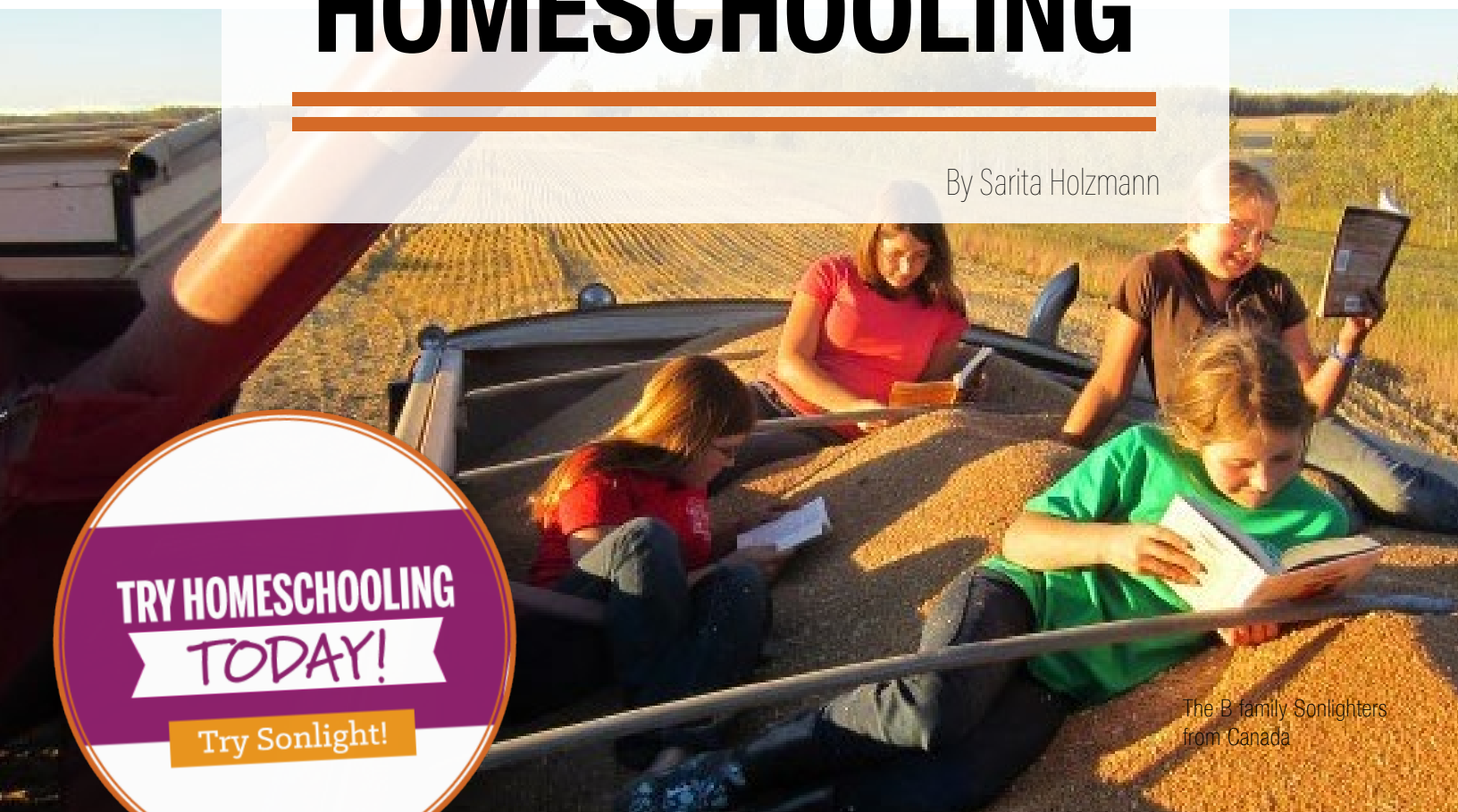


The K family Sonlighters,
from Waco TX



The Benefits of **HOMESCHOOLING**

By Sarita Holzmann



**TRY HOMESCHOOLING
TODAY!**

Try Sonlight!

The B family Sonlighters
from Canada

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How Homeschooling Gives You the Time for Childhood Dreams to Come True

In an ideal world, what kind of childhood would you dream of for your children? Maybe you picture your children:

- Running free in the backyard
- Snuggled in your lap for a good story
- Laughing around the dinner table
- Telling stories around a campfire
- Going on adventures together
- Slopping together mud sculptures
- Creating art projects next to a fire
- Filling their free time with creative pursuits

The thing about all these beautiful pictures is that they take time. And that time is well spent.

Do you find that these experiences rarely happen for your family because your life is driven by someone else's schedule? Between the rush to catch the school bus, to get to after-school activities, homework, and projects . . . is your life full?

Homeschooling gives you freedom to take advantage of the time you have.

When you homeschool, you are in charge of your schedule. You get to pick your curriculum, your outside activities, what you study, when you study, and how long you study. You have freedom:

- Freedom to start your day when it works best for you, whether that's an early morning start or long after the school bus has passed by.
- Freedom to take breaks throughout the day.
- Freedom to enjoy your children when they're at their best, not just when they come home exhausted from school.
- Freedom to take vacations when your family chooses.
- Freedom to meet your children where they are academically, instead of letting them get bored with work that's too easy, or overwhelmed with work that's moving too fast.

In short, homeschooling gives you freedom to move at your pace. It gives your children the time to create the childhood memories you dream they should enjoy.

What might your homeschooling look like?

A Sonlight dad whose children have all graduated wrote recently about how the amount of family time that homeschooling provided helped them shape their family culture. ▶▶

“In looking back, the time we spent with our kids was the single greatest contributor to the success of our homeschooling.

Within weeks after we returned to homeschooling, the kids became more optimistic and their spirits softened.

We read, drew, played, traveled, skied, shopped and did so many other things together that would never have been possible had we not homeschooled. We went to museums, plays, parks and made trips to visit family in Mexico during the school year that would

never have been possible had we not homeschooled.

Most of all we talked and talked and talked about virtually everything under the sun in a way that was natural and not forced due to lack of time.

We do believe in that old adage that, when it comes to children, quality time is quantity time.”

When you homeschool, you have space in your life to be together during the day, and not just in the few hours between school and bed. You get to build up a huge reservoir of quantity time together, which naturally yields rich quality time.



The P family Sonlighters,
from Leland, NC

A Homeschooling *Benefit*:

A Customized Education

In a classroom, the teacher tries to keep all the students learning together. This means some are left behind. Not because the teacher wants to, but because the system requires that the class cover a certain amount of material and there are limited school days.

With homeschooling, this doesn't ever have to be your story. You can take the time to make sure your students get the education they need. And if they need extra time to master a topic or skill, you have the opportunity to give them that time.

With homeschooling, you can choose to grade on a pass/fail system, where you don't allow your children to fail. If your children don't succeed the first time they try something, that's fine! You have learned something about how they learn, about where they are confused.

You can review. Or take a few months off to allow further brain development. You can try a different approach. These are all gifts homeschooling parents give to their children. You have the freedom to wrestle with a subject until your children understand.

Your children can race ahead in their areas of strength, and take the time they need to master the things they aren't proficient in yet.

- If one child needs half as many math problems as the book assigns, you let that child progress quickly.
- If one child needs all the math problems and maybe a little more, you can add in board games, or check online for creative ways to reinforce particular concepts.
- If one child understands, but grows tired quickly from the mechanics of writing, you are free to write the answers your child dictates.

You can give your children a customized education that meets your children's needs, whether they work ahead or need a little more time to grow and develop.

Don't let your children believe—and don't you believe!—that they aren't learners or that they have nothing to offer the world. Homeschooling opens the doors to learning for every student.

You are teaching your children how to learn for the rest of their lives.

A Homeschooling *Benefit*:

You socialize your children!

When parents mention they are thinking about homeschooling, often the first question they hear is: “But what about socialization?”

Meaning, “How will your children know how to act around others, if they only interact with your family all day?”

Of course, most families don’t move to an island when they start homeschooling. Between church, sports, clubs, co-ops, and friends, homeschooling offers children many opportunities to be around others.

This is true of all the homeschoolers I have known.

But there’s a second meaning to “socialize,” based on its definition: *to teach people to act like their social group wants*.

“Socialization” means to teach someone to act like their peers. It means a second grader teaching another second grader to act like a second grader.

Of course, most parents don’t really want their children getting behavioral cues from other children. They prefer

that adults model behavior for their children—free of bullying, silly talk, and put-downs.

Two Stories of Homeschool Socialization

To make this more practical and understandable, let me give you two stories from my life about homeschool socialization.

1. At one point, my husband was talking to a librarian. “I can always tell when homeschooled children come in,” she said. “Most children walk up to my desk and state, ‘I need some help.’ They don’t care if I’m busy with something else. They only see their own needs. By contrast, homeschooled children walk up to my desk and wait quietly until I look up. ‘Excuse me,’ they say. ‘Call you help me find a book I need?’ They are so polite!”
2. At a family reunion, we were heading out to watch dolphins when the driver, after watching my extended family interact, said, “You homeschool, don’t you? I can always tell.”

We ended up meeting her husband, a marine expert, a few days later. We were enjoying the displays at the small museum he ran, asking



him questions, giving exuberant attention to artifacts and animals.

He said, “My wife must have *loved* you.”

That makes sense. We were all engaged with the experience—grandparents, parents, children. We were all interested.

So when the question arises, “But what about socialization?” you can say, “I get to socialize my children! I get to integrate them into my life. They get to observe how I behave, and learn what mature, adult interactions look like. It’s such an exciting opportunity for our whole family.”

THAT’S HOMESCHOOLING!



The H family Sonlighters,
from Bridgeport, WV

Sea-Breeze Sheltered Homeschooling

By Luke Holzmann

I had a rather sheltered homeschool experience.

If what you imagine by *sheltered* is something restrictive or fearful, I would like to reframe the meaning of the word for you.

My sheltered childhood was like a day at the beach: sun, shells, swim wear, beach balls, and all. The shelter I experienced was like a bamboo-and-dried-palm-fronds awning. The sea breezes of life could flow in; I could go out and come back. I had a safe place to rest, protected from rain and cold. I was not tossed alone into the world. I was sheltered, covered, protected . . . and free.

Sure, I got sand in my shorts. The air occasionally smelled fishy. Sometimes I got sunburned.

But despite this mild discomfort, my parents let me dig moats, fly kites, talk to people, explore, run, play, discover.

The world was open to me, and my parents encouraged me to interact with it and exhibit God’s love and grace to any and all whom I met along the way.

Life does not disrupt the kind of sheltering I had.

When Sonlighters read the Bible and other books, we encounter complex characters and situations. We learn about life. Like anyone, we can be disheartened and disillusioned. But we’re not huddled in a house, hoping nothing gets in. We are standing on the shore, looking out, ready to take off when the opportunity presents itself. Sheltered.

A Homeschooling *Benefit*:

An Unexpected Reason to Homeschool

The authors of *Nurture Shock* dedicate an entire chapter to sleep deprivation in children. They say that children today “get an hour less sleep each night than they did thirty years ago. . . . A loss of one hour of sleep is equivalent to [the loss of] two years of cognitive maturation and development” (30, 32). Meaning: an hour less sleep means your fourth-grader will think and behave like a second-grader.

On its own, the promise of getting enough sleep is probably not a big enough benefit to convince you to start homeschooling. But once you start homeschooling, and your children get enough sleep, you’ll wonder how you survived before.

With homeschooling, your children are able to wake up naturally, allowing them to get the sleep they need. Your family will enjoy increased focus and better attitudes.

How much sleep do children need?

THE NATIONAL SLEEP FOUNDATION SUGGESTS		
Category	Age Range	Hours of Sleep
Toddlers	1-3	12-14 per day (including naps)
Preschoolers	3-5	11-13 per day
Children	5-12	10-11 per night
Teens	13-19	8.5-9.25 per night

Of course, as children grow up, most also increase the number of activities, events, and appointments. Sleep deprivation does not go away.

As students hit puberty, their circadian rhythms change. This makes it hard for them to fall asleep as early as they did when they were younger. Ideally, a teenager would sleep from about 11 pm to 8am. Yet most high schools start so early that students have to wake up by 6am in order to get to school on time.

Unfortunately, the massive sleep debt of most classroom school teens puts them at much higher risk for car crashes, depression . . . or even that classic teen trait, irritability.

Some school districts have actually changed their start times because of this research. They’ve followed the advice from several studies showing that teens perform better in many areas of life when allowed to sleep a little later in the morning. In districts that have made the change, parents report that their teens are now easier to live with.

But homeschoolers don’t have to change an entire school district in order to help their students sleep. You can implement a change tomorrow, if you want, allowing your children to wake when their bodies are ready, without an alarm clock.

Homeschooled teens have the chance to get far more sleep than their peers who go to school. And that sleep ►►

translates into better health, better moods, and better ability to learn throughout the day.

I love that homeschooling helps us meet our children's needs in different ways, including a flexible schedule. We can pause a math lesson to meet an emotional need. We can take a day off if a child is sick. We can take a break to pray at any time. And we can orient our family schedules to help our children get the sleep they need.

The F family Sonlighters
from Battle Ground, WA



A Homeschooling *Benefit*:

Children learn better when they can move

Therapist Angela Hanscom wondered what it would be like to sit through the hours of class as a student again. So she went to middle school for a day and wrote an article titled:

“A therapist goes to middle school and tries to sit still and focus. She can’t. Neither can the kids.”

[Click here to read this Article](#)

Because of her experience, Hanscom champions children’s need to move a lot throughout each day in order to learn well. On her recent visit to a middle school as a “student,” she didn’t even last past lunch:

“There is no way I could tolerate six hours of sitting even just one day, never mind *every day*—day after day. How on Earth do these children tolerate sitting this long? Well, the short answer is they don’t. Their bodies aren’t designed for extended periods of sitting.

As Hanscom writes elsewhere, students today are growing up without the crucial sensory input they once got from hours of vigorous play each day. This is not just a physical problem—it causes problems for learning and sensory integration as well.

Classroom school teachers don’t have the space in their

classrooms to let students move. Many middle schools have only passing periods to allow movement, and even some elementary schools have shortened recess to a mere 15 minutes a day.

But when you homeschool with Sonlight, you can let your children move. Your children don’t have to sit still at a desk.

You can:

- let your children sit however they want (or even hang upside down) as they listen.
- let them run outside or do headstands in the basement.
- let them wiggle as they read, and take a break when they need.
- let your active young students jump on a mini-trampoline while reciting math facts, or sit on bouncy balls while they learn.
- let them enjoy unstructured play time.
- let them squish some play dough or silly putty during school.

Even as homeschooling lets children get the sleep they need, homeschooling also lets children get the movement they need. Children’s brains need adequate sleep. Children’s brains also need body movement.

Both of these are non-negotiable for optimal development.

Happily, the flexibility of homeschooling can give your children time for both.

A Homeschooling *Benefit*:

Teach Your Values and Beliefs as You Homeschool

You might be in the 85% of parents who consider this one of the main reasons to homeschool:

Pass along your values and beliefs.

Perhaps you've thought about how most parents don't allow a babysitter to watch their children for a few hours without knowing and trusting the sitter, but that often parents will send a child to school all day, every day, without knowing anything about the teacher.

Perhaps you've thought about the words of Moses in Deuteronomy (6:5-7):

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

Time is incredibly important in teaching your values and beliefs to the next generation. And

I like how Moses puts it, that you talk to your children—that you have a conversation, a discussion. This is a beautiful picture of parents and children

talking of important things as they go somewhere, together.

You have time to do that when you're homeschooling.

With homeschooling, your children have the opportunity to ask you questions. Since you're available, you can help them work through their struggles and doubts, and provide clarity in areas that confuse them (or, perhaps, commiseration—you probably have some questions, too).

Homeschooling with Sonlight, we believe that walking with your children as they learn allows you to educate, not indoctrinate. This means that your children are learning and growing, not repeating what they think you want to hear.

Sonlight helps you:

- teach
- instruct
- train
- coach
- guide
- inform
- enlighten

You can teach your values and beliefs because homeschooling gives you opportunities to model your values, and address your children's questions. ►►

Education, not indoctrination.

Homeschooling is no guarantee that your children will turn out, in all ways, the way that you hope they will.

But in the ways that values are passed on by modeling over time, homeschooling certainly offers plenty of opportunity for both modeling and time!

Ready for your next step?

Curious to see what this type of education might look like for your family? Go to [SmoothCourse](https://www.smoothcourse.com) to explore your options.

If you are ready to explore the possibilities for your children's education, Sonlight has homeschool consultants available to talk to you about the next step on your journey. Contact a homeschool advisor today by visiting [sonlight.com/advisors](https://www.sonlight.com/advisors)



The M family Sonlighters,
from Buhl, ID

How a Homeschooling Parent Is Like an Archer

By Luke Holzmann

When I took archery in college, one of the first things I learned was that how they shoot in the movies is all wrong. Archers shouldn't grip tightly to the bow as they release an arrow. Rather, as an archer, I should

- *leave my hand open with the bow resting between my thumb and forefinger.*
- *When I release the arrow, the bow will fall forward and hang from a little rope around my wrist.*
- *This keeps me from accidentally jarring the bow as the arrow leaves my hand so it flies more true.*

In other words: **Archery is all about keeping your hands open, your body relaxed, as you point the arrow where it should go.** Doing so actually makes the arrow fly straighter and more accurately toward the target.

The Psalmist compares parents to archers in Psalm 127: "Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth."

What a beautiful picture of parents as archers: Hands open. Body relaxed. Pointing your children toward God.

Prepare your children for flight—and then release them.



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