

Home Schooling

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concepts by mixing the formula and feeding the lamb on schedule.

Although Karen has taught elementary students for years and continues to substitute teach, she said that she is amazed how quickly her daughter picked up reading. "In the regular classroom setting, each group is taught at the same pace. At home, we go through the same material in a lot less time.

Children, she believes, thrive on making learning fun. Presently, 7-year-old Kristine is reading "The Little House" series by Laura Ingalls Wilder.

"I think books like that stemmed her interest in history," Karen said.

Ken added, "Our children love history. Every night they want a history bedtime story."

The Sensenigs want their children to have a wide perspective of the world, to know geography and how others live. To do this, they entertain international visitors and have a fresh air child who returns to their home each summer.

Opponents of home school point out that home schooled students are deprived of social interaction with their peers. Ken said, "People's philosophy of education vary. I'm not convinced that putting 30-40 students in the same room is essential to child development. I feel it is more important for

a child to be in a family setting and under parental influence rather than their peers' influence."

Parents, he believes, should take more responsibility for educating their children. But, he added, "I don't know how long we will home school. It works well now, but if one of my children preferred to attend school, I wouldn't insist against their wishes."

They believe their children get plenty of interaction with cousins and children of family friends and at church functions. "And Kristine has friends stay overnight," Karen said.

They also see the value of exposing their children to older people. When Karen substitutes for area schools, she places her daughter with an elderly friend "who is adept at making things out of nothing." Kristine has picked up that interest and uses scraps of material and yarn to make her own doll and stuffed animal collection.

The Sensenigs said, "Home schooling offers tremendous fulfillment." Karen confessed, "I'd rather do that than clean house. I can do other interests when the children are grown. I don't feel like I'm sacrificing my time to do this. It's a joy. It allows me to spend time with my children and a chance to continue my teaching career."

Karen likes to intersperse book learning with plenty of field trips. They use both public library and a county university library for resources of filmstrips, atlases, videos and books.

Parents who teach at home must work with their school district. Each district's requirements vary, but the Sensenigs are pleased with their district that sets guidelines but allows them the freedom to chose curriculum and the method to present it. A school district appointee visits their home three times during the school year to monitor the home program. They also appreciate that Lancaster County has an association of home schools that plans field trips, offers supportive services and ideas.

The farm offers many learning experiences. Ken considers farming mostly a summer occupation. His father, Earl, owns the 70-acre farm with its 75 steers. The hay and corn raised on the land all goes for silage for the beef operation. Ken raises about 12,000 broilers annually and Karen catches the chickens and drives tractor during the busy season. The children enjoy caring for the animals, especially special projects like raising ducklings in the house.

Ken summed up their dedication to home schooling in a rural setting by saying, "It allows the flexibility of using God's world for an individualized approach to learning."



Kristine learned to measure ingredients by mixing the formula for this lamb that was left an orphan at birth.



Konrad, 3, chooses a book from the book rack. The Sensenigs arrange their home and furnishings so that children are inspired to learn.

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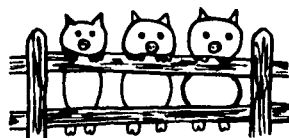
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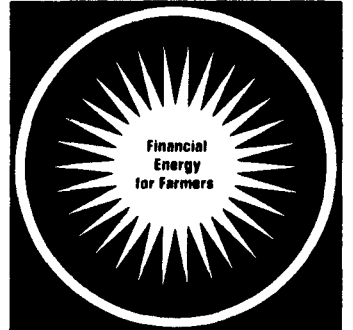
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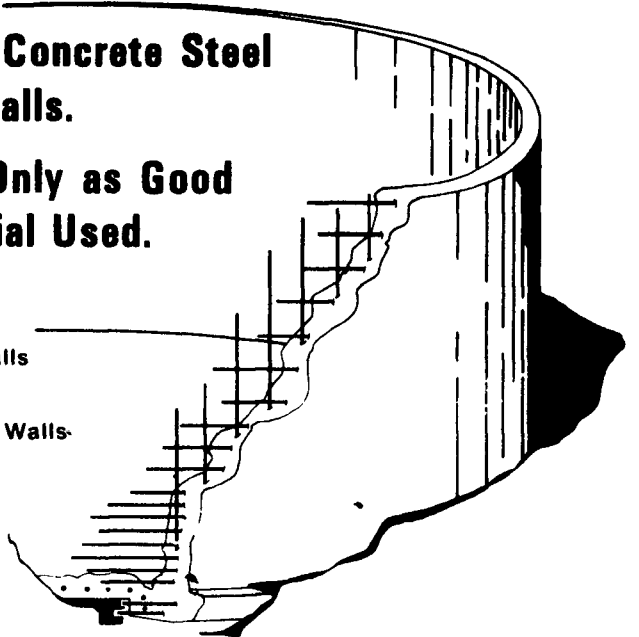
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