

How to Answer the Socialization Question Once and for All

by Marsha Ransom

I am beginning to tire of the many articles, essays and responses I keep running across on what has become to be known as the "socialization question."

Homeschooling families, please listen carefully: What people refer to as socialization is a non-issue! It has become a buzz-word among the Official Homeschool Naysayers Society. When someone asks you the question ("What about SOCIALIZATION!?"), I suggest you begin by asking them, "What do you mean by socialization?" They will more than likely proceed with some variation on the following theme: "You know, having your kids spend time with other kids their age. Hanging out with their friends, stuff like that." At that point do not, under any circumstances respond with, "Oh my little Susie gets plenty of socialization! She's in 4-H and Awanas, and Sunday school and HomeSchool band and she volunteers at the nursing home etc.etc. etc. In fact she has so many opportunities for socialization that I hardly have time to teach her some days..YaDa YaDa YaDa." Why not? Because this is not what socialization really is!

Here is a more appropriate response: "Oh, I think the word you are looking for is socializing. Socialization is actually defined as the process by which the norms and standards of our society are passed from one generation to the next. I've never really thought that a complete stranger's six-year old child would be a good source of information on the correct standards of behavior in our family and in society as a whole. As for socializing, I remember from my school days that it was something you weren't supposed to be doing during class!"

We do not have to defend homeschooling based on false assumptions, false accusations, and false information. Please stop telling others about all the opportunities your kids have for "socialization" and start gently exposing them to the real issue here-- a lot of what kids learn from other kids in social situations is simply living according to "The Law of the Jungle." In our family, we have a higher set of laws to follow and I bet your family does too. Next time, don't be afraid to say so!

Marsha's book, ***The Complete Idiot's Guide to Homeschooling***, can be purchased through the amazon link on the right side of this page. Remember, any Amazon purchases linked FROM the NHEN site will benefit NHEN financially. It's an easy fundraiser - go for it!