

SUGGESTIONS FOR NEW HOME SCHOOLERS: a Practical Approach

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(Revised 2020)

I. WHAT DO I NEED TO DO FIRST IN GETTING STARTED?

In order to home school in Georgia, you must have a high school diploma or a GED. If you decide to hire someone to tutor your children, they must also have a high school diploma or GED. You should go to www.ghea.org (the website for the Georgia Home Education Association) and click the link on the “Getting Started” page. Follow the directions on that page. **NOTE: YOU SHOULD NOT REPORT CHILDREN UNDER SIX (6) YEARS OF AGE UNLESS THEY HAVE PREVIOUSLY BEEN ENROLLED IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL FOR AT LEAST 20 DAYS.** Fill out the Letter of Intent, submit it, then remember to print it out BEFORE you leave the Department of Education page. This form should be submitted by September 1st or within 30 days of the establishment of your home school program. Because of the requirement of school officials to report children as truant after 10 days absence, we recommend that you submit this form as soon as you withdraw your children, although legally you have 30 days.

Do NOT call the county school board. They are elected officials and know nothing about home schooling unless they themselves have home schooled their children.

Other Suggestions:

- If you are beginning your home school program after Sept. 1, your beginning date will be the day after you withdrew your children from school and the ending date will be the day before that the following year. I realize this is as clear as mud, but that’s the way it is!
- Remember to keep these forms in your file as part of your permanent records.
- Keep these documents in your files for at least three (3) years. I recommend that you keep them until they graduate!!

II. WHAT DO I NEED TO KEEP?

Keep the following records for your use only. DO NOT send in:

- Testing and test scores (Iowa Tests, Stanford Achievement or any achievement tests) – at least three (3) years or until they graduate!
- End of year reports listing the subjects taught, materials used and an evaluation of that work.
- Daily lesson plans, yearly goals, your reason to home school
- Records of educational activities (field trips, art, music, etc.)
- Permanent folder for each child, including school records, attendance, health records, samples of work, extra-curricular classes attended, etc.)
- Pictures of major projects too big to keep.
- Awards

III. HOW DO I FIND OUT MORE?

A. SUGGESTED READING:

- Read through the information on www.ghea.org.
- *You Can Teach Your Child Successfully* – Ruth Beechick – information and insights for parents and teachers of children in grades 4-8; common sense teaching; practical helps; goes beyond basics; invaluable!
- *The Three R's* – Ruth Beechick – three little books that include a guide for teaching reading, language, and arithmetic to levels K-3; grade level guidelines; practical
- *Language and Thinking for Young Children* – Ruth Beechick – language activities for ages birth – about 8. Wonderful!
- *Teaching Children* – Diane Lopez – a curriculum scope and sequence from Kg – 6th grade.
- *For the Children's Sake* – Susan Schaeffer Macauley – a simple, practical easy-to-use resource that will help parents enrich children's education by extending learning opportunities to all areas of life
- *Books Children Love: A Guide to the Best Children's Literature* – Elizabeth Wilson – comprehensive guide to the best in children's books
- *The Christian Home School* – Gregg Harris – an exhaustive resource for anyone interested in home schooling; gives guide for getting started

These resources are by some of the pillars of the modern homeschooling movement and are a wealth of information.

B. OTHER RESOURCES

- Georgia Home Education Association (GHEA) - state home schooling organization; lists of local home school support groups; website has links to many other resources; conference information; information on driver's licenses; 770-461-3657; www.ghea.org
- Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA) – Prepaid legal protection for home educators; family membership dues; group discounts available; strongly recommended, but not required (540-338-5600 or www.hslda.org)
- God's World Newspapers – Christian current event newspaper; graded; includes history, science, language arts, social studies, current events, geography, character qualities, Bible, art, games, vocabulary and more or www.gwnews.com)
- Homeschooling Today Magazine – practical, instantly useful articles and materials; based mainly on unit studies; excellent resources for all levels – preschool through teen (www.homeschoolingtoday.com)
- The Old Schoolhouse magazine – theoldschoolhouse.com.
- Web search for "Homeschool magazines" for more resources.
- Chill Out 101: How to Get Started Home Schooling: A Workshop for Parents – Ruth Martin, Ph.D. all-day workshop presented upon request by a veteran home school mother; includes how to get started, legal issues, setting educational goals, the nitty gritty (what do I do all day?); how to choose curriculum, learning styles; very practical (404-217-8118; e-mail: martinedservices@gmail.com)

- High School and Beyond – Ruth Martin, Ph. D. – an all-day seminar designed for parents and teens to manage the teen years, high school and life after high school, including college; writing transcripts, getting scholarships, driver’s license regulations, how to write essays for college applications, HOPE scholarships, etc. (404-218-8118; e-mail: martinedservices@gmail.com)
- Website: ruthmartin.org

IV. WHAT ABOUT TESTING?

- Visit www.ghea.org or www.hslda.org for a listing of testing services and test distributors.
- Keep all test records on file. DO NOT send in.
- Home schoolers are required to begin testing in 3rd grade and continue every three years following (6th, 9th, 12th). We recommend that you don’t begin testing UNTIL 3rd grade.

Suggested Reading and Resource List
Yes, these are older resources. They're still great!

- You Can Teach Your Child Successfully,
The Three R's, Language and Thinking
for Young Children* All by Dr. Ruth Beechick
- For the Children's Sake* Susan Schaeffer Macaulay
- The 100 Top Picks for Homeschool
Curriculum* Cathy Duffy
- Teaching Tips and Techniques* Rebecca Avery (Available through Alpha
Omega-www.aop.com)
- The How and Why of Homeschooling* Ray Ballman
- The Unit Study Idea Book
How to Create Your Own Unit Study
The Joy of Reading* Valerie Bendt
- The Christian Home School* Gregg Harris
- Teaching Children* Diane Lopez
- Home Grown Kids,
Home Style Teaching,
Better Late Than Early, etc.* Dr. Raymond & Dorothy Moore
- The Big Books of Home Learning* Mary Pride
- Books Children Love* Elizabeth Wilson

Magazines:

- The Teaching Home* (www.teachinghome.com) no longer in print; archived articles
Homeschooling Today (www.homeschoolingtoday.com)
Practical Home Schooling (www.practicalhomeschooling.com)

Other Great Resources:

- Homeschool Marketplace* (www.homeschoolmarketplace.com)
God's World Newspapers and book club (www.gwnews.com)
Rainbow Resource – (rainbowresource.com)