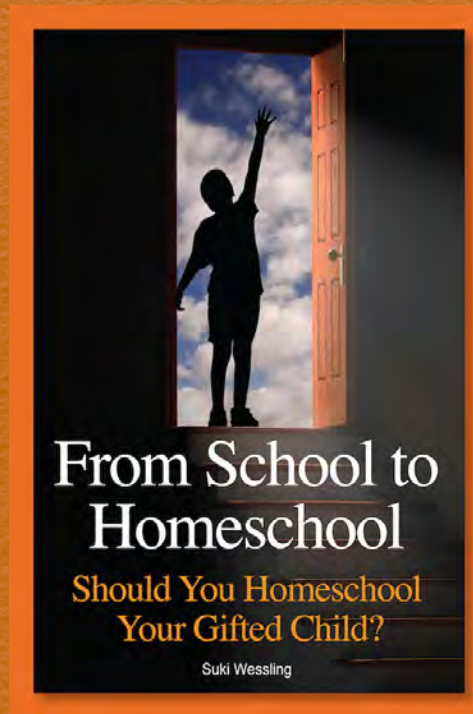


A la carte education for gifted homeschoolers



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Homeschooling

Why are families leaving school?

Why are gifted homeschoolers leaving public and private education?

Cultural factors:

- * Older parents having fewer children can pay more attention to each child's individual needs
- * Families who are more mobile don't feel as connected to their community school
- * Choice is everywhere: we take choice for granted in every aspect of our lives
- * The Internet has broken down traditional physical boundaries — we no longer only look to our immediate community for solutions
- * DIY culture

Why are gifted homeschoolers leaving public and private education?

Educational Factors:

- * Public education's focus on testing and serving the needs of the lower end of the curve
- * Private education's focus on achievement and pushing out "cookie cutter" students
- * Growing evidence that traditional schooling methods do not produce passionate, flexible learners
- * Growing understanding of twice-exceptional learners and how educational theories ignore their needs and development
- * Interest in helping our children follow their passions

Homeschool Models

Homeschool models: Traditional/Structured



- * Parent (usually mom) stays at home to educate the children
- * Homeschool modeled on school:
- * Mom teaches using set curriculum
- * Children's progress measured by traditional methods
- * Children may do cooperative learning
- * Some families emphasize real world learning in form of service or apprenticeship

Homeschool models: Pure unschooler



- * Unschooling varies according to family but is generally child-led learning
- * Rejects school-based models including curriculum, set schedules, classes, grade levels
- * Parent does not view herself as a “teacher” but rather as a facilitator, mentor, or guide
- * Emphasize real world learning in form of service or apprenticeship

Homeschool models: The eclectic



- * Parent stays at home to educate the children (and act as chauffeur)
- * Homeschool more flexible than school:
- * May or may not use curriculum
- * May or may not “teach” and do “grade level” work
- * Willingness to “hire out” subject areas, especially math and science
- * Emphasis on following child’s passions
- * Emphasis on learning in real world

Homeschool models: A la carte



- * Parent acts as planner, scheduler, guide, mentor, research assistant, chauffeur
- * Child's education is provided on a subject-by-subject basis, including:
 - * Cooperative education
 - * Hiring private tutors
 - * Attending online classes
 - * Attending physical classes
 - * Self-education in areas of strength
- * May call themselves "unschoolers" as well

A la carte education

How does it work?

Parenting and à la carte education

- * Eliminates the “I couldn’t do that” part of being a homeschooling parent
- * Allows more flexibility for parents to work or pursue their own interests
- * Eliminates the need to be experts or even somewhat educated in their children’s academic areas
- * Demands willingness to create what their children need if they can’t find it
- * Warning: A la carte is the most expensive homeschooling option

How do à la carte homeschoolers design their children's education?

- * Traditional/School-based:
 - Emphasis on hitting all the subject areas that school demands
 - Emphasis on documentation and output of student effort
 - Emphasis on well-rounded, well-educated students in a traditional sense
- * Unschooler/Child-led:
 - Emphasis on following child's interests
 - Emphasis on finding resources that fit child's needs rather than satisfy outside criteria
 - Some unschoolers will avoid structured activities
- * Blend:
 - Many families blend the two approaches, with a mix of child-led and traditional education options

Commonly used resources

- * Internet
- * Gifted programs
- * Private providers
- * Cooperatives
- * Public school programs
- * Private school programs
- * Micro-schools

Commonly used resources: The Internet

- * **Self-paced**: for motivated students in their areas of passion
Examples: Khan Academy (all levels, free), CTY, Duke TIP, EPGY (K12, test, fee), community colleges (high school), MIT Open Courseware (college, free), eIMACS (middle, high school, fee), Thinkwell (K-12, fee).
- * **Self-paced with teacher**: for motivated students who need guidance
Examples: CTY, Duke TIP, EPGY (K12, test, fee), community colleges (high school) , eIMACS (high school, fee).
- * **Individually accessed with forum/community**: For highly motivated students
Examples: Scratch (elementary, free), Coursera, EdX, Udacity (college level, free)
- * **Tutor-led private**: For students who need personal attention, remediation, require teachers with unusual skills
- * **Teacher-led class**: Suitable for any student, can work for less motivated students with parental guidance
Examples: Online G3, Athena's, Lukeion, Art of Problem Solving (all fee-based)

Commonly used resources: Gifted Programs

National gifted programs that serve homeschoolers:

- * Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins: grades 2-8, regional in-person courses and gatherings, CTYOnline courses for preK-12
- * Duke University Talent Identification Program: grades 4-7, online lessons, publications, contests, and the Duke TIP Book Club
- * PG Retreat: PGR organizes the annual Retreat, informal local gatherings around the country, listservs, and web forums to support its members.
- * Davidson Young Scholars: Offers community support and events for profoundly gifted children.

Commonly used resources:

Private providers

Private, local providers are one of the best resources to hook into for classes and mentoring for your children. The quality and availability vary widely by area, however. To find classes:

- * Look for a local homeschool-focused class already suitable for a gifted student
- * Arrange with an afterschool provider to offer a homeschool-focused class
- * Arrange with a provider of general education to offer a gifted-focused class
- * Register homeschooled student for afterschool gifted-focused class

Commonly used resources: Cooperatives

- * Offer a cost-effective way for parents to pool money, resources, and skills
- * Can function full- or part-time
- * Can happen in homes, rented space, or dedicated space
- * Allow parents time to pursue work and personal projects
- * Can employ involved parents as teachers or hire professional teachers
- * Can include children of a variety of ages
- * Can focus on one part of homeschooling, e.g. major academic subjects, or offer a “school-like” comprehensive experience.

Commonly used resources:

Public school programs

- * Include charter schools (“homeschooling umbrellas”) as well as district-created (“independent study”) programs
- * May offer financial support for courses taken off campus
- * May offer financial support for materials and curriculum
- * May offer academic classes and enrichment opportunities on campus
- * Usually offer a licensed teacher to work directly with family
- * Can sometimes be inflexible about grade level and testing

(un)Commonly used resources: Private school programs

- * Actually not a common resource – most homeschoolers find more cost-effective option
- * Private schools may allow homeschoolers into parts of their program
- * Private schools may agree to continue a relationship with a student moving to homeschool on a case-by-case basis
- * Private schools may offer extra-curricular classes open to homeschoolers

(un)Commonly used resources: Micro-schools

- * A new option being developed by a number of providers
- * Example: Quantum Camp – grew from summer camp to afterschool program to homeschool program to micro-school
- * Offers an à la carte program similar to a college: students choose how much to attend
- * Parents are expected to fill out the rest of the child's education outside of school

A la carte education

Conclusion

A la carte education is not

- * Staying at home
- * Mom being teacher
- * Kids isolated from community
- * Education offered as a package
- * The cheapest homeschooling option

A la carte education is

- * Infinitely flexible
- * Possible for working parents
- * A way to create connections with other homeschooled children and adults in the community
- * Suited to gifted children's unique needs, especially asynchronous learning abilities
- * A growing option in many communities

A la Carte Education Resources

About a la carte options:

- * Hoagies' distance learning:
www.hoagiesgifted.org/distance_learning.htm
- * Hoagies' talent search list:
www.hoagiesgifted.org/talent_search.htm
- * Hoagies' academic programs:
www.hoagiesgifted.org/academics.htm
- * "Helping teens navigate MOOCs":
blog.sukiwessling.com/2013/04/helping-teens-navigate-moocs/
- * "Boutique distance learning":
www.examiner.com/article/boutique-distance-learning-offers-variety-for-gifted-kids

About homeschooling:

- * Home Education Magazine's Welcome to Homeschooling:
homeedmag.com/gettingstarted.php
- * Info-graphic on homeschool demographics:
www.collegeathome.com/homeschool-domination/
- * Homeschool facts from Homefires:
www.homefires.com/facts.asp
- * "When Schools Fail: Is Homeschooling Right For You and Your Highly Gifted Child?":
www.hoagiesgifted.org/schools_fail.htm
- * Sandra Dodd's "Deschooling for Parents":
sandraddodd.com/deschooling