

Homeschooling Your Child



Overview:

Homeschooling, also known as home education, is the education of children inside the home, rather than in a traditional public or private school setting.

Relatively uncommon throughout most of the twentieth century, homeschooling has been on the rise in recent decades. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, about three percent of school-aged children in the United States are currently homeschooled.

In this eGuide, you will learn about the logistics of homeschooling – including how it works, how to identify the legal requirements in your state, and how to explore the potential costs – as well as some of the important concerns you will face as a homeschooling parent

Understand the different types of homeschooling.

In a homeschool environment, parents decide what to teach, when to teach, and how to teach – which means that it can be an incredibly flexible option for parents wishing to create a unique and interesting schooling experience for their child.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, homeschooling is very much a spectrum of teaching and learning styles tailored to meet the needs of individual kids and families. Methods may range from a very structured, scheduled school day

at home to a flexible “unschooling” approach where the child’s interests determine the direction of the curriculum on a day-to-day basis. The most common approach, though, is a mix between the two. This “eclectic” approach combines the child’s interests with the more typical in-school curriculum. It is also common for parents to periodically switch approaches until they find one that best suits their family’s needs.

Regardless of the methods chosen, most parents like to emphasize activities outside of the home – such as community service,

museum visits, time spent in nature, and the exploration of personal passions – as part of the overall curriculum. Additionally, teenagers may sometimes take courses at local colleges or universities.

Understand the legal restrictions.

Homeschooling is legal in every state. However, each state has different requirements and processes for applying to homeschool your child. Be sure to **explore your state’s expectations** and the assessments required before pursuing homeschooling.

💡 Determine the financial cost of homeschooling

In general, the average cost of homeschooling one child in a given year can run anywhere from \$200 to \$1,500 or more. That's certainly more expensive than the cost of a public school education (which is free); but, it's also substantially less costly, in most cases, than paying for private school tuition and fees.

The actual cost of homeschooling for your family will depend on a variety of factors. Consider the following when planning your budget:

- **The instructional style and materials used.** Adhering to a very structured homeschool program or purchasing complete boxed curriculums will cost more than seeking out free or low-cost community resources, such as public libraries, museums, and the Internet.
- **The age of your child(ren).** Teenagers typically cost more to homeschool than children at the elementary school level. Pricier extra-curricular activities, fees for standardized testing and/or tutoring, and college-level courses taken on campus are a few things that can increase costs for this age group.



- **The number of children being homeschooled.** Homeschooling gets more expensive for each additional child. However, it's worth noting that curriculum and materials purchased for an older child can often be re-used for younger ones later on.
- **Extra-curricular activities.** Children who are homeschooled frequently have more spare time than other children their age. As a result, many are involved in a higher-than-average amount of extra-curricular activities. These activities are not only an important part of their education, but also provide important opportunities to socialize and make friends.
- **Field trips and excursions.** Many families who homeschool place a high value on trips to museums, nature sites, and

other educational destinations as an important part of their learning experience. And while many parks and cultural institutions occasionally offer "free days" for children, it's a good idea to factor in spending for admissions, gas, parking, food or other travel expenses.

Finally, it's worth noting that in addition to the more basic costs listed above, homeschooling could also have an effect on household income. While some parents are able to maintain a profession while tackling homeschooling responsibilities, many find that the time-consuming nature of it requires them to cut back on hours or even leave a job altogether. Be sure to factor in any potential income losses before you decide to homeschool.

! Quick Tips

Homeschooling has grown in popularity. Many parent groups and resources are available to support your child's learning as well as social skills. Make connections and take advantage of these resources!

Sometimes homeschooling is simply a bridge between other opportunities. It doesn't have to be forever.



💡 Understand the concerns about homeschooling

Opponents of homeschooling have traditionally voiced two big concerns. The first is that children who are homeschooled could face difficulties getting into college (or that they will be ill-prepared for it when they get there). The second is that they will fail to develop important social skills or learn how to get along with others. Fortunately, several recent studies indicate that neither of these concerns are founded, and that the opposite may, in fact, be true.

According to the National Home Education Research Institute and the Journal of College Admission, there is a growing body of research indicating that teens who are homeschooled:

In regards to socialization:

- **Have stronger social skills** than other children their own age.

- **Interact more frequently** with people of all ages.
- **Display higher levels of maturity** in social situations.
- Have more **self-confidence**.
- Are more likely to vote and participate in community service over a lifetime.

In regards to academics:

- **Receive higher scores** on standardized tests.
- Spend more time **pursuing their passions** and **developing potential career interests**.
- **Earn more college credits** before their freshman year of college.
- **Earn higher GPAs** during the college years.
- **Graduate from college** at a higher rate.

Of course, what your child is able to get out of homeschooling is

directly related to what each of you is willing to put into it. If you decide to homeschool your child, be sure to provide plenty of opportunities for your child to learn in the way that best suits him or her, as well as ample time to interact with others in the community.

💡 Understand the benefits and challenges of homeschooling

As a parent, there are many reasons you might consider homeschooling your child with special needs. Perhaps you have had ongoing disagreements with your child's school or district that just aren't being resolved. Perhaps you feel your child would do better with more one-on-one attention or greater flexibility. Or, perhaps your child has a number of medical or therapeutic visits that conflict with school hours.



! Quick Tips

Learn as much as you can

To learn more about homeschooling, explore the following resources:

[Homeschool Community](#)

[A2Z Homeschooling Resources](#)

[Special Needs Homeschooling](#)

[The U.S. Department of State](#)

[Homeschool Legal Defense Association \(HSLDA\)](#)

[Homeschool Facts](#)

Whatever the reason, rest assured that the decision to homeschool brings many benefits, including a flexible curriculum, the potential for stress reduction, and more opportunities to bond with your child.

But, there are also challenges to homeschooling your child with special needs. Public schools often have many specialists and resources available for your child throughout the school day. By teaching your child outside of the school, you may

need to find the appropriate resources yourself. This is due to the fact that school districts are generally not required to provide special education services to children who are homeschooled. (They are, however, still required to evaluate a child in all areas of suspected disability, if requested.)

That being said, each state has its own specific laws dictating whether or not homeschooled children are eligible to receive services, so make sure you

understand the provisions in your state. You can find a state-by-state guide [here](#).

If you do decide to homeschool your child with special needs, you might consider hiring a special education teacher or consultant for advice. S/he can provide tips, ideas, and networks to connect with in order to get the resources you need.

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