

How Adults Can Discover What Schools Are Really Teaching Kids

Homeschoolers are no strangers to questions concerning their decision to educate their children at home. Such a choice opens them up to [inquiries on everything](#) from their qualifications to whether their children will be socially well-adjusted.

Homeschool parents realize that such questions are natural and come with the territory. But according to a recent *Washington Post* [article](#), there is one question which many homeschoolers are never asked, but should be. Homeschool mom Sarah Bradley explains:

What I have a harder time understanding is why so few people think to ask the one question that would address most of their concerns and satisfy nearly all of their curiosity about our choice to home-school: "What are you learning about?"

Notice that I said "What are you learning about?" rather than "What are you teaching your son?" There's a big difference, and it lies at the heart of our decision to home-school."

Bradley goes on to say that many homeschoolers choose such an education option because they want to foster a love of learning in their children. They recognize that the "public education method is transforming the act of learning into something that must be scored, carefully dictated and comparatively measured," and that such a process kills the eagerness to learn.

Because homeschoolers look at education through this

alternative lens, Bradley suggests that they should also be questioned about their schooling in a different way:

Instead, ask them what birds they saw on their morning nature walk. Ask them where they went on their last field trip or what chapter book they are reading together. Have them tell you about their coolest science experiment, their messiest art project, their favorite sea creature.

Bradley's admonition is a great one, not only for homeschool families, but for those in public, private, and charter schools as well.

Think about it. The first question almost any adult asks a child is, "What grade are you in?" Doing so trains a child to think narrowly, give a scripted answer, and classify themselves as a part of a large group of similarly conditioned individuals.

On the other hand, asking a child to explain what they are learning in school immediately pulls them out of a narrow-minded mental prison. They can no longer hide in safety as another member of the herd or offer a canned response. Instead, they must stand out as an individual, think for themselves, verbalize the unique thoughts that are floating in their brains, and engage in discussion about these thoughts.

Such a question not only trains children to be independent thinkers ready to give an answer and pass their insights on to others, but it also offers decided benefits to adults.

Let's face it: adults are somewhat clueless as to what really goes on in school. Sure, they went through thirteen years of schooling themselves, but that experience has become a bit foggy, and, well, times have changed. What may have been standard books or classes or experiences when today's adults were in school, might now be completely different. If adults

were to ask kids more open-ended questions such as what books they are reading, what field trips they have been on, or what science experiments they have conducted, would they not gain far greater insight into today's classrooms? Perhaps we would realize that today's schools are encouraging learning at a far greater rate than we ever hoped.

Or perhaps we'd discover that the only things our children are learning are how to check boxes, fill in bubbles, and give dull, pre-programmed responses to life's questions.