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Subject: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Mr Vinyl](#) on Sat, 04 Mar 2006 13:39:36 GMT

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Hope you don't mind that I start a new thread. I don't mind answering any questions I can MB. So ask away. You asked me: "How do you structure the day; in small chunks like maybe an hour at a time? How do you organise the lessons; daily/weekly?" Answer: Autistic children can vary widely in their abilities. My older son is a high functioning autistic while my younger son is more severe. Neither of them have the attention span to sit for long periods of time for their lessons. So we do it in short bursts throughout the day. Sometimes it's only a few minutes while other times I can get an hour. With my sons it can't be pushed too hard or they will start screaming and continue to do so for what seems like an eternity. With my older son we pretty much use a pre-packaged curriculum by Alpha Omega (see link below). My younger son has problems talking so we spend most of the time working on trying to get him to understand and speak correctly. Regarding other home schoolers. In my experience most of the people that home school their children do so for religious reasons. They don't like the public school system and how they have eliminated teaching God and morals. They believe the public school system has failed our children and is a bad environment to send their sons and daughters too. I am a religious person but I don't go to church. Many of the groups for home schoolers center around religion which is a turn off for me. I would rather get together with other parents talk about what works and what doesn't work and just let the kids play together. I have not found such a group in my area but must admit I haven't looked too hard. It has taken me a long time to get used to the idea of having autistic children. Mentally it is very scary and depressing. You continue to cling on to the hope that they will just grow out of it but they don't. Hard to convey the gambit of emotions involved. I don't know if you have children yourself but consider these things. There are good things and bad things about having children as any parent knows. It's hard to raise kids properly. Takes a lot of work and time. But having autistic children changes everything you thought parenting would be like. This is a little much, but it seems like it takes all of the good things about children away and leaves only the the bad. No father son catches, no happy holidays (kids don't understand Christmas and something always seems to set them off into a screaming fit which seems to never end) no seeing your kids off to college, probably you will never see them get married and settle down, They will probably live with you until you pass away. And then what? What will happen to your autistic children after you and your wife pass away? Very scary thought! I try not to think about it much. Too depressing. Sorry if I have been to depressing. I rarely get to talk about these things because I avoid them when I'm asked. I guess it's easier to type than to talk face to face. I don't want you to think it's all doom and Gloom either. I love my kids more than I could say. There are fun times and good times as well with autistic children but they are not as frequent. All I can say is that it has (at times) been almost more than my wife and I could bare. Luckily my wife and I have a very good marriage. I would not have been able to handle this without the support of my wife. She says the same about me. So maybe this is Gods plan for us. Who knows. Things seem to be getting easier now that the children are growing up. We try to keep a positive outlook for the future. I know God will help my children and has already helped my family get through some very tough times.

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Subject: Sorry forgot link.

Posted by [Mr Vinyl](#) on Sat, 04 Mar 2006 13:44:41 GMT

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Here is the link to the curriculum my wife and I use for our older son. These books are pretty good and I would recommend them to other home schoolers. Keep in mind that they are religion based but not too much. I think just right.

[http://www.aop.com/lifepac/Subjects\\_Math.php](http://www.aop.com/lifepac/Subjects_Math.php)

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Subject: Re: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Sat, 04 Mar 2006 15:35:50 GMT

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How's your support system, do you have family in the area? Are you in a suburban setting or rural area? You don't mention what their ages are. Where do you do the lessons; is there a defined space in the house where, say all the educational things are stored and set-up? How do the boys approach lesson time, do they have a schedule that they recognise or say a special time that they know is school time. I see where you say you must keep the time frame flexible in order to maintain attention but is there an arranged system you follow; like a structured procedure for beginning and such? How do you manage to separate them in as far as their capabilities are so different? Can I ask what State you live in? I'm not a believer but it is my expressed belief that what works for you is the right thing.

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Subject: Re: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Mr Vinyl](#) on Sat, 04 Mar 2006 17:23:37 GMT

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My sons are 8 and almost 10. Unfortunately I have no family in the area. So we have no real support system at all. Just ourselves. We live in a suburban area. I would rather not say which state. We do our lessons in one room usually but sometimes where ever is convenient. This is the kids bedroom where we have charts a desk etc. It is usually a battle to get the kids to do their lessons. Most of the time we have to bribe them with some kind of reward such as getting their favorite lunch etc or playing their favorite playstation game. I try to get most of their lessons done in the mornings but we don't have a specific time set up to do lessons. It usually goes something like this "it's time for lessons. But Dad I'm watching this Nick Jr cartoon. Ok when that's over we'll start. If I were home schooling normal children I would be much more strict with lesson time etc. But we are just happy to get the kids to do something each day. We work on Sat & Sun. as well as through the summers. I teach the kids separately. First one then the other. When my wife comes home from work she will also work with them if she is not too tired. You say you are not a believer. I assume you mean in home schooling. Neither was I until we did it. I am very convinced that home schooling was essential for my boys. My son hated school the short 9 months he was in it. He learned nothing. To this day he talks about how the teacher hated him. Now that I have done

home schooling I think I would do it even if my sons were "normal". It is very gratifying when they learn something. Plus as I said we can concentrate on doing the work that we feel is important. There is only one drawback that I can see. That is that part of going to public school is meeting and making friends. Now I do converse with people with normal kids that home school. They are constantly going on trips (campouts, museums etc) with many other children so there is much social interaction for normal home schooled children if you choose to participate. This is difficult with my children. My sons don't like going places and usually start screaming after a short time and want to go home. So the bottom line is our sons don't get much social interaction. That said, home schooled children regularly outperform public schools children on standardized tests. I am all for home schooling now. I see the difference it has made in my sons and other people's kids. Public schools are becoming a poor more and more a poor environment for learning. This is why home schooled children as well as children who attend private schools do so much better than children who are products of the public school system.

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Subject: Re: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Sat, 04 Mar 2006 19:12:02 GMT

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I did not mean to imply that I don't believe in home schooling; I meant I don't believe in super beings that control our destiny. But I don't begrudge anyone else having those beliefs. My own son is a practicing Catholic. My interest in education is something I developed as a kid because I was a rebellious student with no respect for authority whatsoever. They took some interest in me however because I did some things well and I received some positive and productive re-inforcement from teachers that liked me. That always intrigued me as to why they were so eager to try and involve themselves in my situation. Regarding Home schooling and why I have questions; I don't have a bias either way; it is the actual process of educating children that interests me. In the public schools we have a variety of personalities; capabilities and emotional types all impressed on our children at a very vulnerable time in their lives. Is this good? I don't claim to know but there are several issues that impact that scenario. Of course one advantage to the conventional community system is the adaptation response required by the kids. That is a learned response and something they will eventually draw upon in their dealings throughout life. The favoritism; disappointments; peer group conflict resolution. Those are all behaviours needed to function in the world. If you look at how the current educational system evolved it becomes apparent that the organisational model is one in which the administration and staff are served most efficiently. The system is not designed for the kids and to further their skills but in fact it is designed to enable the staff to control the student population in the most efficient manner possible. Our schools were flooded with masses of immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; many of whom had no English. The only process that would accommodate that huge influx of difficult studies was to devise a system whereby one teacher could control many students. So we have 34 kids lined up in a row; silent facing front to the imposing authority figure who can from his vantage point keep order and invoke discipline. Is this the best way kids learn? Nope. And unfortunately this model is the least expensive and uses the least resources of any other mass education format available. So we are stuck with it. Home schooling is a fine way to educate children because you as a parent can be the best arbiter of your kids personal needs and style of learning. But here is my concern. Everyone has their own biases/focus

points/weaknesses/attention span etc etc. In the public schools these personal idiosyncracies are mitigated by the vast number of different individuals who engage your kids. If you have a bad teacher in one class you will have a good one in another. If you as a parent are weak in one area; well then they will be inheritors of that weakness. You have an even more egregious task. Your children require very sophisticated educational techniques in order to make the best use of their talents. That to me is quite a row to hoe; so to speak. I am impressed you have even taken on this task and therein lies my interest. How children learn is a very important subject and the Autistic Child has a set of circumstances that in the research as I am sure you are more familiar than I has divulged huge amounts of very pertinent data regarding structural learning modes and the actual neurological basis of learning. People don't get how they learn. I attended a lecture by a woman of high functioning Autism Diagnoses who has been able to help in explaining to people how they process information differently than others do. It was extremely enlightening since she has built a very successful business utilising the sensory processing capabilities that they have that we don't. Listen; I hope this doesn't sound pompous or arrogant to you. I don't believe in sentimentalising these things. In your position you have enough issues to deal with without having to validate weak attempts at expressing sympathy; I know that is not what you want. You have a valuable insight that most do not. I admire your efforts and I have a little understanding of what you go through. I will discuss this as long as it doesn't insult you in any way. Tell me if I am telling too much of myself here and hogging the issue.

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Subject: Re: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Damir](#) on Sun, 05 Mar 2006 17:33:10 GMT

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Huh, Mr. Vinyl - it's really so sad. I have no real knowledge in this field, but I'll write some of my experience - for supporting you. My daughter is going to the "Montessori" section of local kindergarten. There're about 30 children, a few of them "children with special needs". It is a little difficult "mix", but I think that's good atmosphere there - healthy children help, and there're no big troubles. I think that those children make progress in socialization and learning. Are there in your area something like that? I think that 1-2 times a week on a few hours can't be bad?

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Subject: Re: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Mr Vinyl](#) on Mon, 06 Mar 2006 13:07:05 GMT

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Hi, Yes, we do have a school in the area that teaches with the Montessori methods. Interesting ideas. But we are happy with our home schooling for now. We will just continue until progress slows or problems arise. I appreciate your comments though. Thanks

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Subject: Re: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Mr Vinyl](#) on Mon, 06 Mar 2006 13:21:30 GMT

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Well, you may not know this but you inadvertently just stated reasons against gay child adoption and single parents. A father and mother each provide different things to their children both different, but both necessary for raising a well adjusted child. While I believe this is absolutely true I don't believe it applies to the school system as you wrote above. An example is that I am very poor at spelling. My older son is very good at spelling. Many autistic kids, while not having super memories, have better memories than normal children in certain areas because of the way they think. If your theory were correct my son would have picked up on my weak area (spelling) and would be a poor speller too. But look, I really don't know what's completely best. Some children do very well in school with all the teachers and social interactions. But for other children school can be hell. If your popular, great. If not and you are picked on and bullied it's not such a great life experience. So I will say it depends on the child and the circumstances. I can only say that in our case and with our children I think home schooling is the best for them.

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Subject: Re: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Mon, 06 Mar 2006 14:34:52 GMT

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Mr V; I understand perfectly and fully agree with your descision. When you have discussions like this it is easy to become mired in semantics and many times words do not adequetly express what you are trying to say or get the nuances of your message across. I don't want to become redundant. Let me just try to clarify one point. When I say they inherit your weaknesses; I don't mean specific mechanical aspects of your teaching methods. Even though you are a poor speller; the textbook will correct that for the child.I was thinking more of subliminal personal traits. The ones everyone on earth have but many times are not aware of. A teacher who may have biases they are not even aware of will be co-opted by another teacher who has biases they are not aware of but that contradict the biases of the first teacher; resulting in a balanced apprehension by the child.I don't mean racial or gender biases although they could be reflected unconsciously; I mean more like say the level of patience; the way a person communicates distaste for a particular theme without knowing they are doing that.Thats not to say that it is all positive or negative; you may luck out and get very positive messages from the instructors. We all have watched a very good coach motivate their players to perform over and above their skill level. How do they do that? If there was a formulae; every coach would be the best. It's something they have within themselves.Popular is a whole nother issue. How many of the popular kids from your high school went on to be vastly successful people?But I digress; home schooling is a pretty new and under-represented facet of education. Thats the interesting part. You are guinea pigs for this style of education and have a lot of experiences to bring to the table. I like to hear them.

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Subject: Re: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Mr Vinyl](#) on Mon, 06 Mar 2006 15:02:08 GMT

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ah, I see. Yes, you may be right. You might be surprised by the number of children being home schooled. I don't know the exact number but it is quite large and growing yearly.

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Subject: Re: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Mon, 06 Mar 2006 15:35:53 GMT

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Yes' I followed one blog directly concerned with home schooling; but it was as you say mostly religious in nature. Another thing is I downloaded copies of the standardised testing they are using in my kids school. The blog divulged the topics sequentially and truthfully they were about two years behind. What the kids here are doing in eight grade they were doing in tenth. See; the homeschool associations have a incentive to provide the best grades they can in their quest for legitimacy. But the SAT scores don't reflect that. Now these studies were done in Kansas where there is considerable pressure from home schoolers on the mainstream since there are so many of them in that state. So I don't know how that relates to where you are. But perusing the link you gave me I can see that they are definately lagging in how and when they present topics.

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Subject: Re: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Mr Vinyl](#) on Mon, 06 Mar 2006 15:53:20 GMT

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Manual, If you are interested in some statistics check out link below. I just found this link just now when I read your post above. I know nothing of the site (And frankly I just skimmed through it). I just googled home-schooling vs Public test scores. I found the site. However I have read the results many many times. Home schooled children do much better on "standardized tests". I don't know about SAT scores but would assume they are similar. I really don't want to get into the home school vs public school debate. That said I think it's pretty clear that academically home schooled children do much better than their public schooled counterparts. If you can find a link to anything saying otherwise I would be interested in reading it. That said, I will admit that it wasn't so long ago that I thought home schooling was crazy. Then I was pretty much forced to do it. Experience has taught me that I was wrong in a big way on this subject.

<http://www.hslda.org/docs/nche/000010/200410250.asp>

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Subject: Re: ManualBlock - Continued from below - Home Schooling

Posted by [Manualblock](#) on Mon, 06 Mar 2006 18:05:33 GMT

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Well; I'm sorry you see it as a debate. I just have an interest in it. It's not like politics or music where you take a point of view and defend it. It just is what it is. I only read about it due to my personal interest and because I have kids in school; I like to know what's what. I hope it works out for you with your boys. If you want to seek more info I would be glad to communicate on that issue; but I don't really see it as a debate. There are so many variables regarding testing and scoring that it is hard to pin down any absolutes; consequently a debate is probably non-productive.

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