.... Laura has discipleship and when the twins are studying their AWANA verses, she is preparing for the discipleship assignment.

Subject #029

I am right now. The only thing I said is that I had joined up with that new school and I have so much paperwork. Last year it was a lot easier. They want to see you four hours a day through this school. That's kind of a lot of hours for young children, this is Leona Valley, it's actually in the LA School district. It's a public school, it's an independent study program, there's about fifteen people in it. I don't know, it's not something that's freely offered. They do not encourage recruiting people at all. They found out that there was a lot of home schoolers out here and they were trying to get them into the school so they ended up making up a contract with the people that were home schooling out here allowing them to be in charge of their schooling and just having an overseer that you come in and see every two weeks. She will give you curriculum, but you may choose your own curriculum and you are the teacher. Usually in an independent study, there is a teacher but here they want the parent to be a teacher.

Subject #042

Yes. It's running quite well. We did test our daughter this last time. She scored under grade level on only one thing and that was spelling test and proof reading which is very difficult for a child that age. She scored at or above and substantially above in

reading subjects on the IOWA test which is supposed to be very difficult. So I think we are accomplishing what we need to accomplish.

NON HOME SCHOOL PARENTS

What is your impression of home schooling?

1. Social Isolation:

Subject #102

Again this is my personal observation, I don't care for it in that I don't feel that the children are exposed to enough different types of social situations to learn how to really be able to handle themselves in the real world when their school days are over.

...I can only base it on what I really know about with it being the kind of group that they are involved with. I feel that the whole environment is simply too protective and I based that on my own experience and my own schooling and I was in private religious and also in public. It was a tough transition for me going into public schools for me after private religious schools. I had to learn a lot quickly. I chose to not let my children grow up in it and I feel that is a better way..... (There's) a lot of peer pressure and I don't like that particularly, but I also think that that's what they're going to need to deal with the most, so we work with it all the time. I think I'm attuned to it even though I like to see less of it, and I think home schooling is a way to control that more and to keep a kid, in a way protected from it, and maybe strengthening them to the point where when they're a little bit older they can handle it better and be more their own person.

Subject #103

I think that the social aspect of school is extremely important and I couldn't provide that. I think that they're driven. I don't want my oldest daughter, she's real kicked back, you have to push her to get her to work, so in a school environment I think that she works a little bit harder because there's a little bit of competition. I think a little competition helps her personally. The second one is a social butterfly and she likes the social aspect of it....how to get along with a lot of kids.

I think they need to have that, for instance the math, the repetition of learning how to add real fast and need all that paper work. I know a lot of home school people don't agree that kids should do a lot of paper work. But I've seen my daughter who is now in third grade really get pretty far doing a lot of paper work, it's been really helpful. I do think they get a lot of ideas from other kids too like she's reading, writing short stories. Instead of just her short story to read, she's got 30 short stories to read, you know, I think they get left out of a lot of things like that. Spelling tests, I think they become really good spellers.

Subject #105

I didn't like her being so isolated either... The children where we live they go mostly to public school and so she wasn't meeting any children in the neighborhood. She was too isolated. So once she got into the public school system she met all of her friends who live nearby and now she has several friends. It's been good for her, the

public school's been good because she's been learning how to deal with all different types of children not just children who believe the same as she believes or being raised the same as she is. She's learned how to interact with all different types and all different races and religions, which is real good.

Subject #109

Well, everybody else is in school and your kid is at home. A lot of times I've seen people pull their kids out of their public school because they were having a social problem, you know. I think a child maybe doesn't get a chance to work it out or make a new set of friends or something like that. I think their world can be kind of narrow. On the other hand as a parent I guess if they're concerned about bad influence I suppose that that might just be fine with them if their children don't have too many social contact. I think.... there is definitely some things like sports that they don't get to participate in, some group musical things or theater things....some of those kinds of things, unless you really take them around town trying to pay and get it all in. I don't think they have access to a lot. ...I think some cases home schoolers can cause a dependency on the parent when I don't think a child should always be that depended on a parent.

Subject #110

(Father): I have a lot of concerns about it and I suppose it comes mostly from the area of social skills development. My awareness of it is maybe somewhat limited. I don't know the legal parameters involved in it.

...Not having known that many people in that, but realizing that Emily would be by herself if we chose to teach her here, she would never interact with others. I'm involved in a little bit of the projects and programs that offered deals with the areas of cooperative education and learning. I believe there are some real values in that approach to education, that kids do learn from peers and it can serve as a stimulus to promote learning.Also it would concern me that if you have two or three children and they're naturally at each other's throat, you put them into a learning environment, I question whether or not that it could work well in some setting there, I don't know. I haven't seen it first hand, but there are a lot of questions like that. As far as the social skills development is concerned, it seems to me that they miss out on the experience of a variety of personality types.

(Mother): ...But there are so many things in the public schools, sports, field trips, awards that the kids can work toward.

Subject #113

I don't know, but I have this gut feeling that there's something missing. I can't really put my finger on it other than the peer pressure and all the kids and all that kind of stuff, but overall I think home schooling is great, it's great for mothers who can do that.

...I don't know what it is. I know home schoolers get together and maybe one of them is the teacher and they teach History and stuff like that, I don't know, there's something about the comradely, there's something about the group, the social aspect of it that I think it's missing in home schoolers, and I don't know if that's true. I know a lot of kids that are home schooled and they seem very active, they have lots of friends and they do lots of things. So I don't know if there's anything to that, I just have this

feeling that there's something I think my kids would be missing if they were home schooled. But I really don't know what that would be other than just I always feel sooner or later you're going to have to deal with the real world. You can't be home schooled and go to church and just be with your small circle of friends for a long period of time and then all of a sudden be thrown out into the world. I don't know,my children learn filthy language at school and they do things I'm sure they wouldn't do if they were home schooled, but that's a chance for me to teach them what's right or wrong. It's hard to put that in words, but it's all a learning process, public school is not just schooling, it's getting along with kids and learning to say no when you have to, learning to put up with that peer pressure. I guess that's basically what it is.

Subject #114

(Mother): I also think one of the ways children learn is through competition with their peers.

(Father): And observation with each other.

(Mother): That's a big big disadvantage of home schoolers. They're missing out on that peer interaction.

2. Time and Commitment:

Subject #105

I found that in the morning I wanted to clean the house first, which meant that it cut her off later in the day which wasn't good for her.

Subject #111

Well, I think I have never looked at the curriculum of it or anything but I can't imagine how anyone can do it with more than one child and really keep from getting bogged down and trying to split between parent and teacher and keep everything functioning -- especially if you have preschoolers who, "Mommy, Mommy" all day. And having gone through the education program at a college level and learning to be a teacher, I know how hard it is to get things over to kids.

...The other thing is I think that usually people's decision to home school is based on a problem that has been had in school, either a child that's not keeping up, or socially not being able to mix in and things like that. Kind of like, if the teacher's not doing a good job and the school system is not working I'm just going to take them out and I'll do it. And yet, I would do that if I was in a horrible horrible situation. That's what I'm saying, that if the school was so bad that I had no alternative than to teach them myself, I would, but I feel like it really overloads the parents when they do it. That's my main concern with it.

Subject #114

(Father): It seems to me that home schooling is also for someone who is also a homemaker. It means that it's probably not a full time thing. The person doing the teaching has to also do the housework. I don't know how they would mix that in.

(Mother): ...now for a homemaker to do this with the child on a daily basis plus keep up the house is very difficult. I don't know how other people interact with their children but when you're teaching and when your mothering it's two different

functions in a way. You can teach your child while you're sorting the laundry, sorting them into colors, so you're teaching them colors or whatever, but a lot of that is at the primary level. I think it works up to a certain level... I just don't think overall you are going to be able to keep up the quality of education and the mothering aspect and the homemaker and everything and really offer them what they need.

Subject #118

The pressure on me to try to get his curriculum finished on my own would be more than he or I can handle, I think.

4. Academic Concerns

Subject #103

My thoughts, I'm not a teacher and I think that I've seen the teaching profession in such a way that I don't think I can adequately cover all the ground that a teacher can in all subjects. I think that with the way the computer age is and the way technology is going I don't think that in my home I can teach them in that area what they need to learn.

Subject #109

I did know a few people in our church who have done this and they're covered by a school some place out in Saugus or some place like that. It sounds really good but I think that I found that when there was an area that a child was really struggling with and having a hard time with and maybe the parent wasn't so good at teaching that or a parent who didn't understand that themselves as well, I'm thinking of Algebra or something, they tend to shift to an easier level, which I don't think is good for the child. I think that they say well just about anything you do in a way of a craft or something will be considered art and just about anything you do in a way of something else can be considered History and I think that's shoddy thinking. That really doesn't have continuity to it. I think it makes it easier on the parents. It may be fun for the child but I don't think it's really very sound. Then there's a lot of things, this is just personal friends, that I know if they were not feeling too great, had a bad day or something, that it was easy to let the schooling just slide. Which might happen even in a classroom, but I think it's easier to let something slide in a home in that atmosphere.

...I think some of the curriculum some of these schools use aren't the best either. I don't think they are at the state of the art with what California is teaching or trying to go forward with. I think there's tendency just to cover the basics and the minimum requirements and that's about it. I don't think that's bad in all cases. I read of a few parents who home schooled their children and their children got brilliant. I think there are some children who went to Yale and Harvard, but that's very rare.

Subject #110

(Father): My other concern is that the child only gets one exposure.... to teaching methods, to any information that may be, it's the parent.... there are communication barriers built in because of the familiar relationships there...

(Mother): I think my main concern is that too many parents are not qualified. ...I don't know if you have to have a degree in education, but not all people are teachers.

Subject #111

I worked for four years learning that material and learning how to. I can't imagine someone who is not trained can do it as well as a teacher. Even the poorest teacher I think has more. Because some teachers are really poor. But the average teacher I think can do a better job than us, than just a mother that's not been trained, even though she has her instincts to know what her kids are like. I feel like they are disadvantaged that way.

Subject #117

I have another friend who does that and I don't see her kids progressing like mine do scholastically.

...I'm not creative enough to think of interesting things andinteresting ways to keep attention. ...I think there are teachers and there are those that aren't, and a lot of them aren't. So scholastically I think I can do it but school is more than that. I don't want it to be information in and information out. I want it to be more rounded than that.

5. Parent-Child Conflict:

Subject #104

I admire people who can home school. I don't feel that I have the patience to do it. When I was just doing homework with my kids, if I have told them three or four times and they still don't get it, I blow up, or I just can't seem to communicate to them what I want to teach them. That has made me feel that I can't home school.

Subject #105

I demanded too much from her. If she didn't understand after going over it the eighth or ninth time I lost my patience.

Would you ever consider home schooling?

Subject #101

No, not anymore. I wouldn't because I like them to get out there and be independent. I think it's a beginning of independence for them. In doing that, it's a guided independence because I'm always trying to keep a balance of finding out what's going on there and if there are problems, trying to work with them with the kids,have them approach the problems on their own terms and start to take a little more of the back seat little by little. I wouldn't do home school even if I had no need to work. I think it's good for them to be out and to be on their own somewhat....

Subject #103

It's because of the area. A school that would be too far away or a school system that I didn't feel was adequate.

Subject #107

I thought about it when Scott was in the fourth grade and was having a real problem. We probably would have thought about it even more seriously if he had had another bad year. When he's emotionally upset he's just not learning anything. Whether we would have done all the children or just him at that time, I don't know.

Subject #110

(Mother): No, I don't think so. I don't think I'm qualified to teach. I think Larry would be qualified, but I would not want to deprive Emily of the chance to get out and be independent of me and her home a little bit. I think that is very important.

(Father): I really doubt it. I think there would be circumstances that might cause me to think about it.

(Mother): It would have to be some dire circumstance I would think....well the busing circumstance. If we were forced into an issue or situation where we couldn't find a school.....and we couldn't afford a private one.

(Father): I suspect we would do it ourselves. It would have to be one of those circumstances....or else leave the area.

Subject #112

I would if I have my husband's support. The only reason I'm at work right now is I just felt I need to get a skill level in case my husband needed my help to finance my son's college education. I get to pick and choose my hours. It's a perfect job. I would quit any minute, I would pull my kids from school, even my junior higher. I would.

Subject #113

Yes, I would consider it. If I felt my idea of the school level has dropped I would definitely consider it. Right now in Pinetree I don't see that happening but when they go to Junior high, that's a whole new thing.

Subject #114

(Mother): No.

(Father): I think we would consider it if we thought that would solve a particular problem. In our particular situation it would be the opposite, it's almost like home schooling would be detrimental. He really needs that social environment of the school, the particular regiment, very structured.

(Mother): Unless something came along, we would say the best place for him would be in school. We went through the regular kindergarten class, we watched him there. When it came to the end of the year, we asked if they would test him to see how he was doing and if he was ready to go into the first grade. They tested him and he tested very bright but very immature, so at that point the kindergarten teacher suggested giving him another year of kindergarten. We prayed about it and counseled and did a lot of searching and researching and it was suggested we would put him in a learning center, which would give him more individualized attention.... So we tried that for a year and we found the thing for him (was) to use medication and put him back into a structured classroom. And he started and finished the medication and moved into the second grade classroom. We can just see what a difference... and so for us this really seems like what the Lord was leading us to do.

Subject #115

If I was starting out now I probably would. I think I would be inclined to do that if I were much younger and my kids were much younger.

... I like having the direct influence on my children. I like the idea of that close influence not coming to a close when you send them off to school. But our oldest daughter is twenty and when she started school that's what you did, you send them to school. Nobody ever thought about keeping them home -- at least I didn't know about it then. By the time I heard about it I guess my third child was in elementary school then. The only time I ever seriously thought about it was for our fourth child. By that time I had older kids and I was much older and I was busy, involved with a lot of other things. I know it takes an awful lot of time and commitment. By the time our fourth child came along I didn't have the energy and the time to commit to it.

Subject #116

I don't know. You know, the kids are still really young and they're great. I think if I see more changes probably peer pressure changes, what they're wearing, or things that they wanted to do that they can't do.

Thinking back on when you first enrolled your child in school, what kind of decision process did you go through?

What is your impression of the public, private and private religious schools available to you in this area?

1. Public Schools:

Subject #101

In choosing school for our children I interviewed five different schools and I found at that time our local public school was poor and what I would consider as unacceptable. So I ended up sending them to a public school that was near by but not right near our region. I would not have considered sending them to the local public school, it just had very little to offer and it doesn't have a very consistent program.....a lot of bilingual programs and I'm a bilingual teacher, I'm fluent in Spanish. I still wouldn't prefer my children to go through that program. I think they loose a lot of time. So the local school was not an option for me...

Subject #102

They are a true example of what life after school is going to be like for the kids. They meet all elements and learn to deal with those elements. I don't always like the elements that are there, but having been to some private schooling myself I know that you aren't exempt from those elements either. I believe that a child can come away

with as much or as little education as the parent chooses to be involved in either private or public level.

We have one in high school and at junior high level. They are exposed to children who have access to drugs and children who are themselves alcoholics..... just not nice kids. Children who fight or like to pick fights. These are the things that I don't like to see but I like to see my children through that so that they learn how to deal with it.

Subject #103

First of all we were living in Sunland. We would never put our children in a public school there. We both went to Catholic school. We would have put our child in a Catholic school or home schooled. We thought of that, too. We just decided that there were a lot of reasons why we wouldn't do it.....a lot of definite reasons why we would not do that. We felt we couldn't put our child in a public school in Sunland. The socio-economic problems are terrible. If we lived there we would have gone to a Catholic school. We ended up moving out here because we knew the schools were excellent out here. Living out here you pay more taxes for the school, therefore, the Catholic school is small and the education isn't as good in the Catholic here as it is in the public school. That's why we put our kids in the public school here.

Subject #106

...So we've been real pleased with the schools here. There are some things I don't like, but basically they've always been able to go at their own speed. If they are a fifth grader and can read in the seventh grade book, they put them in math. There's been a few draw backs...they can't go as far forward as they want but then I don't think they really should..

Subject #107

So far very favorable. I've got three children enrolled. We came from the San Fernando Valley where my oldest son was having a lot of problems in fourth grade and came out here. I was a little nervous but the teacher seemed to be very qualified. There are a lot of Christian teachers at this school which is important. A lot of teachers there go to our church. They are involved in our AWANA program. I've been real pleased. I'm not as involved in this school like I was in the other school, but I do help out in the classroom so I've met some of the teachers and so far I've been very impressed.

Subject #108

We have excellent public schools. If we were to choose a public school, this would probably be one of best public schools here. I know the public school here is tested out as one of the highest in California. I know several of the teachers that teach in public school system and they have to be very good Christians...

Subject #109

The public schools in Simi Valley, they've been okay. In some of the schools some of the newer things they're doing, you know, are beginning to happen. I think I really have to talk about my daughter entering Junior High right now and at the Junior High she's in a pilot program which I'm really happy with. It's a program where teachers

are doing inter-disciplinary teaching. There are four teachers who are working very closely using their time and using the subjects they're dealing with at the time to try to tightly connect them and keep a close watch on the students. I think it's great! In talking with these teachers, they seem to be really be up on what is happening in education. Things I haven't been pleased with in the public schools is the kids who are average.... sometimes they miss out on some of the more innovative kinds of teaching. I think that they tend to pay a lot of attention to the highs and the lows and not so much the middle kids and that's where my kids largely are. So I think they miss out on some of the things.

I think in every school you have a few teachers who are very good and the majority aren't. That's my feeling about teachers... I think for the most part school do not have any sense of activities that were really involving, except for I think last year they had a science project. Once a year they had a mission project, I think they were like in fifth or sixth grade. That's about yet. Now I think things are changing. So my youngest, when summer comes around, I really try hard to find things that will be fun for her and enhance her education. So I found that now that she's getting into Junior High, some classes that are given at the Junior College, Community College supplies most needs for her.

Subject #111

I'm pretty satisfied with the school up here. I've heard a lot of people who aren't satisfied with some of the schools in the district..... but our school, I'm on the counsel and I try to get involved as much as I can to make sure that everything is running that needs to be run through. I'm really quite satisfied. Right now, one of my daughters has a very poor teacher but she had a great one last year. So I feel like kind of a level out.....but I'm not quiet about it. I talk to them and see if I can help in any way and I let my concerns be made known. I really believe that socially the kids need them and these schools around here I'm really satisfied with.

...I'm not used to having the State dictate how every program is. It seems like the State does to quite a large extent and I'm just learning right now what kind of expectations they have from each school, so I'm not so sure I'm satisfied with all the curriculum but I have been involved in trying to find out.

...Right now, I don't care for the reading program. But my kids are really readers except for my middle child who isn't quite as much a reader, but she's not having any problems. But I hear people who are having problems aren't really satisfied with program that they're working on now.

Subject #113

I just love it. Both of my daughters go to Pinetree Elementary which is a new school and it's just an incredible school, there's a lot of parent participation. The principal is just real with it with the kids and I'm very very happy with the school, extremely happy. Coming from what I had down there and what we're into now I'm very pleased with the education system.

Subject #114

(Mother): From what I know of public school, you're not going to get #1 the quality of private school, academically. If your child is in a magnet school and reach the quota that these days they have of the magnet school then you've got a better chance of you child getting a better education, more individualize attention. Also the other

thing you've got with the public school is the lack of discipline, the problems with drugs, and all of your problems are accentuated in a public school.

(Father): To comment on that I think that one of the reasons there is in a private school they can set rules and regulation according to their specific culture where in a public school they have to adapt to a very wide range of culture. They just can't have the kind of discipline that they have at a private school. I think one of the things, we both grew up in a Catholic school. I guess we always felt that that kind of environment just provided a better focus besides the religious aspects that we also consider very important. I think one thing I heard lately that I haven't really investigated, apparently that a lot of public schools have their facilities in some private school because of the funding. On the other hand I think the thing that I have always intended for my son and any other children that might of been should go to private school, private Christian school. Primary thing for that is for the spiritual development, and the secondary thing is for the discipline.

(Mother): Statistics show that a lot of children from public schools can't read at grade level. They can't spell, they miss a lot of the basics and are not well equipped to go into the upper level grades. A lot of them get passed through the grades without the extra help they need to bring their studies up to par. So you've got colleges now a day that had to offer remedial courses because the public school is not meeting and educating the children. It's not as rigorous of training.

Subject #115

My general impression is if you just take your chances on the public schools in your neighborhood, you don't have much of a chance. Our experience has been that we were able to choose the public schools to send our children to and we did alright. We made a good choice and it turned out to be a good choice for each of our children.

Our children have been going to a Magnet school for the past twelve years because we happened to move out here in California the very first year that the school system was under a court ordered integration program, so rather than have our children bussed to a school that we have no say about, we volunteered to send them to a Magnet school, and because our children were already high achievers and identified gifted we could choose a special gifted program.

2. Private Religious Schools:

Subject #102

They are nice safe place for education. I feel that the children are more protected there in their total environment. My younger ones that went to private religious preschools. The start that they got there I wouldn't change for anything. It was a good beginning for them.

Subject #104

Expensive. I would of like to send my son to a private Christian High School but our income is not available to do that.

...I would like him to have his Bible teaching at school too and to be able to have peers who would have, a lot, not everybody in private Christian schools do, that they have the same faith in religious belief that he has and morals. We know a lot of kids in public school that don't and lot do. We couldn't afford it.

Subject #107

There are some in Lancaster. There might be one in Palmdale, but I think they're mainly in Lancaster, which would mean a one half hour drive.As long as we gave our children the religious education that they needed here,as long as it is academically okay, we were going to go the public school route.

Subject #108

(Father): We chose a private school I suppose primarily because it's a church school and we've both grown up in church school. I like the foundation we got.

(Mother): One of the reasons for moving back in this area is to be near grandparents. We moved here from Georgia. I like a religious school because not only do they have children who go to church and believe the same way that my kids will and that also they teach religion and has a very good moral overtones in classrooms and on the playground.

(Father): They have good teachers. We know the teachers and we feel good about them.

Subject #109

I hear some good things about one or two of them. I'm surprised that most of the people I know send their kids to Evangelical Covenant. I don't know a whole lot about that. My kids did very well in public school and we're a very religious family. I have them involved in a lot of things in our church. I didn't really feel that that was necessary to have them in a Christian school. I also feel that they will get out in the world sometime and I don't know that it's the best thing to have them always in a sheltered situation where they are not exposed to the people they are going to run into everywhere.

Subject #110

(Mother): I think they're a very good school. I know that they have high academic standards. I know that from the kids who have gone to a smaller Christian school down here had a very hard time catching up with the same level of program, I mean grade level when they went to Pinecrest. It was much stronger academically. I was involved when I worked there with the pre-school but just from the people I know they have a good strong program.

...one I know of is not good. We happen to know of two different people who taught there who had no teaching experience and no credentials. It finally folds because of the administration. We know someone who put their child at another school because he was a little bit slower and they thought maybe the attention would help but he couldn't handle it so they put him back in public school.

Subject #113

...I'm aware of a couple of the people in our church go to, then again, I would feel right putting one in and all four and I can't afford all four, so. That kind of situation right now would not be possible.

...The Christian education for part of it....I don't know if it's true or not but usually Christian schools are a little more strict, and you've got kids coming ...usually

from a Christian background, so you probably don't have as much problems with cussing, fighting, smoking and drugs.

Subject #114

(Father): I think the fact that my son will be with people who believe the same way we believe obviously is a great support and it becomes a family. In public school if there's any kind of feeling like that it's very partial feeling or maybe there's only a limited number of people that he would consider himself aligned with and the rest of them are from another culture, even to the point of conflicts.

(Mother): ...We want to give him strength in the Christian education and to be surrounded by others who believe the same so that he's not just hearing it from us. This isn't just the way we believe in our family but there are a lot of other children who are raised with the same beliefs and have the same values and discipline, the same rules that they have in their home that we have in our home. That gives him a good sense of security, identity and he'll really have the feeling of being part of that family at school. They're working together.

Subject #116

We looked at Christian schools first of all. Definitely Christ is the center of our lives so I wanted Him to be the center of their education too. Then when that was academically sound and maybe a little bit advanced. Because my oldest daughter is right on the boarder line, she had to wait an extra year, so that was really important to me.

Subject #118

I chose the kindergarten school because it was also an extension of a pre-school which I had done some research on a pre-school ran by the same church. I had gotten to know a lot of the teachers and I knew basically their philosophies. There were a couple of slight doctrinal differences but it was not critical and not something we couldn't deal with at home. So after visiting a few schools and asking a few friends who taught and had feedback from actual students.....I made my selections from that.

...The school I chose basically had a real balance between discipline and love for the students. There didn't seem to have to an academic push versus really caring for the students. They actually loved the kids and really cared.

....We had made an absolute decision against the city schools. The one where my children would go has a good reputation but I thought the Christian school would have more of a control outside of the classroom as well as inside, on the playground. The Christian school would at least address the problem of one student cutting down another student or making fun of him or whatever so that was part of my decision.

3. Private Nonreligious Schools:

Subject #106

No, I don't even know of any.

Subject #107

I know there's one based on European curriculum that just started out last year, I believe, and it's very strict academically. But I didn't investigate that.

Subjects #109

I don't know too much about them. I had a friend who had her daughter in Pinecrest and she thought it was wonderful. It was expensive I guess. They make kids do a lot of homework. I never really investigated private schools.

Subject #111

I don't know of any. I know there are some, but I don't know anyone that goes to them.

Subject #113

I don't know anything about them. That has never even entered my mind. Other than preschools. I put my children in a nonreligious preschool. Other than that I don't know anything about it.

Subject #115

Well, I guess we never seriously considered it. Any private school we looked at was associated with church.

Subject #116

...because our background is so strong and religious that it wasn't even a consideration.

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