

# Step-by-Step Guide to Beginning Homeschooling

1. Pray.
2. Counsel with your authority (your husband).
3. Register with a church school or use a certified teacher as a private tutor. According to Alabama Law, you may legally homeschool under the following two options:

<b>Alabama Legal Home Schooling Options:</b>		
	Option: 1	Option: 2
Legal Option:	Establish and/or enroll in a church school	Use a private tutor
Attendance:	None specified (175 days required for the public schools)	140 days per calendar year, 3 hours per day between the hours of 8am and 4pm
Subjects:	None	Reading, spelling, writing, arithmetic, English, geography, history of the United States, science, health, physical education, and Alabama history
Qualifications:	None	Teacher certification
Notice:	File a notice of enrollment and attendance with the local superintendent on a provided form (not required annually)	File a statement showing children to be instructed, the subjects taught and the period of instruction with the local superintendent
Recordkeeping:	Maintain a daily attendance register to be kept by the principal teacher of the church school	Maintain a register of the child's work showing daily attendance and make such reports as the State Board of Education may require
Testing:	None	None

Find a church school that you are comfortable with as far as their belief system and their requirements for membership. <http://www.chefofalabama.org> will have a listing of available church schools in the state of Alabama.

4. Set goals for each child you will be teaching. Think *beyond* traditional academics here. What do you want your child to be equipped with when he/she leaves your home to go out on his/her own? Think about character and spiritual issues and make those a priority. "Character training adds time to every duty and every duty ought to stop for character training!" --Marilyn Howshall. Of course, you will want to include academic goals as well, but

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don't try to push them forward all at once. Set the goals and list steps to achieve the goals. Then implement ONE routine at a time toward those goals. Once that routine is established, then add the next, and so on.

Genesis 33:13-14, which relates part of the story of Jacob meeting his brother Esau, sheds some biblical light on this: But [Jacob] said to [Esau], "My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And if they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die. Please let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and *according to the pace of the children*, until I come to my lord at Seir." (italics added)

Let your **child's needs** determine the pace in your homeschool rather than a curriculum writer.

Also look for your child's particular bents. If you follow those God-given areas of interests, you can set goals according to those and eliminate activities that don't take you closer to your goals. In essence, you can be focused and therefore, efficient -- both in time and money spent toward their education.

Do a little research on learning styles as well to determine which style best fits your child. This will help you as you set goals and purchase materials to meet those goals. If your child is a kinesthetic learner, then a traditional textbook approach alone will not meet that child's needs. So, determine your child's learning style before purchasing materials. Here's a good site to do some research with: <http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/weblinks/assets.htm>

5. Learn about different educational philosophies and decide which is a better fit for your family. The one that fits right now might not necessarily be the one you stick with for the rest of your homeschooling years, so don't feel that you'll be locked into this one forever. For example, MANY families begin with a purely textbook approach when they are new because they need the specific guidelines telling them what to do at what time. But as they gain more experience, they may break away from that style to another one. Or they may not! (See pages 3-4 for details and links)

Go to a search engine, like Google, and type in "homeschooling" or "homeschooling philosophies." This will be a good starting place for researching and give you ideas of the different philosophies out there as well as seeing how other families work out this lifestyle.

6. Now that you have done a little research and have chosen an educational style or philosophy to pursue with your family, you can start looking at and purchasing resources geared toward your particular style and the specific goals set for your child. (See Page 6 for some sites to get you started on your shopping spree!)

7. Decide on a record keeping system. This can vary from a traditional teacher's plan book with dates, subjects, and activities to complete to a spiral bound notebook that you use to write each day's activities after they are completed to a wall calendar filled in with accomplishments. (See pages 6-7 for some helpful links on this topic)

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8. Set aside a regular time to evaluate progress. Some suggestions are every six weeks or before reporting requirements for your particular cover school.

9. Plug into a support group of some kind. It is easy for homeschoolers to become isolated. The first six months of homeschooling are especially difficult. If the children have been in a normal school setting, the adjustment period will be particularly difficult. Belonging to a support group will be a help both to the child and to the parent during this adjustment period. Support groups usually offer regular meetings where parents can get together to share successes and struggles and hear the stories of other families. They also offer field trips and activities for the children to be involved in and make friends.

## Philosophies & Approaches

**Charlotte Mason** (a late 1800's educator) - Charlotte Mason had a concern that students develop a lifetime love of learning. She based her philosophy on the Latin word for education, "educare," which means "to feed and nourish." The Charlotte Mason philosophy includes: Narration and copywork, Habit training, Nature Notebooks, Fine Art studies, language studies, a literature-based curriculum instead of textbooks, and real-life applications.

For more information, visit:

A Charlotte Mason Education - <http://sites.silaspartners.com/cmason>

Charlotte Mason Research and Supply Company - <http://www.charlottemason.com/>

The ABC's of Charlotte Mason - <http://bushnell.net/~peanuts/faq1.html>

Ambleside Online - <http://www.amblesideonline.org/>

Sonlight, a literature rich program of learning - <http://www.sonlight.com/>

**Classical** - The focus of the traditional classical approach is on Greek mythology, philosophy, logic, and Latin. It utilizes the grammar, logic, and rhetoric phases of learning as a three-legged stool.

For more information, visit:

The Well Trained Mind - <http://www.welltrainedmind.com/index.php>

Trivium Pursuit - <http://www.triviumpursuit.com/>

Veritas Press - <http://www.veritaspress.com/store/home.asp>

**Lifestyle learning** - a new way of life, a new system that applies principles instead of following programs, and a fresh beginning for the entire family. The three Lifestyle of Learning goals are: *Science* - student is disciplined to Jesus and to an individual definable life-purpose; *Art* - student possesses a love of learning by relating with his own learning process along with unique process of expression; and *Tools* - student is equipped with the tools for learning needed to pursue a vital learning process throughout childhood that will continue to deepen into adulthood, producing individual scholarship.

For more information, visit:

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The Homeschool Oasis - [http://www.homeschooloasis.com/lol\\_main\\_pg.htm](http://www.homeschooloasis.com/lol_main_pg.htm)

**Unit Studies** - It is defined as an in-depth study of a topic (space, trees, cars, etc.) that takes into account many areas of the topic, such as geography, science, history, art, etc. It is a complete immersion into the topic so that the student will see things as a "whole" instead of bits and pieces learned throughout their education.

For More information, visit:

KONOS Curriculum - <http://www.konos.com/>

Five in a Row Curriculum - <http://www.fiveinarow.com/index.html>

Doorposts Publishing - <http://www.doorposts.net/default.asp>

Amanda Bennett - <http://www.unitstudy.com/>

The Weaver Curriculum - <http://www.aop.com/weaver/>

**Unschooling** - Unschooling doesn't mean not learning; it means learning without the trappings of school. It's not unlearning or uneducating. It's only unschooling - it points out a contrast in approaches to learning. Unschooling is following your children's lead. Allowing them to learn from a wide variety of experiences and resources. Start right from where you are and enjoy.

For more information, visit:

Unschooling.com - <http://www.unschooling.com/>

Family Unschoolers Network - <http://www.unschooling.org/>

The Natural Child Project - [http://www.naturalchild.com/guest/earl\\_stevens.html](http://www.naturalchild.com/guest/earl_stevens.html)

Unschooling in Alabama - <http://www.pipeline.com/~wdkmg/homeschool/unschool.htm>

**The Principle Approach** - The Principle Approach has been called "reflective teaching and learning." It is America's historic method of Biblical reasoning, which places the Truths (or principles) of God's Word at the heart of education. Each subject is predicated upon God's Biblical principles and students are taught to think and reason from principles and leading ideas using The Notebook Approach to Research, Reason, Relate, and Record.

For more information, visit:

The Foundation for American Christian Education - <http://www.face.net/>

**Textbook Approach** - full curriculum packages with step-by-step direction.

For more information, visit:

A Beka - <http://www.abeka.org/>

Bob Jones University Press - <http://www.bjupress.com/>

Alpha Omega Publications - <http://www.aop.com/homeschool/>

Calvert School - <http://www.calvertschool.org/home-school/>

Christian Liberty Academy - <http://www.homeschools.org/index.html>

Lighthouse Christian Academy - <http://www.schooloftomorrow.com/homeschool/lca.asp>

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## Some Helpful Websites

### **GENERAL INFORMATION AND ARTICLES**

<http://school.familyeducation.com/home-schooling/educational-philosophy/34545.html>--How To Homeschool page

<http://homeschoolinformation.com/>--This site includes hundreds of pages including frequently asked questions, helpful homeschool articles, links to free books online, ideas to help you utilize the Internet, freeware links, education philosophies, lesson ideas, list of homeschool catalogs, magazines, links, books, list groups, educational software, message boards, newsgroups, and tons more!

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/8259/used.html>--this page has a listing of sites to visit for purchasing used curriculum and resources

<http://www.homeschooloasis.com/>--Barb Shelton's site with lots of articles on home education and family life

<http://homeschoolcentral.com/index.htm>--"All the resources you need!" is this site's motto

<http://learninfreedom.org/>--this site shows how to use your own initiative in learning

<http://www.leapingfromthebox.com/>--Articles and resources to assist homeschoolers, home educators, unschoolers, and independent learners who desire to move beyond the "cookie-cutter" box mentality in their homeschooling or unschooling journey. Ideas and materials for Independent Learners along with tips for using textbooks (curriculum), community resources, & online information.

<http://homeschooling.about.com/>--resource for lots of information, articles, and links to other home education sites

<http://www.homeschooltopsites.com/>--some of the top homeschooling websites on the Internet, ranked by homeschoolers from around the world

[https://www.homeschoolestore.com/catalog/product\\_info.php?products\\_id=483](https://www.homeschoolestore.com/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=483)--a paid, downloadable resource called "Secrets to Successful Homeschooling: You Have What it Takes"

### **LEGAL**

<http://www.hslda.org/Default.asp?bhcp=1>--Home School Legal Defense Association's site; visit here to find out legal information regarding home education

<http://www.nheld.com/>--National Home Education Legal Defense

### **MAGAZINES**

<http://www.teachmagazine.net/>--Lorrie Flem's magazine for home educating families

<http://www.teachinghome.com/>--free e-mail newsletter and for sale magazine back issues

<http://www.home-school.com/catalog/pages/phs.php3>--Mary Pride's home education magazine

<http://www.homeschooltoday.com/>--Packed with encouragement and practical helps for homeschool parents, Homeschooling Today magazine delivers the resources homeschoolers have come to rely upon, from regular departments to book and product reviews, and from popular unit studies to academic helps.

<http://www.thehomeschoolmagazine.com/>--online home of The Old Schoolhouse Magazine

<http://www.everythinghomeschooling.com/default.aspx>--monthly online homeschooling magazine; this is a Membership site but there is some free content

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## **REVIEW SITES**

<http://www.homeschoolreviews.com/>

<http://www.homeschoolingfromtheheart.com/hsreviews.html>

[http://www.thehomeschoolmagazine.com/Homeschool\\_Reviews/](http://www.thehomeschoolmagazine.com/Homeschool_Reviews/)

## **Curriculum Suppliers**

This is by NO MEANS an exhaustive listing of suppliers. But this should get you started on your way!

<http://www.christianbook.com/html/specialty/1016.html?p=1018818>

[http://www.aop.com/home/--Alpha Omega](http://www.aop.com/home/--Alpha%20Omega)

<http://www.bjupress.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/HSHomeView?storeId=10001&langId=-1&catalogId=10001>-  
-Bob Jones

[http://www.abeka.com/--A Beka Book](http://www.abeka.com/--A%20Beka%20Book)

[http://www.rodandstaffbooks.com/--Rod & Staff](http://www.rodandstaffbooks.com/--Rod%20&%20Staff)

[http://www.konos.com/--Konos \(character-building unit study\)](http://www.konos.com/--Konos%20(character-building%20unit%20study))

[http://www.highschoolscience.com/--Apologia Science](http://www.highschoolscience.com/--Apologia%20Science)

[http://www.sonlight.com/--Sonlight Literature-based curriculum](http://www.sonlight.com/--Sonlight%20Literature-based%20curriculum)

[http://www.themysteryofhistory.com/--biblical history curriculum](http://www.themysteryofhistory.com/--biblical%20history%20curriculum)

[http://www.bfbooks.com/--literature-based history and geography curriculum](http://www.bfbooks.com/--literature-based%20history%20and%20geography%20curriculum)

[http://www.unitstudy.com/--home of Amanda Bennett's CD unit studies](http://www.unitstudy.com/--home%20of%20Amanda%20Bennett's%20CD%20unit%20studies)

[http://www.unitstudies.com/--Jennifer Steward's unit study site](http://www.unitstudies.com/--Jennifer%20Steward's%20unit%20study%20site)

[http://www.queenhomeschool.com/--Charlotte Mason style products, including Mary Woodis' books](http://www.queenhomeschool.com/--Charlotte%20Mason%20style%20products,%20including%20Mary%20Woodis's%20books)

[http://theswap.com/-- Homeschoolers' Curriculum Swap](http://theswap.com/--Homeschoolers's%20Curriculum%20Swap)

[http://vegsource.com/homeschool/--buy and sell new and used resources](http://vegsource.com/homeschool/--buy%20and%20sell%20new%20and%20used%20resources)

[http://www.accountwizard.com/clients/shop.asp?web=cca-store--Homeschool Supercenter](http://www.accountwizard.com/clients/shop.asp?web=cca-store--Homeschool%20Supercenter)

[http://www.calvertschool.org/home-school/--Calvert School](http://www.calvertschool.org/home-school/--Calvert%20School)

[https://www.homeschoolingbooks.com/--Complete curriculum packages or individual items for sale](https://www.homeschoolingbooks.com/--Complete%20curriculum%20packages%20or%20individual%20items%20for%20sale)

[http://www.time4learning.com/homeSchool--curriculum.htm--online homeschooling curriculum](http://www.time4learning.com/homeSchool--curriculum.htm--online%20homeschooling%20curriculum)

[http://www.homeschooldiscount.com/--curriculum, supplies, teacher resources](http://www.homeschooldiscount.com/--curriculum,%20supplies,%20teacher%20resources)

[http://www.mathusee.com/--math curriculum](http://www.mathusee.com/--math%20curriculum)

[http://saxonpublishers.harcourtachieve.com/en-US/saxonmath\\_home--math curriculum](http://saxonpublishers.harcourtachieve.com/en-US/saxonmath_home--math%20curriculum)

[http://www.teachingtextbooks.com--math curriculum](http://www.teachingtextbooks.com--math%20curriculum)

[http://www.videotext.com/--easy-to-understand Algebra and Geometry](http://www.videotext.com/--easy-to-understand%20Algebra%20and%20Geometry)

## **Record Keeping Sites**

[http://homeschooling.about.com/od/records/Record\\_Keeping\\_and\\_Scheduling.htm](http://homeschooling.about.com/od/records/Record_Keeping_and_Scheduling.htm)

[http://www.tghomesoft.com/--homeschool tracker computer record keeping software](http://www.tghomesoft.com/--homeschool%20tracker%20computer%20record%20keeping%20software)

[http://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/gettingorganized/planner.php--FREE planner and organizer](http://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/gettingorganized/planner.php--FREE%20planner%20and%20organizer)

<http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/materials/SW4Records.htm>

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<http://www.dataplus.biz/HER/>--computerized record keeping

[http://www.contechsolutions.net/products/eths\\_pc/](http://www.contechsolutions.net/products/eths_pc/)--computerized system

[http://www.3moms.com/html/homeschool\\_recordkeeping.asp](http://www.3moms.com/html/homeschool_recordkeeping.asp)

<http://www.homeschoolsolutions.com/>--download a free 30-day trial

<http://www.notgrass.com/homeschool-record-keeping-learning-lifestyle.php>

<http://www.homeschoolorganizer.com/>

<http://simplycharlottemason.com/home/blog/2007/02/28/announcing-the-cm-organizer/>--tailored to documenting a Charlotte Mason style education

<http://www.themasterplanner.com/>--over 160 forms on CD

<http://www.donnayoung.org/>--FREE printable forms

<http://www.homeschoolstudentplanner.com/>

<http://homeschoollog.com/>--quickly & easily document your child's work; downloadable record keeper