

My grandson has ADHD, a muscle movement problem of his arm and the muscles of his mouth called apraxia. Colton, after six years of four times a week speech therapy, two paid by the schools during the school year, and the rest paid by us, can now speak quite well, except for pronouncing new words. He was the first to read in his class, as his speech therapy taught him what letters sound like. He was in a talented and gifted group before school was closed in March of 2020.

At that time he was learning time tables. He was having problems with his arm in printing, as when his need for speech therapy stopped, occupational therapy for his hand apraxia also stopped. I worked with him for an hour after school that year. He was getting better at printing. I had been told not to introduce him to cursive yet.

When the schools were shut down, the kids were not told to stay apart. As a grandmother, I was deluged with kids. Since I did not want to be around groups of kids as I have pre-existing conditions and Colton has asthma, the decision was made to send him to Brogran to his other grandparents, as Brogran is isolated. His parents work.

For ten weeks, Governor Brown said that education could not be advanced for any child since some children did not have access to the internet. Colton got down loaded packets of information that was not even up to what he was learning at school. Little math was included. He could complete this for the week in less than an hour. His other grandmother added reading to what was offered. Most of the time, he played X-Box. When Colton got homesick and came home, he had lost the skills he had learned in being able to print more clearly.

He had gone backward or regressed. Over the summer, his behavior was getting worse, stomping, yelling, not minding, etc. A medical provider said his ADHD had worsened., but this occurred with advancing puberty. He prescribed new medication that Colton was starting as school started in the fall.

In the summer, I started to try to help Colton catch up. In the fall,. I offered to help Colton and another ten year old friend named Jackson,, who was also in the talented and gifted range at school to do online school. Since the school was only going to offer two forty-five minute sessions, the plan was to offer home schooling to this to meet both boy's intellectual needs. The online classes did not go well. Jackson knew the math offered. Although he passed the talented and gifted math test, he was only offered one short advanced math session in six weeks. Neither boy was offered advanced reading..

Colton was having problems with the internet going down often when the internet was overloaded. He would start a test, the internet would go down due to the load, and when we were able to get it up the teacher would be on a different topic. We do not have five g here, and the internet was not strong enough to carry the traffic here when all the kids logged on at the same time. Tt the kids were expected to go back and finish any work not done due to computer problems. This often meant waiting for the school to have recorded the class, which would not occur until the afternoon. A lot of the subjects offered were clips of reading which was not put into any context, and making the kids do remedial level math and reading after the morning. Both boys resented this, as they said "It was too dumb."

After six weeks, both Jackson and Colton's parents decided to have me just homeschool. The main reason for this decision was that the other kids were not understanding what was being taught and the teacher kept having problems in getting them to understand and to mind.. Although Colton is harder to teach a concept, especially in English, both boys have conquered multiplication, divisions, and now are finishing fractions.

They have learned how to reduce fractions with factors, find common denominators by finding the least common multiple, add, subtract, and multiply fractions. They have reviewed the parts of a sentence and are starting to be able to write short paragraphs. Both boys could not do this previously. Schools need to emphasize how to write more. We have also reviewed American History from a fourth grade level, and have read about science and done some science experiments, which the boys have liked. A big gift of homeschooling is both boys are doing cursive.

Colton's handwriting after doing cursive every day is getting understandable. Colton's behavior is getting less aggressive toward Jackson and me. Both boys seem happy, and I do not see any signs of depression in either boy. (Jackson has three holes in his heart and a lung problem. His parents however do not shelter him due to this.

However, Jackson has been in a more protective environment homeschooling. Both groups of parents decided to finish homeschooling this year, as they did not want their boys to go back to school, have to stay away from other kids, not be able to play, and especially have no new knowledge offered to them. The most amazing thing is that I am a grandmother who is seventy three and I have had two strokes. With the right books, these two boys have been able to achieve academically. The books at the school are not challenging those kids with normal or above normal ability to learn. The curriculum need changed to offer more challenges to those kids interested in math and science. Jackson hates Go Math used in our schools as he thinks these books do not challenge him enough. The biggest problem that Jackson and Colton's parents have is whether to continue to home school or what school in the public system to go to. Our public schools in Ontario have crowded school rooms and many of the kids are not learning.

Judith Kirby
Ontario, Ore.