



Start a School

AN EDUCATION FREEDOM FOUNDATION INITIATIVE

Florida

Homeschools

Home Education is a parent-directed educational option that satisfies the requirement for regular school attendance enshrined in the Florida Statutes since 1985. Parents have the freedom to determine their child's educational path and the plan for reaching their goals. Home education students are able to enter institutions of higher learning and are eligible to participate in the [Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program](#). Home education students have the opportunity to participate in the Family Empowerment Scholarship – Unique Abilities (FES-UA) and the Personalized Education Program (PEP) offered through the scholarship organizations.

Steps to Start a Homeschool

Starting a homeschool in Florida involves several steps to ensure compliance with state regulations and to set up an effective educational environment for your child. Here's a general guide:

1. **Understand the Law:** Familiarize yourself with Florida's homeschooling laws. In Florida, homeschooling falls under the category of non-public education, and parents are required to comply with certain regulations. [Florida Statute 1002.41](#) outlines the legal requirements for homeschooling. Review the [Parent Home Education Resources webpage](#). You can find detailed information on your state's Department of Education website or through homeschooling advocacy groups such as [Home School Legal Defense Association \(HSLDA\)](#).
 - Review [Contact Us](#)
 - Review [School Choice Resources for Parents](#)
 - Review [Home Education District Contacts](#)
 - Review [Home Education Facts & Figures](#)
 - Review [Home Education Statutes](#)
 - Review [Personalized Education](#)

2. **Notify the School District:** Submit a Notice of Intent to Establish a Home Education Program to the county school superintendent's office within 30 days of starting homeschooling. This notice should include the names and addresses of the homeschooling parents, the names and ages of the children who will be homeschooled, and a statement of assurance that the homeschooling curriculum will meet the state's requirements. A list of Home Education coordinators can be found here: [Home Education District Contacts](#).
3. **Choose a Curriculum:** Select a curriculum that meets Florida's educational requirements. While Florida doesn't prescribe specific curriculum or educational standards for homeschooling, your curriculum should cover the core subjects such as reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. There are various homeschooling curricula available, including pre-packaged ones and innovative approaches where parents design their own curriculum. You can also apply to attend a Charter School as a home education student.
4. **Establish a Schedule:** Create a schedule for homeschooling that works for your family. Determine how many hours per day or week you'll dedicate to homeschooling and establish a routine that includes time for lessons, activities, and breaks.
5. **Keep Records:** Maintain records of your homeschooling activities. Florida law requires homeschooling parents to keep a portfolio of educational records, including samples of the child's work, reading lists, and any standardized test results. These records may be requested by the school district for evaluation purposes.
6. **Assessment:** Florida law requires an annual educational evaluation of the child. Parents can choose from various assessment options, including standardized tests, portfolio reviews by certified teachers, or evaluations by licensed psychologists. Optima Academy Online performs all of the required assessments for parents.
7. **Stay Updated:** Stay informed about any changes to homeschooling laws or regulations in Florida. Joining homeschooling associations or support groups can help you stay connected with other homeschooling families and stay updated on relevant information.
8. **Participate in Homeschooling Community:** Consider joining homeschooling cooperatives or support groups in your area. These groups provide opportunities for socialization, extracurricular activities, and support for homeschooling parents.
9. **Stay Flexible:** Homeschooling allows for flexibility in teaching methods and scheduling. Be open to adjusting your approach based on your child's needs and interests.

10. **Seek Support:** Don't hesitate to seek support and resources from other homeschooling parents, online forums, local libraries, and educational organizations. There are plenty of resources available to help you navigate the homeschooling journey.

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

- Home education programs must provide an annual evaluation of the student's educational progress to the district school superintendent. The evaluation must be completed in one of the following ways: (1) a Florida-certified teacher may evaluate the child's progress based on a review of the portfolio and discussion with the student; (2) the student may participate in a nationally normed student achievement test administered by a certified teacher; (3) the student may participate in a state student assessment test at a location and under testing conditions approved by the school district; (4) the student may be evaluated by a psychologist holding a valid, active license pursuant to [s. 490.003\(7\) or \(8\), F.S.](#); or (5) the student may be evaluated with any other valid measurement tool as mutually agreed upon by the parent and the superintendent. [s. 1002.41\(1\)\(c\), F.S.](#)
- If a student does not possess an official transcript or is a home education student, credits shall be validated through performance during the first grading period. [Rule 6A-1.09941, F.A.C.](#)
- School districts are required to provide state assessment tests to home education students, if the parent chooses this form of evaluation per [s. 1002.41\(1\)\(c\)3, F.S.](#)

Curriculum and Instruction

- The requirements of the school day do not apply to home education programs. [s. 1002.41 \(3\), F.S.](#)
- Home education school students are eligible to participate in Florida's Bright Future Scholarship Program established to reward Florida high school graduates who merit recognition of high academic achievement. [s. 1009.531, F.S.](#)
- Under the Benacquisto Scholarship Program, a home education student who receives recognition as a National Merit Scholar or a National Achievement Scholar and initially enrolls in the 2014-15 academic year or later in a baccalaureate degree program at an eligible Florida postsecondary educational institution is eligible to receive an incentive award. This award is equal to the institutional cost of the public postsecondary educational institution or the highest cost of attendance at a Florida public university (if the student is attending an independent postsecondary educational institution [private])

minus the sum of the student's Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and National Merit Scholarship or National Achievement Scholarship. [s. 1009.893, F.S.](#)

Home Education Programs

- Home education is defined as “the sequentially progressive instruction of a student directed by his or her parent in order to satisfy the attendance requirements of [ss. 1002.41, 1003.01\(16\)\(d\), and 1003.21\(1\).](#)” [s. 1002.01, F.S.](#)

Initial and Renewal Applications

- Within 30 days of establishing a home education program, the parent must notify the district school superintendent in the county where the parent resides of his or her intent to establish a home education program. The notice must be in writing, signed by the parent, and must include the names, addresses, and birth dates of the children being homeschooled. The parent is not required to hold a valid regular Florida certificate to teach. [s. 1002.41\(1\), F.S.](#)
- Home education programs must maintain a portfolio of educational records. The Florida statute defines a portfolio as “a log of educational activities which is made contemporaneously with the instruction and which designates by title any reading materials used, and samples of any writings, worksheets, workbooks or creative materials used or developed by the student.” The portfolio of education records must be available for inspection by the superintendent upon a 15-day written notice. [s. 1002.41\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)
- The student's portfolio must be preserved for a minimum of two years. [s. 1002.41\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)
- Within 30 days of closing a home education program, the parent must submit a letter of termination to the district school superintendent. [s. 1002.41\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)
- The family must notify the school district if the student wishes to terminate the home education program at 16 and the student must be notified according to [s. 1003.21, F.S.](#) that his/her earning power is likely to be reduced.

Public School Access

- A home education student is eligible to participate in interscholastic activities at the public school that the student would be assigned to attend if the student attended public school or may develop an agreement to participate at a private school. The student may participate if he or she: (1) meets the requirements of the home education program pursuant to [s. 1002.41, F.S.](#); (2) demonstrates education progress in a manner defined in [s. 1006.15\(3\)\(c\)2, F.S.](#); (3) meets the same standards of acceptance, behavior, and performance as required of the other students; and (4) has successfully completed one grading period in home education if the student was unable to maintain academic eligibility as a public or private school student. [s. 1006.15\(3\)\(c\), F.S.](#)
- Any organization or entity that regulates or governs interscholastic extracurricular activities of public schools must permit home education associations to join as member

schools, and must not discriminate against any eligible home education student. [ss. 1006.15\(5\) and \(6\), F.S.](#)

Special Education

- Home education students may receive testing and evaluation services at diagnostic and resource centers, in accordance with the provisions of [ss. 1006.03](#) and [1002.41\(9\), F.S.](#)

Resources

Florida Parent Educators Association (FPEA)

A large association providing resources, support, and an annual convention for Florida homeschooling families.

[Website](#)

Information and Legislative

- [Florida Department of Education: Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice – Home Education](#)

How to Pay for your Homeschool

[Florida Tax-Credit Scholarship and Personalized Education Program \(PEP\)](#)

The Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES) is available for home education students. Please contact the [scholarship funding organizations](#) (SFO) with questions pertaining to the Family Empowerment Scholarship. More information can be found on the [Family Empowerment Scholarship](#) website.

Corporate Tax Credit and Insurance Premium Tax Credit: Florida offers tax credits on corporate income taxes and insurance premium taxes for donations made to SFOs. This incentivizes corporations and insurance companies to contribute to scholarships for K–12 students in Florida.

Eligibility: All students in grades K–12 are eligible to receive scholarships funded through this program. However, priority is given to students from low-income families and those in foster care, ensuring that those who may face financial barriers to education have greater access to educational opportunities.

Use of Scholarships: Families can use the scholarships provided through SFOs to cover various educational expenses, including tuition at the school of their choice. Additionally, the scholarships can be used for instructional materials, curriculum, homeschooling tuition and fees, fees for standardized tests (such as nationally norm-referenced tests, AP exams, and industry certifications), unbundled courses and services at public schools, fees for choice

navigators, tutoring, virtual education programs, educational therapies, and extracurricular programs. This broad range of eligible expenses allows families to tailor their children's education according to their individual needs and preferences.

Promotion of Educational Choice: By providing scholarships for students to attend the school of their choice and supporting various educational expenses, the program promotes educational choice and empowers families to make decisions that best suit their children's educational needs.

Support for Low-Income and Foster Care Students: The prioritization of students from low-income families and those in foster care ensures that those who may face socioeconomic challenges have equitable access to educational opportunities and resources.

Funding: On average, students receive \$8,000 in scholarship funds which are placed in an education savings account (ESA) and can be used for homeschooling, tutoring, instructional materials and more.

Overall, the tax credit program for donations to SFOs in Florida plays a significant role in expanding educational access and choice for students, particularly those from underserved communities. It aligns with the state's commitment to providing quality education options for all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

Florida students who are Home School students can access the [Personalized Education Program \(PEP\)](#) through the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program. This scholarship provides an educational savings account (ESA) to fund the educational needs of eligible students.

[View the 2024-25 Scholarship Award Amounts](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Scholarship Funding Organizations

Scholarship Funding Organizations (SFO) are approved to administer the Family Empowerment Scholarship, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship, and the Hope Scholarship. You will need to contact these organizations to get into the SFO's system so that families can select their school as a provider.

[Step Up for Students](#)

P.O. Box 54367

Jacksonville, FL 32245-4367

(877) 735-7837

info@stepupforstudents.org

[Step Up for Students Private School webpage](#)

[A.A.A. Scholarship Foundation- FL, LLC](#)

P.O. Box 15719, Tampa, FL 33684

(888) 707-2465

info@aaascholarships.org

[AAA Scholarship webpage](#)

ESA Statutes and Rules

- [Rule 6A-6.03315 Private School Scholarship Compliance](#)
- [Rule 6A-6.0952 Family Empowerment Scholarship Program](#)
- [Rule 6A-6.0960 Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program](#)
- [Section 1002.394 - The Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.](#)
- [Section 1002.395 - Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program](#)
- [Section 1002.421 - State school choice scholarship program accountability and oversight.](#)