

Reasons to Include Science Fair in Your Homeschool Curriculum

Science Fair gives students an opportunity to DO science. Many of the science projects that we do with our children in an ordinary homeschool setting serve mainly to demonstrate or observe known scientific principles. Conducting a science fair experiment (following a scientific method) allows students to discover principles on their own by evaluating data, using controls, drawing conclusions, etc., and trains the mind to think logically.

Science Fair helps students polish skills in many areas besides science:

- library and research
- writing
- word processing
- math and graphing
- logic
- graphic display / art
- speech and communication
- time management

Science Fair allows students to investigate a topic of interest in great detail. By February, most students have become quite expert in their fields because they have not only read and done research, but have also used this knowledge to conduct an experiment. Students may continue their research the following year if it is their passion, or they may choose an entirely different topic.

Science Fair allows students to complete an independent project from start to finish.

Science Fair gives students an opportunity to interact with professionals and other students about scientific subject matter. During the course of researching their topics, students often choose to email, phone, or write letters to scientists or other professionals; some even find a scientist to mentor them. Additionally, some students choose to work with a partner or to collaborate with a fellow student conducting research in the same field, as is often the case in the scientific world. And the students really enjoy the camaraderie with other young investigators.

Science Fair allows students to see what it's like to be a scientist. The science fair experience is very similar to the work done by professional scientists. Thus, students can discover whether a career in science is really for them.

Science Fair gives students real deadlines. This is one of the few areas that most homeschoolers find lacking. Having an important deadline or two during the school year helps students of all ages learn to manage their time wisely and to be accountable to other adults besides Mom or Dad.

Science Fair gives parents an opportunity to have student work reviewed by objective teachers. At each level, student work is evaluated by teachers and/or science professionals. Their feedback is a nice, mid-year evaluation of a student's work—and is usually encouraging. Students also self-evaluate their work compared to their peers. Peer-pressure isn't all bad, sometimes it's very motivating.

Science Fair may open doors for future study opportunities. Especially at the upper levels, students interact with many science professionals, which could lead to a job opportunity, an internship, an independent study opportunity or a good contact for a letter of reference.

Science Fair gives students an opportunity to earn prizes and college scholarships. Prizes include scientific calculators, cash, science kits, museum passes, and gift certificates. At the high school level, many colleges offer full or partial scholarships to students who participate (and do well) in science fair. (We have met students who have had their choice of several four-year scholarships! Consider Science Fair to be an investment in your child's college fund...)

Science Fair is fun (whether kids like science or not).