

# GETTING STARTED GUIDE

By [DesertSchoolChoice.com](https://DesertSchoolChoice.com)

## INTRODUCTION

**For Families Exploring Alternative Education**

**Mission:** Serving K–12 students and advancing career readiness in the Desert Cities and beyond.

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### Why Consider Alternatives?

Every child learns differently. Whether your reasons are academic, personal, religious, cultural, or values-based, alternative education paths give families more control over their child's learning journey. This guide helps you explore the most common options, steps to get started, and key questions to ask.

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### Step 1: Identify Your Family's Needs & Goals

Use these guiding questions to start:

- What are our top 3 reasons for seeking an alternative to public school?
  - What are our child's strengths, challenges, and interests?
  - Do we want more flexibility, safety, faith integration, or individualized learning?
  - Are we looking for short-term or long-term alternatives?
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### Step 2: Understand the Main Education Options



#### Homeschooling

- Parent-directed education at home

- Flexible curriculum, pacing, and schedule
- Options: Independent, PSPs (Private School Satellite Programs), online

### ✓ Charter Schools

- **Publicly funded but independently operated**
- Often offer flexible, theme-based programs (STEM, arts, classical)

### ✓ Private & Microschools

- **Tuition-based**, small group settings
- Can reflect specific values, religious beliefs, or specialized learning models

### ✓ Learning Pods & Co-ops

- **Group learning led by parents or tutors**
- Share teaching, costs, and social experiences

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## Step 3: Know the Legal Requirements (California Example)

*Note: Always verify with your state's Department of Education.*

### If Homeschooling in California, You Can:

- File a **Private School Affidavit (PSA)**
- Enroll in a **Private School Satellite Program (PSP)**
- Join a **public charter homeschool program** (funded, with teacher oversight)

Requirements usually include:

- Attendance tracking
- Record keeping
- Basic subject instruction



## Step 4: Choose Curriculum & Resources

Curriculum styles vary:

Type	Best For
Classical	Logic, literature, history-heavy
Charlotte Mason	Nature, literature, habit training
Unit Studies	Multi-age, theme-based projects
Online/Virtual	Independent learners, structure
Faith-Based	Integration of spiritual beliefs
Secular	Neutral worldview, flexible content

For a printable starter pack checklist, click [here](#).