



The Brainy Bunch: The Harding Family's Method to College Ready by Age Twelve

By Kip Harding, Mona Lisa Harding



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Two parents share the extraordinary and inspirational story of how they sent six of their ten children to college by the age of twelve—and how any parent can achieve the same amazing success.

If the Harding family can do it, your family can too!

Having six out of ten kids go to college is no small feat on its own, but having six kids in college by the age of twelve— that’s nothing short of incredible. Meet Kip and Mona Lisa Harding, high school sweethearts whose simple homeschooling method produced exactly those extraordinary results. Kip and Mona Lisa are parents to an engineer (who earned her BS in mathematics at 17), an architect (who finished her five-year program at 18 and became the youngest member of the American Institute of Architects), a Navy physician (who earned her biology degree at 17), an entrepreneur (who earned a BA in English at 15 and an MS in computer science at 17), a 15-year-old college senior studying music theory and performance, a 12-year-old Middle Ages scholar with the highest average in his college class, and four others who are following fast in their siblings’ footsteps! No wonder the family is so used to being asked: How did you do it?

The Hardings are the first to say they’re not geniuses. Nor do they run a strict, high-pressure household. Instead, they find out early what really motivates their children, instill their kids with dreams, and allow those dreams to blossom. In a remarkable, down-to-earth narrative that is part captivating memoir, part invaluable guidebook for parents, Kip and Mona Lisa reveal with warmth and humility the strategies behind their family’s amazing educational accomplishments. Filled with daily regimens, advice for providing children with fulfilling experiences that go beyond the home, and tips for making the transition to college, theirs is an inspirational real-life success story that anyone can achieve—whether you homeschool your children or not.

The Brainy Bunch is uplifting and ultimately relatable proof of what any family can accomplish through dedication, love, faith, and hard work.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Never judgmental and not without humor, the [Hardings] intersperse their story with strategies and advice...this fascinating read transcends the Christian homeschool market. Written in an engaging and relaxed style, the book tells how all 12 Hardings have accomplished much, and their account is inspirational and uplifting." (Library Journal)

"Motivated by their Christian faith and dissatisfaction with the lack of personal attention children receive in the classroom...the Hardings chose to homeschool their children -- all 10 of them. [T]he work ethic and family bonding are impressive, as are the children's career successes." (Publishers Weekly)

"Through home schooling, the Hardings were able to attain [their] goals and much more, as evidenced by the success of their children...the methods defined here could work for others willing to buck convention." (Kirkus)

"[T]he Hardings' story is very much one of putting love and family first. They are not pushing their children to overachieve -- they are helping them to find their own unique potential." (BookPage)

About the Author

Kitchener (Kip) Harding and Mona Lisa Montoya were high school sweethearts in San Jose, California. Kip asked Mona Lisa to the prom and proposed a few weeks later. After four kids, they decided to turn to homeschooling, and their success paved the way for their children to start college by the age of twelve and go on to great careers in medicine, engineering, architecture, and more. They have been interviewed on *CNN*, the *Today* show, and *Fox and Friends*; featured in *The Daily Mail*; and covered in several prominent magazines. They live in Montgomery, Alabama, with their ten children.

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The Brainy Bunch

Introduction

The Greenhouse Effect

Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

—PROVERBS 22:6

This isn't a story about geniuses or driven parents obsessed with their children. We like to think this is a love story, about how an ordinary couple met in high school and were eventually blessed with an amazing set of children. It's a story of faith, and how that faith defined how we chose to parent. It's also a story about dreams, about instilling them into kids with average intelligence and allowing them to blossom. We thank God for our family and for inventing this wonderful thing called homeschooling. Our true hope is that you'll be inspired reading about all the possibilities homeschooling has to offer.

Before sharing with you who we are and how we got to this point, we want to start by talking about why we choose to homeschool. We realize there's a stigma attached to this word. But homeschooling has come a long way in the last couple of decades.

When we first started homeschooling in 1997, we did not have all of the online resources that we do now. We felt like we had to find the material for our kids and try to supply all of the answers that their little curious minds could come up with. Now when they have a question we can't answer, we say, "Wow, that is such a good question." Then we suggest they Google it and tell us since we really want to know the answer, too. They usually come back a few minutes later with so much interesting information. And even if we're not too interested in the subject matter, we are so thrilled to see that spark in their eyes that this newfound knowledge has put there.

Our kids teach us something every day and they are learning to find answers on their own. We do not have to worry about what they are missing in their education. We, as parents, just have to make sure that they have access to the Internet, good books, and our attention.

The amount of resources instantly available is remarkable. There are tools and techniques for homeschooling that we will share with you later in this book. But for now, we'd like to share the eleven primary reasons why we (and many other families—over 2 million kids as of 2013!) choose to homeschool (our source for the homeschooling statistics is www.topmastersineducation.com/homeschooled/):

1. There is a lot of "dumbing down" going on in the American school, as John Taylor Gatto explained in one of his books. Kids are not allowed to learn at their own pace in public and most private schools. Many kids get bored in school because the teacher has to teach to the middle of the class. He or she cannot move forward with the kids who are ready to move and doesn't have time to really help the kids who are falling behind.
2. There are places like Selma, Alabama, where 40 percent of students do not graduate from high school. The public school system is failing. If you have doubts, just watch the documentary *Waiting for "Superman."* As an early private school kid who later worked as a high school math and science teacher, our oldest daughter clearly saw how little learning actually goes on in a classroom of over twenty-plus kids as opposed to the quality of the education she got at home with personal attention.
3. We believe in a Christian worldview and creation. We believe that there is scientific evidence that supports intelligent design. Uncle Sam will pay for kids to learn only a single theory, which limits diversity of opinion and growth.
4. Our right to pray in school is being challenged everywhere (and has already been taken away in many places) even though it is still our constitutional right. Thirty-six percent of homeschooling families say that providing religion to their children is their first concern.
5. We believe teaching kids in an age-segregated environment is not the most effective way to develop real-life social skills and exposes them to peer pressure. It is not the way the real world works. In the real world, we encounter people of all different ages. We want to teach our kids how to interact with people of all ages. Homeschooled kids are less peer-dependent and better socially adjusted for the real world.
6. We were both educated in the public school system and we know all about how much time is wasted sitting around, standing in line, and excessively practicing concepts. Our daughter had to ride the bus for forty-five minutes each way to and from the private school that she attended for her first four years of school.

At home, we can be done with our school day by lunch and have time in the afternoon to read more books for pleasure, to play, to go on field trips, or to have bonding time with the family. No homework for Dad to deal with when he gets home.

7. We do not have to worry about school shootings or any other kind of school bullying and violence, which has recently been in the media so much and is scary for all parents.

8. Now that we have kids graduating from college at the ages of seventeen and fifteen, we can't turn back. Not even a private school setting could give us the results that we are getting—results that our children have worked hard for and desire themselves.

9. We are free to tailor our curriculum to match the interests of each child. For example, we can study one subject in depth and with great continuity, teaching how it may relate to other subjects. Kids really learn better when they can see the big picture of how each subject integrates with the others.

10. Homeschooling works. On average, homeschoolers score in the eighty-seventh percentile on standardized tests. Seventy-four percent of homeschoolers continue on to college, as opposed to 49 percent of the general population. Ninety-nine percent have read a book in the last six months, as opposed to only 69 percent of everyone else. And as you'll see from our story, you can achieve amazing things through homeschooling.

11. You cannot pay for a better education outside of your home. Homeschoolers on average spend \$500 per child per year, whereas the average public school spends almost \$10,000—for worse results.

What is the greenhouse effect? Think of your home as a greenhouse where your new little seedlings can begin to take root and grow into big strong plants. Once your plants are mature enough to be transplanted outside to face the elements, you will be able to take them out of the greenhouse. We use this precious time before our "little plants" start college to teach them all we can about the outside world.

Kids have so many questions, questions like "Where do babies come from?" The answer you give your five-year-old is so different from the answer you give your ten-year-old. This will open up discussions about biology, psychology, and sociology. Why would you want them to get their answer from a textbook and an overworked and underpaid schoolteacher who really doesn't know your child? Or, even worse, what if they get the answer from another child on the playground like many of us did?

It's a beautiful thing when we're able to be the ones there to give our children the best answers. And not only the best answers, but the love and bonding that comes in providing those answers.

This book is the story of our journey into homeschooling and how we managed to achieve the success we've had with our children. Our desire is not for others to imitate us but rather for them to be encouraged. We want others to follow their dreams and know that attending college early may be an option.

For our family, attending college early is the best option we know. And it really is something that can be achieved with hard work, perseverance, and faith.

A recent report (www.educationnews.org/parenting/number-of-homeschoolers-growing-nationwide/) in Education News states that since 1999, the number of children who are homeschooled has increased by 75 percent. Though homeschooled children represent only 4 percent of all school-age children nationwide, the number of children whose parents choose to educate them at home rather than in a traditional academic

setting is growing seven times faster than the number of children enrolling in grades K–12 every year.

Source:

<http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2013/06/07/Report-Growth-in-Homeschooling-Outpacing-Public-Schools>

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There is no school equal to a decent home, and no teacher equal to a virtuous parent.

—MAHATMA GANDHI

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Bass:

As people who live in the actual modest era should be revise about what going on or info even knowledge to make these keep up with the era that is always change and advance. Some of you maybe will certainly update themselves by looking at books. It is a good choice in your case but the problems coming to an individual is you don't know which you should start with. This The Brainy Bunch: The Harding Family's Method to College Ready by Age Twelve is our recommendation to make you keep up with the world. Why, because this book serves what you want and need in this era.

Dolores Stiger:

Within this era which is the greater man or who has ability in doing something more are more treasured than other. Do you want to become among it? It is just simple method to have that. What you need to do is just spending your time very little but quite enough to possess a look at some books. Among the books in the top listing in your reading list is The Brainy Bunch: The Harding Family's Method to College Ready by Age Twelve. This book which can be qualified as The Hungry Slopes can get you closer in getting precious person. By looking upward and review this e-book you can get many advantages.

Jody Vinson:

That publication can make you to feel relax. This book The Brainy Bunch: The Harding Family's Method to College Ready by Age Twelve was multi-colored and of course has pictures on the website. As we know that book The Brainy Bunch: The Harding Family's Method to College Ready by Age Twelve has many kinds or type. Start from kids until teenagers. For example Naruto or Detective Conan you can read and think that you are the character on there. Therefore not at all of book are generally make you bored, any it offers you feel happy, fun and rest. Try to choose the best book to suit your needs and try to like reading that will.

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