



Christian Home Educators Association of California

Promote • Provide • Protect

Questions & Answers for Private Home Educators

Why Private Home Education?

California parents choose to educate their children at home for a variety of reasons:

- Ability to provide an individualized course of study for each pupil.
- Desire to preserve their cultural heritage and pass on moral and religious values to their children.
- Development of child's confidence and independent thinking, away from negative peer pressure.
- Advantage of one-on-one teaching time, with special attention to each child's unique needs and interests.
- Family unity, closeness, and enjoyment of each other.
- Opportunity to develop relationships with people of all ages.
- Flexible schedule which allows more time for children to explore and learn at their own rate.
- Provision for a safe educational environment for their children. Bullying, physical abuse, school shootings, exposure to drug and alcohol abuse, objectionable state sponsored sex education content are a great concern to many.

Is Private Home Education Legal in California?

In California, there is no legally-defined entity known as a "homeschool." Instead of having a separate "homeschool" law, California is one of 12 states in which homeschoolers operate as private schools. Private schools can be legally established and operate in the home just as some private schools operate on a campus.

Under the California Education Code (E.C.) all children between the ages of 6 and 18 must attend a public full-time day school unless they are exempted (E.C. §48200). Note that kindergarten attendance is not required.

The general rule is that children between ages 6 and 18 must attend public school. However, remember that the law provides exemptions from this rule. While there are other exemptions, each of the four options below applies to homeschoolers.

Is Private Home Education Legal in California? (cont)

Option 1: Start your own private school. Home educators may establish private schools in their own homes. The law requires private schools to file a Private School Affidavit with the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Option 2: Enroll in a Private School Satellite Program (PSPs) offered by an existing private school. The private school offering a Private School Satellite Program must meet the same legal exemption and requirements as Option 1. Such Private School Satellite Programs may be composed entirely of home educators or be an extension program of a campus-based private school.

There is no more or no less legal protection or covering in our current Education Codes for either option 1 or 2. Families enrolled in out-of-state schools or programs are still required by state law to be enrolled in a California private school (home-based or PSP) with a California address for its location.

Option 3: Arrange for private tutoring done by a California credentialed teacher. The credential must be for the appropriate grade level and teaching must be in the courses of study required in the public schools. Tutoring must be done for at least three hours a day for at least 175 days per year. Private school enrollment isn't required for the use of a tutor. (E.C. § 48224)

Option 4: Enroll in a charter school or independent study through the public school. The student must be enrolled in the public school and work under a written agreement that specifies minimum requirements. Families who choose this option are totally under the authority of the public school, since their children are enrolled in the public school.

How Many Families Are Homeschooling in California?

The National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI) estimates there were 616,000 to 753,000 homeschool students in grades K-12 in California during the spring of 2021 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2022; Ray, 2021b).

Do Homeschoolers Outperform Public School Students on Standardized Tests?

Studies performed by Brian D. Ray, Ph.D. of the National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI.org) show the following:

- The home-educated typically score 15 to 30 percentile points above public-school students on standardized academic achievement tests.
- Homeschool students score above average on achievement tests regardless of their parents' level of formal education or their family's household income.
- Whether homeschool parents were ever certified teachers is not related to their children's academic achievement.
- Degree of state control and regulation of homeschooling is not related to academic achievement.
- Home-educated students typically score above average on the SAT and ACT tests that colleges consider for admissions.
- Homeschool students are increasingly being actively recruited by colleges.

What Can I Do to Help Me Make This Decision?

CONSIDER THE LAW

While the Bible is our authority concerning the responsibility of our children, we must be aware of the law, and in subjection to the authority of the law to the best of our ability where it does not conflict with God's laws. Education for Christian children is a First Amendment, freedom of religion issue. However, the U.S. Constitution left education within the realm of the states for specific statutes. Therefore, not only do we need to know what our federal Constitution says, we also need to be aware of the requirements in the Education Code and other state laws.

CONSIDER YOUR CHILDREN

If your children are preschool age, you are no doubt concerned about where and how they will develop to their greatest potential. You need to decide whether that development has the greater chance of happening in your home or in a school. If your children are already in school, you may be dissatisfied in some way and are looking for an alternative. Your question now is, "What can I do to change this unsatisfactory situation?" Carefully think through all your choices, pro and con, until one choice stands out as the best answer. If the best answer appears to be to bring your children home and educate them yourself, then you need to go on to the next consideration.

CONSIDER YOUR FAMILY

How you view the goals, purposes, and role of the family and your lifestyle are crucial to the ultimate success of your home education experience. What do you want your lifestyle to exhibit? Is the purpose of the family to love, nurture, and protect its members? To foster respect for all, even the children? Is your home a place of serenity and beauty? Beauty that doesn't come from a high standard of living, but from a love for God's word and a desire to make others feel special? Does each family member feel free to be himself? Is the goal of the family to give every material advantage or every spiritual advantage? Are you willing to learn better organization, discipline, and consistency? Does your lifestyle exhibit a vision for the role of motherhood and fatherhood?

CONSIDER YOUR LIFESTYLE

Bringing your children home or keeping them home from the beginning, will at the very least, set you firmly apart from the average, mainstream family. In addition, it may mean a drastic change in your lifestyle. It may also set you up as the object of criticism and ridicule. It may even cause you for the first time in your life to have to defend your actions. Consequently, you must be absolutely sure that educating your children at home is the strongest of convictions.

Adapted from *The California Homeschool Manual* by Karen Woodfin Middleton and Susan Beatty. Published by Christian Home Educators Press.

HOME EDUCATION IS NOT NEW! Home education has existed, of course, since before today's modern educational institutions. Through-out history, some families have chosen to educate their children at home even when other schools were available to them. Among the well-known figures who have been educated at home are:

Pearl S. Buck, Author
Agatha Christie, Author
Charles Dickens, Author
George Patton, General
Alexander Graham Bell, Inventor

Andrew Carnegie, Industrialist
Andrew and Jamie Wyeth, Painters
Frank Vandiver, President, Texas A&M
Albert Schweitzer, Physician
George Washington Carver, Scientist

Benjamin Franklin, Statesman & Inventor
Abraham Lincoln, US President
Franklin Delano Roosevelt, US President
George Washington, US President

What Teaching Materials Do California Home Educating Families Use?

A variety of materials is available to California families, including textbooks and other educational supplies available to public schools and traditional private and parochial schools. Many new products designed specifically for the one-on-one style of home education have been created. In addition, the advent of online education has opened a new world of opportunities.

For more than 35 years, CHEA has hosted its Annual Convention, which caters to the private home education community. Featured are a full range of specialized workshops designed to train and equip home educating parents, an Exhibit Hall, a Children's Convention, Teen Convention, and more. You can find information about upcoming events and conventions on our website: cheaofca.org/events.

Several excellent guides to selection and purchase of curriculum are available to assist families in setting up their children's course of study. Also available are many websites including www.cheaofca.org that offer help and resources for your homeschool journey.

How Do Families Begin Home Education?

Home education is as individual as the families who pursue it. CHEA of California has several publications designed to help home educating families get off to a good start.

CHEA is also able to refer families to a choice of home education groups in their areas. With the Homeschool Directory on our website, you can narrow down your search by county and specific groups you are looking for. That includes sports, teens, and even some special needs groups.

More About CHEA of California

Christian Home Educators Association of California is a non-profit organization established to provide such services as information, support, and training to the home education community throughout the state. We offer:

- A weekly e-newsletter, the CHEA Connection with articles and updates on what's going on in the California homeschool community
- A comprehensive getting-started manual entitled *The California Home School Manual; A Guide to Private Home Education in California*
- The publication of several other manuals and materials designed to assist home educators
- Special workshops, seminars, virtual events, and conventions
- A statewide network of home education groups
- A legislative consultant/coordinator who works full time in the Sacramento area, monitoring bills and coordinating action on bills which affect home educators

Check out our website for more information on Private Home Education in California. **www.cheaofca.org**