

Homeschooling Around the World



by Daniel Silva

Today, homeschooling families continue to grow in large numbers around the world.

Home education began in the book of Genesis, but the modern movement in the US was reignited by ideas from such men as John Holt, John Gatto, and Raymond Moore. Their arguments inspired the emergence of these new homeschoolers, and today, homeschooling families continue to grow in large numbers around the world.

Although the term homeschooling has its origins in The United States, the practice is becoming more widespread throughout the world. But in some countries, parents hoping to educate their children at home still face obstacles.

Germany

In Germany, for example, a family fighting for the right to homeschool has taken its case to the European Court of Human Rights. Dirk and Petra Wunderlich have been trying for more than a decade to homeschool their four children.¹ On more than one occasion, social workers and police have removed the children from

their home, saying it was an abuse of parental rights to homeschool.

Japan

In Japan, there's a very small homeschooling population because its legal status remains vague. While Japanese society generally doesn't recognize homeschooling, there's no law explicitly outlawing it.² And some parents may prefer home education because bullying is a big problem in Japanese schools.

Mexico

Homeschooling in Mexico, while still rare, is on the rise with over 5,000 families now. Some children receive curricular instruction at home because they do not have access to quality education in their country. This is true especially in low-income areas. Statistics show less than half of Mexican children who start first grade will complete high school. In Mexico City, education reform efforts have faced tremendous opposition, particularly from the teachers' union. The Homeschool Legal

Defense Association (HSLDA) website states, "Without clear compulsory attendance laws, homeschooling is flourishing legally. As a general rule Mexican families homeschool without significant interference from the government."³

Canada

The news is a little better in Canada, which currently has tens of thousands of homeschoolers. And the provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia even provide financial support to parents who choose to homeschool.⁴ Among the reasons parents choose to home educate are overcrowded classrooms, inflexible school curricula, children with special needs without specialized education, ineffective evaluation systems, and problems with student discipline.

Spain

According to HSLDA, the legal situation in Spain is somewhat ambiguous, because under certain circumstances, homeschooling could be considered illegal.

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One hurdle is that there is no process for pulling children out of the school system.⁵ Some families have been fined for homeschooling, and some have never registered their children with the school system.⁶

France

France specifies that it's the education, not the school, which is compulsory from the age of six to sixteen. So, homeschoolers can take classes by correspondence or lessons under the guidance of the family. For children not enrolled in correspondence courses, an inspector is referred to the family's residence. According to HSLDA, families must annually notify the appropriate authorities of their intent to homeschool. Although the law only gives school inspectors the authority to verify the teaching in a homeschool each year, officials may require homeschooled students to be tested, order children back to public school after only one negative report, or threaten to declare children in

danger of mistreatment, to coerce parents to accept the inspector's demands.

Italy

Educazione Parentale is the term used in Italy for parental education, or homeschooling. The country maintains websites of educational organizations with activities that inform and guide parents. However to join homeschooling, the family must submit a notice to the school board annually. Parents must also prove they have both a technical and economical capability to teach their children. "Technical capacity" means that the parent must have completed two full academic years of schooling beyond the level of the children she is currently teaching.⁷

Switzerland

Homeschooling in Switzerland is rare, and parents who choose to do so must first see if the local district authorizes the practice. If asked, parents must respond to an appli-

cation for legal approval. Teaching materials and lesson plans are provided for free by local schools. In addition, families receive visits and tutorials by members of local associations.

China

In China, the Ministry of Education has issued a statement officially condemning homeschooling. It also warned parents that the practice is forbidden. Their policy states that "[Students] should not be allowed to study at home to replace the national unified implementation of compulsory education."⁸

Egypt

In Egypt, some public school students say the curriculum proposed by the country does not take into account the individual needs of each student. Nevertheless, Egypt doesn't recognize homeschooling, and forbids homeschool graduates from enrolling in the country's public universities.⁹

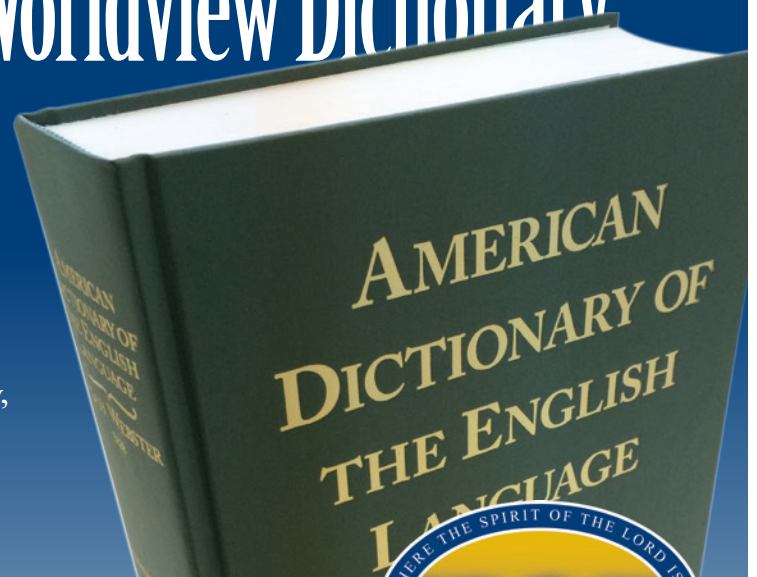
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Norway

In Norway, as recently as February 2018, a twelve-year-old boy was chased by police and removed from his home for several days after his parents decided to home-school him. The parents made the decision to home educate because he was being bullied in public school. His mother says she followed the law, but because of a misunderstanding, the school did not give approval for him to be homeschooled.¹⁰

Brazil

In Brazil, the Supreme Court recently ruled although homeschooling does not violate the constitution, it must be recognized by federal statute. Brazil's fast-growing homeschooling movement is hoping the government will soon recognize homeschooling as the law.

As we have seen, while homeschooling has grown exponentially in some places, there is a still much work to be done by

homeschooling advocates before it is accepted and legal throughout the world.

Editor's Note: Homeschooling laws do change, so please research your country's current laws before homeschooling. 🏠

About Daniela

Daniela Silva is a Brazilian educator and independent writer. She holds a BA in Pedagogy, with concentrations in School Management and Business Education; an MBA in Personnel Management; and a post-graduate certificate in Neuroeducation. Working with social projects in the area of e-learning and people development since 2009, Ms. Silva is a regular contributor to several educational websites. Working in collaboration with The New Heights Educational Group, Inc., she has just published Unraveling Reading, a book on literacy education and learning disabilities in reading and writing. (amzn.to/2JfmEk7) www.newheightseducation.org/author/daniela-silva/

Endnotes:

1. <https://hslida.org/content/landingpages/Wunderlich/>
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3. <https://hslida.org/content/hs/international/Mexico/>
4. <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/blogs/homeschooling-in-canada-continues-to-grow>
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