

Ten Reasons to Homeschool your Child with Special Needs

There are so many reasons to homeschool all our children, but on top of all the great benefits to homeschooling our kids there are even more reasons to homeschool our children who may be struggling. HSLDA's (Homeschool Legal Defense Association's) studies show homeschooling our special needs children have even greater benefits than homeschooling our other children especially through high school! Here are some of the benefits I have discovered from homeschooling our special needs child from birth through high school.

1. **You, the parent, know your child better than anyone on earth.** This is true of all parents, but how much more when we homeschool. I have spent 18 years with my special needs daughter and of that time we have rarely been apart. I am finally realizing that this really does make a difference! There is no one that comes close to knowing your child as well as you do. You have observed how they react and respond in all sorts of different situations. This knowledge and understanding you have of your child (and will continue to acquire) will result in wisdom as you teach.
2. **You are equipped because God is the one who equips.** Some would say we should leave our special needs children to the experts. After all, they have had years of training. I believe you are being trained by God for your particular child. I'll let you in on a secret. A couple years ago, I took a course given by a public school teacher who was contracted out to schools all over Ontario to help teachers teach special needs students integrated into their classrooms. He confessed that teachers on the whole know nothing about teaching special needs children. He was astonished at their lack of ability to think through how to assess and teach these precious children. God is faithful. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.
3. **The home is a flexible place to learn.** When does your child learn best? Do they need little breaks? Do they do better learning while jumping on a trampoline? Do they learn better hands on? Do they need to talk through things to learn? Do they need healthy snacks throughout the day? Do they need more sleep? Homeschooling allows for the flexibility often needed for the struggling child.
4. **The home is a loving accepting place.** Your child will not be segregated into special classes or areas of a room. Instead, they will always be an integral part of the family unit.
5. **Your homeschool is run with your worldview.** This is huge not just for spiritual reasons but also for educational reasons. The humanistic worldview goes far beyond teaching evolution. They have a clear cut opinion on what qualifies as success and how to achieve it. There is no room for how God created your child and what He created them to do. In the school system all students must achieve in all areas and must graduate and earn lots of money to be considered successful. A child who struggles will know they are a failure in this worldview. Christian worldview cares more about what God's plan is for each unique child, declares we are created in His image, and we all have equal value.

6. **You can choose curriculum that is a fit with how your child learns.** We had to go totally eclectic with Monica as her cognitive and physical needs are scattered all over the place. And even though we used a variety of curriculum we still modified it for her specifically.
7. **You can also choose no curriculum for a time.** Horrors! You can actually take a break from a subject that is just not working out right now. We took quite a bit of time off from math. Monica was not learning. She had tears and I was frustrated and no learning of math happened. What she *was* learning was to hate anything to do with numbers, and to put up a mental block to anything “math.” She must have matured in the year we took off from math because when we tried again she had learned stuff without being taught formally. The homeschool is free to do this. A public or private school would not be.
8. **Your child will not end up being defined by their disability.** God sees your child for who He created them to be. As you spend more and more time with your child and seek God with all your heart, you will too. *The school will see your child for the disability.* They will prepare IEP’s and your parent/teacher discussions will revolve around these. The child, parent, and teacher’s energy will primarily be directed toward the disability. In the homeschool, we can focus more on their God given purpose, their strengths, and giftings.
9. If the area of weakness is something you feel the Lord wants to work on improving, **you have the freedom to do a variety of programs** within your homeschool framework that makes this possible. You have the freedom in homeschooling to choose a program whether administered in home by the parent or therapist or out of home by a variety of therapists.
10. **You the parent will learn things** you never would learn by sending your child away for eight hours a day five days a week. Over the years of teaching my special needs daughter I have been on a journey learning many things including: longsuffering (patience), perseverance, creativity, humour, hope, humbleness, trust, contentment in all things, God’s perspective, how to encourage myself in the Lord, and, how to come to Him to find rest for my soul.

There are so many benefits to homeschooling our special needs children. As I was in the midst of it all I often didn’t see the benefits, however looking back from a 20/20 hindsight, I see clearly how much we have gained because of homeschooling.