



Start a School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

District of Columbia

Home School

In the District of Columbia, parents and legal guardians may elect to homeschool their children. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) provides information, resources and monitoring to families that choose to homeschool. Homeschooling is a private, parent/legal guardian-directed education program for children who are subject to the compulsory education laws in their state. Compulsory education requires that all children between ages 5 and 17 who reside in the District of Columbia receive an education.

In the District of Columbia, homeschooling programs must provide thorough and regular instruction of sufficient duration and, at a minimum, include language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, health and physical education. To administer a homeschooling program in the District of Columbia, parents/legal guardians must have a high school diploma or its equivalent, or they may petition OSSE for a waiver by providing evidence that they can provide the student with a thorough and regular education. Students who receive specialized instruction and/or related services while enrolled in public school are no longer eligible to receive those services once the student has been withdrawn from public school. For additional details on the requirements of homeschooling in the District of Columbia, visit the OSSE Policy and Guidance page linked below.

To homeschool, parents/legal guardians must complete a [Notification of Intent to Homeschool](#) at least 15 business days prior to the first date of home instruction. For any year a parent/legal guardian chooses to continue a homeschooling program, they must complete a [Notification of Homeschool Continuation](#) by August 15. For more information about applying to homeschool your child and notifying OSSE of continuation of homeschooling, visit the Apply to Homeschool page linked below.

Steps to Start a Home School

Starting a homeschool in the District of Columbia involves several steps, but it's definitely manageable. Here's a guide to get you started:

1. **Research Homeschooling Laws:** Familiarize yourself with the homeschooling laws and regulations in the District of Columbia. You can find this information on the website of

the District of Columbia State Board of Education or through homeschooling associations. You can find detailed information on the Districts Department of Education website or through homeschooling advocacy groups such as [Home School Legal Defense Association \(HSLDA\)](#).

Review [Homeschool Information for District of Columbia Families](#)

2. **Understand Requirements:** Make sure you understand the requirements for homeschooling in D.C., such as filing necessary paperwork, keeping records, and meeting educational standards.
3. **Notify the School District:** In most cases, you will need to notify the local school district of your intent to homeschool. This may involve submitting a letter of intent or completing a form provided by the district.
4. **Develop a Curriculum:** Decide on the curriculum you will use for homeschooling. You have the flexibility to choose materials that align with your child's learning style, interests, and educational goals.
5. **Set Up a Learning Space:** Create a designated learning space in your home where your child can focus on their studies. This could be a separate room or a specific area free from distractions.
6. **Establish a Schedule:** Develop a daily or weekly schedule for homeschooling activities. This helps provide structure and consistency to your child's learning experience.
7. **Join Support Groups:** Consider joining homeschooling support groups or networks in your area. These groups can provide valuable resources, advice, and social opportunities for both you and your child.
8. **Stay Flexible:** Homeschooling allows for flexibility, so be open to adjusting your approach based on your child's needs and interests. Remember that every child learns differently, and homeschooling provides the opportunity for personalized learning experiences.
9. **Keep Records:** Keep detailed records of your child's homeschooling activities, including attendance, coursework, and any assessments or evaluations. This documentation may be required by the district or helpful for tracking your child's progress.
10. **Stay Informed:** Stay informed about changes to homeschooling laws and regulations in the District of Columbia. Being aware of any updates or policy changes ensures that you remain compliant with state requirements.

Starting a homeschool in the District of Columbia can be a rewarding experience for both you and your child. With careful planning, dedication, and support, you can create a successful learning environment tailored to your child's individual needs and interests.

Home School Statutes

The Education Freedom Foundation has relied on the [U.S. Department of Education's State Regulation of Private and Home Schools Map](#) for relevant statutes. Over time, the state pages on this map have been updated since their initial creation. In some cases, states have changed their laws without these updates being reflected on the map. Given the various methods each state uses to publicize changes to its laws, the most recent information for the Start-A-School project was often obtained directly from the U.S. Department of Education website. Users are encouraged to verify any information before making decisions based on it.

Assessment and Diplomas

- A parent or legal guardian must maintain a portfolio of home school materials (including the child's current work showing that the child is engaged in a range of subjects). This portfolio must be maintained for a year and available to review by OSSE upon written request. [5-E DCMR §§5205.1 and 5205.2](#)
- OSSE has 30 business days after receiving the portfolio to provide a Notification of Deficiencies when it determines that a student is not receiving thorough, regular education consistent with 5-E DCMR 52. The parent or legal guardian must respond within 30 business days with a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) indicating how each deficiency will be remedied. OSSE must review and respond to the parent or legal guardian within 15 business days, of receiving the CAP. The parent or legal guardian then may request a meeting to discuss OSSE's response to the CAP. If the CAP fails to correct the deficiencies, OSSE will issue a Letter of Non-Compliance. The parent or legal guardian may appeal the findings of non-compliance to the state superintendent of education within 15 calendar days. The state superintendent of education will issue a final decision, which the parent or guardian may appeal to the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Within 45 days of this final decision, the parent or legal guardian will be required to enroll the child or children in public or nonpublic school unless the action is stayed by a court order. [5-E DCMR §5208](#).
- Homeschooled students are eligible to participate free of charge in standardized testing programs at their residential public school. [5-E DCMR §5209.1](#).
- If a homeschooled student applies to enroll in the District of Columbia public school (including public charter schools), placement of the child and any credits towards high school graduation will be determined by evaluation (which may include administration of standardized tests, other examinations, and interviews with the child). [5-E DCMR §5210.1](#).

Curriculum and Instruction

- A homeschooling program must include, at minimum, language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, art, music, health, and physical education, and must be of sufficient duration to implement the program. [5-E DCMR §5204.1](#).
- Parents or legal guardians must have a high school diploma or equivalent in order to provide home school instruction. If the parent or legal guardian does not, they may petition OSSE for a waiver with evidence of the parent's or legal guardian's ability to provide a thorough, regular education. [5-E DCMR §§5207.1 and 5207.2](#)

Initial and Renewal Applications

- Every parent, guardian, or other person, who resides permanently or temporarily in the District during any school year and who has custody or control of a minor who has reached the age of 5 years or will become 5 years of age on or before September 30th of the current school year shall place the minor in regular attendance in an educational institution during the period of each year when the public schools of the District are in session. This obligation of the parent, guardian, or other person having custody extends until the minor reaches the age of 18 years. For the purpose of this section placement in summer school is not required. [D.C. Code §38-202](#).
- Every teacher who gives instruction privately shall keep an accurate daily record of attendance of all minors. These records shall be open for inspection at all times. [D.C. Code §38-203](#).
- A parent or legal guardian providing homeschooling must provide a written Notice of Intent to Home School form to OSSE (which can be completed [online](#)) 15 business days before the first day home instruction begins. [5-E DCMR §5202.1](#).
- Each year in which a home school program continues, the parent or legal guardian shall file a home school notification form for each child being homeschooled, no later than August 15th of that year. A parent shall notify OSSE in writing of discontinuing homeschooling for any reason 15 days prior to discontinuing it. The 15 days do not include Saturdays, Sundays, or district holidays. [5-E DCMR §5203](#).

Resources

Information and Legislation

- [District of Columbia Government: Education Resource Center](#)
- [District of Columbia, Office of the State Superintendent of Education \(OSSE\)](#)
- [District of Columbia OSSE: Homeschooling](#)
- [District of Columbia Official Code](#)
- [District of Columbia Municipal Regulations \(DCMR\)](#)
- [District of Columbia OSSE: Homeschooling Form](#)