

Trusting the program of homeschooling

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They know that at home, they get to play whenever they want, take a snack break when they are hungry not when the schedule allows them to. By December, they never asked me again, when will go back to real school? Winata says.

There were times I felt like I robbed their childhood, but thankfully my husband is very supportive. He would tell me, you are doing it right. We are doing this for them. Just keep focusing.

I think this experience will prepare them for adulthood, Winata says.

She plans to home school them until at least Grade 8.

Winata, who also runs a mobile mini-putt business from home, admits it is challenging.

I run my business too, trying to do the house chores and home-school the kids; sometimes I lose my focus, and think I have to do this, then I will remember it is their home-school time and think, no I have to give my hundred per cent to them, she says.

Teaching has always been my passion, so for me this is the answer.

Does she have advice for anyone thinking about taking on a larger role in their kids' education?

First I would say, look at the curriculum, next do a self-assessment, and then assess your kids. Are you willing to make the commitment?

In Halton Region there are home-schooling support groups such as Catholic Home Schoolers of Halton and Halton Hills Christian Homeschoolers. While both groups were contacted for this story, nobody came forward to be interviewed.

Pam Laricchia, who practised a laid-back version of home-schooling called unschooling beginning in 2002, with her three children, understands the parents' reluctance to speak up.

She says parents from these groups have likely experienced criticism and judgment about their choice to home-school.

But does Laricchia wonder if her now adult offspring are at a disadvantage in today's globally competitive economy without post-secondary credentials?

I don't worry. I know my children have been learning all the time. They have an incredible base of knowledge. If they have to take an entry test, or do remedial testing, if at any point there is knowledge they want to pick up, I know they will dive in when they are ready. I don't see gaps, because I don't judge what they've learned by a certain age.

I don't mean to demean school. What we do is, we don't presuppose you need that knowledge and we go into the real world and learn as we go, Laricchia says.

Laricchia says knowing that her kids are healthy and that they are working in fields they enjoy (her daughter Lissy is a photographer in New York, her son Michael works in martial arts, and her oldest son Joseph is into computers) is good enough.

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