

What is home education?

Home education is the education of children, primarily by parents, in the family home.

It is legal in all Australian states and territories.

Home education is a rewarding and challenging endeavour enjoyed by many Australian families. A practical and successful alternative to school-based education for children, home education embraces learning within the whole community.

Home educated students regularly access libraries, educational and cultural institutions, parks, zoos, markets and shopping centres, sports and recreational clubs, religious facilities and much more. Home educating families do not restrict learning to home... The world is their classroom!

Their parents accept the responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating their children's educational experiences. They are highly motivated individuals who believe that the education of children is primarily the right and responsibility of parents. They take this role very seriously and continuously educate themselves in order to maintain high educational standards for their children. Parents typically find that being involved in all aspects of their children's development is personally enriching and fulfilling.



Home Education

All too often public schooling doesn't cater to the needs of individual students. Finding a suitable school for one's children that is affordable and within reasonable distance can be difficult. For many, home education offers a real solution to intractable problems experienced in the school system. For others, home education provides a choice that matches their family lifestyle and values.

Article 26 part (3) of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights states, "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

The Educating Parent encourages parents to read and familiarise themselves with the sections relevant to home education provision in their state and territory Education Acts.

There is a considerable body of Australian research on home education:
<https://home-ed.vic.edu.au/a-summary-of-australian-research/>

The best teachers are those that respect children's individual learning styles, passions and interests, and care deeply about their health, well-being and development. Devoted and attentive parents are naturally placed to continue educating their children beyond the start of compulsory schooling age. Home education offers a life-style that builds and strengthens relationships within the family.

It is not the same as learning at school. No two families home educate the same way. Each tailors their curriculum to suit the needs of individual children. Learning programs typically reflect such factors as family values, beliefs, interests, learning styles, and available resources. Home education can also embrace 'blended learning' which may involve part-time school attendance, accessing distance education courses, or 'e-learning' using a variety of educational programs available on the internet. This ability to be flexible with the delivery of education is a cornerstone of the success families experience as home educators.

How families begin home educating often looks very different to what they are doing a year or two later: the books, materials and approaches used continually adapt to the emerging needs and styles of each individual child, as well as the changing conditions in family and community life. Adaptable, responsive and resourceful, home education is capable of delivering the best education possible. Some children leaving school rejoice in the increased responsibility for their own learning immediately, whereas others take a few months to adapt to the different pace, emphasis and motivation of learning at home.

Although many families follow a schedule, they find it isn't necessary for children to work through every page in each textbook, or to sit at a desk and do assignments for three or more hours a day to learn effectively. In addition to lessons, children learn through conversation, play, hands-on activities, completion of family and personal chores, and the freedom to pursue hobbies, interests and passions at length.

A typical day usually includes

time spent reading, a couple of hours working on assignments or unit studies, free or structured play, chores, some kind of physical exercise, most of which will include social activity, either with parents, siblings, friends or members of the local community. Some families concentrate learning activities into two or three days each week, leaving other days for family activities and educational excursions.

Families maintain student portfolios that record educational and developmental progress. Home educated graduates are able to access tertiary education and choose a variety of pathways to satisfying employment which suit their individual needs and personalities. Students can enter university by direct application or through entrance exams; others complete high school certificates or vocational courses through school attendance or distance education; some complete TAFE courses; and some start their own businesses or remain vital members of their families' businesses. Home education is a proven pathway to successful, full and satisfying adult lives.





The benefits

Home educating parents find that home education offers a life-style that builds and strengthens relationships within the family.

The individual attention available to home educated students allows for:

- ✓ increased engagement during learning tasks;
- ✓ structuring programs tailored to the child's individual learning styles and academic level;
- ✓ the early identification and resolution of learning problems and misconceptions;
- ✓ access to an increased number and variety of social activities leading to the development of a wide range of social skills and mature attitudes, cooperative behaviours and a balanced understanding of their society.
- ✓ discussion of issues concerning values and relationships as they arise and in context;
- ✓ children to focus on topics of interest for periods of time appropriate to the child's learning needs and ability;
- ✓ studying topics beyond the required state curriculum level;
- ✓ provision of, and access to, a huge range of resources not generally available within the classroom;
- ✓ ability to access tertiary education and choose a variety of pathways to satisfying employment which suit their individual needs and personalities.

Socialisation

There are tens of thousands of home educating families across Australia. They come together to form supportive networks which cater to the educational and social needs of their members. Groups offer support and companionship for parents and children, as well as regular educational excursions and activities, concerts, dances, sports days, and camps.

In addition to the many activities children engage in outside the home, such as sports, church, scouts, voluntary work, classes and part-time employment, home educators organise and attend group excursions to cultural places of interest, educational institutions, and tours through workplaces. Picnics, visits to playgrounds and opportunities for children to play are an important feature of most groups. The chance to learn in mixed age and gender groups are provided in all areas of the curriculum, either as stand-alone classes or within home educating learning cooperatives. Annual seminars and conferences provide information about home education and curriculum resources for the parents.

Studies repeatedly demonstrate that home educated children exhibit high levels of self-motivation and responsibility and integrate easily into a variety of social situations. For a home-educated youngster, a peer group is more likely to consist of those who share the same interests, just as it does for adults, rather than those who share the same birth year.

The Educating Parent provides FREE Resource Directories to help families link with others as well as find suitable learning materials. Home educators share their experiences and organise group activities through hundreds of Australian online and local support groups.

