

Homeschooling

What is Homeschooling?

Homeschooling refers to children learning at home with their families or with other children in their communities. The practice takes many forms, from a daily routine following a set curriculum to child-led learning in which parents supervise and help.

All states allow homeschooling. Parents should examine local laws and consult with other homeschoolers before proceeding. In every state, parents must, at a minimum, notify a state or local education agency of their intent to educate their children at home and identify the children involved. Several states require the submission of proposed curricula and tests or have educational requirements for parents. A few even test parents.

How Do Educators, Policymakers, and Others View Homeschooling?

Homeschooling is controversial. The National Parent-Teacher Association opposes the practice, as do the National Education Association and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. Other groups such as the American Civil Liberties Union maintain that parents have a constitutional right to school their children at home. In polls, many Americans have indicated that they believe parents have a right to try homeschooling, even though they don't necessarily approve of it. State legislatures have responded favorably to homeschoolers seeking more flexible compulsory education laws.

How Well Do Homeschooled Children Do?

It is difficult to obtain a representative sample of homeschooled children, and researchers cannot say for certain whether these children would do better or worse in public or private school. Test results indicate that while some homeschoolers score below average, a larger number test above that mark.

Homeschooled children often demonstrate better social adjustment than their traditionally schooled peers. Many families participate in homeschool support groups, scouting, church and recreational activities, and other associations. Through these activities, homeschooled children share experiences with people outside their immediate families. Although some homeschoolers and their associations emphasize affiliations only with people who share their religious beliefs, many actively seek diversity.

What About College Admissions?

Homeschooling teenagers should contact the colleges and universities they would like to attend and ask about their admission policies. They should also ask their local homeschool association for the names of college students who were homeschooled and would not mind offering advice about the college process.