

## Beyond Homeschooling



When you think seriously about what your child will do ‘after homeschooling,’ you’re either at the beginning of your child’s ‘high school’ years (the ages from about 14 and up), or are actually contemplating ‘graduating’ near the end-of-homeschooling. You may wonder, “What comes next?” How do people who were homeschooled fit themselves into everyday adult life? The answer, of course, is “just like everyone else.”

Before your child makes the change from at-home dependent to competent-adult, it is usually best to prepare for it, and not just expect the teen to step out onto adulthood’s doorstep looking for the taxi to Grownup Land. This is only common sense. The trouble with preparation is, that to make specific plans, the teen must have a goal in mind, sometimes as early as fourteen. The ‘what do you want to be when you grow up’ question must leave the realm of the wishful thinking of six-year-olds, although fire fighters, dinosaur hunters, and astronauts have to come from somewhere. Making plans early is useful so that when ‘graduation’ arrives, both you and your teen are as ready as you can be for that next step.

The usual possibilities (or a mix of possibilities) beyond and after homeschooling are

- continuing to live as a family
- a job
- attending college or specialized schooling
- joining the military

Since a ‘gap year’ (or more) may not require as much groundwork for entry as the other choices, I won’t discuss it. And since marriage is such a personal choice, I’ll leave that discussion to the families.

## Continuing to live as a family



Although leaving one's family after the teen years is the average experience in the U.S., not all people in families separate once one of them reaches a certain age. If the family members live together harmoniously, and if the younger family members find schooling or useful work close by, and if they decide to continue along as they already have done, whose business is it?

Of course, as time passes, the family structure changes. Without unusual circumstances, none of us remains the way we were at 12, or 16 or 18, and each party will have to adjust his actions about helping out. If a young person branches out on his or her own while still living with family, what he or she expects in the way of freedom and responsibilities changes. Boundaries, too, will change. As with homeschooling, how this works out depends on the members of each family.

## Holding down a job



Sometimes though, though apprenticing, part time jobs or finding a need and filling it, teenage homeschooled kids already have jobs. Teens with artistic talent might have jobs as assistants to artists, or in a shop specializing in supplies for various undertakings. We could say the same of young people with musical talent, carpentry skills or mechanical experience. As the young person works, he or she gains more experience and moves up the ladder. Another benefit of jobs-while-young is that if the job is not what the young person expected it to be, it is better to find that out before anyone invests in long-term training.

Not all jobs must be paying jobs. A young person could try out various fields through volunteering, and again, work his or her way up the ladder as she gains skills. A slow immersion into the adult world can also save the money needed for large investments, or the interest levied on loans.

## Researching college and university requirements



In our society, the presumed pinnacle of schooling is a college degree, and it can be a worthy goal. A degree, though, is not the guarantee of financial success that it is often advertised to be. If other less expensive means to a prospective job present themselves, the alternative might be the fiscally responsible path to take. That said, as things have developed, a college degree often is the path to well-paid professional or white-collar jobs.

Colleges and universities have their individual requirements for the work they expect applicants to have completed.

- University of Idaho: applicants with less than 14 college credit hours that can be transferred must provide a GPA, and acceptable GPA levels vary with whether the applicant is in-state, out-of-state, or applying to a specific department<sup>1</sup>
- the Art Institute of Phoenix accepts a GED certificate, but Game and Art Design applicants must provide a portfolio<sup>2</sup>
- Yale applicants must “apply directly to the school, college, or program where the degree will be awarded ...”<sup>3</sup>
- Tarleton applicants must rank in the top 10% of their graduating class and provide ACT or SAT scores; homeschooled applicants must have an SAT of at least 1100 or an ACT of at least 24, but the school expects “proof of curriculum completed from an agency or teacher.”<sup>4</sup>

### Applying to a college or university

While working towards applying to a college or university, it is useful to prepare for a smooth progression from homeschooling to undergraduate schooling.

Steps that ease the applying might be:

- research early, perhaps at 14 or 15
- research the requirements expected by the kinds of colleges or universities that specialize in a young person’s areas of interest, and completing them
- accurately track homeschooling hours and activities in order to produce an easily understood

transcript

- take the SAT or ACT (the PSAT is most useful if the teen wishes to apply for a National Merit Scholarship)
  - choose potential colleges or universities that seem to mesh well with the young person's interests
- visit school(s) and speak with admissions staff

No college is "generic." Each school has its requirements. Check school websites for homeschooling particulars.

## Entering the military



If one of the military services is a goal for your teen, he or she must decide whether the goal is to be an officer, or to enlist. The differences between commissioning as an officer or enlisting, can be boiled down to seeing commissioning as entering into the professional management level of one of the services, while enlisting gives a more hands-on experience of doing the actual work in the field.

Officers “serve at the pleasure of the President” for an indefinite period, until retirement, dismissal, or their resignations are accepted. If an officer submits a resignation, this may or may not be accepted. Enlisted servicemembers serve only for the period of their enlistment. After that, the servicemember may leave the service with an honorable discharge, or re-enlist. All servicemembers, commissioned or enlisted, must serve in some capacity for eight years. The eight-year obligation may be all active duty, or a combination of active and either Reserve or National Guard service.

Officers do ‘work for a living,’ despite the standard replies of NCOs (non-commissioned officers) to anyone replying to them with, “Yes, sir,” or, “Yes, ma’am.” (fyi, the proper reply to an enlisted supervisor is “Yes, corporal,” or Sergeant, or Sergeant Major/Chief, depending on the person’s rank or rating).

Officers perform their duties across a broader spectrum of their job field than enlisted servicemembers. Where an enlisted servicemember’s job might be a specific part of a field, an officer’s job would be to oversee multiple jobs, or an entire unit providing a specific service, such as supply, personnel, intelligence or one of the combat arms. Commanding officers are responsible for overseeing the well-being and training of a unit, plus the housing and feeding of the individuals within the unit, as well as accomplishing the unit’s mission.

A community commander, acts as the ‘mayor’ of a military installation with all the responsibilities of fire control, security, safety, sanitation and infrastructure. Commanders of ships have even broader responsibilities as they must also oversee onsite medical care, food, waste disposal, sailors buying sundries, banking, barbering, water safety and possible search and rescue.

The medical field is an exception as doctors do the hands-on work they have been trained to do, as well as handling administrative or command duties as needed.

Enlisted personnel do the actual jobs that together make up the output of a unit.

They are the tank drivers, missile launcher operators, and front-line infantry, air crews, helicopter mechanics and

aircraft catapult operators, interpreters, interviewers and photo analysts, military policemen, criminal investigators, and corrections personnel, medical technicians, dental technicians and pharmacy technicians, mechanics, truck drivers and heavy equipment operators, electricians, refrigeration technicians and plumbers, finance clerks, personnel clerks and legal clerks, clarinetists, trombonists and buglers, cooks, bakers and pastry chefs. The Navy has the widest variety of jobs because of the need to maintain full services aboard the floating towns and cities that are naval ships.

In-between the officer and enlisted ranks are the warrant officers of the Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard. Warrant officers are the technical experts of the military world. They are former enlisted members whose expertise allows them to perform as technical leaders.

An Army helicopter pilot is the only field in which a homeschooled applicant could apply to be a warrant officer,<sup>5</sup> but the “high school to flight school” path isn’t easy. Applicants must pass the Flight Aptitude Selection Test, possess a GT score of 110 or higher, meet the Army’s physical requirements, have near-perfect vision and no color-blindness ... and hold their own against enlisted soldier applicants.

The services appoint all other warrants from the enlisted ranks. The Air Force stopped using the warrant officer ranks when the top enlisted grades of E-8 and E-9 were created in 1958.

For more information on joining the military as a homeschooled graduate, see the Tossed by the Fates article, “Joining the military.”

## Conclusion

Grownup Land for homeschoolers has as many possibilities for a good life as does Grownup Land for young adults educated in a more mainstream way. Not all homeschooling parents will want to continue home education after a child reaches the usual high school age, and some homeschooled kids will want to attend high school. But for those who do continue homeschooling until graduation, the same paths are available 'beyond homeschooling' as for teens who choose mainstream schooling.

### Recommended reading:

*And What About College?: How Homeschooling Leads to Admissions to the Best Colleges & Universities* by Cafi Cohen  
*College Without High School* by Blake Boles  
*Homeschoolers' College Admission Handbook*, by Cafi Cohen  
*Homeschooler's Guide to Portfolios and Transcripts* by Loretta Heuer  
*The Teenage Liberation Handbook* by Grace Lewellyn (out of print)

### Notes:

<sup>1</sup> University of Idaho, transfer students

<http://www.uidaho.edu/futurestudents/admissions/admissionrequirements/transferstudents>

<sup>2</sup> Art Institute of Phoenix admissions

[http://www.artinstitutes.edu/phoenix/Admissions/Admissions\\_Requirements.aspx](http://www.artinstitutes.edu/phoenix/Admissions/Admissions_Requirements.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> Yale admissions

<http://www.yale.edu/admissions/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> Tarleton admissions

<http://www.tarleton.edu/admissions/homeschool.html>

<sup>5</sup> Army warrant officers

[http://www.goarmy.com/about/warrant\\_officer.jsp](http://www.goarmy.com/about/warrant_officer.jsp)