



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: Issues Facing America's Homeschoolers – Part 2

Guest(s): Jeremy Newman & Tim Lambert

Air Date: July 7, 2020

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Dr. Dobson: Hello, everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.

Roger Marsh: Many families in the past have abandoned public schools, citing their downward trajectory, both morally and academically. Also, with COVID-19 canceling school years across the country, more and more parents are now being forced to consider homeschooling. In just a moment here on Family Talk, we'll continue hearing Dr. Dobson's recent conversation on this surprising societal shift. His guests again are Tim Lambert and Jeremy Newman from the Texas Homeschool Coalition.

Last time, they looked at homeschooling origins and how it's grown over the past few decades. They also discussed a vicious article published recently by the Harvard Gazette that attacked this movement. Today, Tim and Jeremy will offer encouragement and support for many parents who have decided to homeschool for the first time. They'll also stress that both moms and dads play a critical role in educating their children.

Well, there's lots of great content to get to, so let's pick up where we left off on yesterday's program. We'll begin with Tim Lambert's question about homeschoolers getting plugged in socially and athletically in their communities.

Tim Lambert: Jeremy, given your experience, we've been talking about the extracurricular activities. Texas is one of the few states in the nation that does not allow homeschool students to participate in extracurricular activities in public schools, but we're continuing to work to change that. Jeremy, why don't you address that issue?

Jeremy Newman: Yeah. It's actually interesting you mention that because that's one of the things that ... Texas is one of the best states in the nation to homeschool, but that's one of the issues where even the state of Texas actually is kind of behind the curve. Because we have, I think, 35 states now that let students participate in extracurricular activities at public schools, and Texas doesn't. It's not because it

didn't work in the other 35 states, it's actually worked super well in all of those other states.

The issue is that there's a kind of semi-unique problem that you sometimes run into as homeschool families where if you live out in the rural areas especially, you might not physically have enough homeschool families in a close enough geographic region that you can get together to form a band or a football team or certainly a football league or something like that. So that's why these other states have allowed people to participate at the local public schools. Texas hasn't done that yet. So we've actually been working on trying to get that fixed for quite a while. We've made substantial progress, but it still hasn't happened.

Dr. Dobson: Are you still under attack? Do you feel like that homeschooling, that idea, that concept is threatened? Is this criticism that we talked about last time still a threat to you?

Tim Lambert: It is a threat. One of the organizations working with this Harvard professor has an online presence and they ... A couple years ago, we started following them and they are looking for news stories related to abuse or something like that, child abuse related to homeschooling, and then they use those stories to gen up media in the state where that occurred and they try to encourage the legislatures to adopt regulation to severely restrict home education. We've seen them do that in Texas, California, Hawaii.

So the acceptance of homeschooling is greater today than it's ever been, but we still have, particularly from the left, those folks who really think that the government, rather than parents, should make decisions about the education of children.

Dr. Dobson: Would you guys like to make a case to parents then to be vigilant, to read what's going on? If there is a threat to your rights to educate your own children, to be vocal and make sure that your voices are heard, otherwise that could be taken away from you.

Jeremy Newman: Yeah. I think that's absolutely true. I think one of the things I explain to people, especially here in Texas when we get on this topic, is that not in every state do you find homeschoolers who are regularly going to the capital in kind of an organized fashion to address legislative issues. They tend to be more politically active, but it's not organized like that in every state. So when you've had some of these regulatory efforts come up in some of these other states, even when they prevailed, it's something that you had to organize for after the fact.

Tim mentioned before, here in Texas for the last 30 years, we've been doing this where we're getting the homeschool community involved and having them come address legislative issues and have a presence there in the legislature. There are actually a tremendous number of homeschoolers now who either work in the legislature or are legislators, and the presence is so substantial there

that I really think it would be political suicide for someone in the Texas legislature to file a bill to openly try and regulate homeschooling. But the reason that's true is because people had been so active for so long.

If you stop doing that, then you lose that advantage and then someone who comes after you is the person who's going to have that first step on you. You have to be trying to catch up and organize people who haven't been used to being organized to try and kill the effort.

Dr. Dobson: I'm just trying to think of how to help people get started doing this. Tell parents, how can they reach you and are there other organizations that you would recommend?

Tim Lambert: So, yes. I mentioned homeeducator.com and that is a great place for people to go to get information on how to start a curriculum, lesson plans. We also have a link there to all the other states and organizations like ours in those other states. So if you go there and you're from Texas, you get a link to our organization, the Texas Homeschool Coalition, so that it gives people information on how to get started from an academic standpoint, how to choose curriculum, lesson plans, that sort of thing.

And then we also can connect people to other states where they can connect to organizations like ours so that they can get involved specifically in their state for specific legal information as well as updates on any particular attacks that might be happening in that state.

Dr. Dobson: Well, my greatest concern is for what's being taught to children in states where the legislatures are far left and they have taken over the curriculum and mandated the teachings of things that are anti-biblical and dangerous to children. Our state, Colorado here is one of them - I wrote in my monthly letter, I think I shared this once before. But if you don't mind, let me share what I've written there and then you comment on it.

"My greatest concern is for your children and what they're being taught in many public schools. In worst cases, not all of them are like this, but in worst cases, kids are being indoctrinated by radical social agenda that can have horrendous consequences. For example, policies in some states mandate," this is what I was talking about, "that kindergartners and those in the primary grades be taught what social engineers call gender neutrality. That's becoming very common now.

According to this curriculum, wide-eyed kids just a few years out of babyhood are being hammered with the idea that they are neither a boy nor a girl. Furthermore, they've been led to believe that they can change their gender by surgery and medicine. It sounds easy, doesn't it? But it is a lie. I go on to explain why. In some schools, children are also taught homosexual propaganda, sexual liberation, and other unbiblical and revolutionary concepts. What parents think

early public education is about is reading, writing, math, and social studies. But many boys and girls are being taught concepts that would have horrified earlier generations.

I'll close with this. Of the many dimensions of our culture that alarm me, this is most troublesome. It is twisting and warping millions of present-day children. In addition to what they're being taught at school, their parents are also being indoctrinated with a big lie. It is a multigenerational effort. In some states, such as Colorado, California, Massachusetts, and elsewhere, moms and dads are not even permitted to opt their children out of disturbing curricula. Not only public schools have taken this leftward swing, but those that have will soon own the minds and souls of vulnerable boys and girls. Does this disturb anyone but me? It keeps me awake at night." Comment on that.

Tim Lambert: Well, that's exactly right. The issue way back in the '80s when I heard Dr. Raymond Moore, our concern was that our greatest goal for our children was to be able to pass our faith on, to be able to give them a foundation in biblical Christianity. Dr. Dobson, you know this. It was true then. It's even more true today, that we have a culture that is antithetical to everything we believe, and they want our children.

Dr. Dobson: Yeah, there's a tug of war for their souls. Isn't it?

Tim Lambert: Exactly. The reality is that many, many families, we talked about 40% of the homeschool community is a minority, from the minority community. Many families cannot afford private education. Homeschooling has been the lifeline for these families, whether it's for academic reasons or social reasons or religious reasons. Parents have a fundamental God-given right to direct the care, control, and upbringing of their children. For many of them, homeschooling is the key to that.

Dr. Dobson, I tell people that the greatest thing we ever did for our children was to decide to take full responsibility and teach them ourselves. They are wonderful kids going on for the Lord. They're raising wonderful grandkids. That freedom, that choice, really I don't think it's an understatement or hyperbole to say that our country may depend for its future on people who are teaching their kids at home.

Dr. Dobson: How do low-income families homeschool when many of those families need both parents to work full-time?

Tim Lambert: Well, the reality is what we tell people is, "Look, don't fall into the trap of thinking that in order for you to homeschool you have to teach those kids from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM. You can do a lot of education in a short period of time." When I talk to those single moms or those low-income folks, I always share the story that probably 20 years ago, I met a couple who both work at the Texas Education Agency, which is our state department of education. They both were

full-time employees there and they homeschool. I asked them how they did that and they said, "We just do it when we have the time."

So, the point I make to people is, if you want to do this, you can do this. You can do that. Grandparents are doing this for their grandchildren. There are lots of opportunities and ways for people to teach their kids at home that does not require eight hours a day in front of a computer.

Jeremy Newman:

Especially modernly, it's not like you have to do this yourself. It's not as if you have to wake up and you have to become a master at math and a master at science and you have to teach your kid for eight hours, and if you fail in any of those then your child is going to grow up ignorant. That's not really how it's structured, because there's an entire industry now, frankly, and you can find most of it online that you can utilize the resources from providers all over the country who have built tools that your kids can use to learn where you don't have to be the expert.

In fact, I tell people when I was homeschooled, pretty much after we learned to read comprehensively, we taught ourselves. If we had questions, we came and asked my parents. If they didn't know the answer, we just went and figured it out together. It's not a requirement that you have a PhD in education. We even mentioned earlier that that doesn't really even affect statistically the outcomes for the students. The other thing is, there are so many people now who homeschool that you can find a community of people to help you with this.

A lot of people have even built co-ops and university model schools around this idea where parents will come together and help each other teach each other's kids.

Dr. Dobson:

Well, the program began last time with my talking about Dr. Ray Moore, who has become known as the father of the homeschools movement. He made the point over and over again. I feel like to honor him I should mention what was really burning in his heart. It was that early, early public education in a formalized setting is not necessary. You don't have to start with kindergartners and first and second and third grade. The first time I ever heard this concept, I was in Seattle and I had just spoken.

A woman came up to me and said, "You must read this book." She was so emphatic about it that I did. It was written by Ray Moore and the title of it was *Better Late Than Early*, because children will learn more from their relationship with their parents, going to the grocery store with them. They learn math that way. They are read to by the parents. You don't have to do what you said, Jeremy, where you have to mimic the public schools with an 8:00 to 3:00 PM schedule. You don't have to do that.

You can do a lot of it at home and you can do it better one on one, or two or three on one, than you can in a classroom of 25 or 30 kids. I Wish Ray were here to make that case himself. He could do it a whole lot better.

Tim Lambert: Well, and that was the thing that really resonated with me four years ago when I heard that program. In fact, we bought that book. That was our first homeschool book, *Better Late Than Early*. It really is the idea that some people say that kids catch more than they are taught. That is certainly true of a lot of things. But we found that trying to replicate that 8:00 to 3:00 is just not very successful and, frankly, kids do a lot better in a different approach.

Dr. Dobson: Well, that was absolutely contradictory to what I'd been taught at USC in regard to early childhood education, which was my field, or child development. I was taught that you have to start early, two, three, four years of age. You must get started or they'll be behind the whole way. That is simply a lie. That's not true. It is not true.

Tim Lambert: That's exactly right. That's the reason that we also talk to a lot of folks who are pulling their kids out of the public schools in later grades. They're concerned that they're not going to be able to make up the time. It's amazing what kids can do in terms of catching up and even surpassing their peer group academically when they have this kind of a nurturing homeschool environment.

Dr. Dobson: They typically do that. The other thing that Dr. Moore, kind of going down the row of the things that mattered to him, but Dr. Moore was also concerned about self-concept and sense of confidence. He talked often about the fact that five-year-olds, six, seven, eight-year-olds are very, very vulnerable and children are vicious. They are often vicious to each other. They make fun of the one that's different and the one that looks a little different. He has an eye that's not centered or whatever it is. They don't like the freckles on their face. They make fun of them. They make fools out of them.

Parents can protect them until they've had a chance to get their legs under them and find out that they are worthy as individuals. That's what, again, really resonated with me.

Tim Lambert: Yeah. Dr. Dobson, I had a conversation with a homeschool leader just a few weeks ago, and she was talking to me about the number of students that joined their little co-op from the public schools that were just beat down and how they just blossomed once they were in that safe environment where they are encouraged and supported. It just goes to really support what you were just saying, that this is not just about academics. It's about nurturing that child and supporting them in their development.

Jeremy Newman: I think it's important for people to also realize that that's kind of the entire reason that the homeschool community has become structured the way it is, that there are so many different ways to structure it that you have people who

basically have completely their own schedule. They make it up from scratch. And then you have other people who kind of get together with other families and they do something jointly. Even people who want something that's closer to a more structured school but still has a lot of the flexibility of homeschooling have ...

We've been talking about university model schools where you kind of do three days at school and two days at home or something like that. There's just so much variety out there now and so many options for people to choose, that even someone who feels like they have a unique schedule or a uniquely difficult situation, I really would encourage that person to go and look and see what the opportunities are because someone has done it before them. There's an opportunity out there that will fit their needs.

Dr. Dobson: Jeremy, you made reference, we only have time for this last question. But you mentioned in the program last time that your father realized that he was on the hook too. It's not just the mother. You want to speak to the dads who are out there?

Jeremy Newman: Yeah. This is something that I've always thought was interesting. People talk about homeschooling like only the mom does the homeschooling. I think it's certainly the case that the moms do the vast majority of the heavy lifting there. I don't think it's true if the way you approach it is that the dad, because he works, is somehow unable to help. In our family, it definitely wasn't true, where my dad helped us, especially with math and science because that was kind of his bent. He helped us a lot with that.

And then practical skills, I cannot stress this enough that my dad owned a roofing company. So he took us out on the jobs and he taught us how to work. He taught us how to do business and stuff like that. People feel like a textbook is the only way to learn. Well, a lot of people will graduate high school and lack some basic life skills that they have to go learn some other way because there wasn't a class for that. So for a homeschool family, you kind of have a unique opportunity where you can make your kids a part of your daily life and teach them how daily life works.

For our family, that was my dad teaching us how to do physical labor, how to do technical labor, and how a business works and how to interact with customers. It was really invaluable and I think all of us have used those skills.

Dr. Dobson: Well, we're out of time. I just want to say again to those who are listening, I believe in homeschools. I regret the fact that my children were already up in age before homeschooling came along. My wife was a teacher for five years, she would have been outstanding at it. But we never got an opportunity to do it because I'd never heard of it. It was a brand-new idea to me. But to those who are listening, if you want to give it a try, there are a lot of people who will help you do it.

I think it'll be the most rewarding thing in your life. That's what we've devoted the program to today. We've been talking to Tim Lambert, who's president of the Texas Homeschool Coalition. My other guest is Jeremy Newman, who's director of public policy for the Texas Homeschool Coalition. These guys know what they're talking about. Gentlemen, it's been good having you on the program. We covered a lot of territory. Thank you for being with us for these two programs.

Tim Lambert: Dr. Dobson, thanks for having us. It was an honor to be with you again.

Jeremy Newman: We definitely appreciate you guys having us on. I really enjoyed the conversation.

Roger Marsh: An uplifting end to this lively and valuable conversation about the latest happenings in the homeschool movement. I encourage you to learn more about the Texas Homeschool Coalition when you visit our broadcast page at drjamesdobson.org. They are a wonderful advocacy and support group for countless homeschooling families. Also, if you enjoyed this two-part interview, you can request a CD copy on our site as well. Find all this content and much more when you go to drjamesdobson.org. That's D-R, jamesdobson.org.

Thanks for listening today. Be sure to join us again for the next edition of Family Talk to hear the wisdom of the late Zig Ziglar. On tomorrow's broadcast, you'll hear Dr. Dobson's classic interview with Mr. Ziglar on the topic of positive parenting. It's an insightful discussion that you won't want to miss. I'm Roger Marsh and I hope you'll be with us then for the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.

Dr. Clinton: This is Dr. Tim Clinton, executive director of the James Dobson Family Institute. Thanks for listening today. We hope you found this program helpful and encouraging. Please remember that our ministry is here to serve you and your family. For more information about our programs and resources or to learn how you can support us, go to drjamesdobson.org. That's drjamesdobson.org. Or call us toll free (877) 732-6825.

I pray that God will bless you in 2020. We're so grateful for your partnership. We ask you to stand with us and to continue to defend the Christian values in an ever-changing culture. Thanks again for joining us. We hope you join us again on the next edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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Dr. Dobson:

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