



Overview of Homeschooling

See the Home Education Program Basic Education Circular (BEC). It can be located in the list with the other [BECs](#).

Each of the following topics is covered more fully in their own section of this website. All laws and regulations that are referenced are located in the [General Laws and Regulations](#) section of this Home Education website.

A home education program is not considered a nonpublic school under the home education law. See 24 P.S. § 13-1327.1 (b).

Beginning the Program: the Affidavit

Homeschooling is a right and the school's permission is not needed, as long as the required documentation is submitted with the affidavit.

The affidavit covers the school year (July 1 – June 30) and should be turned in to the superintendent's office no later than August 1 of each school year a child is homeschooled. The exception is the first year a student is homeschooled; that year the home education program may begin homeschooling at any time during the year, as soon as an affidavit and supporting documentation is submitted.

See the [Affidavit](#) section of this Home Education website for more information on the required documentation.

Closing out the Year: the Portfolio

The portfolio documents that the compulsory attendance laws have been observed and that the student has had an appropriate education. It must be submitted to the superintendent's office of the student's district of residence no later than June 30 of the school year. See the [Portfolio](#) section of this Home Education website.

A student must attend school until their seventeenth (17th) birthday; therefore, the portfolio and accompanying documentation must be submitted for the school year in which a student turns age 17 for at least the period of time the student is age 16 up to, and including, the day before the student's seventeenth birthday.

Since the portfolio must be evaluated before submission to the superintendent, the homeschool supervisor should identify an evaluator as soon as possible after submitting the affidavit. The parent is responsible for the cost of the evaluation. See the [Evaluators](#) section of this Home Education website.

Age of Enrollment and Attendance

The age of enrollment is eight (8) years old, except in Philadelphia where the age is six (6).

NOTE: If a child has attended any public or private school in first grade or above, or if the parent has submitted an affidavit for a homeschool program for first grade or above, the child must continue their education (whether private, public or homeschool), regardless of age, even if they are not yet eight years old (24 P.S. 24 13-1326). Attendance in kindergarten does not count toward this rule.

Compulsory attendance is required until a child is 17 years old. Homeschooling must be documented and submitted to account for all schooling until that time.

If a student drops out of homeschooling after the age of 17, they may not return to homeschooling.

See the [Age of Enrollment and Attendance](#) section of the Home Education website for details.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is not required in Pennsylvania. Parents may choose to submit an affidavit for homeschooling their kindergarten child, but it is not required.

See the [Kindergarten](#) section of the Home Education website for details.

Curriculum

Parents may request to borrow copies of the school district's own planned courses, textbooks and other curriculum materials appropriate to the student's age and grade level; these are provided free of charge.

There are a number of other options for obtaining curriculum. See the [Curriculum](#) section of this Home Education website for further information.

Extracurricular Activities

Homeschooled students have the right to participate in the school district's extracurricular activities, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria or their equivalent and complying with all policies, rules and regulations or their equivalent of the governing organization of the activity. See the Home Education section of the website on [Extracurricular Activities](#).

Diplomas

Diplomas are an important consideration in a home education program. Some parents choose to issue parent-issued diplomas, while others seek a Commonwealth-recognized diploma. There are organizations that are authorized to grant a home education diploma. See the [Diplomas](#) section of the Home Education website.

Transcripts

A home education program has certain legal requirements for completing the elementary grades (kindergarten – 6th) and secondary grades (7th – 12th). There also are requirements for a home education graduation. In order to ensure these requirements are met, and to document the homeschool history, transcripts should be kept by the parent and by the school district.

Additionally, if a home education program moves to another PA school district, a letter of transfer is required. Including transcripts in the letter of transfer will ensure that credit is given in the new district for work completed in the former district. This may become an issue for graduation.

If the home education student completes the home education graduation requirements but has not affiliated with an authorized diploma-granting organization, the school district is required to submit to PHEAA a certification that the home education program is in compliance with the home education program law. See the [Transcripts](#) section of this Home Education website.

Exceptional Students

For any child in a home education program identified by the provisions of the Education of the Handicapped Act as needing special education services (excluding those identified as gifted and/or talented), the program must address the specific needs of the exceptional student and be approved by a teacher with a valid certificate from the Commonwealth to teach special education or a licensed clinical or certified school psychologist. This written notification of approval must be submitted with the notarized affidavit. School districts have the option to provide support for these students. See the [Exceptional Students](#) section of the Home Education website.

Standardized Testing

The law requires that homeschooled students take the statewide tests or other authorized tests in grades 3, 5, and 8. The results must be reported in the portfolio. See the Home Education section of the website on [Standardized Testing](#).

Support Groups and Resources

Parents of homeschool programs often band together for sharing resources, ideas and planned activities – including graduation exercises. Check with your homeschool contacts to see whether one of these exists in your area; if not, you may want to start one.

A number of organizations offer services to homeschooled students, often for a fee. See the Home Education section of the website on [Support Groups and Resources](#).