

# HOW TO GET STARTED

## Guide



Starting your homeschooling journey is an adventure filled with potential and promise, offering a path to tailor education to fit your child's unique needs, interests, and pace of learning. As you embark on this path, it's essential to have a clear map to guide you through the initial steps, ensuring a smooth and successful transition into homeschooling. Here's a detailed guide to help you navigate the beginnings of your homeschool journey, focusing on understanding legal requirements, choosing your homeschooling approach, and selecting the right curriculum.

# INTRODUCTION TO

# homeschooling



Homeschooling is more than an educational choice; it's a lifestyle change that offers flexibility, personalized learning, and the opportunity for your family to grow together. Whether you're seeking a more enriched educational experience for your child, flexibility for travel or extracurricular pursuits, or a learning environment that aligns with your family's values, homeschooling can provide the framework to achieve these goals. The key to a successful homeschool experience lies in thorough preparation, informed decision-making, and a commitment to adapting to your child's evolving needs.



# 1. UNDERSTANDING YOUR STATE'S homeschool laws

Before you dive into curriculum planning or lesson scheduling, it's crucial to understand the legal framework governing homeschooling in your area. Laws vary significantly from state to state, with requirements ranging from submitting an intent to homeschool to the local school district, to annual assessments or evaluations of your child's progress.

- **Research and Compliance:** Begin by visiting [HSLDA](#), where you can find detailed information on homeschooling laws for each state. This resource is invaluable in helping you comply with legal requirements, ensuring your homeschool operates within state guidelines.
- **Legal Considerations:** Some states may require you to keep specific records, follow an approved curriculum, or even submit your child to standardized testing. Knowing these requirements upfront can help you plan your homeschooling strategy and avoid any legal pitfalls.

## 2. DECIDING ON YOUR HOMESCHOOL approach

Homeschooling offers the flexibility to choose an educational approach that best fits your child's learning style and your educational philosophy. From structured traditional methods to more relaxed, child-led learning, the approach you choose will shape your daily homeschool routine and curriculum choices.

- Exploring Approaches: Familiarize yourself with the various homeschooling methods, such as [Classical](#), [Charlotte Mason](#), [Montessori](#), [Unschooling](#), and [Eclectic homeschooling](#). Each has its own set of principles and practices. For example, the Classical approach emphasizes rigorous study of the liberal arts and great books of Western civilization, while Montessori focuses on hands-on learning and fostering independence.
- Resources for Learning: Delve deeper into these methodologies through resources such as ["The Well-Trained Mind"](#) by [Susan Wise Bauer and Jessie Wise](#) for a classical education overview, or ["The Montessori Method"](#) by [Maria Montessori](#) for insights into Montessori homeschooling. Check out my [Amazon storefront](#) for a full list of book recommendations that can help guide you on your path!




# 3. CHOOSING YOUR

## *curriculum*



Selecting the right curriculum can feel like one of the most crucial and stressful decisions in setting up your homeschool. A curriculum is going to act as the framework, the skeleton if you will, for your educational approach, guiding both what you teach and how you teach it. But a curriculum will not make or break your homeschool! The curriculum encompasses all the educational materials you plan to use, including textbooks, lesson plans, projects, and digital resources.



Here's a more in-depth look at each step involved in choosing your curriculum:

## **Understanding Curriculum Needs**

First, assess your child's learning style and interests closely. Do they learn best through hands-on activities (kinesthetic), or do they prefer listening (auditory) or seeing information (visual)?

Understanding this will help you tailor your curriculum choices to suit their learning preferences, making education both engaging and effective. Additionally, consider your educational goals: Are you aiming for a broad nature/agriculture education, focusing on STEM, or emphasizing life skills and practical learning?

- For Visual Learners: Look for curriculums that are rich in books, videos, and visual aids.
- For Auditory Learners: Audio resources, lectures, and discussion-based learning will be beneficial.
- For Kinesthetic Learners: Choose curriculums that include hands-on projects, experiments, and field trips.

## Curriculum Selection

With the vast array of homeschooling curricula available, it can feel overwhelming to choose the right one. Here are some steps to help you navigate this process:

- **Research Widely:** Start by researching the various curricula that align with your homeschooling approach. For traditional methods, consider well-established publishers that offer structured lesson plans and assessments. For more flexible education philosophies like unschooling or Montessori, look for resources that support exploratory learning and creativity.
- **Read Reviews and Ask for Recommendations:** Online forums, homeschooling blogs, and local homeschool groups can be invaluable in providing insights and reviews on different curricula. Websites such as [Cathy Duffy Reviews](#) offer comprehensive reviews on a wide range of homeschooling curricula.
- **Consider Your Budget:** Curriculum costs can vary widely. While some comprehensive packages may be on the pricier side, there are also many affordable or even free resources available online. Don't forget to check for used curriculum sales in your homeschooling groups or online marketplaces.

**\*\*Join our community on instagram for updates in late spring.**

## Supplementary Resources

While your core curriculum will guide your homeschooling, supplementing it with additional resources can enrich your child's learning experience:

- **Local Library:** Your library is a treasure trove of free resources, including books, audiobooks, DVDs, and educational programs. Many libraries also offer access to online platforms like Kanopy, which provides free educational and entertainment content.
- **Educational Websites and Apps:** Websites such as [Outschool](#) offer free instruction on a range of subjects, while apps like [Hoffman Academy](#) can support music and teaches piano courses online. See below for a few more of my favorites:
  - [Guide Dot Art](#): Full sized art supplies delivered to your child, with online art instruction to go with it.
  - [Typing.com](#): Free typing lessons and activities
  - [Code.org](#): Home of the "hour of code" program and packed with free resources and activities for kids
  - [Dancemat typing](#): Typing lessons and activities geared towards younger learners aged 6-9
  - Check Appendix A for complete Free Website list!



- Hands-on Learning Experiences:  
Look for opportunities for field trips, science experiments, art projects, and real-world learning experiences. These activities not only reinforce academic learning but also help develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- My Amazon Store: I've curated a selection of educational tools and materials that can complement your chosen curriculum, ranging from science kits and art supplies to educational games and workbooks. You can explore these resources [here](#).

Choosing the right curriculum is a dynamic process that may require adjustments along the way. Remember, the goal is to create a learning journey that is adaptable, engaging, and aligned with your child's needs and interests.

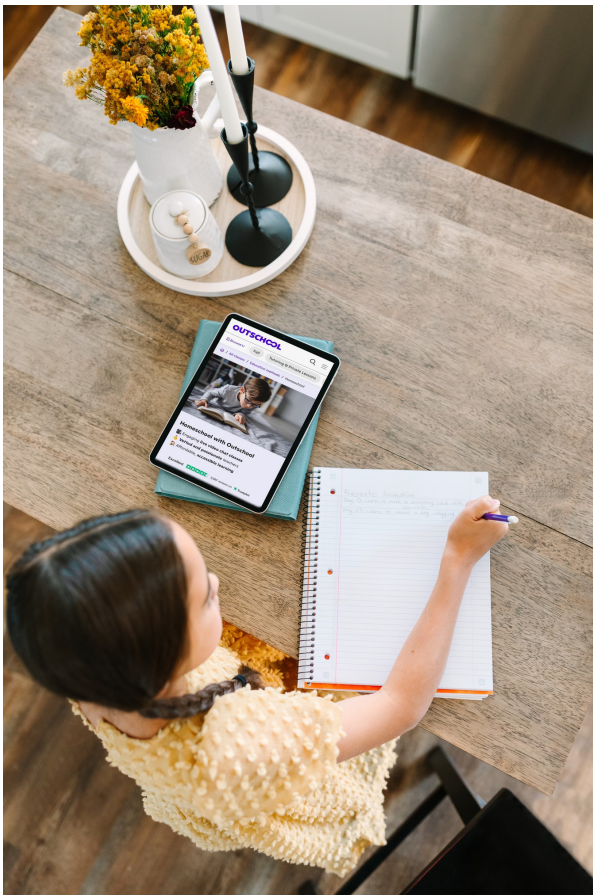




## 4. CREATE A *learning environment*

Creating an effective learning environment in your home is about more than just finding a quiet corner. It's about crafting a space that inspires learning, creativity, and concentration. This space should be a physical representation of the educational journey you and your child are embarking on together.

- **Designing Your Space:** Consider the kind of environment that will best suit your child's learning style. Visual learners might benefit from a colorful space adorned with educational posters and visual aids, while kinesthetic learners might need more open space to move around for hands-on activities ([Check out some of our favorite hands-on learning manipulatives here](#)). Ensure there's adequate lighting, comfortable seating, and minimal distractions. A well-organized area with all necessary supplies within easy reach can significantly enhance the learning experience. [Here is an example of one of my daughters personal learning spaces in our homeschool setting.](#)



- **Incorporating Technology:** If your curriculum includes online resources or digital tools, set up a dedicated space for computer and internet access that's safe and easily monitored. Consider ergonomic furniture to support posture during screen time.
- **Flexibility is Key:** Your learning environment doesn't have to be fixed. Feel free to adapt and change your setup as you discover what works best for your child. This could mean rotating educational themes displayed on the walls or reconfiguring the space to accommodate different types of learning activities. If flexible learning is something you feel your child would benefit from, [here](#) are some of our favorites resources.



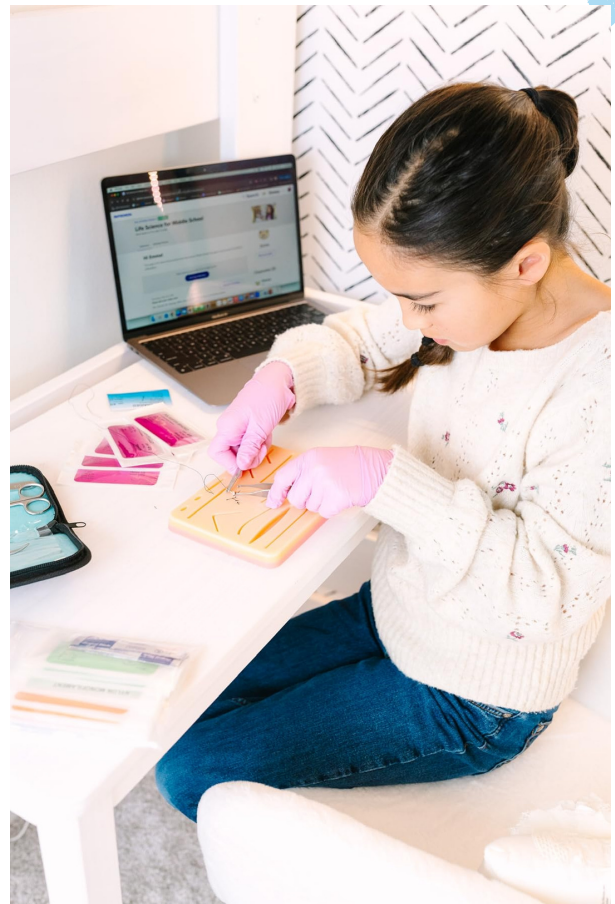
## 5. SET GOALS AND PLAN YOUR *schedule*

Goal setting and scheduling are foundational elements of a successful homeschooling routine. They bring structure and direction to your educational approach, ensuring that you and your child remain focused and productive.

- **Setting Educational Goals:** Begin with broad goals for the school year, which could range from mastering certain math concepts to improving writing skills or exploring a new language. Break these down into smaller, measurable objectives that you can aim for weekly or monthly. This approach helps track progress and provides a sense of accomplishment for both you and your child.
- **Crafting a Flexible Schedule:** Your homeschool schedule should balance structure with the flexibility that homeschooling allows. While it's beneficial to have regular times for focused study, it's equally important to allow for breaks, free play, and impromptu learning opportunities. Use tools like digital calendars or planners specifically designed for homeschoolers to organize your days and weeks. Remember, the schedule that works best is one that reflects your family's natural rhythm and allows for adjustments as needed.



- **Incorporating Life Skills:**  
Beyond academic subjects, include time for teaching life skills such as cooking, financial literacy, or gardening. These activities not only provide valuable learning experiences but also offer practical applications of academic concepts.
- Looking for help in teaching these skills? Try a platform like **Outschool** – who brings in professionals for just about every enrichment area you can think of!



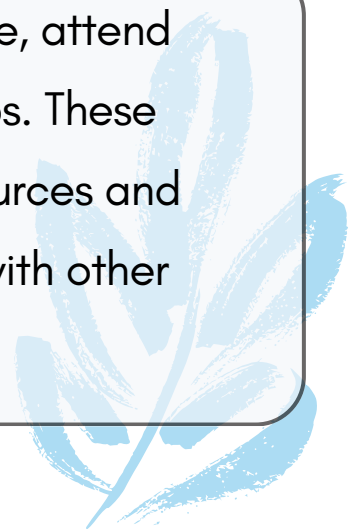
## 6. GET CONNECTED WITH THE homeschool community

The homeschool community is a vibrant and diverse network of families who share your choice of educational path. Connecting with this community can provide a wealth of support, resources, and socialization opportunities.

- **Finding Your Tribe:** Start locally by searching for homeschool co-ops, support groups, or educational collectives in your area. These groups often organize events, field trips, and group classes that can enrich your homeschooling experience. For local group listings, visit websites like [HSLDA](#) or check community bulletin boards at libraries or community centers.
- **Leveraging Online Platforms:** The internet is a treasure trove of homeschooling forums, blogs, and social media groups where you can find support and advice. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram host a wide range of homeschooling communities where you can share experiences, ask questions, and connect with other homeschooling families. [My Instagram page](#) is a place where we share daily homeschooling insights, resources, and encouragement.



- **Attending Events and Conferences:** Whenever possible, attend homeschooling conferences, workshops, and meet-ups. These events are not only great for learning about new resources and teaching methods but also for building relationships with other homeschooling families.






# 7. INCORPORATE EXTRACURRICULAR *activities*



Incorporating extracurricular activities into your homeschooling routine is essential for developing a well-rounded education. These activities allow your child to explore their interests in depth, learn new skills, and apply what they've learned in real-world contexts. Here are some suggestions:

- **Sports:** Joining local sports teams or leagues can offer physical education and teach valuable lessons in teamwork and discipline.
- **Music and Art Classes:** Local community centers or private tutors can provide lessons that foster creativity and can be tailored to your child's skill level.
- **Community Service:** Volunteering for local charities or community projects can enrich your child's understanding of civic responsibility and empathy.
- **Clubs and Groups:** From chess clubs to science labs, extracurricular groups offer a chance to dive deeper into specific interests while socializing with like-minded peers.

Remember, the goal is to enhance your child's education with activities that excite and challenge them, providing a break from the more structured learning environment.







## 8. KEEP records

Effective record-keeping is a cornerstone of successful homeschooling. It serves not only to comply with state laws but also as a way to track your child's progress and achievements over time. Here's how to manage this crucial aspect:

- Document Daily Learning: Keep a log of **daily lessons**, including subjects covered and materials used. This helps in creating a comprehensive overview of your child's educational journey.
- Save Samples of Work: Regularly include samples of your child's work in your records. This could be written assignments, art projects, or descriptions of science experiments. Consider using **Artkive** as a digital portfolio to easily store and organize these samples.
- Track Progress: Alongside academic achievements, record extracurricular activities, volunteer hours, and any other learning experiences. This holistic view of your child's education is invaluable for assessments and future planning.

# 9. BE PATIENT AND *flexible*



Patience and flexibility are key virtues in homeschooling. Every child learns at their own pace, and part of the homeschooling advantage is being able to adapt to their needs. Here are some strategies to help manage the transition:

- **Adjust as Needed:** If a certain curriculum or schedule isn't working, don't be afraid to change it. Homeschooling is all about finding what works best for your child.
- **Take Breaks:** Sometimes, taking a short break can help reset focus and reduce frustration. Incorporate regular breaks into your daily schedule to keep learning fresh and engaging.
- **Celebrate Achievements:** Recognize and celebrate your child's milestones, both big and small. This reinforces the value of their efforts and keeps them motivated.





# CONCLUSION

Taking the step to homeschool your child is a profound commitment to their individualized learning and development. It's a journey that requires patience, flexibility, and a willingness to seek out and utilize a myriad of resources and support systems. By embracing this adventure with an open heart and mind, you're setting the stage for a rich, rewarding educational experience that is tailored to your child's unique needs and potentials.

As you navigate the challenges and celebrate the milestones, remember that the homeschooling community is vast and supportive, ready to assist you in providing the best possible education for your child. Your journey is your own, but you're never alone on the path.

By following these steps and making the most of the available resources, you're well on your way to crafting a successful and enriching homeschooling experience. Here's to the adventures that await you and your child in the world of homeschooling.

Xoxo, Mandy





# APPENDIX

## **Appendix A:**

### *Websites for homeschooling*

This comprehensive organized list of free websites will help you find the right resources for any enrichment opportunity.

## **Appendix B:**

### *Resource list*

On this page you will find any and all homeschool resources we use on a daily basis, as well as my affiliate discount codes.

## **Appendix C:**

### *For more*

Here you will find all of my direct links to social media, blogs, freebies, my store, and much more!





# WEBSITES FOR HOMESCHOOLING

*Check out these amazing free websites for enrichment opportunities!*

## CORE SUBJECTS

### (MATH, SCIENCE, LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL STUDIES)

- **Khan Academy**: Comprehensive courses for kids in math, science, computer programming, history, art history, and economics.
- **CK-12 Foundation**: Online textbooks, videos, exercises, flashcards, and real-world applications for over 5000 concepts.
- **Project Gutenberg**: Over 60,000 free eBooks, focusing on older works where copyright has expired.
- **Crash Course Kids**: Educational videos specifically for kids, covering science topics.
- **Storyline Online**: Videos featuring celebrated actors reading children's books alongside creatively produced illustrations.

## INTERACTIVE LEARNING AND GAMES

- **Cool Math Games**: Brain-training site where logic and thinking meet fun and games.
- **PBS Kids**: Educational games and videos from PBS shows, suitable for younger children.
- **National Geographic Kids**: Games, videos, and articles on animals and nature.
- **Starfall**: Reading, phonics, and math games and activities for kids in K-3.
- **ABCya**: Fun and educational games for grades PreK through 6.





## CODING AND TECHNOLOGY

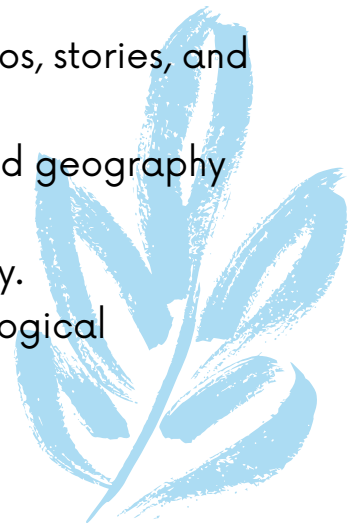
- [Code.org](#): Coding lessons for all grades, encouraging computer science education.
- [Scratch](#): A platform where kids can create their own games and stories, learning to code in the process.
- [Typing.com](#): A comprehensive platform for learning keyboarding and technology skills.
- [Google's Interland](#): An adventure-packed online game that makes learning about digital safety and citizenship interactive and fun.
- [Tynker](#): Offers coding puzzles, games, and projects to teach kids programming in a fun way.

## CREATIVE ARTS AND MUSIC

- [Art for Kids Hub](#): Step-by-step video art lessons for kids and families.
- [Classics for Kids](#): Music education through games and activities, focused on classical music and composers.
- [Incredible Art Department](#): Resources and activities for art education across all ages.
- [Chrome Music Lab](#): Interactive experiments that allow kids to explore music and sound.
- [Pixilart](#): A free online platform for creating pixel art and digital drawings.

## SCIENCE AND EXPLORATION

- [NASA Kids' Club](#): Engaging games and activities about space exploration and NASA's missions.
- [San Diego Zoo Kids](#): Focuses on wildlife conservation with videos, stories, and games.
- [National Geographic Kids](#): Content about animals, science, and geography that's both fun and educational.
- [SciShow Kids](#): Science concepts explained in a kid-friendly way.
- [WOW in the World](#): A podcast exploring scientific and technological discoveries in a way that's engaging for kids.





# RESOURCE LIST

*Interested in any of the links above? Here is more information to help you dive a little deeper into each program, with a specialized discount code to help you save.*

## LEARNING / HOMESCHOOL

- ArtKive - Preserve your child's artistic journey with ArtKive, an effortless solution for storing, organizing, and cherishing your child's artwork. [Click here](#) to use code MANDY20 for a special discount, and transform those piles of art into a beautifully curated collection.
- GuideDots - Unlock your child's artistic potential with GuideDots. Their unique method combines strategic dot-to-dot structures with online instructional videos to guide young artists. [Click here](#) and discover how to turn dots into detailed masterpieces.
- Hoffman Academy - Piano lessons reimaged. Hoffman Academy offers interactive, step-by-step piano lessons for kids, making learning music accessible and fun. [Click here](#) to use code HOMEBUILT to start your musical journey with a special offer.
- Outschool - Expand your child's learning horizon with Outschool's 100,000+ live online classes for ages 3-18. Explore interests, unlock creativity, and engage in learning that's fun and social. [Click here](#) to use code HOMEBUILTED20 for a discount.



## GAMES / TOYS

- GIIKER - Revolutionize playtime with GIIKER's innovative educational toys and games, designed to enhance logical thinking and problem-solving skills. Check out their Super Slide at [here](#) for high-tech fun that engages and educates.
- Simply Fun Games - Make learning a joy with Simply Fun's award-winning board games. These games are not just fun; they're educational tools designed to develop critical thinking, communication, and social skills. [Click here](#) to find your next family game night favorite.
- Everything Blocks! - Stackable and storable learning blocks that make phonics, reading, math, and a variety of other lessons enjoyable. These hands on blocks are so diverse and enjoyable for kids to use in learning and in play. [Click here](#) and use the code Mandy20 to get 20% off your block order!



*Commissions earned through sponsored links.*

© homebuilteeducation





## HEALTH / HOME

- Caraway - Cook up a healthier lifestyle with Caraway's non-toxic, eco-friendly cookware. Say goodbye to chemicals and hello to high-quality cooking essentials. [Click here](#) and use code HOMEBUILTEDUCATION10 for a discount on your next kitchen upgrade.
- Pranamat - Experience the therapeutic benefits of acupressure in the comfort of your home with Pranamat. Relieve stress, tension, and pain with this innovative mat. [Click here](#) and code homebuilt for a discount.
- Copper and Pine - Beautify your space with Copper and Pine's sustainable, handcrafted home goods. From cozy to chic, find the perfect addition to your home decor. Enjoy a special discount with code Mandyaffiliate [here](#).



*Commissions earned through sponsored links.*

© homebuilteeducation



# FOR MORE

*Let's stay connected!*

## LINKS

- Let's stay connected on [Instagram](#)
- Check out my [shop, With love From, Homebuilt](#) for leveled learning monthly bundles, spelling, custom mug designs, and more!
- Looking for something specific from my pictures? Check out my [Amazon Storefront](#)
- Check out my [website](#) for more inspiration
- Stay up to date with homeschool ideas, freebies, and more by following my [blog](#)
- My [Youtube](#) channel
- Lets inspire each other on [Pinterest](#)

