



1988

A study of the perceptions of parents in Sacramento County who choose home schooling for their children

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A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY
WHO CHOOSE HOME SCHOOLING FOR THEIR CHILDREN

by

Elizabeth L. Knopf

A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Education
University of the Pacific
December, 1988

A STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS IN SACRAMENTO COUNTY
WHO CHOOSE HOME SCHOOLING FOR THEIR CHILDREN

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to (1) investigate the reasons parents in Sacramento County choose home schooling for their child(ren); (2) describe selected characteristics of the parents; (3) describe selected characteristics of their child(ren); (4) describe the educational programs used in the home schools; (5) describe the perceptions home schooling parents have of local public school administrators; and (6) describe the commitment these parents have to home schooling.

Method: A mailed questionnaire was used to collect data. The population used in this study was 117 families who either filed a private school affidavit with the Sacramento County Office of Education in the fall of 1986 or in the fall of 1987, or who are home schooling families living in Sacramento County that are members of one of three different "support groups".

Findings: Analysis of the data collected indicates the following: (1) the three most frequently cited reasons for choosing home schooling are to provide greater opportunity for moral instruction, to have greater involvement in child's education and to provide a higher quality of education; (2) the majority of parents are high school graduates with two years of college who attended public schools and have no teaching credential; the religious affiliations of the families vary widely and the majority of families report incomes of less than \$40,000; (3) the majority of students in home school programs are between kindergarten

and third grade; (4) the majority of home school children spend 3 hours or less daily on academic subjects and 2 hours or less daily on related activities; (5) the majority of the home schooling parents have not met with local public school administrators; and (6) close to one-third of the parents possibly or definitely plan to home school their child(ren) through senior high school.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Home schooling families are willing to sacrifice to insure their children receive the type of education valued by the family. Further study is needed to compare the academic progress of home-schooled children with public school children; to determine the impact of religion on home schooling; and to track home schooling families.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

After years of favoring learning through both public and private schools, some parents are now rejecting this tradition in favor of home schooling for their children. Historically, the belief that parents had both a right and an obligation to control the intellectual and moral upbringing of their children was found in Anglo-American common law as the right to feed, clothe and otherwise provide for the basic needs of children (Beshoner, 1981). Early laws were concerned with the basic education of children. Yet, according to Beshoner, they are not to be confused with today's compulsory education statutes which require classroom attendance. The responsibility for the child's education was left up to the parents. The state assumed the role of assisting the parents in the job of preparing their children for adulthood by providing state-supported "free" schools. According to Beshoner, the parents could chose to delegate some part, or even all, of this parental responsibility.

The rights of parents regarding the education of their children are derived from different areas. Volz (1981) cites such

rights as being derived from the status of being a parent, from the First and Fourteenth amendments to the United States Constitution, from general principles of law, from legislation and from congressional acts, such as the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. However, it appears that in few instances are parental rights in education absolute. Generally, according to Volz, parental rights must be weighed and balanced against the interests of the State, under its police power, to provide for its interest, and that of the public at large, in an educated and capable citizenry. Volz concludes that on purely educational matters the interest of the parent normally must yield to the dominant interest of the State.

Mondschein and Sorenson (1982) offer the viewpoint that where there is no expressed or implied provision for home schooling in state education statutes, the question arises as to whether or not parents may nevertheless have a constitutional right to educate their children at home. The constitutional basis of such a right, according to Mondschein and Sorenson, is thought to come from one or more of the following: basic common law principles, early Supreme Court cases related to education, and/or cases related to the right of privacy. Lines (1982) states home schooling may be entitled to even more constitutional protection, because the child/parent relationship may be entitled to constitutional protection under a right to privacy. However, Lines admits this ideas has not been tested and judicial reactions to it have been unclear.

Hafen (1983) concurs with Mondschein and Sorenson and Lines, he states,

...the right of parents to direct the rearing of their children does not completely outweigh the right of society--acting through governmental agencies--to maintain standards necessary to ensure a minimal level of educational quality. Again, this social interest is for the benefit of the child as well as the larger society. (Hafen, 1983, p. 154)

Two broad principles have been identified by Hafen to require certain minimal educational standards. One supports the right of parents to direct the raising of their children. The second principle is society's right to require minimal educational standards.

...(both of these) have coexisted and interacted successfully for many years, as the United States has developed and maintained the world's most successful publicly-funded system of universal education. Within the last several years, however, a number of problems have developed that now threaten this one harmonious relation between the home and the school. (Hafen, 1983, p. 154)

There is evidence that the interests of the child are now being included in decisions relating to the child's education as they relate to a future career, according to Nolte (1982). Traditionally, the interest of the state in enlightened citizens and the interest of the parent to control the education of the child were the major interests to be balanced. Nolte is of the opinion that "Since children do not shed their constitutional rights at the school-house gate, the child's interest in education will receive increasing attention in courts of law" (Nolte, 1982, p. 4).

A review of compulsory school attendance history by Mondschein and Sorenson (1982) shows the first state law requiring students to attend school was enacted in Massachusetts in 1850. School attendance laws had been passed in all states by 1918. However, after the United States Supreme Court's landmark decision in Brown v. Board of Education, several southern states rescinded their compulsory attendance laws. Mondschein and Sorenson conclude that today, every state, with the exception of Mississippi, has an effective compulsory school attendance law. (In 1981, according to Mondschein and Sorenson, Mississippi adopted a new compulsory attendance law but it contains no provision for enforcement.) These compulsory attendance laws generally require parents or guardians to send their children, generally between the ages of seven and sixteen, to school for a certain period of time and for a specified number of days per year. Attendance laws, according to Mondschein and Sorenson, in general, are based on the idea that education promotes the general welfare of the people and are a proper exercise of a state's police powers. "The importance of education to the state is demonstrated by the fact that forty-eight states have constitutional provisions requiring their legislature to establish a public school system" (Mondschein and Sorenson, 1982, pp. 258-259).

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compulsory education laws are granted for only very few reasons. These reasons include school suspension or expulsion; quarantine; marriage; and attendance at a private school or the receiving of other acceptable forms of instruction. According to Harris and Fields, significant litigation has recently developed in this last area.

Laws applying to home schooling vary from state to state. Three basic types of state compulsory education statutes have been identified:

1. those that provide no exception beyond the alternatives to public and private schools
2. those that provide an implied expectation for home schooling by broadly interpreting phrases in the law such as "equivalent education elsewhere" or like phrases
3. those that provide an explicit exception for home schooling

The laws governing home schooling usually concern themselves with three issues; whether or not home instruction qualifies as equivalent to the institutional, group-learning experience; whether home instruction constitutes and can fall under the precepts of a "private" school; and whether First Amendment considerations focusing on separation of church and state apply to home schooling. (Nelson, 1986, p. 2)

"The public education system is caught in the middle, unable to please everyone, and responsible for enforcing compulsory attendance laws against those who have rejected the values underlying the approved course of instruction" (Lines, 1982, p. 190). According to Lines, some educators wonder whether compulsory attendance is important enough to be treated as a criminal offense for parents for seeking what they believe to be the best education for their children.

Other educators, according to Lines, worry that children in unaccredited programs may not be acquiring the basic skills for good citizenship and self-sufficiency. In addition, some educators are also concerned about the long-range consequences of allowing a large number of the population to insulate themselves from the mainstream of society. Meanwhile, according to Lines, a few state officials have recognized the financial implications to public schools when parents choose home schooling. Such a choice reduces the number of students and therefore reduces enrollment-based state aid.

Nelson (1986) concurs with Lines regarding the concern of public school officials to the loss of enrollment-based state aid. In addition, Nelson cites a concern by public school officials about home schools lacking accreditation.

Some superintendents are genuinely concerned that students in unaccredited programs may not acquire the essential skills for good citizenship and further learning. Many state officials recognize that the trend toward home schooling will siphon off students and thus enrollment-based state aid from public schools. Because of this threat of diminished state aid, some superintendents engage parents in lawsuits in an attempt to stop the flow of students from their school districts. (Nelson, 1986, p. 2)

The home schooling movement appears to be growing but is not understood by educators or researchers. Mondschein and Sorenson (1982) conclude that school administrators are increasingly being confronted with issues concerning home schooling. In addition to considering procedural guidelines, Mondschein and Sorenson suggest educators should become familiar with the compulsory education statutes

and court decisions of their own jurisdictions. This is to help the educator make decisions that are both legally and educationally correct.

According to Williams (1984) the results of home schooling research should be useful to:

1. School districts who want guidance in designing programs that will appeal to current or potential home schoolers and other parents to encourage cooperation between parents and schools.
2. Teachers, student teachers and administrators who want to plan and/or modify their educational practices to eliminate problems cited by home schools and to facilitate cooperation with parents.
3. Members of the research community who are trying to understand the role of parents in the education of children and the nature of learning, education and schooling in all settings.
4. Legislators who want to encourage or discourage the home school alternative.
5. Anyone else interested in learning or education, in or out of institutions. (Williams, 1984, p. 28)

Statement of the Problem

An increasing number of parents appear to be choosing home schooling as an alternative to public or private schools. School boards and administrators are concerned and sometime unclear as to the reasons parents make this choice. Specifically collected data on home schooling is rare. The purpose of this study was to

11. determine what teaching resources are being used in the home school.
 12. determine how the child's achievement is assessed.
 13. determine the average amount of time the child spends daily on academic subjects.
 14. determine the average amount of time the child spends daily on related activities.
 15. determine if the family is involved with any home schooling organization or "support group".
 16. determine if the home schooling parents have met with a local public school administrator to discuss the needs of the family regarding educational programs for the child(ren).
-
17. describe the parents' perceptions of the meeting's outcome if the parents have met with a local school administrator.
 18. determine until what age or grade level parents plan to continue home schooling.
 19. determine the perceptions of parents regarding the success of their home school.

Limitations and Delimitations

The limitations of this study include:

1. The home schooling families used in this study came from two sources. The first source was home schooling families that filed a private school affidavit in compliance with Section 33190 of

the Education Code with the Sacramento County Office of Education in the fall of 1986 or in the fall of 1987 and have four or fewer students registered in the school. The second source was home schooling families that are members of SCOPE, HIS, or Spice "support group" and may or may not have filed a private school affidavit. (SCOPE is the Sacramento Council of Parent Educators; HIS is Home Is Success; and Spice is a local independent group.)

2. The content of this study was based on a 42% return rate; 117 responses were received from the 280 mailed or distributed.

Definition of Term

Home Schooling - the education of child(ren) at home by a parent or parents rather than in a public or other private school.

Assumptions

This study of home schooling parents was based upon the following assumptions:

1. The survey provided accurate data.
2. The sample was sufficiently representative of the home schooling population in Sacramento County.
3. Nonrespondents did not seriously distort the findings of this study for the population of home schooling families in Sacramento County.

Long-Range Consequences

As a consequence of a study to determine reasons parents choose home schooling and selected characteristics of the parents, information will be available for administrators, teachers, home schooling parents and others interested in education. This information may be of assistance to encourage meaningful and productive communication between various groups of people. In addition, from this study, legislators, board of education members and other policy makers will have information available to them for use in their decision making processes.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The major purpose of the chapter is to present a review of the literature related to the reasons parents choose home schooling for their children and to describe characteristics of the home schooling parents and their children. An additional purpose is to review the literature related to the perceptions home schooling parents have of the local public schools, the commitment these parents have to home schooling and to describe the educational materials used in the home school.

Reasons Cited for Home Schooling

A review of empirical literature and various anecdotal articles indicates that parents choose home schooling for a wide variety of reasons. Greene (1984), in one of the few empirical studies, offers a profile of Alaska home study students and their families. Reasons, other than necessity, cited by Greene for enrollment in home study range from the belief that home study provides more opportunity for learning life skills and spiritual values, to the need or desire of the family to continue schooling while traveling.

Child's Educational Needs

Williams (1984), in another empirical study, reports that any given family in his study may have cited one or more reasons for choosing home schooling. One reason for home schooling identified by Williams is the child seems unsuited for school. The parents decided the child may either be bored because the materials being taught at the school are already understood by the child, or the child may be behind and unable to keep up with other students. The student also may be having social problems with the teacher or with other students. According to Williams the parents have determined that the student needs individual assistance and the parents feel the schools are unable to provide this individual attention and thus not meet their child's needs.

Kearney (1984) claims parents of gifted children choose home schooling for their children when the child's intellectual abilities are so far beyond that of the normal age-in-grade placement that they experienced a great deal of frustration. According to Kearney, home schooling families can design an extensive individualized curriculum for their gifted children, taking into account special abilities. This view is somewhat supported by Lines (1984). According to Lines families choose home schooling because they believe they know best how to educate a particular child. Some of these parents, according to Lines, enroll all their children in school except the child believed to have unique educational needs. Lines (1987) states sometimes parents

choose home schooling after recognizing the needs of "a precocious child". The child, the family decides, needs a highly individualized program to attain its highest potential and other parents choose home schooling for a child having difficulty adapting to school.

Parental Desire for Control

Another reason parents choose home schooling cited by Williams (1984) is parents and children want to feel "in control". Sometimes parents responded that they found themselves, their children and their lives revolving around the children's school schedule and activities. These parents would prefer their lives to be centered in the home and to give their children responsibilities in the home. However, the children's activities were focused on school and school-related purposes. According to Williams, for these parents, taking children out of the school and to have a home school is a means of shifting the control from the school and to the home and to the parents.

This reason is supported by Divoky (1983) who states that some "home schoolers are simply working for self-sufficiency in a society that they perceive as too technological and too institutionalized" (Divoky, 1983, p. 396). For these parents, according to Divoky, home schooling is part of a lifestyle that often includes living on the land and growing their own food. The lifestyle in a rural setting, according to Divoky, has children spending more time with the family and is compatible with home schooling.

School is one of the first institutions children encounter and some home school parents want their children to be more independent of institutions. Some, in fact, want to feel independent of all government institutional control. They believe schools which receive federal funds are "under government control" (Williams, 1984, p. 5).

McCoy (1982) cites Helen Baker, an Ohio attorney, who argues "the school systems of America are the single largest state agency for the deprivation of rights, starting at an early age and on a captive audience" (McCoy, 1982, p. 146). Baker claims required schooling deprives children of free speech, free association, religious freedom, and other rights adults take for granted. Baker also claims compulsory schooling subjects children to invasion of privacy. Baker contends compulsory schooling denies children the right to an education, because "most schools do not educate...the compulsory school community is essentially not a learning environment" (McCoy, 1982, p. 146). Nolte (1982) also cites "unnecessary compulsion amounting in effect to unconstitutional invasion of parental privacy" as a reason parents are rejecting public school education for their children in favor of home instruction (Nolte, 1982, p. 2).

Socialization

A common criticism of home schooling cited by many authors is that children in home schools will not be involved in the socialization process that occurs in schools. However, according to Williams (1984) and to Carrere (1983), this is one of the major reasons many home schooling parents want to take their children out of

the school. Williams quotes one home schooling mother as saying, "We want our children to be peer independent" (Williams, 1984, p. 5).

These parents want family-socialization for their children. They want their family to be center of the children's social world. Williams states these parents want this family-centered life at least until the children are old enough to be on their own socially. However, Williams does not clarify at what age this would happen. According to Williams, these parents do not stop their children from associating with other children but these parents want to feel that their children enjoy being at home associating with family members rather than having their entire social life centered around peers. Lines (1984) appears to agree with Williams in stating that some families choose home schooling because they are strongly committed to a family-centered life and extended time with small children.

Carrere (1983) appears to concur with the view offered by Williams and Lines that many home schooling parents want to take their children out of schools for social reasons. According to Carrere, these parents honestly believe public schools are devoid of the religious and moral instruction they desire for their children.

Parental rights to educate their children at home is cited by Beshoner (1981) as a reason parents choose home schooling for their children. It is Beshoner's argument "that conscientious and informed parents are the most aware of their children's needs and are best qualified to integrate learning materials with their family's own

philosophy and values" (Beshoner, 1981, p. 193). Williams (1984) writes that home schooling parents see home schooling as a means of protecting their children from rivalry, ridicule and competition. In addition, according to Williams, home schooling protects their children from conflicting moral values the parents believe are associated with school socialization.

According to the study conducted by Gustavsen (1981), there are two major reasons expressed by parents for operating home schools. One reason is concern about the moral health and character development of their children. The second reason is the detrimental effect of rivalry and ridicule in conventional schools. "Other parents are worried about their children's physical safety and the increasing drug use in schools, even at the elementary level." (McCoy, 1982, p. 142). This viewpoint is supported by Beshoner (1981). "Many feel home education is the best way to provide a safe environment for their children and to keep them away from the multiplying problems of assaults, drugs and vandalism" (Beshoner, 1981, p. 193-4). Nolte (1982) states parents who choose home schooling instead of public schools want to protect their children from "...exposure of their children in public schools to worldly influences, dirty language, drugs, crime and sex" (Nolte, 1982, p. 2).

However, according to Divoky (1983), this protective attitude does not stop home-schooled children from associating with other children. Divoky claims home schooling parents do encourage

social activities, either with other home schooling families or with neighborhood children when those children are not in school. Divoky writes that home schoolers who wish their children to have time to socialize with their peers are also advised to sign them up for such out-of-school activities as scouts, sports teams, church groups, hobby clubs and community classes. This view is supported by Wheatley (1985) who states that parents usually make sure their kids participate in athletics, church activities or scouts to widen their circle of friends and maintain their social skills.

Curriculum Content

Many home school parents disagree with things that are taught in the public schools. Many parents are also concerned about exposing their children to atheism or satanism or witchcraft or explicit sex, or to evolution unbalanced by creationism (Moore, 1979).

Many home school parents disagree with the things that are taught in public schools. They believe home school provides them a means of teaching the morals and values they perceive the schools are teaching that they do not want to emphasize. For example, many home schoolers are anxious to include the concepts of God, country, honesty and freedom in the daily lessons they provide their children. They are under the impression that these values are not emphasized in the public schools and that in their place, other values which they often categorize as "secular humanism" are implicitly taught through the text materials that most schools use. Certainly not all home schoolers have these attitudes but many do. (Williams, 1984, p. 6)

Divoky (1983) concludes probably a majority of parents choose home schooling for religious reasons. "Probably a majority of home schoolers are religious fundamentalists, unhappy with

the failure of the public schools to teach religious and spiritual tenets and with what they sometimes describe as the 'secular humanism' that these schools allegedly espouse" (Divoky, 1983, p. 396).

Nolte (1982) concurs with this view by stating some parents are rejecting public school education for their children in favor of home instruction because they are disenchanted with what they believe to be inexcusable "humanistic" trends in the public schools. Zirkel and Gluckman (1983) appear to agree with Divoky and Nolte and cite the case of State v. Riddle as an example.

The Riddles perceive public schools, like television, as a pernicious influence on the young, incalculating the heresies of secular humanism. They were not even satisfied with the spiritual teachings of the local Christian academy, having enrolled and then withdrawn their children from attendance there. (Zirkel and Gluckman, 1983, p. 37)

Learning Process

In the 1981 study conducted by Gustavsen, parent-perceived poor quality of public school education is cited as another major reason expressed by parents for operating home schools. Many parents cited "academic failure" as the reason they choose home schooling for their children. "Contributing to the dissatisfaction of parents are declining scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT), little or no assigned homework, inflated grades, automatic promotion, below-level text books and objective, rather than essay, examinations" (Beshoner, 1981, p. 194).

Home schoolers tend to value independent thinking, learning how to learn rather than learning facts, and giving learners the responsibility for their learning. Although these same attitudes toward learning are possible in schools, home schoolers tend to believe they are not encouraged. Rather, they perceive schools to be focused on the transmission of information and the testing of children to see if they have captured information. They would rather emphasize helping children learn to love to learn, feeding their curiosity, encouraging inquisitiveness, and building independence from teacher structure and direction. (Williams, 1984, p. 6)

This position is supported by Merrill (1983) who claims home schooling parents are even uncertain about private Christian schooling, "especially when the teaching is sometimes long on seatwork and short on creativity" (Merrill, 1983, p. 16). Merrill also states the number of parents choosing home schooling is being fortified by a growing number of curriculum publishers providing materials for home use. This view is supported by Divoky (1983) who states the popularity of such highly structured correspondence courses as the Calvert Home Instruction Courses and the Christian Liberty Academy program suggests many parents need a crutch for their home schooling. These programs provide for a structured morning or afternoon of study each day. They also give parents some feedback about their children's progress by evaluating their work, scoring their tests, and reporting back with grades.

According to Kearney (1984) parents choose to educate a child, especially a gifted child, at home especially after trying the

public school. Home schooling allows families to design an individualized curriculum for the child. The individualized curriculum takes into account the special abilities and interests of the child. The home school program allows the gifted child more time for independent study in subjects other children are not interested in, and more time for original and creative projects. Kearny quotes a parent of a gifted child, "Home schooling allows our child to cope with society in general, not just with peers in a controlled environment. It's a real-life socialization rather than an institutionalized program" (Kearney, 1984, p. 17).

Divoky (1983) appears to agree somewhat with both Williams and Merrill. "The goal, many veteran home schoolers suggest, is to be able to get out of the way of children's learning, to simply provide an environment that allows youngsters to be self-directed" (Divoky, 1983, p. 397). This view is supported by Lines (1987) who writes that many home schooling parents agree with the view of John Holt who believed children learn best in an unstructured setting where the child sets the pace and the direction. However, Williams (1984) writes that parents who decide they are going to teach their children at home have to believe they are capable of teaching their own children. These parents may purchase commercially-distributed materials, or they use materials that the schools lend them. However, they teach with the assumption that they can supervise the children's use of workbooks and textbooks as well as teachers can, especially

since they can give their children individualized attention which the teachers cannot give.

Parental Interest

Four authors, Gustavsen (1981), Solorzano (1985), Williams (1984) and Divoky (1983), agree that some parents choose home schooling simply because they like to watch their children grow and learn. The desire to extend parent-child contact is cited as one of the reasons expressed in Gustavsen's study in 1981. According to Solorzano (1985), home schooling parents feel they have their children for a very short time and want them to have the family's values, not the values of their peers. These parents believe they are not stunting their children's growth by keeping them home so they as parents can be involved in the children's education (Williams, 1984). They are strongly committed to a family-centered life and extended time with small children. Divoky (1983) claims many programs and many experienced home schoolers urge parents to spend time working side by side with the children.

Other Reasons

Colfax (1981) in an anecdotal article titled "Teaching Our Own", seems to concur with many of the reasons cited. Colfax states that for families located in the northern California hills where he lives, several reasons contributed to the decision to educate their children at home. The Colfax family home-schooled for nearly

ten years. Included in Colfax's reasons were difficult transportation conditions in the winter.

Distances between neighbors with school-aged children precluded the organization of alternative backwoods schools. And then there were the religious, political, and philosophical objections to the local schools; they were too conservative or too liberal, too rigid or too informal, too academic or not academic enough, too fundamentalist or not fundamentalist enough.

For most of us, however, a mixture of philosophy and geography impelled us toward home schooling. We had moved to the country without giving much thought to how the children would be educated, or where, or by whom, but all were imbued with a spirit of self-reliance, and it was all but inevitable that we would begin thinking and talking about "teaching our own". (Colfax, 1981, p. 44)

There are additional reasons for parents to choose home schooling mentioned by other authors. For example, Rust and Reed (1978) cite racial identification and prejudice as reasons parents are disenchanted with state-controlled schooling and therefore choose home schooling. This idea is somewhat supported by one other author. Lines (1982) claims some home schooling parents reject the idea of the U.S. public school as a "melting pot". McCoy (1982) cites an example from Hal Bennett's book No More Public School. Bennett writes of one home-schooling couple who did not want to share their child's affection with a teacher or classmates.

Lines (1987) writes many parents have home schools as a matter of long-standing religious tradition. Lines cites as examples Mormons who operate "kitchen schools" for a few neighborhood children

along with the Seventh-Day Adventists who have some members who believe that young children should stay at home and the Amish who often remove their children from school after eighth grade.

Characteristics of Home Schooling Parents

Conflicting information has been written concerning characteristics of home schooling parents. Two dissertations, Linden (1983) and Gustavsen (1981), give empirical information. Several other authors report both studies and general characteristics. For example, the women who operate Learning at Home (a home-schooling support organization in Hawaii) characterize home schooling parents as "committed to providing a more informal, individualized, and more responsive type of learning. These parents often birth their children at home, clothe them in natural fibers and feed them natural foods" (Lines, 1987, p. 510).

Various authors claim different levels of education for home schooling parents. Feinstein (1986) cites a survey by the Home School Legal Defense Association, a 3,000 member support group, which found 40% of those responding were college graduates and an additional 30% had some college. Almost all the rest, according to survey, had high school diplomas. Bowen (1987) in The Home School Court Report, published by the Home School Legal Defense Association, reports on a random sampling survey of 300 home schooling families who are members of the association. The survey results indicated 45% of the parents have a college degree or higher and over 50% of the parents only had a

high school diploma. Moore (1985) claims that the education level of the average home-schooling parent is one to two years of college.

Another study on the educational backgrounds of home schooling parents was reported by Rupp (1986). Using responses from 43 families, this study showed 66% of the families had college degrees, 19% had some college education, 10% were high school graduates and 4% were high-school dropouts.

Lines (1987) reports on the education of home schooling parents using the responses to a questionnaire conducted by the state of Washington received from 313 "parent/tutors" teaching 500 children. One percent of the parents reported having a grade school education and 6% reported having some high school. "Almost a fourth" of the parents reported having a high school diploma. "A few more" reported having a General Equivalency Diploma. Forty-one per cent reported having some college while 16% reported having a bachelor's degree and 4% reported having a graduate degree.

Linden (1983), in a dissertation, studied 66 families living in Texas who were currently home schooling their children. Linden's findings indicate the highest level of education attained by 43.9% of the participants was high school. Linden's findings indicate 27.3% had 1 to 3 years of college and only 18.2% had 4 years of college or were college graduates. These are in contrast to Gustavsen's dissertation findings. Gustavsen (1981), studied a population of parents indicating recent experience or interest in home

school operations drawn from the files of the Hewitt Research Foundation, formerly located in Berrien Spring, Michigan and now located in Washougal, Washington. (This organization's president is Raymond Moore.) Gustavsen found 18.7% of the responses indicated 1 to 3 years or college; 23.3% indicated 4 or more years of college; and 22.7% of the responses indicated work in graduate school.

Both McMurdy (1985) and Divoky (1983) claim many home schooling parents are former teachers. According to Divoky, for some parents, the decision to choose home schooling springs from personal experiences as teachers or parents who have worked to reform the schools from within. According to Moore (1985), about 30% of the parents are certified teachers. Moore did not identify the population for this figure.

Carrere (1983) and Divoky (1983) identify a characteristic of home schooling parents as a willingness to act on their convictions and, if need be, a willingness to defy the law in the interests of their children. Divoky concludes these parents are also ready to challenge compulsory education laws or find ways to circumvent the laws. Examples of ways used to circumvent the law include not enrolling their children in the first place, by obtaining a teaching certificate, or by enrolling their children in private institutions acting as "shelter schools", (many of which provide materials and testing services). However, according to Divoky (1983), home schooling parents are coming "out of the closet". Ten years ago, such parents would have insisted that their

children stay inside the house during school hours, for fear that neighbors would report them to the truant officer. Today, according to Divoky, home schoolers are more likely to appear on TV talk shows and to grant interviews to reporters about this educational option.

Divoky, Wheatley and Williams concur about the demanding work of being home schooling parents. Divoky (1983) concludes that even with two parents sharing the job, the nonstop, year-around task of schooling and caring for children at home is both psychologically and physically demanding. Most often, according to Divoky, it's the mother who becomes "the unpaid teacher in uncharted territory".

Wheatley (1985) claims the majority of home schooling parents are excited about playing a vital role in their children's education. They realize it is an awesome responsibility, requiring exceptional time, patience, physical and emotional endurance. Williams (1984) writes that many parents, when they first talked about home schooling suggested that it is an joyous experience to see their children growing and learning and that they enjoy being involved with them in the learning process. They will, according to Williams, eventually admit that being both the parent and the teacher to their children, especially when there are more than one or two children, can be an extremely demanding role. Williams concludes it takes total dedication; it takes a lot of time, a lot of effort, a lot of energy. Beshoner (1981) concludes only a few parents will have the motivation and resources to devote the time and to make the necessary sacrifices to take over

completely the education of their children. Rupp (1986) reports five parents of the 43 responding to her questionnaire noted they have little time left for themselves and "five families mention the inevitable occasional frustrating days when the kids wrangle and nobody seems interested in anything" (Rupp, 1986, p. 72).

Henderson (1987) states there is no denying that home schooling can take its toll on parents. Henderson claims "many give up after a year or so" (Henderson, 1987, p. 83). Reasons cited for this decision include home schooling can interfere with other family activities and with parents' jobs. Henderson also writes that parents who abandon home schooling, feeling they have done an inadequate job, sometimes have tremendous feelings of guilt.

The majority of home schooling families tend to have two parents according to Williams (1984). Yet a majority of home schools, according to Williams, are run almost exclusively by the mothers. Some families who want home schooling end up stopping because one spouse is not supportive. However, according to Williams, in the home schools that continue to operate, the mother is usually the principle force behind the operation. The father has to be supportive and pick up much of the "slack" that is caused by the mother's emphasis on home schooling. Williams writes there are a few cases in which the father conducts most of the home schooling activities. Gustavsen (1981) found that 54.4% of the home schools were operated by homemaking mothers whose spouses were professionals or skilled workers. Gustavsen also found

38.3% of the home schooling families in his study reported a joint operation run by both parents. Findings from the study by Linden (1983) show of the 66 families surveyed, all but 2 main educators in the families were female. Lines (1987) study of 313 "parent/tutors" conducted in the state of Washington found that 89% were female.

Gustavsen (1981) found 74.3% of home schooling household incomes ranged between \$5,000 and \$29,999 per year with the largest group, 17.9%, reporting incomes between \$10,000 to \$14,999. In Linden's 1983 study, the most frequently selected range (24%) of incomes was between \$10,000 and \$14,999 and approximately half of the families reported incomes ranging between \$15,000 and \$39,999 annually. Lines (1987), reporting on the income 313 home schooling parents in Washington state, writes 85% of the parents reported incomes below \$30,000.

Characteristics of Home-Schooled Children

Moore (1982), in his April 1986 addendum, reports home schooled children include normal, migrant and handicapped children. Moore also reports home schoolers have few behavior problems. Gustavsen (1981) reports the typical home school family in his study had two children. Lines' (1987) study, based on the 313 questionnaires received from home schooling parents in Washington state, found 89% of the "parent/tutors" have three or fewer children. Rupp (1986) reports that of the 43 families responding to her questionnaire, most of the families were "medium-sized" and the average age of all the home-schooled children was seven. Only six of the responding families had students of

high-school age. Rupp concludes indications from other studies are that the majority of home-schooled children are primary-grade students. Findings from the study by Linden (1983) show most of 124 students were in grades 2 and 8. Grade 2 had the most with 17 children, or 14%.

In a study of organizations that serve school-aged children through 12th grade, Lines (1987) writes that Accelerated Christian Education in Lewisville, Texas, believes that 40% of the users of its curriculum materials are in grades 9-12. The School of Home Learning has 22 of 102 children at the secondary level. The Pensacola Christian School estimates that between 20% and 25% of its correspondence students are in grades 9-12. Alaska reports 456, or 36%, of its 1,254 school-aged correspondence students in 1985-86 were in grades 9-12.

In the study by Rupp (1986), thirty-two of the 43 participating families indicated the children love home schooling and have no desire to go to public school. Two of the families indicated their children were bored and two families indicated their children were embarrassed about home schooling because they were teased by friends. In two other families the children were reported as being lonely and wanted to return to school to make more friends. McCoy (1982) reports some home schooled children actually go back to school because they want to be where their friends are. Henderson (1987) reports many children do not like being home schooled, especially beyond elementary grades, and even home-schooled teens with plenty of friends want to take part in school dances, plays and clubs. According to Greene (1984) in his study of

home schooling in Alaska, it appears students are more likely to leave home study and enter regular school as they reach high school. Greene attributes this to the reasons mentioned by adults and students in his study. Reasons include needing more subject matter expertise in advanced levels, wanting more participation in social and sports activities, and exposure to classroom discussion experiences.

Henderson (1987) writes that a "recent study" measuring self-esteem showed that home-schooled children do not appear to be socially deprived. In contrast, Lines (1987) reports evidence for the social development of home-schooled children is scarce and may be biased. Lines cites as an example a study by John Wesley Taylor of Andrews University who tested 224 home-schooled children. Using the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale, Taylor found that half of the home-schooled children scored at or above the 91st percentile. Lines, however, states Taylor's sample may be biased and his testing procedures may have influenced the outcome.

There is limited data on the achievement of home-schooled children. According to Henderson (1987), individual case studies and surveys of parents have repeatedly shown that the level of academic achievement of home-schooled children is equivalent to or higher than that of their public school peers. Henderson cites the "routine tests" given by the departments of education in Alaska and Arizona show home-schooled children "outperformed" those in public school. Henderson does

conclude the lack of performance data nationwide makes it difficult to assess the effects of home schooling.

The study conducted by Rupp (1986) shows of the 43 responding families, twenty said their children did not take standardized tests. Sixteen reported their children had been tested and in almost all cases the home-schooled children scored at or above their grade level. The single below-average exception was a child who had also been below average while attending public school. One study cited by Lines (1982) (1984) (1987) of children in a home tutorial network in Los Angeles shows their scores on standardized national tests were higher than the scores of children in the public schools. Lines notes, however, the test scores of the children before they enrolled in the program were not available. In addition, the children in the program were compared to all children in public schools and not with children from the same socioeconomic background. Lines (1987) also cites the results of the experimental Washington state program that tested 100 home-schooled children. All of these children had remained in the program from spring 1984 to spring 1985. Lines concedes the sample was too small to permit generalization, however, a majority of the students were at or above average on the Stanford Achievement Test. In addition, according to Lines, information on income and parental education from the survey of parents indicated that this was not an "elite group".

Home-Schooling Parents' Perceptions of School Administrators

Very little information has been written on the perceptions

home schooling parents have of public school administrators. Findings from the study conducted by Linden (1983) show 55 of the 59 responding parents perceived school authorities as either opposing, indifferent, and/or hostile and interfering. Only 4 parents of the 59 responded they found school authorities supportive. Rupp (1986) reports thirteen of the 43 responding families in her study found their local schools very supportive of home schooling and all 13 has good relationships with school officials. Nineteen of the 43 responding families stated their districts were not supportive of home schooling but did not interfere with home schoolers and gave no problems. Six families indicated their districts were not supportive and had given considerable difficulty and, in two cases, were threatening lawsuits.

Parent Commitment to Home Schooling

Rupp (1986) reports that 17, or 40%, of the 43 families in her study responded their children had been home-schooled all their lives. Of the rest, most had been home-schooled two to three years. The shortest practicing home schoolers had been in home school for three months and the longest for nine years. Bowen (1987) reports approximately 63% of the families in her study had been in home schooling two or more years.

Wheatley (1985) claims most home schooling parents intend to put their children back in school eventually. This is in contrast to the findings of Linden (1983) showing 92.4% of parents in her survey stating they would not re-enter their children in public schools. Only

3% of the parents in Linden's study responded they would re-enter their children in public schools.

Nelson (1986) suggests that a factor often overlooked when discussing home schooling is that families who choose home schooling tend to weave back and forth between home schooling and regular schooling every few years. Nelson claims it is not a permanent choice and concludes that home schooling families each year seem to be trying to find the best possible education for their children.

Colfax (1981) writes that all of his friends who began teaching their children at home back in the early seventies have long since given it up. Colfax attributes geographical and social isolation on a primitive homestead as the reasons his family kept home-schooling. However, according to Education USA (October 20, 1986), financial pressures may be one reason only about half of the home school parents tracked by Connecticut continue for more than one year.

Materials Used in Home Schools

Gustavsen (1981) characterizes the typical home school programs in his study as informal, child-centered and relatively flexible. According to Divoky (1983), many home schooling veterans suggest the goal is to be able to get out of the way of children's learning and simply provide an environment that allows youngsters to be self-directed. Divoky cites Holt as recommending a "free-flowing" curriculum for home-schooled children. This curriculum is to expose them to as many community resources as possible. Divoky concedes the

popularity of highly structured correspondence courses suggests many parents need a "crutch" for their home schooling programs. These programs also give parents some feedback about their children's progress by evaluating their work, scoring tests and reporting back to the parents.

According to Wheatley (1985), for home schooling parents who are not trained as teachers and for those who do not have access to public educational curricula, the search for a balanced program is unending. Wheatley concludes areas requiring special equipment like science, music, and physical education are often shorted. In addition, many parents turn to experience packets developed and produced commercially or by religious schools. However, Education USA (October 20, 1986) cites Ellen Dana of the Hewitt-Moore Child Development Center in Washougal, Washington as saying many parents have left highly academic programs because "children were getting burned out."

Ideally, according to Moore (1982), the head of the Hewitt-Moore Child Development Center, in his 1986 addendum, home programs should reflect the Smithsonian findings that have a recipe for leadership and genius that includes warm, educationally-responsive parents; little association with children not of the family; and rich experience in working out their own fantasies. In addition, according to Moore, the ideal home program will delay formal instruction until about age 8 to ten; use simple curricula that is tailored to each child but stressing creative thought and practice. Moore also recommends

teaching no more than two to three hours daily including supervised study, having home businesses with children as officers and providing service opportunities.

Teaching materials and methods used in home schools vary widely. Lines (1984) writes some parents believe children should be self-directed and offer little or no supervision. Other parents maintain a strict schedule. However, according to Lines, parents generally try to design home schooling programs to meet the individual needs of their children.

Rupp (1986) reports that thirteen of the 43 families in her study were allowed by school officials to use school resources and materials if desired. Twenty-one families or almost 50% of the families reported using a "structured" or "semistructured" curriculum in their home schooling. Seventeen were "unstructured" and allowed learning to be entirely directed by the individual interests of their children. Six families used correspondence courses and three families used tutors for languages, math and music.

Henderson (1987) concludes home schooling can be as structured and as academic as the parents choose to make it. Some families may use one of the many schools that offer a home-based curriculum, such as Calvert in Baltimore or the Clonlara School in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Other families, according to Henderson, incorporate learning into daily life activities and follow no formal schedule while other parents develop their own curriculum and set aside at least two to three hours a

day for supervised learning and another two to three for independent study.

The study conducted by Linden (1983) revealed 56% of the responding parents used commercial materials developed especially for their kinds of programs. Forty-one per cent of the parents prepared most of the materials used in their home school. This is in contrast to Lines (1987) who estimates 50% to 75% of all home schooling parents design their own curricula rather than use the services or materials from an institution.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the reasons parents in Sacramento County choose home schooling for their children and to describe selected characteristics of the parents and their children. An additional purpose was to describe the educational programs in the home schools, to describe the perceptions home schooling parents have of local public school administrators and to describe the commitment there parents have to home schooling.

Research Methodology

After in-depth discussions with the leaders of a local home schooling parent support group, the decision was made to use a mailed questionnaire. The leadership of the group expressed strong concern that some of the questions required information that was "highly personal" and "confidential" to some of the parents. In addition, the leaders expressed a concern that if this information could be identified with specific parents that people, such as public school officials or legal officials, could possibly misuse the information. In an effort to guarantee, as much as possible, the confidentiality of the responses and to try to achieve a greater response rate, a questionnaire appeared to be the best research tool.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

Sacramento was incorporated in 1950. It is located near the center of California's central valley and is 385 miles north of Los Angeles, 85 miles east of San Francisco and approximately 95 miles west of the Lake Tahoe area. According to information supplied by the Sacramento Chamber of Commerce, there are 16 school districts in Sacramento including 177 elementary, 6 junior high, 29 intermediate and 28 high schools. In addition, there are 83 private and parochial schools and 70 industrial, technical and trade schools in Sacramento County.

The home schooling families used in this survey came from two sources. The first source was home schooling families that filed a private school affidavit in compliance with Section 33190 of the Education Code with the Sacramento County Office of Education in the fall of 1986 or in the fall of 1987 and have 4 or fewer students. The names and addresses of the home schools and their number of students were obtained from the Sacramento County Office of Education. The second source was home schooling families that are members of SCOPE, HIS, or Spice "support group" and may or may not have filed a private school affidavit. (SCOPE is the Sacramento Council of Parent Educators; HIS Is Home is Success; and Spice is a local independent group.)

The sample size was 117 families. Ninety-nine families responded from the first source, families filing affidavits, and 18 responded from the second source, families who are members of a "support

group". A total of 280 surveys were mailed or distributed for a return rate of 42%.

After field testing, the cover, letter, the questionnaire and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope were mailed to 151 home schools on the fall 1986 list obtained from the Sacramento County Office of Education. Thirty-seven usable responses were obtained from this group for a return rate of 25%.

The cover letter, questionnaire and a stamped self-addressed return envelope were distributed at meetings of SCOPE, HIS and Spice. Twenty-eight questionnaires were distributed and 18 usable responses were obtained for a return rate of 64%.

To maintain the confidentiality assured the home schooling parents in the cover letter, the roster of the home schools responding was destroyed immediately after the study.

Data and Instrumentation

From a review of the literature, including two related dissertations by Gustavsen (1981) and Linden (1983), a questionnaire was developed to determine the reasons parents in Sacramento County are choosing home schooling for their children and to determine selected characteristics of the parents and children. In addition, the questionnaire was designed to describe the educational programs in the home schools, the perceptions home schooling parents have of local public school administrators and to describe the commitment these parents have to home schooling.

The questionnaire and cover letter were reviewed by eight home schooling parents who live in Sacramento County. In addition, Jesse Ortiz, Project Manager, Sacramento County Office of Education and Frederick Fernandez, Ph.D., Consultant, Office of Private Schools K-12, California Department of Education, reviewed the questionnaire and the cover letter. The cover letter and questionnaire were field tested with the same group of eight home schooling parents.

Statistical Analysis

Percentage distributions were used to summarize important statistical information. The questions used to provide evidence for the research problem are listed below under the relevant research objective.

- A. To ascertain the reasons parents in Sacramento County choose home schooling.
 - 1. Rate the importance of the following items in your decision to provide home schooling for your child(ren).
- B. To describe characteristics of the parents.
 - 2a. Circle the highest level of education completed for the father and the type of schools attended.
 - 2b. Circle the highest level of education completed for the mother and the type of schools attended.
 - 3. Check who is the main teacher in the home school.
 - 4. Does either parent in the home have a teaching credential?

5. List the occupation of the mother.
 6. List the occupation of the father.
 7. Identify the family's religious preference, if any.
 8. Check the approximate total annual family income.
 14. Are you involved with any home schooling organization or "support group"? If yes, please identify.
- C. To describe selected characteristics of the child(ren).
- 2c.-2e. Circle the grade level of the home-schooled child(ren).
- D. To describe the education program in the homes schools.
11. Identify any educational materials, programs or services provided by the local school district that were offered to you as home schooling parents and those that you would be interested in using.
 12. How do you assess your child's achievement?
 13. Identify what teaching resources are being used in your home school.
 14. What is the average amount of time your child spends daily on academic subjects and related activities?
- E. To describe the perceptions home schooling parents have of local public school administrators.
9. As parents, have you met with a local public school administrator to discuss the needs of your family regarding educational programs for your child(ren)?
 10. If you have met with a local public school administrator, what is the best description of the administrator's reaction to your decision to home school your child(ren)?

F. To describe the commitment these parents have to home schooling.

16. Until what age or grade level do you plan to continue to home school your child(ren)?

17. How do you rate the success of your home school?

CHAPTER 4

REPORT OF THE FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis of the data. The purposes of the study were (1) to ascertain the reasons parents in Sacramento County choose home schooling for the child(ren); (2) to describe selected characteristics of the parents; (3) to describe selected characteristics of the child(ren); and (4) to describe their educational programs. Additional purposes were (5) to describe the educational materials used in the home schools; (6) to describe the perceptions home schooling parents have of local school administrators; and (7) to describe the commitment these parents have to home schooling.

The 117 home schooling families used in this survey came from two sources. The first source was 99 families with four or fewer students who filed a private school affidavit in compliance with Section 33190 of the Education Code with the Sacramento County Office of Education in the fall of 1986 or in the fall of 1987. The second source was 18 home schooling families in Sacramento Country who are members of SCOPE, HIS, or Spice "support group" and who may or may not have filed a private school affidavit.

Findings

The findings of this study are organized and presented in sections according to the seven principle objectives of the study.

Objective 1: To ascertain the reasons parents in Sacramento County choose home schooling survey question 1 and Table 1 are presented. In addition, Tables 2, 3 and 4 are presented.

Survey Question 1:

Please rate the importance of the following items in your decision to provide home schooling for the your child(ren).

Survey item number one sought information to determine the reasons why parents in Sacramento County choose home schooling for their child(ren). The parents were grouped into four groups. These groups include:

1. the collective group of all the parents included in the survey;
2. the group of parents where both parents have not graduated from college;
3. the group of parents with one member of the family having graduated from college;
4. the group of parents with both members having graduated from college.

Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "very important", the data in Table 1 indicates that the major reasons the collective group of parents in the study choose home schooling are to provide a greater opportunity for moral instruction (4.7), to provide for greater parental involvement in the child's education (4.7) and the parents wanting to provide a higher quality of education (4.6). The least cited reasons

Table 1

Parents' Rating of the Importance of Various Reasons for Choosing Home Schooling For Their Child(ren)

Reason for home schooling	Response choice*					n	Mean	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
greater opportunity for moral instruction	94	9	11	0	2	116	4.7	1
greater parental involvement in child's education	87	19	10	0	0	116	4.7	1
provide a higher quality of education	83	19	12	2	0	116	4.6	2
greater opportunity to learn life skills	74	28	8	4	1	115	4.5	3
to encourage religious/spiritual values	78	19	9	2	7	115	4.4	4
greater control of curriculum content	75	23	12	2	4	116	4.4	4
enhance the child's creativity	57	29	25	3	2	116	4.2	5
greater parental control of child	58	28	21	7	1	115	4.2	5
encourage self-sufficiency and independence	58	33	18	2	4	115	4.2	5
greater control of child's socialization	54	27	25	5	4	115	4.1	6
philosophical difference with public school	63	22	17	5	8	115	4.1	6

* Response Choice Key: 5 = very important, 3 = somewhat important, 1 = not important

Table 1 continued

Reason for home schooling	Response choice*					n	Mean	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
provide greater safety/security	38	16	32	17	13	116	3.4	7
avoid secular humanism	49	16	19	6	22	112	3.6	8
greater protection from ridicule	23	28	31	17	17	116	3.2	9
avoid the theory of evolution being taught	36	22	16	12	29	115	3.2	9
greater protection from competition	18	28	26	19	25	116	3.0	10
celebration of holidays	15	10	23	13	52	113	2.3	11
fewer problems with racial identification	4	3	12	15	81	115	1.6	12
conflict with public school administrator	6	1	8	8	89	112	1.5	13
conflict with public school teacher	8	1	6	9	87	111	1.5	13
child has special need	24	4	3	1	7	39	3.9	**
other	24	2	1	0	1	28	4.7	**

*Response Choice Key: 5 = very important, 3 = somewhat important, 1 = not important

**These items not included due to low response rate and high mean.

for choosing home schooling are conflict with a public school administrator (1.5) and conflict with a public school teacher (1.5).

Table 2 shows the reasons for choosing home schooling cited by families where both parents have not graduated from college. This group of parents cites greater opportunity for moral instruction and greater parental involvement in child's education as their highest rated reasons, means of 4.8 each. The second most frequently cited reason is greater opportunity to learn life skills, with a mean of 4.6.

Table 3 shows the reasons for choosing home schooling cited by families with one parent having graduated from college. The reasons cited with the highest mean, 4.7 each, are greater parental involvement in child's education and to provide a higher quality of education. The second most frequently cited reasons are greater control of curriculum content, greater opportunity for moral instruction and greater opportunity to learn life skills with means of 4.4 each.

Table 4 shows the ratings of the various reasons for choosing home schooling by families where both parents have graduated from college. The reason with the highest mean, 4.8, is to encourage religious/spiritual values. The reason with the second highest mean, 4.7, is greater opportunity for moral instruction. The reasons with the third highest mean, 4.6, are provide a higher quality of education and a greater control of curriculum content.

Table 2

Parents' Rating of the Importance of Various Reasons for Choosing Home Schooling for Their Child(ren)
with Neither Parent a College Graduate

Reason for home schooling	Response choice*					n	Mean	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
greater parental involvement in child's education	53	8	4	0	0	65	4.8	1
greater opportunity for moral instruction	58	2	2	0	1	63	4.8	1
greater opportunity to learn life skills	47	13	3	2	0	65	4.6	2
to encourage religious/spiritual values	46	12	3	1	3	65	4.5	3
provide a higher quality of education	42	14	7	1	0	64	4.5	3
greater control of curriculum content	43	10	9	0	3	65	4.4	4
greater parental control of child	39	15	8	2	0	64	4.4	4
encourage self-sufficiency and independence	38	13	11	1	2	65	4.3	5
enhance the child's creativity	30	20	14	1	0	65	4.2	6
philosophical differences with public school	37	10	10	3	5	65	4.1	7
greater control of child's socialization	34	10	16	3	2	65	4.1	7

* Response Choice Key: 5 = very important, 3 = somewhat important, 1 = not important

Table 2 continued

Reason for home schooling	Response choice*					n	Mean	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
provide greater safety/security	29	10	13	9	4	65	3.8	8
avoid secular humanism	32	9	10	3	9	63	3.8	8
avoid the theory of evolution being taught	27	14	8	4	12	65	3.6	9
greater protection from ridicule	16	11	17	10	11	65	3.2	10
greater protection from competition	11	12	17	8	16	64	2.9	11
celebration of holidays	13	6	10	7	28	64	2.5	12
conflict with public school administrator	6	1	5	6	45	63	1.7	13
conflict with public school teacher	6	0	2	8	47	63	1.6	14
fewer problems with racial identification	2	1	6	8	48	65	1.5	15
child has special need	13	2	2	1	4	22	3.9	**
other	9	2	0	0	1	12	4.5	**

* Response Choice Key: 5 = very important, 3 = somewhat important, 1 = not important

** These items not included due to low response rate and high mean.

Table 3

Parents' Rating of the Importance of Various Reasons for Choosing Home Schooling For Their Child(ren)
With Only One Parent A College Graduate

Reasons for home schooling	Response choice*					n	Mean	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
greater parental involvement in child's education	22	4	3	0	0	29	4.7	1
provide a higher quality of education	23	3	3	0	0	29	4.7	1
greater control of curriculum content	18	9	2	1	1	31	4.4	2
greater opportunity to learn life skills	17	10	1	1	1	30	4.4	2
greater opportunity for moral instruction	20	4	6	0	1	31	4.4	2
enhance the child's creativity	16	6	7	0	2	31	4.1	3
encourage self-sufficiency and independence	12	11	4	0	2	29	4.1	3
philosophical differences with public school	14	6	5	2	3	30	3.9	4
greater control of child's socialization	12	7	7	1	2	29	3.9	4
greater parental control of child	9	7	9	3	1	29	3.7	5
greater protection from ridicule	4	9	6	5	5	29	3.1	6

* Response Choice Key: 5 = very important, 3 = somewhat important; 1 = not important

Table 3 continued

Reasons for home schooling	Response choice*					n	Mean	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
provide greater safety/security	6	4	7	5	7	29	2.9	7
greater protection from competition	4	8	4	7	8	31	2.8	8
avoid secular humanism	9	2	4	3	11	29	2.8	8
avoid the theory of evolution being taught	5	4	3	3	14	29	2.4	9
celebration of holidays	1	3	7	3	15	29	2.0	10
fewer problems with racial identification	1	2	3	4	19	29	1.7	11
conflict with public school teacher	2	1	2	1	23	29	1.6	12
conflict with public school administrator	0	0	1	2	26	29	1.1	13
child has special need	7	2	1	0	2	12	4.0	**
other	9	0	0	0	0	9	5.0	**

* Response Choice Key: 5 = very important, 3 = somewhat important, 1 = not important

** These items not included due to low response rate and high mean.

Table 4

Parents' Rating of the Importance of Various Reasons for Choosing Home Schooling for Their Child(ren)
With Both Parents College Graduates

Reason for home schooling	Response choice*					n	Mean	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
to encourage religious/spiritual values	16	3	1	0	0	20	4.8	1
greater opportunity for moral instruction	15	3	2	0	0	20	4.7	2
greater control of curriculum content	14	4	1	1	0	20	4.6	3
provide a higher quality of education	15	3	1	1	0	20	4.6	3
greater parental involvement in child's education	11	7	2	0	0	20	4.5	4
philosophical differences with public school	12	6	2	0	0	20	4.5	4
enhance the child's creativity	11	3	4	2	0	20	4.2	5
greater opportunity to learn life skills	10	5	4	1	0	20	4.2	5
greater control of child's socialization	8	9	2	1	0	20	4.2	5
encourage self-sufficiency and independence	7	6	6	0	0	19	4.1	6
greater parental control of child	8	6	4	2	0	20	4.0	7

* Response Choice Key: 5 = very important, 3 = somewhat important, 1 = not important

Table 4 continued

Reason for home schooling	Response choice*					n	Mean	Rank
	5	4	3	2	1			
avoid secular humanism	8	5	5	0	2	20	3.9	8
greater protection from ridicule	2	7	8	2	1	20	3.4	9
greater protection from competition	3	7	5	4	1	20	3.4	9
provide greater safety/security	3	3	9	3	2	20	3.1	10
avoid the theory of evolution being taught	4	4	5	4	3	20	3.1	10
celebration of holidays	1	1	6	3	9	20	2.1	11
fewer problems with racial identification	1	0	3	2	14	20	1.6	12
conflict with public school teacher	0	0	2	0	17	19	1.2	13
child has special need	4	0	0	0	1	5	4.2	**
other	6	0	1	0	0	7	4.7	**

* Response Choice Key: 5 = very important, 3 = somewhat important, 1 = not important

** These items not included due to low response rate and high mean.

Objective 2: To describe characteristics of the home schooling parents, responses to items 2a, 2b, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 14 are presented. These responses include information on the education of the parents; identification of the main teacher in the home school; occupations of the parents; and the religious preferences of the home schooling families. In addition, responses include information on family income, a comparison of income by educational achievement of the parents and the involvement of families with support groups. Tables 5 through 12 present this information.

Survey Question 2a and 2b:

Please circle the grade(s) completed at each type of school:

Survey 2a and 2b sought to determine the educational levels achieved by home schooling parents.

Table 5 data shows the mean grade level for home schooling fathers is 14.3 and the mean grade level for home schooling mothers is 14.0. Over 36% of the fathers are college graduates and slightly over 29% of the mothers are college graduates.

Table 5

Grade Level Achievement of Home Schooling Parents

Grade level	n	Father		n	Mother	
		%	Cum.%		%	Cum.%
Grade 9	1	0.9	0.9	0	0.0	0.0
Grade 10	1	0.9	1.8	3	2.7	2.7
Grade 11	0	0.0	1.8	3	2.7	5.4
Grade 12	25	21.7	23.5	27	23.9	29.3
Grade 13	17	14.8	38.3	17	15.0	44.3
Grade 14	23	20.0	58.3	23	20.3	64.6
Grade 15	6	5.2	63.5	7	6.2	70.8
Grade 16	15	13.0	76.5	14	12.4	83.2
Grade 17+	<u>27</u>	23.5	100.0	<u>19</u>	16.8	100.0
Totals	115			113		

Mean grade level for fathers = 14.3

Mean grade level for mothers = 14.0

As shown in Table 6, the largest group of home schooling fathers, 77.8%, reports attending public school only. The largest group of home schooling mothers, 74.4%, reports attending public school only.

Table 6

Educational Backgrounds of Home Schooling Parents

Grade level	Father			Mother		
	n	%	Cum.%	n	%	Cum.%
Public school only	91	77.8	77.8	87	74.4	74.4
Private school only	2	1.7	79.5	2	1.7	76.1
Combination of public and private	21	17.9	97.4	26	22.2	98.3
Combination of home and public	1	0.9	98.3	2	1.7	100.0
None listed	<u>2</u>	1.7	100.0	<u>0</u>	0.0	100.0
Totals	117			117		

Survey Question 3:

The main teacher in the home school.

Table 7 indicates the mother in the home schooling family is the main teacher in 89.7% of the home schools in Sacramento County. Ten families, 8.5%, identified "other" as their response to this question and identified both the mother and father as sharing equally in teaching their children.

Table 7

Identification of the Main Teacher in the Home School

Main teacher	n	%	Cum.%
Father	0	0.0	0.0
Mother	105	89.7	89.7
Relative	0	0.0	89.7
Credentialed teacher/tutor	2	1.7	91.4
Other	<u>10</u>	8.5	99.9
Total	117		

Survey Question 4:

Does either parent in the home have a teaching credential?

Table 8 indicates almost 84% of the home schooling families report neither parent has a teaching credential. Slightly over 16% of the families report at least one parent has a teaching credential.

Table 8

Home Schooling Parents With A Teaching Credential

Response	n	%	Cum.%
Parent has credential	19	16.2	16.2
Neither parent has credential	<u>98</u>	83.8	100.0
Total	117		

Survey Question 5:

Occupation of mothers:

The responses to this item were categorized into Table 9. Over 64% of the mothers report their occupation as "housewife" or some other similar word.

Table 9

Occupations of Home Schooling Mothers

Response	n	%	Cum.%
Housewife	73	64.6	64.6
Housewife and occupation listed	21	18.5	83.1
Occupation only listed	<u>19</u>	16.9	100.0
Total	113		

Survey Question 6:

Occupation of fathers:

The information gathered regarding the occupations of the fathers includes a wide range of titles, skills and occupations. Responses include vague titles such as "state worker" and "businessman". It is not possible to group the responses, however, there are very few responses with more than two with the same title, skill or occupation.

Table 10

Religious Preferences of Home Schooling Families Grouped According to Melton*

Religious preference	n	%	Rank
<u>Adventist Family</u>			
Jehovah's Witness	11	9.3	2
Seventh-Day Adventist	4	3.4	5
Worldwide Church of God	3	2.6	6
<u>Pentecostal Family</u>			
Assembly of God	11	9.3	2
Charismatic	2	1.7	7
Pentecostal	2	1.7	7
Four Square	1	0.9	8
<u>Baptist Family</u>			
Baptist	8	6.8	3
Christian (Disciples of Christ)	5	4.3	4
Churches of Christ	1	0.9	8
<u>Latter-Day Saints Family</u>			
Mormon	8	6.8	3
<u>Holiness Family</u>			
Wesleyan	2	1.7	7
Free Methodist	1	0.9	8
Nazarene	1	0.9	8
<u>Pietist-Methodist Family</u>			
Evangelical Free Church	2	1.7	7
Methodist	1	0.9	8
Evangelical Covenant	1	0.9	8
<u>Western Liturgical Family</u>			
Roman Catholic	4	3.4	5
<u>Reformed-Presbyterian Family</u>			
Presbyterian	2	1.7	7
Reformed Church of America	1	0.9	8
<u>Christian Science-Metaphysical Family</u>			
Unity/Metaphysical	2	1.7	7
<u>Lutheran Family</u>			
Lutheran	2	1.7	7
<u>Eastern Family</u>			
Buddhist	1	0.9	8

Table 10 continued

Religious preference	n	%	Rank
Others**			
Interdenominational	14	12.0	1
Non-denominational Christian	8	6.8	3
Christian-No Group Affiliation	5	4.3	4
Personal Philosophy	2	1.7	7
No Response	8	6.8	3
None	4	3.4	5
Total	117	100.0	

* Families of American religions as described by Melton, J. G. (1978).
The Encyclopedia of American Religions. North Carolina: McGrath.

** Responses not described by Melton.

Table 11

Approximate Annual Income of Home Schooling Families

Income range	n	%	Cum.%
Less than \$20,000	22	20.0	20.0
Between \$20,001 and \$40,000	66	60.0	80.0
Between \$40,001 and \$60,000	17	15.5	95.5
Between \$60,001 and \$80,000	2	1.8	97.3
Over \$80,000	3	2.7	100.0
Total	110		

Table 12 shows a comparison to total family income to the educational achievements of the home schooling parents. At least 90% of the families in all three groups indicate a total family income of \$60,000 or less.

Table 12

Approximate Annual Income of Home Schooling Families Compared to Educational Achievement of Parents

Income range	No parent college grad		one parent college grad		both parents college grad	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Less than \$20,000	14	21	1	3	7	33
\$20,001 to \$40,000	41	62	18	63	7	33
\$40,001 to \$60,000	5	7	7	25	5	24
\$60,001 to \$80,000	1	2	1	3	0	0
Over \$80,000	1	2	1	3	1	5
No response	<u>4</u>	6	<u>1</u>	3	<u>1</u>	5
Total	66		29		21	

Survey Question 14:

Are you involved with any home schooling organization or "support group"? If so, please identify.

Table 13 indicates that 62% of the home schooling families are involved with some home school organization or "support group". Slightly less than 38% are not involved with any home school organization or "support group". When asked to identify their response, 41% cite membership in SCOPE, Sacramento Council of Parent Educators.

Table 13

Home School Organizations and "Support Groups" of Which Home Schooling Families Are Members

Response and group name	n	%
Response if involved in "support group":		
Yes	44	37.9
No	<u>72</u>	62.1
Total	116	
Name of "support group":		
Home Is Success (HIS)	12	14.1
Home Instructed and Schooled Kids (HIS Kids)	4	4.7
Sacramento Council of Parent Educators (SCOPE)	35	41.2
Spice (local, independent group)	6	7.1
Christian Home Educators Association (CHEA)	5	5.9
Friends (informal)	6	7.1
Other groups/programs	8	9.4
No group/program identified	<u>9</u>	10.6
Total	85	

Objective 3: To describe selected characteristics of the child(ren) such as grade level and total number of children involved in home schooling, responses to items 2c through 2e are presented. In addition, Table 14 is presented.

Survey question 2c through 2e:

Circle the grade level of the home-schooled child(ren).

The three largest groups of children involved in home schooling are in kindergarten (16.2%), grade 1 (14.5%) and grade 2 (14.5%). These three groups combine to account for slightly over 45% of the students involved in home schooling programs. The smallest group involved in home schooling is in grade 10 with 4 students (1.8%).

Objective 4: To describe the educational program in the home schools responses items 11, 12 and 15 are presented. In addition, Tables 15 through 18 are presented. These are responses to questions asking for information about educational materials, programs or services either offered by the local school district to home schooling parents or those that would be of interest to home schooling parents. Responses are also presented to the question to determine how parents assess the child's achievement.

Survey Question 11a:

Check any educational materials, programs or services provided by the local school district that were offered to you as home schooling parents and those that you would be interested in using.

Sixty percent of the families responding to this question report materials, services or programs were offered to them by the local school district. An independent study program was the most frequently cited response, 13.8%. Forty percent of the families responding to this question report that no materials, services or programs were offered to them by the local school district.

Table 14

Grade Level of Children in Home Schooling Programs

Grade level	n	%	Cum.%
Preschool	7	3.1	3.1
Kindergarten	37	16.2	19.3
Grade 1	33	14.5	33.8
Grade 2	33	14.5	48.3
Grade 3	21	9.2	57.5
Grade 4	19	8.3	65.8
Grade 5	21	9.2	75.0
Grade 6	15	6.6	81.6
Grade 7	13	5.7	87.3
Grade 8	6	2.6	89.9
Grade 9	7	3.1	93.0
Grade 10	4	1.8	94.8
Grade 11	6	2.6	97.4
Grade 12	<u>6</u>	2.6	100.0
Total	228		

Table 15

Educational Materials, Programs or Services Provided by Local School Districts to Home Schooling Parents

Materials, programs or services	n	%	Rank
No materials, services, programs offered	32	40.0	1
Independent study	11	13.8	2
Testing service	10	12.5	3
Use of books and library materials	8	10.0	4
Use of equipment other than books and library materials	4	5.0	5
Special education programs	4	5.0	5
Participation in selected classes	3	3.8	6
Extra curricular/after school activities	3	3.8	6
Psychological/counseling services	3	3.8	6
Use of school buildings	1	1.3	7
Other	1	1.3	7
Vocational education/job training	<u>0</u>	0.0	
Total	80		

To assist in the identification of home school programs, parents were asked to indicate what materials, programs or services provided by local school districts they would be interested in using. Table 16 shows home schooling parents indicating an interest in all of the various choices listed on the survey. The largest response group, 42 families, or 19.6%, indicate an interest in the use of equipment other

than books and library materials. The second largest response group, 37 families, or 17.3%, indicate an interest in testing services.

Table 16

Educational Materials, Programs or Services That Would Be of Interest To Home Schooling Parents

Materials, programs or services	n	%	Rank
Use of equipment other than books and library materials	42	19.6	1
Testing services	37	17.3	2
Use of books and library materials	31	14.5	3
Participation in selected classes	26	12.1	4
Extra curricular/after-school activities	24	11.2	5
Vocational education/job training	17	7.9	6
Independent study	14	6.5	7
Special education programs	11	5.1	8
Use of school buildings	8	3.7	9
Psychological/counseling services	3	1.4	10
Other	<u>1</u>	0.0	
Total	214		

Survey Question 12:

How do you assess your child's achievement?

The largest group of home schooling families (49) responding to this question report they use only one achievement assessment.

The method this group reports using the most often is standardized tests (37%). Standardized tests are also the most often used assessment method (67%) cited by families using two assessment methods. Thirty families report using two achievement assessments. Sixteen families indicate they use three assessment methods. All 16 families report they use curriculum program tests as one of the achievement assessments. This information is presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Home Schooling Parents Using One to Four Achievement Assessments of Their Child's Educational Progress

Test group	Std. tests	Assessment method			
		Home tests	Curr. tests	Dist. tests	Other tests
Parents using one assessment method (n=49)	18 (37%)	4 (8%)	9 (18%)	3 (6%)	15 (31%)
Parents using two assessment methods (n=30)	20 (67%)	17 (57%)	14 (14%)	2 (7%)	7 (23%)
Parents using three assessment methods (n=16)	15 (94%)	14 (87%)	16 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (19%)
Parents using four assessment methods (n=3)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (100%)

Survey Question 15:

What is the average amount of time your child spends daily on academic subjects and related activities?

Table 18 shows the most frequently checked response for the amount of time spent daily on academic subjects is two to three hours by 39 families (33.9%). The most frequently checked response for the amount of time spent on related activities is one to two hours by 47 families (47.5%). Families were not given definitions for the phrases "academic subjects" and "related activities".

Table 18

Amount of Time Spent Daily On Academic Subjects and Related Activities
By Home Schooling Families

Time Spent Daily	<u>Academic Subjects</u>		<u>Related Activities</u>	
	n	%	n	%
Less than 1 hour	6	5.2	9	9.1
1 to 2 hours	24	20.9	47	47.5
2 to 3 hours	39	33.9	23	23.2
3 to 4 hours	30	26.1	7	7.1
4 to 5 hours	10	8.7	8	8.1
5+ hours	<u>6</u>	5.2	<u>5</u>	5.1
Totals	115		99	

Objective 5: To describe the educational materials used in home schools, responses to survey item 13 are presented. In addition, Table 19 is presented.

Survey Question 13:

Please identify what teaching resources are being used in your home school.

Home schooling programs include a wide variety of resources. The most frequently cited responses by 104 families are maps (88.9%) and family-owned dictionary (88.9%). The third most frequently cited resource is the use of purchased text books (82.9%) by 97 families. The least cited response is the use of public school lesson plans (5.1%).

Table 19

Identification of Resources Used by Home Schooling Parents

Resource	n	%	Rank
Family-owned dictionary	104	88.9	1
Maps	104	88.9	1
Purchased text books	97	82.9	2
Public library materials	86	73.5	3
Parent prepared lesson plans	83	70.9	4
Family-owned encyclopedias	82	70.1	5
Cassette tapes	72	61.5	6
Educational television programs	67	57.3	7
Purchased lesson plans	54	46.2	8
VCR/video tapes	42	35.9	9
Computer programs	41	35.0	10
Other	41	35.0	10
Public school text books	29	24.8	11
Films	19	16.2	12
Public school lesson plans	<u>6</u>	5.1	13
Total responding to question	117		

Objective 6: To describe the perceptions home schooling parents have of local public school administrators, the responses to survey items 9 and 10 are presented. In addition, Table 20 is presented.

Survey Question 9:

As parents, have you met with a local public school administrator to discuss the needs of your family regarding educational programs for your child(ren)?

Seventy-five of the home schooling families (64.1%) report they have not met with a local public school administrator to discuss the needs of their families regarding educational programs for their children. Forty-two families (35.9%) report they have met with the local public school administrator for this purpose. Of the families reporting they have met with the local public school administrator, the largest group is the 13 home schooling families (29.5%) who perceive the administrator as expressing opposition to the parents' decision to home school their children. The second largest response to this question is from 10 families (22.7%) who perceive the administrator as offering support for the parents' decision to home school their children.

Objective 7: To describe the commitment these parents have to home schooling, responses to items 16 and 17 are presented. These survey items asked parents to identify how long they plan to continue to home school their children and to rate the success of their home schools. In addition, Tables 21 and 22 are presented.

Table 20

Home Schooling Parents That Have Met With Public School Administrators
and the Reaction of Public School Administrators to Parents' Decision to
Home School Their Children, as Perceived by Parents

Response	n	%	Cum.%
Administrator's response:			
Yes	42	35.9	35.9
No	<u>75</u>	64.1	100.0
Total	117		
Administrator's reaction:			
Administrator offered support	10	23.8	23.8
Administrator listened	5	12.0	35.8
Administrator was indifferent	5	12.0	47.8
Administrator expressed opposition	13	30.9	78.7
Administrator was outwardly hostile	3	7.1	85.8
Administrator was never told of decision	4	9.5	95.3
Other	<u>3</u>	4.7	100.0
Total	42		

Survey Question 16:

Until what age or grade do you plan to continue to home school your child(ren)?

Table 21 shows the most frequent response to this question is from 38 families (32.5%) who report they are possibly or definitely planning to home school through senior high school. The second most

frequent response to this question is from 24 families (20.5%) stating they are not sure and make this decisions year-by-year.

Table 21

The Plans Parents Have to Home School Their Child(ren) By Age or Grade Level

Response	n	%	Rank
Possibly or definitely through senior high school	38	32.5	1
Not sure, year-by-year decision	24	20.5	2
During or at the end of grade school	15	12.8	3
Religious or philosophical decision	11	9.4	4
No longer home schooling	10	8.5	5
At the end of junior high school	10	8.5	6
No response	6	5.1	7
Will stop at end of current year	<u>3</u>	2.6	8
Total	117		

Survey Question 17

How do you rate the success of your home school?

Forty-seven families (43.5%) rate the success of their home schools as outstanding. Forty families (37%) rate the success of their home schools as above average.

Table 22

How Home Schooling Parents Rate The Success Of Their Home Schools

Rating	n	%	Cum.%
No success	0	0	0
Marginal success	2	1.9	1.9
Satisfactory success	19	17.6	19.5
Above average success	40	37.0	56.5
Outstanding success	<u>47</u>	43.5	100.0
Total	108		

Summary

To briefly state the findings for objective 1, the data indicates parents choose home schooling for their child(ren) to

- a. provide a greater opportunity for moral instruction;
- b. provide for greater involvement in their child's education;
- c. provide a higher quality of education.

The findings for objective 2 show home schooling fathers have a mean grade level of 14.3 and home schooling mothers have a mean grade level of 14.0. Over 74% of the parents have attended public schools only. The mother is the main teacher in almost 90% of the home schools. Over 83% of the home parents have no teaching credential. Home schooling families cite a long list of religious preferences. Sixty percent of the families report their total annual family income between \$20,001 and

\$40,000 and over 62% of the families report they are involved with a home school organization or "support group".

To briefly state the findings for objective 3, over 45% of the home school students are in kindergarten, first and second grades.

The findings for objective 4 show 40% of the home schooling families were offered no educational materials, programs or services by the local school districts. However, the families are interested in many resources and 42 families (19.6%) indicated an interest in using school equipment other than books and library materials. The largest group of parents using an assessment method, 49 parents, use one method and that method is most often standardized tests (37%). Over 33% of the parents report their children spend two to three hours per day on academic subjects and over 47% report their children spend one to two hours per day on related activities.

The findings of objective 5 show parents use a wide variety of resources. Both maps and family-owned dictionaries are used by 88.9% of the families.

To briefly summarize objective 6, over 64% of the parents have not met with a local public school administrator. Almost 30% of those who had done so perceived the administrator's reaction as expressing opposition.

To summarize objective 7, the largest group of home school parents (32.5%) responded they are possibly or definitely planning to home school through senior high school. In addition, over 43% of the parents rate their home schools as an outstanding success.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings with conclusions and recommendations based on the data. The purposes of the study was to investigate the reasons parents in Sacramento County choose home schooling for their child(ren) and to describe selected characteristics of the parents and the child(ren). An additional purpose of the study was to describe the educational programs used in the homes schools, to describe the perceptions home schooling parents have of local school administrators and to describe the commitment these parents have to home schooling.

A questionnaire was mailed to 255 families with a return rate of 46%. The sample surveyed consisted of a total of 117 families comprised of 99 families with four or fewer students who filed a private school affidavit with the Sacramento County Office of Education in the fall of 1986 or in the fall of 1987. The name of the home school, its address and the number of students enrolled were found on the affidavit. In addition, 18 surveys were received from home schooling families living in Sacramento County who are members of a home-schooling support group. These families may or may not have filed a private school affidavit. The three home-schooling support groups contacted for

responses included SCOPE, Sacramento Council of Parent Educators; HIS, Home Is Success; and SPICE, an independent group. It is assumed the responses to the questionnaire were representative of the parents in Sacramento County who choose home schooling for their children.

Summary and Conclusions

The findings of this study were divided into six subsections. These subsections include the reasons for choosing home schooling, characteristics of the parents, characteristics of the children, and a descriptions of the educational programs. In addition, the subsections include the perceptions of home schooling families toward school administrators and a description of the commitment home schooling families have to home schooling.

Reasons for Choosing Home Schooling

Sacramento County has several public school districts and many private schools, yet some families choose home schooling for their child(ren). Families were asked to use a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being "very important", to rate the importance of various reasons for choosing home schooling. The responses from the families were grouped into four groups. These groups included a group with all the families in the survey; a group with neither parent a college graduate; a group with one parent a college graduate; and a group with both parents being college graduates.

The two most frequently chosen "very important" responses selected by the group with all the parents in the survey were to provide

greater opportunity for moral instruction and greater parental involvement in the child's education. Both of these reasons had a mean of 4.7 on a scale of 5. The reason ranking third in importance, 4.6 on a scale of 5, was to provide a higher quality of education.

The group of parents with neither parent being a college graduate rated a greater opportunity for moral instruction and greater parental involvement in child's education as the most important reasons for choosing home schooling. These reasons both had means of 4.8. This group cited a greater opportunity to learn life skills as the second most cited reason with a mean of 4.6. It may be that this group is more interested in having their child(ren) become employable or self-sufficient at an earlier age. Also, it may be these parents do not have higher education goals for their child(ren).

The group of parents that have one parent in the family with a college degree was studied to see if differences appeared between the father with a college degree and the mothers with a college degree. No significant differences were found. The group with one parent a college graduate cited a greater parental involvement in child's education, mean 4.7, and providing a higher quality of education, mean 4.7, as the highest rated reasons for choosing home schooling. This group cited greater control of curriculum content, mean 4.4, and greater opportunity to learn life skills, mean 4.4, as their second reasons.

The group of parents with both parents being college graduates selected the reason of encouraging religious/spiritual values as their

number one reason to choose home schooling. This reason had a mean of 4.8 on the scale of 1 to 5. The second most cited reason by this group was to provide greater opportunity for moral instruction. This reason had a mean of 4.7. Tied for the third most cited reasons were a greater control of curriculum content and to provide a higher quality of education. These reasons both had means of 4.6. What is left unanswered by this study is the value system of these parents. It may be that in a family when both parents are "highly educated" there is less interest in social and material values and more interest in education. It also may be that in families when both parents are "highly educated" religion is more important.

The three highest rated reasons for each group of home schooling parents expresses an intense and focused commitment by home schooling parents to their child(ren) and to the family values. Rather than attending public schools or even private schools, the home schooling parents in Sacramento County have opted for an educational program that has clear, specific and defined goals that reflect the morals and values of the family. Based on the number of young children in the primary grades enrolled in home school programs in Sacramento County, the families believe these goals must be initiated, instilled and reinforced at an early age. Divoky (1983) and comments from parents participating in this study suggest that home schooling parents are willing to be socially unorthodox, to be "different" and to sacrifice the material possessions and the personal status that could be obtained from both

parents working at jobs outside the home in order to provide home schooling for their child(ren). For example, one family from this study shared that other family members, especially the grandparents, "have been negative toward the idea of home schooling and have repeatedly expressed concerns to us about home schooling our children".

Home schooling parents believe that educating their child(ren) in what they perceive to be the best possible way is far more important and has more value than their allegiance to social and educational tradition. This lack of allegiance to tradition, possibly another expression of being "different" or "unorthodox", may also be seen in their religious preferences. For example, using the groups or families of American religion developed by Melton (1978), almost 25% of the parents stated choices not identified and categorized by Melton. These choices include Interdenominational (12%), Non-denominational (6.8%), Christian with no group affiliation (4.3%) and personal philosophy (2%). It could be that home schooling parents are not only unable to be satisfied with established religious organizations and practices, but are also unable to be satisfied with established educational organizations and practices.

This study shows that in spite of the many educational programs, resources and professional staff available in public school districts in Sacramento County, some parents choose home schooling to meet special educational needs for their children. Twenty-one percent of the home schooling families identified their child(ren) as having a

special need that they rated as being "very important" in their decision to home school. The special needs identified by these families included poor reading skills, attention deficit disorders, individually-paced learning and appropriate "gifted" programs. Other special needs cited by families as "very important" included stuttering, hearing and visual perception problems, delayed speech and physical disabilities. This study was not able to determine how these parents determined the child has a special need or how these parents determined home schooling was better able to meet the needs rather than a public or private school program.

This study also found some reasons home schooling parents rated as "very important" in their decision to home school their children that have not been described by other authors. Twenty-one percent of the home schooling families cited a reason other than those listed in the survey as being "very important" in their decision to home school. These reasons included the need for strict discipline to accomplish and master school work and to develop good study habits; an inferior neighborhood school; over-crowded classrooms; an inability to afford a private Christian school; a child being very active; and a need to provide a loving environment that promotes self-esteem as well as learning. Other reasons cited were children not being mature enough to cope with the parent-perceived intense peer pressure present in schools; flexible schedules that permits travel in the "off-season"; and the need to develop family relationships while family members work together.

Characteristics of the Parents

The fathers and mothers involved in homes schooling in Sacramento County, in most cases, have at least a high school diploma. Of the 115 responses to the question regarding the father's education, 98.2% had at least a high school education. Of the 113 responses to the question regarding the mother's education, 94.6% had at least a high school education. In addition, both groups of parents have educational backgrounds that average two years of college; 14.3 years of education for fathers and 14.0 years of education for mothers. Over 36% of the fathers have graduated from college and over 29% of the mothers have graduated from college.

Table 12 shows that 66 of the 116 survey families, or 57%, were couples where both parents are not college graduates. This is in contrast to 29 families, or 25%, with one parent a college graduate and 21 families, or 18%, with both parents being college graduates. The findings of this study show that parents with less education more likely to undertake the education of their children. Left unanswered by these finding is why home schooling tends to appeal to one group of parents, namely those without a college education, significantly more than others.

Eighty-three of the home schooling families responded that neither parent in the home has a teaching credential. Nineteen responses, or 16.2%, indicated a home schooling parent has a teaching credential. Ten families either specifically identified the mother as

the parent who holds the credential or this was determined through the educational background information supplied by the families.

Public schools were the only kind of schools attended by 77.8% of the father and by 74.4% of the mothers. Only one home schooling father, or less than 1%, and two home schooling mothers, or less than 2%, responding to this survey indicated having any home schooling in their educational backgrounds. This could mean that the parents who attended only public schools do not regard their public school education as being sufficient. This could also mean that these parents do not regard the programs in public schools today as being sufficient. A finding of this study is that the vast majority of home schooling parents have no first-hand experience with home schooling before starting one themselves. Left unexplained by this finding is the decision-making process these parents use to reject public schools and even private school alternatives in favor of the home school.

The mother is the main teacher in 89.7% of the home schools in Sacramento County. Only two families, or 1.7%, indicated "credentialed teacher/tutor" as their response when asked to identify the main teacher in the home school. Ten families, or 8.5% of the responses, identified "other" as their choice for the main teacher. All of these families stated both the mother and the father shared equally in the responsibilities of home schooling their children. It would be interesting to discover how these families manage the logistical and financial aspects of their decision. For example, does each parent work

part-time, does each parent have responsibility for specific content areas and does each parent spend the same amount of time with each child?

The home schooling mother is most likely to identify her occupation as "homemaker" or some similar word. Over 64% of the responses made this identification in contrast to 18.5% that identified their occupation as "homemaker" or some similar word along with some other occupation. Only 16.9% of the responses indicated a job title response that did not include "homemaker" or some similar word. Many of the responses indicating "homemaker" or some similar word and an occupation listed part-time occupations such as piano teacher, part-time bookkeeper and other home-based jobs. Responses from home schooling families to this question included comments that being a home schooling teacher was time consuming and demanding to the point it limits the employment opportunities of the home schooling teacher. The mothers in home schooling families are overwhelmingly the teachers so perhaps the families are only willing to be "non-traditional" within certain areas and remain very "traditional" within other areas. Perhaps the role of the mother includes the role of teacher and is defined by religious background or perhaps it is culturally defined. It could be that the role of the home schooling mother is defined in terms of family economics as the father has more education and employment experience and, therefore, more economic earning power.

The information gathered regarding the occupations of the fathers included a wide range of titles, skills, and occupations. There were very few responses that had more than two with the same title, skill or occupation. Some information was vague such as "manager", "federal employee", "self-employed", "state worker" or "businessman". However, trades such as carpenter, electrician and mechanic were listed along with professions such as engineer, lawyer, pastor and teacher. Because the survey question only asked for the father's occupation, it was not possible to determine groupings such as "white collar" or "blue collar" in many cases. It is curious that homes schooling parents who work for government agencies to earn their family income are unwilling to have their children educated by government institutions such as the public schools.

Twenty-five religious groups were given as responses to identifying the religious preferences of the home schooling families. Melton (1978) has examined American religions and found seventeen distinct families. Four religious families, namely the Adventist, the Pentecostal, the Baptist and the Latter-Day Saints, total 47.7% of the home schooling families in this study (see Appendix A for further information on these families). Seven other religious families as described by Melton (1978) are shown on Table 10 but comprise only 17.3% of the responses. Religious groups such as Interdenominational and Non-denominational, not described by Melton, total 24.8% of the home schooling families. The data from this study indicates that no one

religious family was overwhelmingly more active in home schooling in Sacramento County than any other religious group or family. However, the data from this study indicates that some religious families are not involved in home schooling in Sacramento County. Left unanswered by this finding is why some religious groups or families are not involved. For example, no home schooling family indicated a religious preference of Melton's Middle Eastern family (including Judaism) or Eastern Liturgical family (including Orthodoxy). Is it that there are no members of certain religious groups living in Sacramento County? Or is it that members of the missing religious groups are not doctrinely inclined toward home schooling? Or is it that some religious groups are using private schools more than other religious groups?

This author clearly acknowledges this study only asked parents to indicate the family's religious preference, if any. This author also acknowledges that due to limitations of sample size, geographic boundaries and sampling technique it is not possible to completely explore the complex issue of religion and home schooling. For example, it would be interesting to determine the direct and indirect importance of the family's religious preference in the decision to home school, in the decision to continue home schooling their children and in the curriculum the parents use. In addition, it would be interesting to determine if any specific local congregation is more likely to be involved in home schooling than other local congregations of the same religion.

Table 11 shows the total family income in 95.5% of home schooling families in Sacramento County is \$60,000 or less. The largest income group, ranging between \$20,001 and \$40,000, includes 60% of all the families in the survey. These responses and the responses to the occupations of the mothers suggest home schooling families are mostly single income families or families with one income supplemented by part-time employment income.

Table 12 shows that when comparing approximate annual income to the educational achievement of parents, the largest income groups continues to be between \$20,001 and \$40,000 for all three groups. However, Table 12 shows there are more families in the group with neither parent a college graduate (66 families or 57%) involved in home schooling in Sacramento County. Table 12 shows 83% of the families with neither parent a college graduate are earning \$40,000 or less. The findings of this study show parents with less education and less income chose home schooling more than parents with more education and more income. Is the value system of parents with less education and less income different than the other groups of parents or is it that there are more of these parents living in Sacramento County?

When further comparing the incomes of home schooling families to the education of the parents, this study found 62% of the families with neither parent a college graduate earned between \$20,001 and \$40,000 and 63% of the families with one parent as college graduate in the same income bracket. Yet only 33% of the families with both parents

being college graduates earned between \$20,001 and \$40,000 but 33% of the families with both parents being college graduates earned less than \$20,000. What is left unanswered by this study is the finding that there is a similar percentage of families in the same income range when comparing families with neither parent a college graduate to those with families with one parent a college graduate. Also left unanswered by this study is the finding that families with both parents college graduates are not only less represented in a "middle income" range of \$20,001 to \$40,000, but are more heavily represented in the group earning less than \$20,000. Could it be the families with both parents being college graduates value their children or their time with their children more than other parents? Or could it be that more "highly educated" parents have a different value system as a result of their education?

Over 62% of the responses to this survey indicated the family belongs to some home schooling organization or "support group". Thirteen families also indicated they belong to more than one group. However, this survey does include the responses from 17 families who are member of one of three support groups where survey responses were solicited. Due to the limitations of this study it was not possible to determine the amount of time families spend with these groups or the impact these home school "support groups" have on home schooling families and their programs.

Characteristics of the Child(ren)

From the 117 survey responses, 228 children were identified as being currently enrolled in a home school program. Over half, 54.4%, of the home-schooled children were between kindergarten and third grade, or primary grade level. Only 19 children, or 8.3%, were identified in grades 7 and 8. This is interesting as some parents expressed strong concern for their children at the junior high school age when asked how long they plan to continue home schooling. This survey found slightly over 10% of the children were in the high school grades 9 to 12. These findings are in contrast to this study's findings identifying the largest group of home schooling parents, 32.5%, who responded they were possibly or definitely going to be home schooling their children through high school.

Educational Program

Home schooling families use a wide array of teaching resources in their programs. The two most frequently cited responses, with 88.9% each, were the use of a family-owned dictionary and the use of maps. The next most frequently cited response was the use of purchased text books by 82.9% of the families. Home schooling parents most likely use their own prepared lesson plans or use a combination of their own lesson plans and purchased lesson plans. Parent prepared lesson plans were used by 70.9% of the families compared to 46.2% of the families indicating the use of purchased lesson plans. Only 5.1% of the families indicated the use of public school lesson plans. This study did not

determine the process home schooling parents use to evaluate or to prepare lesson plans they use in their home schools.

The use of public library materials in home school programs was cited in 86 responses, or 73.5%, of the home schooling families. This response was closely followed by 82 responses, or 70.1% of the families, stating they use family-owned encyclopedias in their home school programs. The least cited teaching resource was the use of films with 19 responses, or 16.2%.

Forty-one families identified resources other than those listed in the survey as being used in their home school. These resources included field trips, subscriptions to magazines such as Highlights Magazine, National Geographic or church publications and "daily life" experiences such as cooking, shopping and mechanical repair. Other resources included enrolling children in private lessons such as art and gymnastics, Bible lessons, and the use of purchased curriculum designed for home schooling. Additional teaching resources used by home schooling families included the use of multi-sensory materials and games, attending lectures, learning stations, flash cards, educational toys and nature study projects. One family objected to the use of a computer or VCR in their home school program, but the family does stress the use of art materials. Due to the limitations of this survey, it was not possible to determine how the parents determine the suitability of the resources, the sources of the materials or the costs involved in purchasing the various resources. Also, due to the limitations of this

survey, it was not possible to determine how often the various materials were used in the home school programs.

When home schooling families were asked to identify any educational materials, programs or services provided by the local school district that they would be interested in using, responses in all of the categories on the survey were checked. The most frequently selected response, 19.6%, indicated an interest by home schooling parents in the use of equipment other than books and library materials. The second most frequently chosen response, 17.3%, was an interest in testing services. The least chosen response from the survey list was psychological/counseling services with 3 only responses, or 1.4%. One family identified the response "other" and cited an interest in a driver training program. Could these responses indicate the recognition of home school program limitations by parents living in a complex society?

When families were asked how they assess their child's achievement, a total of 112 families responded. Forty-nine families, or 44%, indicated they use one assessment method to measure their child's achievement. Of the families indicating a single assessment response, standardized tests were the most frequently cited response with 18 responses, or 37%. Due to the limitations of this study, information is not available as to who designed the non-standardized tests, how often the tests were administered or what achievement rate was used for "passing".

Thirty families, or 27%, indicated they use two assessment methods to measure their child's achievement. The most frequently cited response was standardized tests by 20 families, or 67%. The other most cited response from this group was the use of home prepared tests by 17 families, or 57%.

Sixteen families, or 14%, indicated they use three assessment methods to measure their child's achievement. The three most often cited responses were curriculum program tests, standardized tests and home prepared tests with respective percentages of 100%, 94% and 87%.

Only three families, or 3%, indicated the use of four assessment methods to measure their child's achievement. All three families cited standardized tests, home prepared tests, curriculum prepared tests and "other" as their four responses. The families identified their "other" response as comparing achievement to other children in the family, comparing achievement to model curriculum standards published by the state or practical application of materials and lessons to everyday life. Do these families have more interest in the "academic progress" of their children or do these families have more interest in proving the benefits of home schooling for their children?

Eight families, or 7.1%, indicated they do not have any assessment method. Three families having no assessment method stated they know exactly where their children are in their educational program as the parents are with the children daily on a one-on-one basis. Another family responded they have no assessment method and stated the

family is enrolled in a home-schooling program that believes achievement assessments are forms of secular humanism and their family is more interested in character development than in presumed academic achievement. Hafen (1983) and Lines (1983 and 1988) refer to educators who oppose home schooling for a variety of reasons that include isolating children and giving children unsound programs than may not provide essential skills for good citizenship and self-sufficiency. Are these eight families the ones educational administrators might stereotype as typical of all home schooling families or are these the families that could lead educational administrators to question the educational programs in all home-schools?

The most frequently selected response to the average amount of time the child spends daily on academic subjects was by 39 families, or 33.9%, citing 2 to 3 hours. The second most frequently chosen response was by 30 families, or 26.1%, citing 3 to 4 hours of time spent daily on academic subjects. Six families, or 5.2%, responded they spend less than 1 hour daily on academic subjects and 24 families, or 20.9%, responded they spend 1 to 2 hours daily on academic subjects.

The most frequently cited response to the amount of time the home-schooled child spends daily on "related activities" was 1 to 2 hours by 47 families, or 47.5%. The second most frequently chosen amount of time spent on related activities was 2 to 3 hours by 23 families, or 23.2%. Nine of the 99 responding families, or 9.1%, responded they spend less than 1 hour daily on related activities. This survey did not offer

a definition of "related activities"; the term was used in contrast to "academic subjects" which was also not defined.

Home schooling parents may not be aware of education codes stating the minimum number of minutes students are to be in school whether the school be public or private. For example, Section 46112 of the Education Codes requires a minimum of 230 minutes per day for students in grades 1, 2 and 3. While many of the families responding to this survey had children at various grades levels, perhaps the number of responses indicating less than this amount of time in academic subjects, "related activities" or a combination of both may indicate home schooling parents are not aware of the legal requirements. Perhaps the responses may indicate home schooling parents have more concern for the "quality" of learning time rather than the quantity of time used. Or perhaps home schooling parents believe learning can be done in less time in a more insulated environment and are not concerned with "bureaucratic rules".

Of the 108 families that responded to the question asking them to rate the success of their home school, no family responded their school had no success. Forty-seven families, or 43.5%, rated their home school as an outstanding success and 40 families, or 37%, rated their home school as above average in success. Nineteen families, or 17.6%, rated their home school as a satisfactory success. Two families, or 1.9%, rated their home school as a marginal success.

This survey asked parents to rate the success of their home school and gave no definition for the word "success". Many parents

wrote comments on their surveys. These comments included the view that success is a very personal, value-laden judgement and frequently varies depending on the individual child's needs and the child's personality. For example, one family commented that the true rating of the success of their home school program will not really be known until the parents know how their children turn out, but right now the parents rate their children and their home school program as "wonderful". Left unanswered by this question of success was the definition used by the families; the possible relationship between the number of years the families have been home schooling and their rating of success; and if this possible relationship changes with the passage of time.

Home Schooling Parents' Perceptions of School Administrators

This study attempted to identify the perceptions home schooling parents have of local school administrators by asking a variety of survey questions. For example, one survey question asked the parents to identify any educational materials, programs or services provided by the local school district that were offered to them as home schooling parents. Eighty families responded to this question. Sixty percent of these families cited various materials, programs or services as being offered to them by the local school district. The most frequently cited responses was from 11 families, or 13.8%, who checked that independent study was offered. However, three of the families who were offered an independent study program commented that the programs that were offered had many requirements or limitations that made the use

of an independent study "unacceptable" or "unusable" for their families. Forty percent of the families stated that no materials, services or program were offered to them as home schooling parents. Five families wrote statements expressing frustration over not being offered the use of public school resources without considerable persistence on the part of the parents. These parents believe as tax-payers they have paid for public school resources and the idea of being offered the use of some of the public school resources only after such persistence was insulting. Left unclear by the wording of this question are the possible interpretations of the word "offered" as perceived by the home schooling parents. Could they have interpreted the word to mean that they have never been offered directly the use of materials, programs or services? Possibly they could have interpreted the word to mean that materials, programs or services were available but refused by the parents. Or possibly they could have interpreted the word to mean that the parents did not ask or that the parents simply did not know to ask for the services or materials.

Conflict with the school administrator was the least important reason parents cited for choosing home schooling. For example, the group of parents that included all of the parents in the study indicated a 1.5 response on a scale of 1 to 5. In addition, the second least cited reason by the same group for choosing home schooling, rated 1.5 on the scale of 1 to 5, regarded as not important, was conflict with a public school teacher. Even when comparing the parents by education these

reasons received low importance ratings. The lack of conflict findings should assist administrators and teachers when dealing with home schooling parents. Administrators and teachers should now be able to go beyond the tension of "personality conflict" and other self-focused emotions as the reason parents choose home schooling and now be able to work with home schooling parents on a more professional level.

The lack of personal conflict with public school administrators appears to be supported by the responses from the 75 of the 117 responses, or 64.1% of the families, that stated they had not met with the local public school administrator to discuss the needs of their family regarding educational programs for their child(ren). Forty-two families, or 35.9%, answered they had met with a local public school administrator regarding the educational needs of the family. However, home schooling parents in all groups used in this study rated philosophical differences with the public school as a more important reason for choosing home school. Could it be home schooling parents are not in personal conflict with school administrators or teachers but rather the parents are in philosophical conflict that stems from a policy or program conflict with the school district? Or could it be home schooling parents have a negative philosophical perception of the institution of public education either from the school district or from some other source?

All forty-two families that responded they had met with the local public school administrator identified the administrator's

reaction to the decision by the parents to home school their children. The most frequently checked response was from 13 families, or 30.9% of those who had met with the local public school administrator, indicating the "administrator expressed opposition". Other answers showing negative responses by administrators toward the decision of parents to home school were also checked by home schooling parents. A negative answer such as the "administrator was indifferent" was checked by 11.9% of the parents and 7.1% of the parents responded the "administrator was outwardly hostile". These three answers expressing what home schooling parents perceived as negative reactions from public school administrators account for 49.9%, or almost half of the parents' responses. In contrast, 10 families, or 23.8%, reported the "administrator offered support" and 5 families, 11.9%, reported the "administrator listened". These two positive responses combine to account for approximately one-third of the parent responses.

Commitment to Home Schooling

The responses from home schooling parents, when asked how long they plan to home school their children, were categorized. The results of data suggest 38 families, or 32.5%, possibly or definitely are interested in continuing home schooling through senior high school. The second largest response group, 20.5%, reported they are not definite as to how long they plan to continue home schooling but rather make this decision on a year-by-year basis. For example, several of these families commented they go through a yearly process of evaluation that

frequently includes input from the children as to what type of educational program they want. In contrast to these two categories, 11 families, or 9.4%, responded with a religious or philosophical statement. These statements included phrases such as they plan to continue to home school as long as the children "need it" or as long as the children "want home schooling" or as long as the family is "led by God" to continue home schooling, or as long as the family has the "freedom" to continue home schooling. Only 3 responses, or 2.6%, indicated they were home schooling only for one year and would not be continuing. However, 10 families of the 117 families, or 8.5%, responded they are no longer home schooling. These families did not identify how long they had home schooled their children, how soon they had stopped home schooling after filing the private school affidavit or their reasons for not continuing to home school their children.

Further research with this study group or with future home schooling parents in Sacramento County appears to be needed. This study indicates that the majority of students are in the early primary grades and parents are considering or planning to continue home schooling even through high school. This is in contrast to the findings of other authors. For example, according to Divoky (1983) no matter how attractive the idea of home schooling may be to parents, home schooling is "logistically impossible" for many families and the current economy does not allow most parents to stay at home even when they are not motivated by career advancement. Education USA (October 20, 1986)

reports financial pressures may be one reason only about half the home schooling parents tracked by the state of Connecticut continue for more than one year. In addition, further research appears needed as Henderson (1987) states many children do not like being in home-school beyond elementary school.

Recommendations

American education is influenced by historical, philosophical and social backgrounds. Public schools reflect these backgrounds in the knowledge, the attitudes, the values and the skills they transmit to students. The survey of the literature on the reasons parents choose home schooling and the findings of this study strongly suggest parents in Sacramento County are choosing home schooling because they believe public schools are not meeting the needs and expectations these home schooling parents have for their children.

Home schooling parents in Sacramento Country are committed to a specific quality of education that includes moral values. Home schooling parents believe such moral values are not found in a public school education. Parental involvement in the education of their children is not only to insure these moral values are taught and reinforced, but parental involvement is also a response to the parental concern for a higher quality of education for their children. The three highest rated reasons for choosing home schooling (greater opportunity for moral instruction, greater involvement in child's education and providing a higher quality of education) combine to form a strong

statement of disagreement with what home schooling parents believe are the current social and philosophical reflections of public schools.

America is a complex society with a culture that is not consistent and does not have a single system of ideas, beliefs and practices. Currently our public schools are the battleground of the diverse and conflicting interests in our society. Home schooling parents are involved in this battle as shown by the strong position they take by having their children break a tradition and not attend public schools or even private schools. Home schooling parents perceive public schools as caught up in a delivery system of education that is unable to adapt to provide for diversity and, therefore, is unable provide their children with educational programs these parents want for their children. This view is supported by Harris and Fields. "Dissatisfied, frustrated, and disillusioned with today's schooling, these parents feel powerless to influence or improve what they perceive to be chaotic, state-controlled education" (Harris and Fields, 1982, p. 26). What is left unanswered by this study is the source and intensity of the feelings home schooling parents have toward public schools. Perhaps these feelings stem from personal observation, from research, from the community, from religious teachings, or from media. Or perhaps these feelings stem from a complex combination of these and other possible sources. Does the intensity of the reason or reasons change with time or with age of the children? Left unanswered is to what extent home schooling parents have tried to

influence change in the public school system or even the local public school to meet the needs of their family.

Lines (1987), Divoky (1983) and Moore (1986) claim an increasing number of parents are choosing home schooling as an alternative to public or private schools. School boards and administrators are concerned and sometimes unclear as to the reasons parents make this choice. The findings of this study may affirm many of their currently held beliefs about home schooling. However, the findings of this study may also cause individuals to reevaluate many of their previously held assumptions about home schooling. School boards and administrators should be aware the major findings of this study include:

1. Parents in Sacramento County choose home schooling to provide greater opportunity for moral instruction, to have greater parental involvement in their child's education and to provide a higher quality of education.
2. Parents most likely to choose home schooling do not have a college degree, earn an annual income of less than \$40,000 and come from a variety of religious backgrounds.
3. The largest group of children involved in home schooling in Sacramento County are in kindergarten through second grade. The largest group of students spend 2 to 3 hours a day on academic subjects and 1 to 2 hours a day on related activities.

4. Resources most often used in home school programs are family-owned dictionaries, maps, purchased text books and public library materials.
5. Sixty-four percent of the home schooling families have not met with a local public school administrator to discuss the educational needs of their families. Of those parents who have met with an administrator, the largest group perceive the administrator's reaction as negative.
6. The majority of parents rate their home school as a positive success and they are possibly or definitely planning to home school through senior high school.

The findings of this study suggest the following recommendations:

1. Further study is needed to compare the academic progress of home-schooled children with public school children in Sacramento County on a yearly basis using standardized tests.
2. Further study is needed to determine the impact of religion on home schooling in such areas as the family's decision to home school, the curriculum used and the family's perceptions of public schools.
3. Further study is needed to track families currently involved in home schooling and to describe the reasons these families give when they stop home schooling.
4. Further study is needed to compare the perceptions of home schooling parents and public school administrators who have met together regarding home schooling.

5. The state legislature and the state department of education need to study the reasons parents cited for choosing home schooling and the implications of these reasons.

Appendix A

Appendix A

Melton's Religious Families

Twenty-five religious groups were given as responses to identifying the religious preferences of the home schooling families. Melton (1978) has examined American religions and found seventeen distinct families. "Within the seventeen families of American religions, the member bodies of each family share a common heritage, thought world (theology in its broadest sense), and lifestyle" (Melton, 1978, v. 1, p. ix). Using Melton's families as groups, the data from this study found the largest number of responses from the Adventist family with 18 responses, or 15.3%. Members in this family include Jehovah's Witness, Seventh-Day Adventist and Worldwide Church of God. According to Melton, since the beginning of Christianity various groups in this family have arisen characterized by the expectation of the immediate return of Christ.

At every turning point in the history of Christianity, people supporting such movements appeared, sometimes within the mainstream of church activities such as disturbers of accepted patterns of life, and sometimes at the outer edge of church activities as critics and reformers. (Melton, 1978, v. 1, p. 453)

The immediate return of Christ causes Adventist family members to place less value on "normal" activity. "Not always, but quite often, and intense moral imperative is associated with the end-time. This

phenomenon is seen as apocalyptists combine with the reformers who look to moral and social reform as a means to hold back impending doom" (sic) (Melton, 1987, v. 1, p. 455). There are two ethical positions among the Adventitist family described by Melton. One position places an emphasis on the Old Testament and the law as mandatory for Christians. Examples of this today include celebrating Jewish holidays and dietary laws. The other ethical position includes involvement in social crusades such as the peace movements.

Perhaps the members of the Adventists family have personalized the nearness of Christ's return and, therefore, do not want their children involved in what Melton called "normal" activities. Perhaps, for the parents in this study, one of those "normal" activities to be avoided is having their children attend public schools. Or perhaps this religious family's interest in morals is responsible for the high rating of "greater opportunity for moral instruction" as a reason for choosing home schooling as seen in Tables 1 and 2.

The second religious family most often cited by parents in this study is called the Pentecostal family by Melton. This religious family was cited by 16 home schooling families, or 14%. Members of this family include Assembly of God, Charismatic and Four Square.

Along with the new form of religious experience centered upon speaking in tongues comes the second distinguishing mark of the Pentecostal: a lifestyle reordered around that religious experience. The Pentecostal convert lets his or her religious experience dominate daily life.

The Pentecostal encourages others to have the baptism of the Holy Spirit: Pentecostals talk about that experience often; when they pray, they pray in tongues; they see healings as signs of God's immediate presence; they pay attention to other gifts of the Holy Spirit; and finally they tend to look down on those who do not speak in tongues. (Melton, 1978, v. 1, p. 244)

If the Pentecostal family members have a lifestyle centered around their religious experiences, then perhaps by necessity public schools are excluded. Pentecostal family members might see home schooling as a method of helping them focus more of their religious experiences in the daily lives of their children.

The third largest religious family in this study includes 14 home schooling families, or 12%. It is called the Baptist family according to Melton and members of this family include the Baptist, Christisn (Disciples of Christ), and Churches of Christ. The Baptist family members "are anti-authoritarian, lay-oriented, non-liturgical, non-creedal, they oppose state churches, and they baptize adult believers, not infants" (Melton, 1978, v. 1, p. 357). Melton claims the Baptist family is second only to Roman Catholics in size and attributes the large size of the Baptist family partly to "the Baptists' evangelistic revivalistic lifestyle" (Melton, 1978, v. 1, p. 357).

Baptist family characteristics described by Melton as "anti-authoritarian" and "lay-oriented" may be transferable to reasons why these parents choose home schooling for their children. For example, these prents may perceive the public schools as authoritarian in their curriculum and administration. In addition, these home schooling parents

may perceive teachers as not needing a special education and not needing a teaching credential to effectively teach children. Certainly if the members of the Baptist family "oppose state churches" (Melton, 1978) they may perceive current controversial issues such a state-sponsored sex education, values clarification and decision making classes as ways the state, via the public school, is in conflict with church doctrine.

Using Melton's system of grouping religions into families, the fourth largest religious family in this study is the Latter-Day Saints. Eight families responding to this survey, or 6.8%, identified themselves as Mormons.

In 1830, the Book of Mormon was published and the church organized. Both events had an immediate impact on the religious community and began a debate that has grown in intensity to this very day. The Book of Mormon was attacked and the Mormons became outcasts. (Melton, 1978, v. 2, p. 3)

The Articles of Faith, written by Joseph Smith, are still used by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and contain thirteen points of church doctrine.

Article 1. We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost...

Article 13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous and in doing good to all men, indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul. We have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

The average non-Mormon needs some interpretation of these statements inasmuch as they were worded to present Mormon doctrine in a form acceptable to mainline Christian denominations. For example, it may seem that the first article professes a belief in the Trinity, but in actuality a tritheism is being affirmed. (Melton, 1978,v. 2, pp. 6-7)

While it is Melton's view that the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints are complicated and need interpretation, perhaps the average non-Mormon and Mormon only view the Mormons as demonstrating a virtuous family-centered lifestyle, even including the choice of home schooling. On the other hand, perhaps the "outcast" description of Mormons by Melton, with negative connotations, is real today and has turned the Mormon families in this study to choose home schooling as a form of religious survival.

Appendix B

November 20, 1987

Dear Home Schooling Family:

I need your help. As part of my study at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, I am writing a dissertation on the reasons parents in Sacramento County choose home schooling for their children. I also hope to identify some characteristics of the parents and their home school. As home schooling parents, your answers to the enclosed survey will be very valuable.

All responses to this survey are confidential. However, if you would like a summary of my findings, please write your name and address on the last page.

I greatly appreciate you taking the time to participate in this survey. I would also very much appreciate your assistance in returning the questionnaire to me in the stamped, self-addressed envelope by December 4th.

Sincerely,

Betty Knopf
4318 Vista de Lago
Fair Oaks, CA 95628
(916) 961-0375

Appendix C

Very Important
Somewhat Important
Not Important

1. Please rate the importance of the following items in your decision to provide home schooling for your child(ren).

1. celebration of holidays	5	4	3	2	1
2. enhance the child's creativity	5	4	3	2	1
3. greater control of curriculum content	5	4	3	2	1
4. provide a higher quality of education	5	4	3	2	1
5. greater opportunity to learn life skills	5	4	3	2	1
6. greater opportunity for moral instruction	5	4	3	2	1
7. greater parental control of child	5	4	3	2	1
8. greater parental involvement in child's education	5	4	3	2	1
9. philosophical differences with public school	5	4	3	2	1
10. greater protection from ridicule	5	4	3	2	1
11. greater protection from competition	5	4	3	2	1
12. fewer problems with racial identification	5	4	3	2	1
13. to encourage religious/spiritual values	5	4	3	2	1
14. provide greater safety/security	5	4	3	2	1
15. encourage self-sufficiency and independence	5	4	3	2	1
16. greater control of child's socialization	5	4	3	2	1
17. avoid the theory of evolution being taught	5	4	3	2	1
18. avoid secular humanism	5	4	3	2	1
19. conflict with public school administrator	5	4	3	2	1
20. conflict with public school teacher	5	4	3	2	1
21. child has special need (please identify)_____	5	4	3	2	1
22. other (please explain)_____	5	4	3	2	1

2. Please circle the grade(s) completed at each type of school

	<u>School</u>	<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>High School</u>	<u>College</u>
Father:	Public	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
	Private	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
	Home	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
Mother:	Public	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
	Private	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
	Home	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
Child 1:	Public	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
	Private	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
	Home	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
Child 2:	Public	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
	Private	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
	Home	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
Child 3:	Public	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
	Private	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+
	Home	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	9 10 11 12	13 14 15 16 17+

3. The main teacher in the home school is

☐ father ☐ mother ☐ relative ☐ credentialed teacher/tutor
☐ other (explain) _____

4. Does either parent in the home have a teaching credential?

☐ yes ☐ no

5. Occupation of mother _____

6. Occupation of father _____

7. The family's religious preference is (optional)

- ☐ Assembly of God
- ☐ Baptist
- ☐ Christian (Disciples of Christ)
- ☐ Episcopal
- ☐ Hebrew
- ☐ Interdenominational
- ☐ Jehovah's Witness
- ☐ Lutheran
- ☐ Methodist
- ☐ Mormon
- ☐ Pentecostal
- ☐ Presbyterian
- ☐ Roman Catholic
- ☐ Seventh-Day Adventist
- ☐ Other (please identify) _____
- ☐ None

8. Please check your approximate total annual family income (optional).

- ☐ less than \$20,000
- ☐ between \$20,001 and \$40,000
- ☐ between \$40,001 and \$60,000
- ☐ between \$60,001 and \$80,000
- ☐ over \$80,000

9. As parents, have you met with a local public school administrator to discuss the needs of your family regarding educational programs for your child(ren)? ☐ yes ☐ no

10. If you have met with a local public school administrator, what is your best description of the administrator's reaction to your decision to home school your child(ren)?

- ☐ administrator offered support
- ☐ administrator listened
- ☐ administrator was indifferent
- ☐ administrator expressed opposition
- ☐ administrator was outwardly hostile
- ☐ administrator was never told of the decision
- ☐ other (explain) _____

11. Check any educational materials, programs or services provided by the local school district that were offered to you as home schooling parents and those that you would be interested in using:

offered interested

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | a. independent study |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | b. use of books and library materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | c. use of <u>equipment</u> other than books and library materials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | d. special education programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | e. testing services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | f. participation in selected classes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | g. use of school buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | h. extra curricular/after-school activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | i. vocational education/job training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | j. psychological/counseling services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | k. other (explain) _____ |

12. How do you assess your child's achievement?

- ☐ standardized tests
☐ home prepared tests
☐ curriculum program tests
☐ school district prepared tests
☐ other (explain) _____
☐ no testing program

13. Please identify what teaching resources are being used in your home school.

- ☐ purchased text books
☐ public school text books
☐ purchased lesson plans
☐ parent prepared lesson plans
☐ public school lesson plans
☐ public library materials
☐ family-owned encyclopedias
☐ family-owned dictionary
☐ maps
☐ films
☐ cassette tapes
☐ computer programs
☐ educational television programs
☐ VCR/video tapes
☐ other (please identify) _____

14. Are you involved with any home schooling organization or "support group"?

no yes (please identify) _____

15. What is the average amount of time your child spends daily on academic subjects and related activities?

academic
subjects

related
activities

less than 1 hour
1 to 2 hours
2 to 3 hours
3 to 4 hours
4 to 5 hours
more than 5 hours

16. Until what age or grade do you plan to continue to home school your child(ren)?

17. How do you rate the success of your home school?

_____ no success
 _____ marginal success
 _____ satisfactory success
 _____ above average success
 _____ outstanding success

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