WHAT ABOUT HOMESCHOOLERS?
Understanding and Programming for Homeschool Students and their Parents

Elizabeth Stinnette, Children’s Librarian
OVERVIEW

- What is homeschooling, anyway?
- Inside the homeschool mind
- What not to ask homeschoolers
- Homeschool programming at the library
  - Case studies
  - Tips and tricks
  - Adaptation for staff and budget
- Why do homeschool programming?
YOUR LIBRARY MIGHT HAVE HOMESCHOOLERS IF...
...One family returns 35 books about the history of flight.
... You see a teen lugging around Saxon Math textbooks.
...An entire family comes in the morning... and stays all day!
MY HOMESCHOOL STORY
WHAT IS HOMESCHOOLING, ANYWAY?

- Modern homeschool movement started in the 1970s
- Grew in popularity through the 1990s as states changed schooling laws to be more homeschool-friendly
- In the past decade, homeschooling has grown in popularity and diversity
In the 2020–2021 school year, 5.4 percent of American students were homeschooled!
WHAT IS HOMESCHOOLING, ANYWAY?

Types of Homeschool:

- Co-ops
- Online
- Unit Studies
- Montessori
- Classical
- Un-schooling
INSIDE THE HOMESCHOOL MIND

- Independent
- Curious
- Often educationally advanced for their age
- Relationship-driven
- Lots of parental and whole-family involvement
- Appreciative of the library!
WHAT **NOT** TO ASK HOMESCHOOLERS

- "Why aren't you in school?"
- "What about socialization?"
- "Are you like, religious or something?"
- "So do you do school in your pj's?"
WHAT HOMESCHOOLERS WANT FROM THE LIBRARY

- An opportunity to connect with other homeschool families
- Activities they probably wouldn’t do at home (think messy!)
- Programming during the school day
- Prior notice about program themes
DESIGNING A HOMESCHOOL PROGRAM

Observe

When do homeschoolers use your library? Which library programs do they already visit?

Interact

Ask parents:
When are the co-ops? Is there a curriculum/activity fair I can attend? What kinds of library programs would you like to see?
Remember, you aren't just providing a program. You're building a relationship with a community.
CASE STUDY: HOMESCHOOL ART
CASE STUDY: HOMESCHOOL SCIENCE


TIPS & TRICKS

- Pick 1, more involved activity for all to do together
- Use upper elementary and middle school projects— even for younger kids
- Get messy!
- Encourage creativity and going "off script"
- Expect younger siblings and have a separate area for them, if needed
- Advertise for age, not grade
OTHER PROGRAM IDEAS

- Outside presenters/field trips
- Makerspace tutorials
- Curriculum swap
- Fairs
- Book club
- Caregivers’ retreat
- Co-op visits
ADAPTATIONS

- Enlist homeschooled teens as volunteers
- Use recycled items in creative ways
- Make a community project
WHY DO HOMESCHOOL PROGRAMMING?

- Building community
- Providing additional resources to people who love the library
- Encouraging positive, inclusive interactions outside the home
RESOURCES

- Understanding homeschoolers: Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA); Coalition for Responsible Home Education (CRHE)
- Program ideas: 123homeschool4me.com
- See handout for more!
Thank you!

Questions:
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