

## Homeschooling Choices Among Families of Children With Disabilities Versus Without Disabilities

**Lucy Barnard-Brak**

Professor, Department of Special Education, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, lbarnardbrak@ua.edu

**Carolina Kudesev**

Doctoral Candidate, Department of Special Education, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, clkudesev@ua.edu

### Abstract

We examined homeschooling choices of families with and without disabilities using a large, nationally representative sample of families from the 2019 National Household Education Survey. There were slightly more students with disabilities in homeschooling settings versus traditional or non-homeschooling settings. In the current study, we examined the distinction between first-choice homeschooling families who initially chose homeschooling versus second-choice homeschooling families who did not initially chose homeschooling comparing students with and without disabilities. Students with disabilities were approximately 16% of the first-choice homeschoolers and 36% (over one-third) of the second-choice homeschoolers. First-choice homeschoolers rated quality special education services as more important and more satisfied with communication regarding special education services than second-choice homeschoolers and non-homeschoolers.

**Keywords:** disabilities; special education; exceptionalities; homeschooling; homeschool.

THE RATES OF children being homeschooled have increased in the United States over past few decades (Hirsh, 2019; Muscatine, 2020; Ray, 2017; Ray, 2020; Ray, 2021). This increasing trend of children being homeschooled has included an increase of students with disabilities in homeschooling as well (Cook et al., 2013; Green-Hennessy & Mariotti, 2023). Many factors have been associated with the increase in homeschooling in the United States. These factors have ranged from religious or philosophical reasons (Muscatine, 2020; Thomas, 2019; Tilhou, 2020) to safety concerns including the social emotional well-being (Dills, 2022; Musumunu & Mazama, 2014; Ray & Shakeel, 2023; Schepis et al., 2020) to the quality of education (Neuman, 2019; Neuman & Oz, 2021; Tilhou, 2020). However, homeschooling has been considered controversial for a variety of reasons (Gaither & Gaither, 2017; Murphy, 2012; Ray, 2017), yet these reasons tend to mirror the very reasons that parents choose to homeschool in the first place. For instance, some parents may homeschool their children due to a lack of academic rigor in the local school choices but critics of homeschooling would say that academic rigor would be lacking unless parents are certified educators.

Furthermore, critics of homeschooling the question the quality of education via homeschooling in regard to social

emotional well-being of students without consistent peer interactions provided by traditional school environments, as well as the presence of religious and philosophical reasons that may be extreme and isolating (e.g., Carlson, 2020; Cheng et al., 2016; Cook et al., 2013; Dennison et al., 2020; Green-Hennessy & Mariotti, 2023). More recent research has countered these critiques as not being universal to all homeschooling and indicating positive academic and social-emotional outcomes associated with students who were homeschooled into college and adulthood (e.g., Ray, 2020; Valiente et al., 2022). The result of this emerging and growing research is a more balanced and nuanced understanding of homeschooling given the many permutations it can take (Gaither & Gaither, 2017; Riley, 2023; Ray, 2021).

For students with disabilities in particular, the choice to homeschool has been considered especially controversial or problematic given that families are more likely not to be sufficiently prepared to educate students with disabilities given their specific learning and socioemotional needs (e.g., Bartholet, 2020; Cheng et al., 2016; Ray & Shakeel, 2023; Simmons & Campbell, 2019; Tipton, 2021). In a history of the homeschooling movement from 1998 to 2016, Gaither and Gaither (2017) indicate that a child having special needs has

been noted as a reason by families for homeschooling for a while now. However, Bartholet (2020) noted many issues concerning homeschooling students with disabilities in particular that, “many homeschooling parents will be incapable of diagnosing and addressing the needs of students with disabilities” (p. 13). This issue of parents being potentially incapable of appropriately serving their students with disabilities is especially problematic given that children with disabilities are more vulnerable to or have greater risk of maltreatment (Ray & Shakeel, 2023).

Despite these concerns, the fact remains for families that a child’s disability or special educational needs remains, “an important factor in their decision to homeschool,” (Morse & Bell, 2018, p. 170). The reasons that parents of children with disabilities choose to homeschool their children can and do certainly overlap with the very same reasons (Murphy, 2012; Green-Hennessy & Mariotti, 2023) that parents of children without disabilities homeschool with some additional or enhanced reasons. Indeed, Cook et al. (2013) noted that, “homeschool children with disabilities come from families that are similar to all homeschool families,” (p. 94). There are however some differences however in the decision-making process to homeschool among families of children with disabilities. For instance, O’Hagan et al. (2021) noted in particular that students with disabilities being bullied or harassed due to the disability as being more associated with a family’s decision to homeschool. Bullying and harassment would certainly fall into the category of safety and social emotional well-being but may be somewhat heightened for students with disabilities. Parents of children with disabilities may also have separate, additional reasons related to disability such as disagreements about educational placement with teachers and staff, which would relate also to quality of education, specifically special education services (Green-Hennessy & Mariotti, 2023; Simmons & Campbell, 2019).

Regardless of disability status, a family’s decision to homeschool their children has been conceptualized in several ways (e.g., Heuer & Donovan, 2017; Lois, 2013, Van Galen, 1988). One of the first conceptualizations of homeschooling families was proposed by Van Galen (1988) categorized families of homeschoolers as either idealogues or pedagogues. Idealogues were posited to choose to homeschool based upon ideological or philosophical objections to traditional, formal schooling (Van Galen, 1988). Conversely, pedagogues were suggested to choose to homeschooling based upon a desire to pursue different learning approaches to traditional, formal schooling (Van Galen, 1988). This categorization, though initially useful, has been criticized as being somewhat overly broad in its conceptualization of the decision-making process of families who choose to homeschool (e.g., Green-Hennessy & Mariotti, 2023; Jolly & Matthews, 2020; Murphy et al., 2017).

More recently, Lois (2013) conceptualized homeschoolers more directly as being either families of first-choice or second-choice homeschoolers. First-choice homeschooling families refers to those families that would generally start homeschooling from kindergarten as being a deliberate and intentional choice by these families (Lois, 2013). Second-choice homeschooling refers to families who generally leave formal, traditional schooling after kindergarten or at some later point though formal, traditional schooling (either public or private) was their

first or initial choice (Lois, 2013). In this sense, first-choice homeschooling families generally would choose to homeschool, “irrespective of the traditional schooling options made available to them,” (Green-Hennessy & Mariotti, 2023, p. 619). Similarly, Heuer and Donovan (2017) categorized homeschoolers similarly as either proactive versus reactive. Proactive, like first-choice homeschooling families would be homeschoolers who initially chose to homeschool as of kindergarten while reactive, like second-choice homeschooling families began homeschooling after kindergarten or some later point leaving traditional, formal schooling (Heuer & Donovan, 2017). For families of children with disabilities, Morse and Bell (2018) found that about half of second-choice homeschooling families consisted of students with disabilities in their sample of 333 families who homeschooled. However, this is only one study that has examined the first- versus second-choice homeschooling patterns of families of children with disabilities warranting further study.

The purpose of the current study was to examine the homeschooling choices among families of students with disabilities as compared to families of students without disabilities. To achieve this purpose, we examined four research questions using a large, nationally representative sample of families from the National Household Education Survey (NHES; Jackson et al., 2021). Our research questions were based upon the theoretical understanding of homeschool families as proposed by Lois (2013) as being either first- and second-choice homeschooling families. Our first research question was to examine the association of disability status with a family’s educational choice to homeschool versus engage in formal, traditional schooling in general, not specific to any theoretical conceptualization. Our second research question was to examine the association of disability status with the educational choices of families in more detail comparing first-choice homeschooling families, second-choice homeschooling families, and those families who selected formal, traditional schooling. This research question was developed in view of the theoretical conceptualization of homeschooling families proposed by Lois (2013). Our third research question was to examine the association of importance of quality special education services as the reason for choosing school setting as rated by parents according to the educational choices among parents of children with disabilities (e.g., being first-choice homeschooling families, second-choice homeschooling families, and traditional, formal schooling families). Our fourth research question was to examination of the association of parents’ rating of satisfaction with communication with respect to special education services according to the educational choices among parents of children with disabilities. Again, the third and fourth research questions were developed based upon the theoretical understanding homeschooling families proposed by Lois (2013).

## **Method**

### **Sample**

The unweighted sample consisted of 16,446 parents of children across the United States from the National Household Education Study of 2019 (NHES; Jackson et al., 2021). Jackson et al. (2021) noted that, “since 1999, the PFI [Parent and Family

Involvement] survey of the National Household Education Surveys (NHES) has been the only source of national-level homeschooling estimates for the U.S. school-aged population,” (p. 267). As part of the NHES, the PFI was designed to be nationally representative of the target population that was achieved through the complex sample design that utilizes weight, which was, “children and youth aged 20 or younger who are enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade in a public or private school or who are being homeschooled for the equivalent grades,” (p. 1). With the application of the weight, these 16,446 parents represent 53,102,038 parents across the nation from which subsequent analyses are conducted. NHES documentation

recommends the application of weights to ensure the national representativeness of the sample (Jackson et al., 2021). The average age of children as reported by parents was 11.07 years (SD = 3.80). Table 1 provides the statistics for the demographic characteristics for the sample. Please note that percentages for race exceeded 100% as individuals were permitted to endorse more than one category. Please also note that the NHES as a federally funded data set follows the U.S. Office of Management and Budget standards for the collection of data on race and ethnicity. According to the Office of Management and Budget, Hispanic was categorized as the only ethnicity (Jones, 2017).

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample

Variable	% & Frequency	Variable	% & Frequency
<i>Gender</i>		<i>Disability Category</i>	
Female	48% (n = 25,710,361)	Intellectual Disability	1% (n = 743,557)
Male	52% (n = 27,391,677)	Speech Disorder	7% (n = 3,678,415)
<i>Race</i>		Emotional Disturbance	3% (n = 1,518,800)
American Indian	4% (n = 2,046,944)	Deaf/Hard of Hearing	< 1% (n = 470,514)
Asian	8% (n = 4,396,676)	Blind/Visual Impairment	1% (n = 619,050)
African American	18% (n = 43,543,945)	Orthopedic Impairment	2% (n = 792,834)
Pacific Islander	1% (n = 720,520)	Autism Spectrum Disorder	2% (n = 1,258,056)
White	71% (n = 37,877,898)	Pervasive Developmental Disorder	<1% (n = 311,904)
<i>Ethnicity</i>		Attention Deficit Disorder	10% (n = 5,527,288)
Hispanic	25% (n = 13,404,257)	Learning Disability	5% (n = 2,873,558)
<i>Disability</i>		Developmental Delay	4% (n = 1,837,591)
Yes	23% (n = 12,255,013)	Traumatic Brain Injury	<1% (n = 202,674)
No	76% (n = 40,847,025)	Other Health Impairment	4% (n = 2,035,381)

### Measures

All measures were obtained from the National Household Education Study (NHES, Jackson et al., 2021). With regard to homeschooling, approximately 3% ( $n = 1,775,233$ ) of the sample homeschooled. While response bias does exist in the NHES and any data set examining parents who homeschool their children, Gaither and Gaither (2017) note that the NHES as a dataset has, “provided the best estimates available of the number of children being taught at home,” (p. 244). Approximately 2% ( $n = 830,992$ ) reported to be a first-choice homeschooler as of kindergarten. Conversely, approximately 2% ( $n = 863,029$ ) reported to be a second-choice homeschooler post kindergarten. Finally, approximately 96% ( $n = 51,408,017$ ) of the sample were involved in formal schooling either public or private school. Table 2 provides the overall percentages and frequencies for schooling by disability status. As part of the NHES, parents were

asked (Variable: SPECALEDSESRVS), “How important was each of the following reasons when you chose the school where this child is enrolled for most credits? i. Quality or availability of special education (including services for students with disabilities).” The response format for this question was a four-point scale with values ranging from ‘not at all important’ coded as 1 to ‘very important’ coded as 4. Table 3 provides distribution of responses for this question. Parents were also asked (Variable: HDCOMMUX), “Thinking about the child’s IEP or services plan, since September, how satisfied or dissatisfied have you been with the service provider’s or school’s communication with your family?” The response format for this question was a four-point scale with values ranging from ‘very satisfied’ coded as 1 to ‘very dissatisfied’ coded as 4. Table 3 provides the distribution of responses for this question as well.

Table 2. Overall percentages and frequencies

Disability Status	Percentage	Frequency
<i>Yes</i>		
First Choice Homeschooling	0.03%	132,757
Second Choice Homeschooling	0.05%	311,352
Formal Schooling	22.24%	11,810,903
<i>No</i>		
First Choice Homeschooling	1.30%	698,236
Second Choice Homeschooling	1.00%	551,677
Formal Schooling	74.70%	51,408,016

Table 3. Variables of Quality of Special Education Services and Communication Satisfaction

Variable: SPECALEDSESRVS		Variable: HDCOMMUX	
Not at all Important (1)	16% ( $n = 784,440$ )	Very Satisfied (1)	52% ( $n = 2,977,275$ )
Somewhat Important (2)	19% ( $n = 889,941$ )	Somewhat Satisfied (2)	33% ( $n = 1,903,398$ )
Important (3)	21% ( $n = 1,007,336$ )	Somewhat Dissatisfied (3)	8% ( $n = 479,835$ )
Very Important (4)	44% ( $n = 2,126,975$ )	Very Dissatisfied (4)	6% ( $n = 361,226$ )

### Analysis

In conducting our analyses with a complex data set such as the NHES, we applied the weight to provide nationally representative estimates based upon the sample data as a complex data set (Jackson et al., 2021). For the first and second research questions, we performed chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) tests for independence. The Phi ( $\Phi$ ) coefficient was calculated as the degree of association with values of 0.10, 0.30, and 0.50 or larger as indicating small, medium, and large values respectively (Kim, 2017). For the third and final research question, we delimited the analyses to parents who reported having children with disabilities as aligned with the purpose of the study. We calculated a Kruskal-Wallis (H) test for independent samples given the semi-continuous nature of the dependent variable of

parental rating of the importance of quality special education services as reason for choosing school setting. Eta-squared ( $\eta^2$ ) was calculated as the measure of effect sizes with values of 0.01, 0.06, and 0.14 as indicating small, medium, and large values respectively (Miles & Shevlin, 2001). After revealing a statistically significant omnibus test, post hoc pairwise tests were performed with Cohen’s d values calculated as the effect size. Values of Cohen’s d of 0.20, 0.50, and 0.80 or larger indicates values of small, medium, and large respectively (Cohen, 1988). A Bonferroni correction was applied to post hoc comparisons to adjust for the likelihood an inflated Type I error rate.

### Results

There was a statistically significant association between homeschooling choice and whether the student was reported to have a disability,  $\chi^2(1) = 4,219.41$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\Phi = 0.01$ . One quarter or 25% of students who were homeschooled reported disabilities (Standardized residual = 56.0) as compared to 23%

(Standardized residual = -10.4) of students who were not-homeschooled reported having a disability. Slightly more students with disabilities reported being homeschooled than not homeschooled. Table 4 provides the frequencies and standardized residuals in parentheses for the first research question.

Table 4. Frequencies and standardized residuals in parentheses for first research question

Disability Status	Homeschooling		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	445,543 (56.0)	11,809,470 (-10.4)	12,255,013
No	1,329,690 (-30.7)	39,517,335 (5.7)	40,847,025
Total	1,775,233	51,326,805	53,102,038

There was a statistically significant association among first-choice, second-choice homeschooling, or formal schooling status and whether the student had a disability,  $\chi^2(2) = 106,063.78$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\Phi = 0.05$ . Students with disabilities were approximately 16% of the first-choice homeschoolers

(Standardized residual = -134.8). Conversely, students with disabilities were 36% of the second-choice homeschoolers (Standardized residual = 251.4). Table 5 provides the frequencies and standardized residuals in parentheses for the second research question.

Table 5. Frequencies and standardized residuals for second research question

Disability Status	Formal Schooling	Homeschooling		Total
		First-Choice	Second-Choice	
Yes	11,810,903 (-15.4)	132,757 (-134.8)	311,352 (251.4)	12,255,012
No	39,597,113 (8.5)	698,236 (73.8)	551,677 (-137.7)	40,847,026
Total	51,408,016	830,993	863,029	53,102,038

We compared parental ratings of importance of quality special education services as the reason for choosing school setting among parents of children with disabilities who were first-choice homeschoolers, second-choice homeschoolers, and non-homeschoolers receiving formal schooling. Results revealed statistically significant differences according to homeschooler status, Kruskal Wallis  $H(2) = 34.27$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.007$ . First-choice homeschoolers found quality special education services as the reason for the school setting to be the most important (Mean Rank = 3,747) followed by second-choice homeschoolers (Mean Rank = 2,852.54) then non-homeschoolers (Mean Rank = 2,396.81). First-choice homeschoolers rated quality special education services as the reason for choosing school setting as being more important than second-choice homeschoolers,  $d = 0.13$ ,  $p = 0.04$ . First-choice homeschoolers also rated quality special education services as the reason for choosing school setting as being more important

than to non-homeschoolers,  $d = 0.26$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Second-choice homeschoolers rated quality special education services as the reason for choosing school setting as being more important than non-homeschoolers,  $d = 0.09$ ,  $p = 0.09$  but this was not statistically significant after the Bonferroni correction for the Type I error rate.

We compared parental ratings of satisfaction with communication regarding special education services among parents of children with disabilities who were first-choice homeschoolers, second-choice homeschoolers, and non-homeschoolers receiving formal schooling. Results revealed statistically significant differences according to homeschooler status, Kruskal Wallis  $H(2) = 22.46$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta^2 = 0.004$ . First-choice homeschoolers found satisfaction with communication to be the most satisfying (Mean Rank = 1,817.35) followed by second-choice homeschoolers (Mean Rank = 2,666.93) then non-homeschoolers (Mean Rank = 2,905.31). First-choice homeschoolers rated satisfaction with communication as better

than second-choice homeschoolers,  $d = -0.26$ ,  $p = 0.009$ . Please note that for this variable that lower ratings indicated better satisfaction (see Table 3). First-choice homeschoolers also rated satisfaction with communication as better than non-homeschoolers,  $d = -0.65$ ,  $p < 0.001$ . Second-choice homeschoolers did not rate satisfaction with communication as any better or worse than non-homeschoolers,  $d = 0.009$ ,  $p = 0.41$ .

### **Discussion**

The results of the current study indicate that students with disabilities may be slightly but statistically significant more likely to be homeschooled than students without disabilities in general with an approximately two percent difference between students with and without disabilities from the sample data. These differences became more pronounced when considering students who were from first-choice homeschooling families, second-choice homeschooling families, and those from families who chose traditional, formal schooling. Students with disabilities were 36% of the second-choice homeschoolers but only 16% of first-choice homeschoolers. This estimate indicates that over 1 in 3 children from families who were second-choice homeschoolers were students with disabilities as compared to 1 in 6 for first-choice homeschoolers.

This estimate from the current study is lower than previously found in Morse and Bell (2018), which indicated about half of second-choice homeschooling families consisted of students with disabilities in their sample. The NHES sample from the current study however is much larger and may be considered more nationally representative due to the stratified sampling procedures utilized (Jackson et al., 2021). This result indicates that there was twice as many students with disabilities who were second-choice homeschoolers (36%) versus students with disabilities who were first-choice homeschoolers (16%). This result implies that families of students with disabilities may be more likely reacting to traditional, formal schooling more (i.e., second-choice homeschooling families) than proactively choosing homeschooling (i.e., first-choice homeschooling families).

As to rating the importance of quality special education services as the reason for choosing school setting among families of children with disabilities, first-choice homeschooling families rated quality special education services as being significantly more important than that of second-choice homeschooling families as well as families who engaged in traditional, formal schooling. Second-choice homeschooling families rated the importance of quality special education services as the reason for choosing school setting as being more important than families who engaged in traditional, formal schooling. This result may further indicate the motivation of parents of children with disabilities to homeschool their children after attending formal, traditional schooling (i.e., second choice homeschooling) as well as initially deciding to homeschool their children (i.e., first choice homeschooling) in view of the quality of special education services as the reason for choosing school setting. Interestingly, first-choice homeschooling families of children with disabilities rated the importance of quality special education services as the reason for choosing school setting as being higher than second-choice homeschooling families of children with

disabilities. Future research should further examine the perceptions of first-choice homeschooling families of children with disabilities as compared to second-choice families of children with disabilities. First-choice homeschoolers found satisfaction with communication regarding special education services to be the most highly rated followed by second-choice homeschoolers then non-homeschoolers. First-choice homeschoolers rated satisfaction with communication regarding special education services was significantly better than second-choice homeschoolers. First-choice homeschoolers also rated satisfaction with communication regarding special education services as better than non-homeschoolers. Second-choice homeschoolers did not rate satisfaction with communication as any better or worse than non-homeschoolers.

Several implications emerged as part of conducting the current study. First, there are small differences in the percent of students with disabilities who are homeschooled versus not homeschooled. Second, the differences that were more pronounced was the percent of students with disabilities between first- and second-choice homeschooling. This result indicates that homeschooling is more likely the second choice among families of children with disabilities. In examining how parents rated quality of special education services as being the reason they chose their educational setting, first-choice homeschooling families rated quality of special education services being more important than second-choice homeschooling families followed by families in traditional schooling environments. First-choice homeschooling families may have higher standards for educational quality in general that would extend to students with disabilities. The expectations of second-choice homeschooling families may also have been high or at least higher than non-homeschooling families. A similar pattern of results was revealed for communication with special education services with first-choice homeschooling families having the highest satisfaction with communication regarding special education services. As to policy, we should develop better outreach to families of children with disabilities who are homeschooling, especially those families that initially attended traditional schooling then changed to homeschooling (i.e., second choice homeschoolers). Families of children with disabilities could potentially be served by state and local disability advocacy programs if local education agencies were unwilling or unable depending upon jurisdiction. Families of children with disabilities should be well-informed regarding the special education services available to them in their jurisdiction regardless their school choice for their children.

Several limitations were revealed as part of conducting the current study. First, the implications of COVID-19 cannot be understated and are still unfolding (Green-Hennessy & Mariotti, 2023). With these contemporary events, the role of homeschooling for students with disabilities, “took on new dimensions,” (Dobosz et al., 2023, p. 3) as the impact of the pandemic made many parents of children with and without disabilities ‘second-choice’ homeschoolers by default. With the advent of the pandemic, the vast majority of parents of children with and without disabilities lacked appropriate training or supports but especially those families with children with disabilities (Dobosz et al., 2023; Greenway & Eaton-Thomas, 2020). Second, families who homeschool are nuanced and can

take a variety of forms, which the current study did not examine beyond categorization as either first- or second-choice homeschooling families. For instance, there are many families who homeschool within the context of face-to-face, traditional formal schooling (Ludgate et al., 2022) through supplemental curricula and supports to serve these needs of their children that traditional, formal schooling cannot or will not address. Third, other variables in the NHES:2019 could have helped us examine whether special education services was the most important factor in determining school setting but for ambiguous wording like 'special needs' (i.e., HMOSTX) that would be open to interpretation by parents without a clear definition. Special needs would ostensibly include children with disabilities but could also include children with exceptional gifts and talents, which was not the focus of the current study.

Additionally, we should note that the maximum age federally for IDEA services under the diagnosis of developmental delay is at 9 years old or around 3rd grade. At which point, schools may no longer use developmental delay as a diagnosis and must provide another diagnosis or exit the child from special education services (GUCCHD, 2011). Many states have lower maximum ages for aging out of the developmental delay diagnosis (Danaher, 2011). However, a developmental diagnosis is a disability diagnosis that entitles students to special education services, though a temporary one. We should also note that many students receive diagnoses well before 3rd grade, most notably in the area of speech (Georgan et al., 2023).

Fourth, there was a certain amount of missing data as participants are not required to respond to every questions if they do not consider it relevant or was not applicable. Hence, for instance, there were less respondents to the question of whether the quality of special education services was considered important in choosing their child's school as they may not have known their child had a disability at the time of choosing the school per the question's wording. The question's wording was (Variable: SPECALEDSESVS), "How important was each of the following reasons when you chose the school where this child is enrolled for most credits? i. Quality or availability of special education (including services for students with disabilities)." Indeed, there are many families who may not know whether their child has a disability diagnosis at the time of entering school, thus do not have all relevant information from which to make a decision regarding their child's education. If certain families of children with disabilities were diagnosed before school entry, they may have been first-choice homeschoolers rather than second-choice homeschoolers. Future research should explore whether homeschooling families (as well as with and without disabilities) expect a same or similar level of communication from the school as compared to families who engage in formal schooling.

Finally, we did not have information regarding the severity of a child's disability as these data were not collected as part of the NHES. Future research should examine the interaction of severity of disability as there may be a differential interaction of homeschooling choice and disability by severity. By disability category alone, there were significant relationships between disability and homeschooling choice in the sense that students in each disability category were more likely to be over-represented in homeschooling versus traditional, non-homeschooling

schooling by the data precludes further examination according to severity.

In conclusion, there was a slight but statistically significant association of disability status with a family's educational choice to homeschool versus engage in formal, traditional schooling generally. More importantly, there was a greater association of disability status with the educational choices of families when comparing first-choice homeschooling families, second-choice homeschooling families, and those families who selected formal, traditional schooling. Students with disabilities were 36% of the second-choice homeschoolers but only 16% of first-choice homeschoolers. This estimate from a large and nationally representative sample indicates that over 1 in 3 children from families who were second-choice homeschoolers were students with disabilities. There was also a statistically significant association of importance of quality special education services as the reason for choosing school setting as rated by parents with the educational choices among parents of children with disabilities (e.g., being first-choice homeschooling families, second-choice homeschooling families, and traditional, formal schooling families). This association warrants further examination in comparing families of children with disabilities who may first-choice versus second-choice homeschoolers. Finally, there was also a statistically significant association of the satisfaction with communication regarding special education services among parents of children with disabilities according to educational setting. First-choice homeschooling families rated satisfaction with communication regarding special education services better as compared to second-choice homeschooling families and non-homeschooling families.

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