

Safe Steps to getting started (From THSC.org)

STEP 1. Know the Law

The only requirements to legally homeschool in Texas are that:

- The instruction must be bona fide (i.e. not a sham);
- The curriculum must be in visual form (e.g. books, workbooks, video monitor);
- The curriculum must include the basic subjects of reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics and good citizenship.
- Your child may also be taught in another family's home or you may use a tutor for instruction.

The courts have determined that Texas homeschools are private schools for the purpose of compulsory attendance. Therefore, homeschools are not regulated, do not require teacher certification or third-party curriculum approval and are exempt from compulsory attendance laws.

Local school officials do have the right to make a "reasonable inquiry" to determine whether your school-aged child is attending a private school. A 2010 letter from the Texas commissioner of education gives direction to school districts on how to legally make a "reasonable inquiry."

For more information on homeschooling and the law, see the [state requirements](#) in Texas.

The 1987 Leeper vs. Arlington ISD decision completely vindicated homeschooling in Texas. Prior to this case, homeschooling came under question, since a decision had not been established in court that made it legal to homeschool and therefore many school districts challenged the legality.

Presiding Judge Charles J. Murray concluded that:

A school-age child residing in the state of Texas who is being educated in a bona fide manner by the parents, or those standing in parental authority, in or through the child's home using a curriculum, consisting of books, workbooks, other written materials, including that which appears on an electronic screen of either a computer or video tape monitor, or any combination of the preceding from either (1) a private or parochial school which exists apart from the child's home or (2) which has been developed or obtained from any source, said curriculum designed to meet basic education goals of reading, spelling, grammar, mathematics and a study of good citizenship, is in attendance upon a private or parochial school within the meaning of Section 25.086(a)(1) of the Texas Education Code and exempt from the requirements of compulsory attendance at a public school.

STEP 2: Find a local, state and/or national support group through LHSS, THSC, HSLDA or Facebook groups and learn about homeschooling--

Homeschool support groups comprise families who come together to meet the needs of other families involved in their group. There are many types of homeschool groups that provide fellowship, activities, co-op classes, support for moms and dads, family events and more.

Benefits of joining a homeschool group include:

- Building friendships for you and your children
- Sharing encouragement and ideas
- Activities such as field trips, sporting events, play groups, etc.
- Co-op classes to help share and expand learning opportunities for students
- If you join a THSC partner group, your group leader can share a discount code for \$20 off your THSC membership
- HSLDA offers similar discounts

STEP 3: Research Curriculum

There are many different types of curriculum to meet the needs of your family and individual students. THSC does not endorse specific curriculum providers or types of curriculum.

Please be aware that curriculum is not “**accredited.**” Schools and programs can be accredited. To be accredited, a school must satisfy certain standards such as holding classes for the same number of days and hours required of public schools, employing certified teachers, etc.

You may enroll your student in an accredited correspondence school. Teachers from these schools give out and grade all assignments. Such programs tend to be more expensive because the school is doing more of the work. Enrollment in an accredited school is not legally necessary to homeschool.

You will order most homeschool curriculum from the publisher or online provider. Publishers and online providers usually have a website with contact and pricing information. There is no state funding for parent-taught homeschool curriculum. All expenses are the parent’s responsibility.

To get a hands-on look at curriculum visit our local bookstore, Cornerstone Bookstore, and see what the differences while discussing it with experienced homeschool moms.

Parents may choose to mix and match from different curriculum providers to cover the five basic subjects. For example, a family might choose an online provider for math and good citizenship while choosing a traditional textbook for reading, grammar and spelling.

Mardel and Rainbow Resource Center carry homeschool curriculum for purchase.

There are other large homeschool bookstores in the Houston area.

Step 4: Withdraw from Public School

You are not legally required to register with your local school district or receive their permission to homeschool, but you must withdraw your child from public school if they are already enrolled.

Note: The Texas Education Agency (TEA) requires you to specify the date that you will begin homeschooling in order to withdraw your child from public school.

It is important to ensure that students are withdrawn before homeschooling begins and that homeschooling begins as soon as the student is withdrawn. This prevents the school from counting the student absent prior to withdrawal and from potentially filing truancy charges.

Withdrawal Process from Public School

Withdraw by email (recommended):

Send a withdrawal email to the principal, counselor and attendance clerk of the school, as well as any other contacts at the school. Send a copy of the email to disenroll@thsc.org.

Keep your child home the day after withdrawal and begin homeschooling.

If you are already in contact with a local homeschool support group, email a copy of the letter to the leader(s) of the group.

Withdraw by letter:

Write a withdrawal letter to the principal of the school, explaining that you will be teaching your child at home. Print three or four copies.

Print the commissioner of education's letter and include it in the envelope with the withdrawal notice.

Mail a signed copy of the letter and request a certified mail receipt to receive and retain proof of delivery.

Keep the second copy of the withdrawal letter and the post office receipts in your records to document your correspondence.

Keep your child home the day after withdrawal and begin homeschooling.

Send the third copy of the letter to us (Texas Home School Coalition, PO Box 6747, Lubbock, TX 79493).

If you are already in contact with a local homeschool support group, mail the fourth copy to the leader(s) of the group.

Note: In some cases, school districts have not opened certified letters and have returned them unopened to the sender.

Letters of Assurance

If the school subsequently contacts you and says that you must do more (such as come to the school office, fill out a form, etc.), do not go to the school. Instead, respond by email or mail with a letter of assurance. The TEA has instructed school districts that such letters meet the guidelines of cooperation in compliance with compulsory attendance laws.

Step 5: Begin Homeschooling

If you have read and followed the last six steps, you should be prepared to homeschool. Now all you have to do is start!

- A few things to remember:
- Enjoy your students and the opportunity to homeschool.
- Be flexible.

- If something is not working, be willing to try something new.
- Keep realistic expectations.
- Comparisons to the public school system or other homeschoolers will leave you frustrated.
- Set educational goals that fit the needs of your children.
- Know that you are not alone.

Staying connected with other homeschoolers will provide information, support and encouragement during difficult times.

EXCERPT from The Texas Education Code

Home schooled students are exempt from compulsory attendance according to Section 25.086(a)(1) of the Texas Education Code because home schools have been determined by Texas courts to be private schools for the purpose of compulsory attendance. (See Leeper case decisions.)

Below are portions of the Texas Education Code that are of greatest interest to Texas home educators. (See the complete Texas Education Code.)

Section 25.085. Compulsory School Attendance.

- (a) A child who is required to attend school under this section shall attend school each school day for the entire period the program of instruction is provided.
- (b) Unless specifically exempted by Section 25.086, a child who is at least six years of age, or who is younger than six years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not completed the academic year in which the child's 18th birthday occurred shall attend school.
- (c) On enrollment in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten, a child shall attend school.

Section 25.086 Exemptions

- (a) A child is exempt from the requirements of compulsory school attendance if the child:
 - (1) attends a private or parochial school that includes in its course a study of good citizenship . . .
 - or
 - (5) is at least 17 years of age and:
 - (A) is attending a course of instruction to prepare for the high school equivalency examination . . .
 - or
 - (B) has received a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate . . .