

How does homeschooling affect adolescents' character, health and well-being?

November 10 2021



A young student working from home. Credit: Jessica Lewis, Unsplash, CC0 (creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/)

Compared to peers at public schools, adolescents who are homeschooled are more likely to report greater character strengths and fewer risky

health behaviors later in life, but are less likely to attain a college degree, according to a new study published this week in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by Tyler VanderWeele of Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, US, and colleagues.

School experiences are crucial for shaping individuals' developmental and well-being trajectories later in life. Past studies have explored associations between types of primary and [secondary schools](#) and [academic achievement](#), but outcomes beyond [academic performance](#) remain less well understood.

In the new study, researchers used data from 12,288 adolescent children of nurses enrolled in the Growing Up Today Study (GUTS). In 1999, [baseline data](#), including the type of [school](#) a child was attending, was collected on children between the ages of 11 and 19. Data on outcomes were collected primarily from the 2010 wave of the GUTS questionnaire, or, when missing 2010 data, from the 2013 or 2007 questionnaire .

Few statistically significant differences were seen between children who attended [public schools](#), private independent schools and private religious schools. However when comparing students who were homeschooled with those that attended public schools, some differences emerged. Homeschooled children were more likely to report volunteering activities ($\beta=0.33$, 95% CI 0.15-0.52, p

Citation: How does homeschooling affect adolescents' character, health and well-being? (2021, November 10) retrieved 13 July 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-11-homeschooling-affect-adolescents-character-health.html>

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