

HOMESCHOOLING FAQ's

Q. I want to homeschool - what should I do first?

A. Contact the county school board in the county in which you live and ask for a homeschool packet. It should include a Letter of Intent, attendance forms, and a copy of the Georgia homeschooling law (or at least a description of the legal requirements).

Q. How do I know what my rights are?

A. You can join HSLDA (Home School Legal Defense Association at www.HSLDA.org) or check the website: www.heir.org. You should also be given a copy of your legal requirements with your homeschool packet that is sent to you from the county.

Q. I have heard that homeschooling is expensive. Is this true?

A. No. Your greatest expense out of pocket is for your curriculum. With all of the options now for used curriculum and learning units on educational websites, you can tailor your curriculum to meet the needs of each of the children you are teaching. You may spend as much or as little as you feel you need to in order to fulfill the learning needs.

Q. Where do I get curriculum?

A. There are so many secular and Christian curriculum providers that it can be overwhelming. Eagle's Nest can provide you with a list of some of the companies who sell curriculum. A good idea is to try to attend a homeschool conference where many of the curriculum providers showcase their products. You may get information on one such meeting at www.GHEA.org. If you are unable to attend, do a search on the internet for homeschool curriculum, sign on to a homeschool chat room, or find a homeschooling mom that you can ask.

Q. Does homeschool curriculum include everything I need for every subject?

A. Not always! Make certain you know what is included in your curriculum! Many families use one company for math, one for language, one for science, etc. Sometimes a curriculum requires you to purchase supplemental books. Some companies do offer packages with complete curriculum designed for each grade level, while also allowing you to purchase each subject individually (enabling you to customize your curriculum for your child). There are also some companies who offer "DVD" or online classroom instruction, complete with grading and testing of the materials.

Q. Does the state dictate what curriculum I use, like in the public school?

A. No! We have been blessed with the freedom to choose what and how to teach our children, as long as it holds to the outline of requirements set out by the state. The state requires the following subjects be taught in the homeschool curriculum: Reading, Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, and Science.

Q. How do I choose curriculum?

A. Take into account the ages of your children, but only use that as a starting point because many children are performing either above or below their grade level. Some companies, such as Saxon Math, offer an online placement test so that you know which level to purchase for your child. Then, try to assess their learning styles - are they a visual, tactile (touch), or auditory learner? For instance, if your child is a tactile learner, you may want to purchase a math curriculum with manipulatives (hands-on activities) and avoid one that uses only a workbook. Don't worry if you purchase a curriculum that looked great in the catalog but just does not seem to work for your family. It happens to the best of us!

Q. Are there any local places to buy curriculum books and materials?

A. The School Box, Books-A-Million, Hastings, Omega Books, and Peachtree Education Station are just some of the places to buy books.

Q: Much of the curriculum looks so expensive - how can I homeschool on a budget?

A: First, if possible, try to purchase used curriculum! There are many websites that offer a Sale & Swap board. These websites are listed on the "Resource Lists" available from Eagle's Nest. Also, the GHEA Conference held in May has a HUGE hall designated just for used curriculum. ENCHEA also holds a used curriculum sale every spring. Members of ENCHEA enjoy the benefit of using the e-mail chain to have "e-sales" to sell products for which they have no further use. You might want to consider using the library. Not only will it save you money, but will also teach your children how to use it effectively. Omega Books in PTC sells used children's books, and Education Station has started carrying used homeschool curriculum. If you have more than one child, console yourself in the fact that you can save the curriculum you purchased for your younger children!

Q. What if I want to follow the public school curriculum?

A. If you wish to follow the public school curriculum, you can obtain a copy of the county's educational plan and objectives from the county school system. However, keep in mind that trying to stay on target with the public school system can be stressful and can take a lot of the fun out of homeschooling. One of the wonderful benefits of homeschooling is the flexibility in scheduling and teaching. Homeschooling is a big commitment! The success of your homeschool will depend in large part on the focus you give to it.

Q. How do I fulfill the state's requirement for testing?

A. Testing materials are available from several different companies such as Bob Jones University. Also, Eagle's Nest offers SAT testing each spring.

Q. Do I need to follow the public school calendar?

A. No. As long as your school year is composed of 180 days (4 ½ hours a day), then you can have school on any day ... including Saturday's! Also, you have a full year (365 days) to fulfill your required 180 days.

Q. What about socialization?

A. The issue of children's socialization as a detriment to home schooling is not a strong argument. Most homeschooling students are more active in their communities and with extra-curricular activities than public school students. Plus, many homeschool groups have designated times to get together. For example, Eagle's Nest Christian Home Educators Association offers organized field trips, bowling days, park days, and co-op classes that give the children a time to play together, learn together, and form other relationships. At no other time in your life are you separated by age (as in public school). Homeschooled children associate with groups of children of differing ages, allowing a much smoother transition into college and the workforce.

Q. How can I find out about opportunities and activities within our community that are available to homeschoolers?

A. A great way to find out about community opportunities is to come to the Eagle's Nest Round-Up held in August. Many people from the community attend the meeting and have tables with fliers for classes and activities geared toward homeschoolers. Some groups that have attended in the past are gymnastics, karate, music lessons, art lessons, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, etc.

Q. How do I organize my day when I'm trying to teach multiple children of all different ages?

A. Be flexible! If you get stressed out, then school will not be fun. We want our children to have such a great love for learning that it lasts them a lifetime! Sometimes an older child can work with a younger one, while you might be working with a third. The older child is learning responsibility and sensitivity by doing this. Remember, our children are learning from us, even when we are not aware of it. Instead of getting stressed out because you did not get done all you had planned to do, bring your kids together and read to them or bring them into the kitchen and have them help you cook! There are other ways of learning besides sitting in front of a workbook!