

Home education, or homeschooling, has become a popular option for parents. From parents individualizing their children's education to parents traveling the world, homeschooling can be a flexible and fun experience. Are you considering whether home education is the right fit for your family? Have you already decided to home educate but need help choosing a homeschooling method? Finding answers to these questions may feel like a daunting task. This page will give those considering home education a starting point and list the other resources available to them.

Reasons to homeschool

In the home setting, parents may choose how a child is educated and what (if any!) standard curriculum is used. When you elect to be your child's teacher, you may also regulate the pace at which she/he is taught, allowing more time for tackling challenging subjects or simply breezing through the areas that come easily. Additionally, some parents choose home education to pass on their religious and cultural beliefs. Other parents may feel the need to protect their children. No matter the reason, parents choosing to pursue education at home are embarking on a journey of possibilities.

Homeschooling methods

Once a family has chosen to homeschool, they need to decide on a method and a possible curriculum. Some homeschooling methods include traditional, virtual, travel, classical, Charlotte Mason method, unit studies, eclectic, Montessori, and unschooling. Understanding the strengths, weaknesses, and benefits of these methods will help families make informed decisions. The following list gives a brief explanation of the homeschooling methods.

*Please note that the links are given for in-depth understanding but are not the only approach for each method.

Traditional: strong emphasis on knowing the facts

Classical: trivium of 3 stages: grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric

Charlotte Mason Method: love of literature, forming relationships, and “living books”

Unit Studies: takes one theme and builds lessons around it. This method is commonly seen within the Charlotte Mason, classical, and unschooling methods.

Unschooling: child-directed and learning by living

Virtual: curriculum of online courses

Travel: schooling while traveling

Eclectic: involves more than one curriculum and supports each child individually

Montessori: child-centered approach that celebrates each child as an exceptional individual

Learning together

In addition to these methods, families may also choose to join a homeschool co-op. Homeschool co-ops allow families in a community to meet and work together to achieve common goals. These co-ops can be created around academics, activities, social time, service work, or projects. They may even be a combination of them all. Listed below are a few of the numerous homeschool co-ops located in our region.

[Chesterfield Chrisitan Academy](#)

[Tri-Cities Home Educators of Virginia](#)

National Black Home Educators

[Enlightium Academy](#)

Virginia homeschool legalities

In America, homeschool laws vary between states and range from strict to low requirements. Whether you are moving to a new state or simply withdrawing your student from public school, always review the state's department of education homeschool laws and regulations. The [Virginia Department of Education](#) (VDOE) presents information on the statistics, laws, timeframes, important dates, and home education options for families who are beginning their homeschooling journey on their website.

As of this writing (June 2020), the deadline to notify your Virginia School Board of intent to homeschool is August 15. However, parents may withdraw their students during the school year as long as they immediately notify the school board of their intent to home educate.

Additional Resources

[The Coalition for Responsible Home Education](#): empowers homeschooled children by educating the public and advocating for child-centered, evidence-based policy and practices for families and professionals.

[Five Flavors of Homeschooling](#): describes the practices and beliefs of the traditional, classical, Charlotte Mason, unit studies, and unschooling methods. At the end of this video, viewers have the opportunity to take a quiz which may help narrow down a method best-suited for their families' home education.

[Home School Legal Defense Association](#): "...advocates for the freedom to homeschool and offers support for every stage of your homeschool journey."

[Homeschooling Books from the Library](#): books to inspire and educate. Newest titles are listed first.

[Virginia Homeschool Support Groups](#): Region 1 are nearby support groups dedicated to making home education possible.