



Why 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

- Flexible schedule which allows more time for children to explore and learn at their own rate
- Opportunity to develop relationships with people of all ages

Is Private Home Education Legal In California?

Children in California are exempt from public school attendance if they:

- 1) Are instructed in a private school (E.C. 48222), or
- 2) Are tutored by a state-credentialed teacher (E.C. 48224).

California's home educators fit variously into either or both of these categories. Some parents choose to begin a private school in their own

home, filing an affidavit with the State Department of Education and complying with the same rules and regulations which apply to any other private school in California (E.C. 33190). A parent who holds a valid California teaching credential may tutor his children without enrolling them in a private school.

Other families enroll in an independent study program (ISP) offered by a public or private school. Families have enjoyed the freedom to teach their own children at home since the earliest California settlements.

It is well established in court cases

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that parents have the primary right and responsibility to direct the upbringing and education of their children. In the landmark case of *Wisconsin v. Yoder* (1972), the United States Supreme Court stated: “*The history and culture of Western civilization reflect a strong tradition of parental concern for the nurture and upbringing of their children. This primary role in the upbringing of their children is now established beyond debate as an enduring American tradition.*”

In *Pierce v. Society of Sisters* (1925), the Supreme Court stated: “*The child is not the mere creature of the state; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations.*”

The right of parents to control the education of their children is protected by numerous provisions of the United States Constitution—including free exercise of religion, free speech, family privacy and parental liberty—and has been consistently recognized by the courts.

How Many Families Are Homeschooling in California?

Based upon the number of families enrolled in private homeschool organizations, CHEA of California estimates that more than 100,000 children are currently being home schooled privately in California. This does not take into consideration the growing numbers of children who are being home educated through public school programs such as charter schools and independent study.

Do California Homeschoolers Outperform Public School Students on Standardized Tests?

In the largest study ever conducted on homeschooling, Dr. Lawrence M. Rudner of the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation found that home educated students excelled on nationally normed standardized achievement tests.

Rudner analyzed test and survey results from more than 20,000 homeschool students in grades K–12 in all 50 states who took a standardized achievement test in spring of 1998. When he looked specifically at California homeschool students, he found they outperform their public school counterparts by 16 to 41 percentile points across all subjects and grade levels.

How Do California Homeschoolers Perform Compared to Homeschooled Students in Highly Regulated States?

California homeschoolers operate under minimal regulations. In comparison, Pennsylvania has a burdensome homeschool law. Parents must submit an outline of proposed educational objectives by subject area and provide a portfolio of records and materials that include a log and an annual written evaluation of student's educational progress by a certified teacher.

Famous Home Schoolers

HOME EDUCATION IS NOT NEW!

Home education has existed, of course, since before today's modern educational institutions. Throughout history, some families have chosen to educate their children at home even when other schools were available to them. Among 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 Univ.*

Albert Schweitzer, *Physician*

George Washington Carver, *Scientist*

Benjamin Franklin, *Statesman & Inventor*

Abraham Lincoln, *US President*

Franklin Delano Roosevelt, *US President*

George Washington, *US President*

California homeschool students' scores are on the average equal to or slightly better than those of students under Pennsylvania's heavy regulations. *Data in Figure 1 taken from Rudner's reanalysis of his 1999 nationwide study results in California (October 10, 2002) and Pennsylvania. (October 10, 2002).*

Figure 1: Comparison of 8th Grade Composite Achievement Test Percentile Scores.

Does Private Homeschooling Cost the State?

In addition to being a highly effective form of education, homeschooling, together with conventional private and parochial schools, saves the already overburdened state budget billions of dollars each year in education costs.

In the 2005-2006 school year, the amount spent per public school child per year from all government funding sources was \$7,374. (California State Budget Overview. February 22, 2005). With more than 100,000 children being privately home educated, the savings to California's taxpayers is more than \$700 million per year.

What About Socialization?

Groups of home educators exist in every major city and in most smaller ones throughout California. Many home educators are actively involved in a local home education group, enjoying field trips, science fairs, sports, spelling bees, and a wealth of other activities with their friends.

CHEA of California maintains a communication and support network, along with a referral service to groups in every area of the state. Home educators typically don't feel isolated from peers, having many social activities from which to choose through their communities, neighborhood churches, families, friends, and home education groups.

Home educated children effectively interact with people from all age groups and from diverse backgrounds, a mixture more accurately reflecting the actual world, but not commonly found on school playgrounds.

Home educated children receive their social skills training from a broad range of experiences, under the supervision of their parents. Problems associated with what Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner of Cornell University calls "peer group social contagion" (peer dependence) are notably absent. Some advantages of freedom from constant peer pressure are: positive self-esteem, independent thinking, the ability to relate to people of all ages, and better family relationships.

Are Homeschooled Children Accepted in College?

Home educated students have fared well in college. In fact, some colleges are actively soliciting home educated students because of their reputation for being self-motivated and having leadership qualities. In addition to their private school diploma and transcript, students may be accepted by colleges on the basis of standardized test results. The California High School Proficiency Exam or the GED are available to establish high school equivalence.

Some students choose to attend a community college for the first year after high school graduation, which will establish transferable credits and demonstrate an ability to work at college level.

What About Students' Special Interests?

A wealth of experiences can supplement and enrich home teaching. Specialized classes and sports programs are often available through community

services such as parks and recreation departments, YMCA, 4-H, Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, Little League, museums, art schools, churches, and private tutors.

Home educated children participate in music, dance, gymnastics, art lessons, and more. Cross teaching among families allows children to learn special subjects. There are generally more opportunities and time for enrichment activities available for home educated students than for those in more traditional schools.

What Teaching Materials Do California's 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. In addition, many new products are becoming available specifically designed for the one-on-one style of home education.

Several conventions are held in California each year which cater to the home education community. These feature a full range of specialized workshops designed to train and equip home educating parents, and exhibit halls with thousands of books and teaching aids. The largest annual convention, which is hosted by CHEA of California, regularly draws more than 4,500 attendees.

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 periodicals and publications featuring home education and related topics.

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, including groups with various religious affiliations, as well as those which are non-sectarian.

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.

These activities are carried out through:

- The California Parent Educator quarterly magazine which includes news, information on upcoming events, articles on a variety of home education topics, resources, and encouragement.
- The comprehensive getting started manual entitled *An Introduction to Home Education*.
- The publication of several other manuals and materials designed to assist home educators
- Special workshops, seminars, 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
- A toll-free information line for those who desire more information about homeschooling in California: 800/564-2432



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