

When Does Guidance Become Manipulation?

Written by Jan Hunt for The Natural Child Project.

Many homeschooling parents have puzzled over the distinction between “guidance” and “manipulation”. As a parent strongly committed to “unschooling” (learner-directed homeschooling) with my son Jason, now 17, I have sometimes wondered if I should encourage certain activities in spite of a lack of interest on his part, or at least remind him of areas he has ignored for a while. I was most likely to wonder about these things after reading about an unusually dedicated child who has excelled in a particular field of activity, such as music. It was at those times that John Holt, through his inspiring books, reminded me that trust is the most essential ingredient of a homeschooling program.

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