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| **From Homeschool to Home Business**  By [Ellyn Davis](http://www.home-school.com/Articles/columnists/ellyn-davis.php) Printed in [Practical Homeschooling](http://www.practicalhomeschooling.com/) #62, 2005. |  |

OK, what's it like to have a home business?

Here's what it has been like for us. Imagine your whole family spending 15 years traveling every spring to homeschool book fairs - first in a station wagon, then in a big truck, and finally in a very large conversion van. After all, the children grow and their legs get longer, so more and more leg room is needed.

Then there are the books you need to take along. You start by piling a few boxes in the back of your station wagon and in a car-top carrier, but before you know it you are looking at a small cargo trailer. And then, oh my goodness, you are pulling a huge seven-foot-wide, twenty-foot-long trailer with a ramp and book racks that you roll in and out.

We're the Davis family, and this has been our life for the last fifteen or so springs. We own The Elijah Company, and we often travel to as many as 15 homeschool conventions each spring and summer where we speak and supply homeschooling families with the best that's out there for teaching their children at home.

But that's not all. When it's not "book fair season," we are hard at work reviewing products, writing a catalog, and filling mail orders that are sent out to homeschooling families in almost every nation.

Since it began, The Elijah Company has mailed millions of catalogs, and has built a customer base of over fifty thousand families from all over the world. My husband Chris and I have spoken at many homeschool conventions, often to audiences that numbered in the thousands, and we have become well known in the homeschool community. We've spent years serving homeschoolers - speaking at conventions, writing articles, giving catalogs away, counseling people in person and over the phone, and sharing everything we could to help families homeschool successfully.

We've enjoyed the travel and the exposure it has given our children to all different parts of the country and all different types of people. And we have enjoyed helping homeschooling parents become more successful at teaching their children.

But in the last few years we've noticed a common refrain in the comments people share with us at book fairs. This refrain is almost like a song with three verses. The song goes like this:

First verse: "I can't afford it." This is usually spoken with a sigh by a homeschooling mother as she wistfully examines a book she would really like to buy for her children. The comment is usually prefaced by the sentence, "My husband will kill me if I spend any more money," and an explanation of how their family is strapped for cash.

Second verse: "I wish there were some way that Dad could come home." This is followed by a lengthy conversation about how the whole family wants to find a way to earn more income at home and start some kind of business so that Dad can quit his job and be a more integral part of family life.

Third verse: "I don't want my children to grow up to just look for a job. I want them to think like entrepreneurs and business people."

**An Entrepreneurial Emphasis**

Because we have our own home business and we were able to not only generate extra family income to the point that we could "bring Dad home," but also we were able to raise our children in a business so they think like entrepreneurs, homeschoolers are continually asking us how we did it and how they can do it too.

All of these questions and all of this interest in home business has led us to an entrepreneurial emphasis. It's not that we have lost our passion for homeschooling; it's just that we see how perfectly homeschool and home business mix.

But business is a tricky thing. You don't want to just start any business, because although money is important, there are plenty of things that are more important - like having a life, or enjoying what you're doing, or having time to spend with your children. So I began searching for business models that require minimal labor, stress, employees, time and financial investment, but that provides maximum profits. And, because I wanted to teach others how to make money by building their own businesses, I looked for businesses that homeschooling families could easily start.

So I've spent the last couple of years going to conferences that were not even remotely homeschool related. I listened to many of the world's top personal success coaches. I attended wealth-building seminars, Internet marketing gatherings, public speaking training, real estate conferences. I studied investing. All the time I was looking for different avenues of income that fit my criteria.

At these conferences I made it a point to meet the speakers and the leaders in each industry, and I found them astonishingly receptive to helping me. (Of course, the fact that I signed up for some of their programs helped!)

**The Importance of Multiple Streams of Income**

If you've ever read anything by Robert Kiyosaki or Robert Allen, you've heard of "multiple streams of income." They are simply declaring the fact that in order to build a strong financial future, it is better to have more than one source of income. That way if one "stream" begins to dry up, you have other streams to sustain you.

Most homeschooling families only have one stream of income - Dad's job. And in this age of increasing layoffs and fewer benefits, there is no such thing as job security. That's why it is extremely important for homeschooling families to develop multiple streams of home income.

There are really only four proven long-term streams of income that fit my "ideal business" criteria and provide the most secure future. These four streams have historically been the most direct paths to wealth.

The first "stream" is real estate investing. Over 80 percent of the fortunes in America have been secured because of real estate. In many ways, real estate investing is the ideal home business. Why? Because it can be done part-time and is something that practically anyone can do. Also, real estate is usually an appreciating asset. And then there are the tremendous tax benefits the government provides concerning real estate. Finally, with real estate rentals, someone else is paying to build your equity in a property. Interesting, huh?

The second "stream" of income is more modern, and that is Internet marketing. Over a billion people a day log onto the Internet, and Internet sales are a trillion dollar industry. But you don't even have to have a traditional "business" to make money on the Internet. We know several homeschooling families who are supporting themselves by selling products on e-Bay.

The third "stream" of income is what could be called "paper assets," and that is investments in stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and the like. Historically, well-balanced investments in stocks have provided tremendous returns.

And the final income stream is through building businesses. But not through building just any kind of business. What you want to do is build businesses that are based on systems so that, once the initial start-up work is done, the business practically runs itself.

Wise investors have a mix of all different kinds of investments in their "portfolio" so that all their various income streams pool to form a reservoir of steady income.

So what does this have to do with our recent entrepreneurial focus? A lot!

We decided to start recommending books, writing articles, holding telephone conferences, and even planning full-scale conferences that focused not just on homeschooling, but also on how homeschooling lends itself to having a home business. And we also wanted to give homeschoolers the best of all the information and contacts we have gleaned about the four proven income streams.

We started in January of 2004 by hosting a telephone conference with Robert Fritz. Robert is the bestselling author of The Path of Least Resistance, Creating, and Your Life as Art. His message is about how to get in touch with what really matters to you and use that as the basis for creating your ideal business. We had nearly 200 people on the call, and after Robert hung up, about 50 people stayed on for an hour and a half longer and discussed what Robert had shared.

Then in March, we sponsored our first From Homeschool to Home Business Conference. The conference lasted two days, with the first day being devoted to becoming a success at homeschooling, and the second day devoted to building a home business. Over a hundred people flew in from all over the country to our little town of Crossville, Tennessee to attend this conference.

In May we co-sponsored a five-day event that focused on personal success and business building, and nearly 40 people from across the country attended.

By summertime, we had begun alternating business-related articles with the homeschooling articles we usually feature in our e-mail newsletter, and had responses from over a thousand homeschooling families telling us they were interested in this new entrepreneurial focus and they wanted more information about real estate, Internet marketing, investing, and building a home business.

So we began offering telephone conferences with some of the leaders in various industries. We found a homeschooling father from Washington state (Dan Doran) who is one of the leading trainers of real estate investors, and held a two-hour phone call in which Dan answered questions that homeschooling families asked about how to build a successful home business by investing in real estate.

Next, we convinced Alex Mandossian, one of the world's leading internet marketers, to offer a two-hour telephone conference about how to develop a successful home business on the internet. We're still getting rave reviews about that call.

And in October we held two events. The first was a telephone conference with Chris Verhaegh, a top stock market investment trainer. On the call Chris explained the system he has taught his students to make billions (yes, that's billions) trading on the stock market.

The second October event was another From Homeschool to Home Business Conference.

Then in November, December, and January, we are providing a coaching program for homeschooling families who want more in-depth information about building a business on the Internet.

We are also developing home study courses in entrepreneurial areas and a website that provides resources, information, and articles to help homeschooling families build home businesses. We're hoping this website will become an on-line "community" for homeschooling parents and children who share an interest in home business. You can give us your input for how you would like the website to be by going to www.starta.biz.

By focusing on home business, we hope to help homeschoolers succeed in these seven areas:

1. Earning extra income by starting a family business
2. Giving their children an entrepreneurial education
3. Working together as a family at home
4. Developing a healthy entrepreneurial mindset
5. Exploring a variety of business opportunities
6. Connecting with like-minded homeschool entrepreneurs
7. Learning from successful businesspeople who have proven that their businesses work

In 2005 we will continue to sponsor From Homeschool to Home Business Conferences every few months as well as offer on-going telephone seminars, and many other resources in every facet of home business development.

So that's the story of our new entrepreneurial focus. We invite all of you to be a part of it and expand your homeschooling experience to include home business.

For more information and to be alerted about upcoming telephone seminars and From Homeschool to Home Business Conferences, sign up for our e-newsletter at [www.elijahco.com](http://www.elijahco.com/).