The Pros and Cons of Homeschooling a Child With ADHD

by ERIC PATTERSON

Should I Homeschool My ADHD Child?

Some decisions in life are simple. These situations are great, but they come too few and far between. Unfortunately, the majority of life's dilemmas are not black and white. Instead, there are endless shades of grey that force you to weigh the pros and cons of the situation while factoring in possible outcomes.

The decision to homeschool your child with ADHD is a tough one. Over the years, you have been increasingly frustrated, confused, and saddened by the way school has gone for your child. You thought that the ADHD diagnosis would improve your ability to navigate the school system, but to this point, success has been limited.

Homeschooling is a bold move, with major implications for you and your child. Consider these pros and cons to aid in your decision-making:

Pro: Education Tailored to Your Child

All children learn at different rates with individual strengths and weaknesses. Kids with ADHD are no different. If the choice is homeschool, you can create a curriculum based on your child's needs, interests, likes and dislikes.

You can move education from sitting inside all day to a more engaging, interactive learning experience that plays into the positives associated with ADHD. Many resources exist to aid in your direction of education, so that you do not have to feel alone in your journey.

Con: Having Total Responsibility of Your Child's Education

Some people perform well under pressure, while others struggle. Many people see the responsibility of homeschooling as an overwhelming obligation that is too much to handle, especially since your child may not relate to common practices due to the ADHD symptoms.

If your child is struggling to learn the material, you could find yourself with more frustration and more uncertainty about how to proceed. This could lead you to make education a lesser part of the daily routine and fall into other bad habits. When thinking about homeschooling, consider your abilities in the short-term and the long-term. If you are worried that the novelty will wear off and the responsibility will be too great, reconsider your choice.

Pro: Avoid Negative Influences at School

The bus, the classroom, and the playground are areas that can expose your child to messages, behaviors, and words you do not appreciate. With ADHD, your child might be more impulsive in repeating or engaging in these unwanted behaviors and words. Whether it's learning obscenities or about sexual issues, you would prefer to have more control over the influences that confront your child.

Beyond the influences is the direct result of bullying and teasing in the school setting. Homeschooling may be seen as a hugely positive choice if you can limit the emotionally and physically abusive behaviors of the other children towards your child.

Next page: two more pros and two more cons of homeschooling a child with ADHD.

Con: Lack of Socialization

Kids with ADHD tend to struggle socially since they do not have the attention to maintain conversations and struggle to stay with one game for any length of time. By homeschooling, you risk cutting off their appropriate socialization as well as their ability to practice their social skills in real life settings. Without appropriate practice, their skills may fall farther behind without a chance to develop.

Socialization helps show children with ADHD socially appropriate behaviors that they can mirror back later. It also helps by fostering new ideas and changed ways of thinking. Surely, you can supplement other types of socialization through other activities, but it will be difficult to obtain the full quantity available at school.

Pro: Potential for Improved Relationship

When you spend more time with your child, unexpected, positive things can happen. No longer are you forcing your child up in the morning and out the door. Now, you are afforded the opportunity to connect and interact in ways that parents do not get to do typically.

Amazing things can develop with this increased time as new commonalities and shared interests grow. The bond between you may become stronger due to the increased occasion to relate on new levels. This could lay the foundation for a life-long, quality relationship that benefits each of you greatly.

Con: Diminished Resources

Homeschooling a child demands a lot of time, effort, and energy. You're human, after all, which means that you only have so much of yourself to give. Imagine continuing all of your current responsibilities at home including cooking, cleaning, mowing the grass, chauffeuring to activities, and completing needed projects. Now, imagine doing all these while homeschooling. Additionally, homeschooling can limit or eliminate your ability to work and provide another income for you family. This can turn into a larger stressor with time.

Pro: Get out of Your Comfort Zone

Life may be a daily routine that you are not satisfied with any longer. The routines become ruts and monotony takes over. With homeschooling, you have the chance to make each day new and different for you and your child. For your child with ADHD, the end of boring routines will be met with excitement and anticipation since a lack of success at school has likely added to frustrations.

For you, it might help you find more enthusiasm for life as every day will be a new venture with you in control. Homeschooling may also show off your creativity by developing new styles and tools to aid in the education of your child.

Conclusion

No matter what side of the fence you land on, remember that homeschooling your child is a situation to be considered over an extended period of time. This is not a choice to be made impulsively or emotionally. Because of this, consulting with a number of people can make the process clearer.

When considering the pros and cons, accept the notion that not all homeschooling is equal. Many of the cons

become erased if you are connected to a strong community network of homeschoolers that can assist with socialization and useful strategies for managing ADHD symptoms. On the other hand, the pros of homeschooling can become negative if you are unprepared or unable to handle the responsibility of educating your child and do not have access to the needed level of support.

Ultimately, as a concerned parent, you must make a choice that you believe to be best for your child and family unit. After the decision is made, do everything in your power to emphasize the pros and shrink the cons.