



## Deschooling

Deschooling and Unschooling are commonly used home education terms which seem to confuse those who are new to the community and are seen by employees of local education authorities as negative about school.

Deschooling is the process by which a child who has been in school re-acclimatises him or her self towards the new environment of home education from the school environment.

When a child is first removed from school the child's (and parents) expectations about what education is undergoes a period of reassessment. Schools follow a highly structured educational style with class learning regulated by the national curriculum and regular changes of subjects through the day. But its not just what is learned and how that changes it's the institutional ethos. By this I mean the structured, authoritarian environment of school which of course plays little part in home life.

Sometime a child may have been traumatised by their school experiences. Perhaps by bullying, or the sense of being a small cog in a large institution. Sometimes it can be specific incidents leading to school refusal that leads to the decision to home educate. In these kinds of circumstances the process of deschooling is not limited to relearning how to learn, its learning how to trust in their own safety again. In this sense its the re-establishment of the child's concept of self and individuality.

Since their education has sometimes been bound together with fear and low self esteem then attempts to introduce formal learning into the child's life too soon after a removal from school may well be met with resistance from the child. It therefore can take some time for the child to see formal education as a safe and positive thing.

When a family withdraws a child from school and begins to home educate the LA will want to determine that the family are in fact meeting their section 7 duties.

However the courts have accepted that there is the allowance of a period of peroration is necessary when they quite sensibly took this into account in the Perry Case in which Lord Slade said:

*"Prima facie this opportunity will appropriately be given (as was done in the present case) if the Authority, having first allowed the parents a sufficient time to set in motion their arrangements for home education,"*

**(R v Gwent County Council Court of Appeal (Civil Division) 10 July 1985 JUDGEMENT BY-1: SLADE LJ)**

In any event even where a child and family are ready to begin if a period of time is allowed before the preliminary inspection is made then the results of an enquiry about the families educational provision will be more meaningful.

Most families change the way they home educate quite rapidly in the first few months and the allowance of (for example) a six month period would mean that the family would in all likelihood have something more meaningful to say to the LA after that time.