

How Do I Find Support?

Support groups are as diverse as homeschoolers themselves and include loose networks, structured clubs, inclusive and welcoming groups, and groups that cater to particular religions or educational philosophies. Try out a few to see where you feel comfortable, or start your own.

Support from Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts:

- **Local support groups listing:** www.ahem.info/SupportGroups.html
- **Events calendar:** www.ahem.info/Events.html
- **Useful links:** www.ahem.info/Links.html
- **Telephone and email help:** www.ahem.info/CountyContacts.html



- **Become a Friend of AHEM.**
- **Talk to active homeschoolers — meet some through a local support group or an e-list.**
- **Read some books on homeschooling:**

Dumbing Us Down by John Taylor Gatto

Family Matters by David Guterson

The Homeschooling Book of Answers, Linda Dobson, ed.

Teach Your Own: The John Holt Book of Homeschooling by John Holt & Patrick Farenga

If you have a young child:

Learning All the Time by John Holt

If you have a teen:

College Without High School by Blake Boles

More suggestions at

www.ahem.info/ThinkingAboutHomeschooling.html

How Do I Decide?



Massachusetts Homeschool Guidelines

If you want to homeschool your child in Massachusetts, and he or she is between the ages of 6 and 16, you must submit an education plan to your local school superintendent. Local school authorities may ask for certain types of information (elaborated below), but they must remember the limits established to protect parents' rights in determining how their children will be educated.

An education plan should include:

Parental Qualifications

Parents are not required to have any specific educational credentials, but schools can ask for the academic credentials or qualifications of the parent or parents who will be instructing the children.

Subjects and Hours

Families can list the subjects they plan to cover, which do not have to replicate the public school's curriculum. Parents should provide the equivalent hours of instruction as the public schools. "Instruction" includes independent study, field trips, technology-assisted learning, and presentations by persons other than teachers. Following a schedule is not required.

What About College?

Colleges and universities throughout the country welcome homeschooled students. See a sampling of Massachusetts colleges that have accepted Massachusetts homeschoolers at <http://www.ahem.info/Media.html#college>.

Teaching Materials

Materials can include books and supplies, as well as intangibles such as travel, community service, field trips, and other resources. School officials may not dictate what you use or how you homeschool.

Method of Evaluation

Evaluation may include one of the following approaches: standardized testing, periodic progress report, or dated work samples. Home visits may not be required as a condition of approval.

See the AHEM website's "Getting Started" section for *Tips for Writing Your Education Plan*, including a sample education plan and progress reports: www.ahem.info/GettingStartedHomeschooling.html



Who Homeschools?

Families choose to homeschool for many different reasons: educational, political, religious, or simply because they enjoy being with their children. The homeschooling population is comprised of traditional and non-traditional families from various races, ethnicities, faiths, philosophies, and lifestyles.

How Do They Do It?

Each family is unique, each child is unique. Some families homeschool without a formal curriculum, others set up a school at home. Some families use different methods for different children in the same family. Take the time to discover what works for you and your child; flexibility is key.

What About Socialization?

Homeschoolers have the time and opportunity to interact with both adults and children of all ages in the world at large, as well as abundant family time. They also socialize through a wide variety of activities, including field trips, classes, and homeschool support groups. Many homeschoolers find they have to cut back on their social schedule to have time at home!



About AHEM

**Help for Homeschooling in Massachusetts
at www.AHEM.info:**

- Walkthrough for getting started homeschooling
- Background info on homeschooling in MA
- Sample education plan and progress reports
- Legislative updates
- Educators' discounts
- Inspiring personal stories

Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts, Inc. (AHEM)

is a nonprofit, independent, grassroots, volunteer-run, educational organization that gathers and disseminates information about homeschooling in Massachusetts through education, advocacy, and events.

Become a Friend of AHEM

It's free! Subscribe at www.ahem.info/BecomeaFriendofAHEM.html. Friends of AHEM get notice of issues and events of interest to Massachusetts homeschoolers via an announcement only email list. AHEM respects your privacy and will not share your name or contact information with any other organization.

Donate to AHEM

Contributions to support our work are greatly appreciated. Donate securely online at www.AHEM.info or write a check to "Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts, Inc." and send it to the following address: AHEM, PO Box 1307, Arlington, MA 02474. Advocates for Home Education in Massachusetts, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Donations are tax deductible.



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Considering Homeschooling?

Come on in ~
the water's fine!

