



Are you considering homeschooling your child? You can do it! As you get started, it's important to make sure you comply with the education laws where you live. This page helps you understand how to homeschool legally in Louisiana –step by step.

Louisiana compulsory school attendance age

Children from the ages of 7 to 18 must attend school or be in compliance with Louisiana's homeschool law.

HSLDA believes that a parent-issued diploma and transcript should be sufficient to demonstrate that a child has completed a secondary education. However, even if your child is beyond compulsory school attendance age, there may be situations where you would want to continue to follow the requirements of a home education option recognized under Louisiana law until your child graduates from high school (filing a home education notice, keeping attendance and other records, etc.). These records may be requested in some situations, such as obtaining a driver's license if your child is a minor, enlisting in the military, applying to colleges, or demonstrating eligibility for Social Security benefits. If you are a member of HSLDA and would like additional details, please contact us.

Withdrawing your child from his or her current school

If you want to start homeschooling during the school year and your child is currently enrolled in a public or private school, HSLDA recommends that you formally withdraw your child from that school. If you are going to start homeschooling after the school year is over, and your child is considered enrolled for the following year, we recommend that you withdraw your child before the next school year begins, so that the school does not mark your child as absent or truant.

We invite you to become a member of HSLDA to receive specific advice about withdrawing your child from school and starting to homeschool. Local schools may have specific forms or withdrawal procedures. HSLDA members are eligible to receive individualized advice about whether complying with those procedures is advisable or required. HSLDA members are also eligible to use the sample letter of withdrawal for Louisiana available in Member Resources, to correspond with school officials.

We generally recommend that any correspondence with authorities be sent "Certified Mail—Return Receipt Requested." Keep copies of the withdrawal letter and any other paperwork or correspondence, and any green postal receipts, for your personal records.

Note: If your child has never attended a public or private school, this section does not apply.

Complying with Louisiana's homeschool law

In Louisiana, there are two options under which you can legally homeschool. After choosing one of the following options, follow the listed steps.

Homeschooling as a home study program:

1. Apply for approval. ▼

You must apply to the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for approval of the home study program within 15 days after beginning to homeschool. The application must be renewed *annually* thereafter by October 1 of the school year or 12 months after initial approval, whichever is later. Your program will be approved if you certify that it will offer a sustained curriculum of quality at least equal to that being taught in the public schools. You must include in your application a certified copy (*not* a photocopy!) of your child's birth certificate. Forms for the application for a home study program and for renewal of a home study program are available to HSLDA members on our website.

2. Teach for the required number of days. ▼

You must operate your home study program for 180 days each year.

3. Teach the required subjects. ▼

You must teach using a curriculum of a quality that is equal to what is taught in the public schools, and subjects must be taught at the same grade level they are in the public schools. This includes teaching the Declaration of Independence in elementary school and *The Federalist Papers* in high school.

4. Provide evidence of immunization.

Evidence of immunization for meningococcal disease must be provided when your child is 11 years old to the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, unless you have a waiver for religious, medical, or personal reasons.

5. Renew your application for approval.

Your annual application renewal will be approved if you submit satisfactory evidence that your program has in fact offered a sustained curriculum of quality that is equal to what is taught in the public schools at the same grade level. Along with the renewal, you must submit a packet of materials that can include a complete outline of each subject taught, a list of books and materials, copies of the student's work, copies of standardized tests, and statements of third parties who have observed your child's progress.

In lieu of submitting the materials mentioned above with your renewal application, you can instead provide:

- your child's passing score on the Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) test;
- your child's score on a California Achievement Test (CAT) or other standardized test approved by the state board of education (the score must be at or above grade level or must show "progress at a rate equal to one grade level for each year in the home study program"); or
- a written statement by a teacher certified to teach at your child's grade level verifying that the child is being taught in accordance with a sustained curriculum that is equal to that which is taught in the public schools or equal to that offered by public schools to a child of similar disabilities.

6. Apply for a TOPS scholarship if desired.

Homeschool students who enroll in a home study program no later than the end of 10th grade may be eligible for a Louisiana Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award based on their ACT scores. Contact HSLDA for more information.

Homeschooling as a home-based private school:

If you choose this option all the way through high school, your student will not be eligible for a TOPS award. Please see item #6 above.

1. If your child has been attending public school, provide notification of enrollment.

When beginning to homeschool under this option, you must provide a written notification of enrollment to the public school your student attended within 10 days of enrollment in the home-based private school. The notice must include your child's legal name, date of birth, gender, and race. You can include in the notification a request for your child's transcript. If you have any questions about the withdrawal procedure, please contact the HSLDA Legal Department. A form for this notice is available to HSLDA members on our website. If your child has never attended public or private school, this requirement does not apply.

2. Do not accept any federal or state funds.

Your school will not qualify under this statute if you accept any federal or state funding, whether directly or indirectly.

3. Provide annual notice of attendance.

You must *annually* report to the Louisiana Department of Education your home-based private school's total attendance as of the 30th day of your school term. A form for the notice of attendance is available to HSLDA members on our website.

4. Teach for the required number of days.

You must operate your home-based private school for 180 days each academic year.

The importance of recordkeeping

You can find Louisiana's specific recordkeeping requirements, they are listed above. In addition to those requirements, HSLDA recommends that you keep detailed records of your homeschool program. These records may be helpful if you face an investigation regarding your homeschooling or your student needs to furnish proof of education.

These records should include attendance records, information on the textbooks and workbooks your student used, samples of your student's schoolwork, correspondence with school officials, portfolios and test results, and any other documents showing that your child is receiving an appropriate education in compliance with the law. You should maintain these records for at least two years. You should keep your student's high school records and proof of compliance with the home education laws during the high school years (including any type of home education notice that you file with state or local officials) on file forever. HSLDA's high school webpage has additional information about homeschool recordkeeping.

Home School Legal Defense Association is a national advocacy organization that supports the right of parents to educate their children at home. We are dedicated to protecting the legality of your homeschool while equipping you to successfully teach your children.

HSLDA members have 24/7 phone and email access to our staff of attorneys and legal assistants, who can help you understand the homeschool law in your state and will go to bat for you if a school official or other authority challenges your homeschool. Our 80,000 members—families like you!— also receive personalized advice on everything from homeschooling a high schooler to teaching a child with special needs from our team of education consultants.

Please note: The information on this page has been reviewed by an attorney, but it should not be taken as legal advice specific to your individual situation.