

Getting Started in Homeschooling

by Anne Elliott, August 18, 2003

Why are you homeschooling?

List as many reasons as you can, then mark your top 3 reasons.

Is homeschooling legal?

See <http://www.hslda.org> for a list of laws in your state. (Note: It costs \$100/year to join Home School Legal Defense Association – and it's well worth it!)

Check for laws pertaining to:

- Subjects you must cover
- Ages of attendance
- Attendance laws
- Qualifications for parent-teachers
- Required testing
- Record keeping, portfolios, transcripts and graduation requirements
- Other

List your state's laws:

Common objections:

Visit <http://fac.hsu.edu/worth/argue.html> for an article on answers to common objections to homeschooling, written by Fred Worth of Henderson State University.

List your own personal objections:

Learning Styles and Teaching Methods:

One of the best things about homeschooling is the ability to customize your child's education to best suit his or her needs. Both you, the parent-teacher, and your children, the students, need to think about several things:

Favorite subjects in school and why

Favorite teachers and why

Favorite memories of school days and why

Now list your least favorite in these categories, and tell why.

Least favorite subjects in school and why

Least favorite teachers and why

Least favorite memories of school days and why

Knowing these things will help you realize how you (and your child) best learn and what methods are least effective.

Choosing curriculum:

Before choosing a curriculum...

- Decide how much time you as a parent have to teach your child each day (in hours).
- Exactly how much money do you have available to spend?
- If you are short on money, do you have helpful resources, such as libraries and homeschool support groups, available in your area?
- What are your child's educational weak spots? (i.e. math, science, reading)
- What are your child's future goals? (go to college, what major, what job, etc.)

When looking at curriculum, be sure to keep in mind your child's learning style and yours, as discussed above.

Be sure to ask for a "scope and sequence" so that you're aware of exactly what your child will be learning.

Don't forget that you can design your own curriculum! Anne's School Place can help!

List some possible curriculum companies:

Record Keeping:

Depending on your state's laws, you should consider keeping a record of:

- A list of materials that you use
- Yearly, quarterly, and weekly plans
- Daily lesson plans and possibly a schedule for your day
- A journal or portfolio describing what learning actually took place

Be flexible, especially when it comes to:

- Attendance (allowing for sick days, for days that Dad is home, for field trips, etc.)
- The official dates of your school year (will you school year-round, will you take off extended time for holidays, etc.)
- Assignments (does your child really need to do every math problem on the page if he has already mastered the concept, etc.)
- Curriculum (you're allowed to change your mind in the middle of the year!)
- Different kids will have different learning styles. No one is a cookie cutter.

I'd love to chat with you... please feel free to e-mail me at <mailto:anne@anneelliott.com>! ~Anne