

HOMESCHOOLING 101

- **Believe** that your children are hard-wired to learn and that you're the best person to make the decisions about what and how to teach them.
- **Recognize** that homeschooling is NOT the same as public schooling. It is more flexible and more student-driven. De-schooling is a real thing. It is a transition for both parents and children to learn at home. It's a different lifestyle and that is a good thing, but it will take some time to settle into homeschooling – for everyone in the family.
- **Understand** that you will make changes along the way and THAT IS A GOOD THING! What works for one family or child, may not work for another. What works this year may not work next year. See #2 above!
- **Seek** resources to help you. Other homeschooling parents, co-ops, online groups, curriculum guides, and homeschool educators are GREAT resources.

How do I start?

The Law:

First things first...Please read the law FOR YOURSELF. There is no substitute for this. You are held legally accountable for your children and their education.

- <https://pahomeschoollaw.com/law/>
- <https://hsllda.org/post/how-to-comply-with-pennsylvanias-homeschool-law>
** Information about affidavits, portfolios, and evaluations can be found here in plain English. Option 1 is the most common way to homeschool, and most likely what you need. **

Withdrawing Your Child:

If your child has already attended public or private school, you MUST withdraw your child from the school they are attending. Each school may have their own procedure for this. Call your district office or school principal to see what their procedure is. A sample withdraw letter can be found here:

<https://homeschoolpennsylvania.org/index.php/documentation/sample-withdrawal-letter/>

Additional Resources

HSLDA (Homeschool Legal Defense Association) provides members with help via email or phone for any questions a homeschooling family may have. Resources include veteran homeschooling parents, homeschooling resources, and webinars, as well as lawyer assistance with homeschooling laws and discrimination by school officials, child protective services investigators, employers, colleges, armed services recruitment officers, and government

bureaucrats. Membership dues for HSLDA are reasonable and there are many available discounts including those for pastors, military, first responders, and some local homeschool support groups. (Perry County Homeschoolers is among them).

<https://hsllda.org/legal/pennsylvania>

CHAP (Christian Homeschooler Association of Pennsylvania) has a website with lots of information about how to get started, resources, evaluators, and testing.

<https://chaponline.com/quick-start-guide/>

CHAP on Facebook has a TON of videos. They are named, so you can just browse through them for topics you would like to learn about. #146 is called “Transitioning from Public School to Homeschool.” <https://www.facebook.com/ChristianHomeschoolPA/>

This virtual workshop will walk you through the legal requirements of homeschooling (about 90 minutes).

<https://bethphillips.gumroad.com/l/wkaEm?fbclid=IwAR2jQh-O5Kg90yI9YL6yKkgOUctLXg1JkYTfV9mr9POBkuYU1Cbbrs98JRY>

Homeschool Pennsylvania is another good resource. <https://homeschoolpennsylvania.org/>

Local Support:

Harrisburg Area Homeschool Association (HAHA) is a larger Harrisburg area group that offers many of the same things that PCH (above) offers, for the wider Central PA area.

<https://www.homeschool-life.com/pa/hahaofpa/>

Pennsylvania Homeschool Support- The “Guides” section contains a walk-thru of how to start homeschooling and includes files section with documents to begin, also has a special needs, text of the homeschool law, etc *highly recommended*

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/pahomeschoolsupport>

Local FB pages:

Shippensburg/Chambersburg Area Homeschoolers:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/163715460817920>

Perry County Homeschool Resources- additional resources for those wishing to start their homeschool journey <https://www.facebook.com/groups/206209672834383>

Carlisle PA Homeschoolers - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/734860653194072>

Meadow Hill homeschool org - offers free support to new and established homeschool families by way of consultation and referral to local organizations. Meadow Hill also offers a hybrid program for a fee. <https://www.facebook.com/houseonahilled>

The Paperwork:

- 1) An affidavit that you’re beginning homeschooling, with attached objectives, goes to the district office on or before the day you begin being a homeschooler. Each subsequent year, it is due by August 1st.

You can find a sample affidavit here:

<https://homeschoolpennsylvania.org/index.php/documentation/sample-affidavit/>

You can find sample objectives here:

<https://homeschoolpennsylvania.org/index.php/documentation/sample-objectives/>

Elementary (K-6) and Secondary (7-12) expected subjects are different.

For a student with an IEP, there are some items of note, which you can find in detail here:

<https://hsllda.org/post/special-needs-provisions-for-pennsylvania> Most notably, you will need a certified special education teacher or a licensed clinical or school psychologist to sign off on your objectives. CHAP has a list of qualified special ed evaluators who work with homeschoolers. You can find them here: <https://chaponline.com/evaluators-by-county/> Some parents choose to vacate the IEP for various reasons, which would negate the need for a special education teacher or psychologist to approve the yearly objectives.

2) A portfolio which includes:

a) Samples of your child's learning through the year in the required subjects

This can be in any form – workbooks, writing samples, worksheets, videos, FB pages with ongoing learning, etc.;

b) A log of reading materials

Library books, electronic books, magazines, curriculum-linked books, etc.;

c) A record of:

DAYS: at least 180 days of learning for elementary level (K-6) or for secondary level (7-12).

This can be as simple as a checkmark on a calendar for the days you do schooling;

OR

HOURS: at least 900 hours at the elementary level or 990 hours at the secondary level

Note: Most people choose to record school DAYS, not hours. Also, the days your child has attended private or public school counts towards the 180 day requirement.

d) a standardized test score if your child is in grades 3, 5, or 8

There are many to choose from, and no particular score must be attained. One option is to test online with a service such as:

<https://www.academicexcellence.com/achievement-tests/>

3) An evaluation: By June 30th of each year, an evaluator must look at the portfolio items and interview your child about what they learned.

Evaluators are not judges or the homeschool police! They must sign off that they saw the items in #2 above, and talked with your child. There are many homeschool evaluators in our area. Ask around on the Facebook pages or other homeschool families you know to find one who is a good fit for your family. They generally charge a small fee, and are often available throughout the year for questions and assistance.

How do I schedule homeschooling?

Unlike public schooling, you can make the school day fit your life, rather than the other way around. Work during the day? Maybe schooling takes place at night. Work in the middle of the day? Do some in the morning and a little more in the evening. Will Mom be home and teach everything? Will Mom teach language and history and Dad teach math and science? Maybe Grandma teaches home economics and Grandpa teaches engineering. Choose the times of day and education resources that work best for your family!

What about socialization?

Homeschooled children are permitted by law to participate in public school sports and activities.

Join local sports teams, scouts, or church groups.

Homeschool groups in our area plan regular field trips, play dates, and clubs. Homeschool groups on FB are a great place to find other homeschoolers with children your child's age.

This calendar has a list of HAHA (Harrisburg Area Homeschoolers' Association) events. HAHA is a great resource for various homeschooling topics.

<https://www.homeschool-life.com/346/events/?public=1&private=>

Many places (library, YMCA, museums, colleges, zoos, dance studios, gymnastics classes, etc.) offer homeschooling days/hours/classes.

Volunteer with your kids. There are many volunteer opportunities in our community that need people.

Small-group classes for homeschoolers are another way kids can spend time with other kids.

How do I get materials to teach?

Free materials online and downloadable/printable:

<https://allinonehomeschool.com/> (complete K-12 curricula)

<https://www.homeschoolingonashoestring.com/>

<https://www.fcrr.org/student-center-activities> (Elementary Reading/Writing/Phonics/Spelling)

Also free - school districts MUST allow you to borrow the student textbooks to homeschool, IF there are extras available. They do not give you the teacher guides or supplementary materials. This is not usually the best fit for families who choose to homeschool.

This site reviews all kinds of homeschool curricula: <https://cathyduffyreviews.com/#>

This is a store in Dillsburg that sells used curricula: <https://pacurriculumexchange.com/>

There are periodic community sales for used curricular materials. These are usually towards the end of the school year as people plan for the following year. There is one in Liverpool each year in the spring.

www.TeachersPayTeachers.com (some free/some paid resources)

Homeschool FB groups (people often post things for sale when they are finished using them).

What about teaching subjects I don't know well?

Are you able to teach reading but you know that math is a challenge? You can always find another homeschooling parent to switch subjects with you – you teach one subject and the other parent teaches the one where you're not so confident.

There are co-ops that offer various classes each year. Some of them require that you teach a class while your children attend another class.

There are various pay-for-service classes offered for homeschoolers in our area. Many of them happen in Carlisle at House on a Hill Education. <https://www.facebook.com/houseonahilled>

www.KhanAcademy.com is a free, online, comprehensive curriculum website for K-12 students with teaching videos, practice items and tests, for math, history, science and reading. It also has college math courses.

<https://outschool.com/> offers a lot of courses online at reasonable prices.

Private tutoring is also an option, in person or online.

Contact Information:

Bridget Henne - Teacher (PA Certified), tutor, and evaluator.

(717) 275-3677 (text or call) or email Bridget@BridgeToSuccessEducation.com

Deborah Imholte – Homeschool parent & educator, Founder of Meadow Hill Homeschool Organization in Carlisle.

-(717) 422-1237 or houseonahilled@gmail.com