

New to Homeschooling: Where to Start?

Congratulations! Welcome to a new adventure!

Whether you have planned to homeschool since your little ones were only hoped for, or you have just been thrust into the deep end of a pool you never intended to enter, we would like to welcome you. Don't panic! If God has led you to this, He will provide. *STOP, PRAY, BREATHE!!*

While homeschooling is a very broad category of education, encompassing everything from unschooling to school at home, there is a style that fits your family and your learners' needs. Often it takes trial and error, time and prayer before you figure out what works best for your student(s).

For many families a co-op is a good addition to your home-based schooling. A co-op is a cooperative of parents working together to educate their children. Heritage is a Christian co-op meeting in Bellevue every Monday during the school year for classes, fellowship, and support. The non-profit co-op contracts with teachers to offer various classes. Families register for classes based on the best fit for their children and their homeschooling needs. Students appreciate the social opportunities and parents appreciate having different teachers investing in their children. Some families love the electives they couldn't otherwise provide, while others appreciate help with challenging academic subjects.

As you begin this journey, there are many resources to guide you – perhaps too many. An internet search will yield an overwhelming response. So, where to start?

A great place to start is **Homeschool Legal Defense Association**. Despite the specificity of the name, reflecting its roots in promoting homeschooling and the necessary legal protections, HSLDA is a great general resource. There are a number of tabs on the following page, so dig deep!

<https://hsllda.org/content/earlyyears/StartHere.asp>

What are the requirements for homeschooling in Washington State? **Washington Homeschool Organization (WHO)** has a getting started page as well and lots of resources.

<http://washhomeschool.org/homeschooling/>

<http://washhomeschool.org/homeschooling/top-10-fags/>

You will need to fill out the following form and submit it to your school district by the 8th birthday of your child and then by September 15th for each following year.

<http://washhomeschool.org/homeschooling/declaration-of-intent/>

Love books? Here are two we recommend to get you started:

102 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum by Cathy Duffy. This isn't just for choosing curriculum, though what a help that is! Duffy explains different methods and styles of homeschooling, looks at the different personalities of learners, and then guides to appropriate curriculum options.

So You're Thinking About Home Schooling by Lisa Whelchel. Published by Focus on the Family, this book looks at 15 families and how they homeschool.