

How do I legally homeschool in Florida?

Homeschooling is one of five legal ways to satisfy Florida's compulsory attendance law. Florida Statute 1003.01 (13) gives parents the choice of achieving regular school attendance through one of these provisions:

- Public School
- Parochial, religious or denominational school
- Non-traditional private school
- Homeschool program
- Private tutoring program

In all cases, a child turning 6 before February 1 of the school year is subject to compulsory attendance and must attend school regularly the entire term.

Your Six Responsibilities

essentially, six stipulations must be followed to comply with the law as a homeschooler.

1) Send a notice of intent to your district school superintendent.

Your written notice of intent must include each of the following:

- Name of each child (6-16 years old)
- Birthdate of each child named.
- Address
- A parent's or guardian's signature.

The notice must be filed in your district school superintendent's office within 30 days of beginning your homeschool program. Send to: HomeEducation@dadeschools.net

2) Maintain a portfolio of records

Your portfolio must contain your documented records with the documentation occurring at the same time as instruction. The portfolio must also contain sample materials, meaning "samples of any writings, worksheets, workbooks, or creative materials used by the student."

3) Make your portfolio available for inspection by the superintendent.

The law requires you to make your portfolio "available for inspection by the superintendent or the superintendent's agent, upon 15 days written notice." The inspection is only to make sure the portfolio is legal; the superintendent cannot evaluate its contents.

4) Submit an annual evaluation for each child to the superintendent.

The law requires an annual evaluation, which the parent or guardian must file with the district school superintendent's office. The annual evaluation is due one year after submission of your letter of intent. There are 5 evaluation options provided for by Florida law:

- Individual evaluation by a Florida certified teacher of your choice.
- Any nationally normed student achievement test administered by a certified teacher of your choice.
- State student assessment test.
- Psychological evaluation
- Any other method mutually agreed upon by the parent and the superintendent

5) Preserve your child's portfolio for 2 years.

The law specifically states that "the portfolio shall be preserved by the parents for two years."

6) Submit a letter of termination upon completion of your home-education program, upon enrollment in a public, private school, umbrella school, or upon moving from the county.

You must file a notice of termination with the superintendent within 30 days of the time you end your homeschool program. A notice of termination should include the same information as your notice of intent. Once again send your notice certified mail, return-receipt requested to prove it reached its destination.