

The ABCs of Home Education



Your education journey



AHEA
Alberta Home Education
Association

So You're Thinking of Home Education?

You've come to the right place! The Alberta Home Education Association (AHEA) began when a group of Christian parents had similar plans back in 1984. Their questions and concerns at the time were probably similar to yours...

- "Will it "work?"
- "Can I teach my own kids?"
- "Will my kids turn out to be "successful" too?"
- "How much does it cost?"
- "Can I do this?"
- "Is it even legal?"
- "And where can I get help?"

We at AHEA are here to help! As the oldest and largest home education organization in the province, we are here to answer those questions and more. We want to tell you a little about ourselves and about the benefits of this educational choice and how it works in Alberta.

Born out of a fight to defend parental rights that continue to this day, AHEA advocates to the government for your freedom to home educate. We work on educating any interested parties on what home education is and is not. We also exist to support parents in their choice to home educate by providing resources on our website www.aheaonline.com, community on our Facebook page, and information through our magazine, Home Matters, which is published three times a year. We also organize the largest home education convention in Canada, which takes place each spring.

AHEA has always affirmed the right of parents to retain the responsibility of teaching their children. We believe God has equipped parents to direct the education of their children. We believe that programs that may compromise this right and these responsibilities need to be carefully evaluated by each individual family. If a parent desires and is able to exercise exclusive direction of their child's program, then home educating under the Home Education Regulations is the preferred option who desire to maintain parental authority over their child's education.

This booklet will provide some of those answers but we also encourage you to do your own research. A [Glossary of Terms](#) on our website helps with definitions. Home Education is a richly rewarding educational choice but it is not always the easy route. If after reading this booklet and checking out our website, you have additional questions, please feel free to reach out to us.

We are here to help and encourage you!

Why Home Educate?

Parents begin to home educate for many different reasons. In time, you will discover your home education lifestyle and the benefits to your family and children. Some reasons are:


- **Academic reasons** – Home educating allows children to excel academically at their own pace; whether a child is gifted and needs to be challenged, has learning disabilities and needs more time or different methods to learn some concepts, or anything in between. You want to cultivate a love of learning in the child that will last a lifetime and produce critical thinkers and well-rounded individuals.
- **Religious reasons** – Home education allows Christian parents to fulfill the command of God to train up their children as stated in Deuteronomy 11:19 “You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” Home education allows this kind of discipleship and the opportunity of presenting a biblical perspective in all subjects.
- **Learning styles** – Home education allows parents to teach their children according to their learning style and to find what works best for their child i.e. shorter class time with more physical activities in between, less distractions, more outdoor activities.
- **Protection from negative influences** – Home education allows parents to have greater control over destructive influences and negative peer pressure. The child can learn and express themselves without always having peer pressure as an influence. The child is positively influenced

by their family unit and interacting with different ages. (School is the only place where people are surrounded with their age group all the time.)

- **Protection from bullying** – Home education allows children to be protected from bullying while being nurtured in a loving family.
- **Family quality time** – Home education allows families to be together, making quality time available to train and influence children in all areas in an integrated way. Each child receives individual attention and has his unique needs met. The family experiences unity, closeness and mutual enjoyment of one another.
- **Flexible schedule** – Home education allows a flexible weekly or daily schedule that can accommodate parents work schedules and vacation times. It will allow for more family time, which is a huge and under-rated value.
- **Special training** – Home education allows time for training in different areas, be it sports, music, art or other interests and any giftedness your child possesses. We believe you should nurture every child's creativity as they are all special.
- **Efficiency of time** – You will be able to progress at a pace that is customized to your child. The time it takes to home educate a child varies and depends on the age level of the child, method used, number of children in family and your goals. While home education does require a time commitment, it is often experienced as a more efficient way of learning so it usually requires less time than the typical classroom environment. As your child's grade level increases, so will their time. However, parents will also learn that the older the child grows, so will their independent learning, which is a wonderful life skill that many post-secondary students are noted for.

Are You Qualified to Teach Your Own Child?

Parents have an advantage over others teaching their kids by the virtue of their deep love, concern and the long-term responsibility they have for their child. Many studies show that



the successful teaching of a child depends more upon a parent's enthusiasm and interest in their child, than their parent's educational level. ([Fig. 6 study Ray](#))¹ Of the many reasons, this is true is that the one on one tutorial method has many advantages over the typical classroom environment where a parent can individualize the education of a child and meet his or her specific needs.

Is Home Education New?

Parents' teaching their own children is a practice that has been around since the beginning of time. In fact, from birth, the primary influencers in a child's life are the parents or caregivers of that child. Compulsory and free public education was instituted in the late 1800's, so it is quite 'young' in relative terms.

The home education movement began to re-emerge in the 1970's, first in the U.S. and gradually spread to Canada. From those beginnings, the popularity has grown rapidly in North America and even globally. In Alberta, while home education had always existed in some form or another, the movement began to take more shape in the early 80's. When it was still a relatively unknown endeavour home educating parents sometimes faced hostility for their choice.

Parents from various parts of the province united together to form AHEA and we have been advocating and promoting this choice ever since. It is important to note that despite the obstacles, both societal and governmental, many parents have stuck by their convictions that home education was, and continues to be, the best choice for their children. You can learn more about the history of home education in a booklet called *Striving for Educational Freedom in Alberta: AHEA and the Vital Effort to Defend Parental Rights* by Dr. Michael Wagner, available for purchase on our website at www.aheonline.com/store.

¹ [Home Education Reasons and Research, Brian D. Ray \(2009\)
http://www.nheri.org/HERR.pdf](http://www.nheri.org/HERR.pdf)

How Home Education/Homeschooling Works in Alberta

Here is what you need to know:

- You may begin home educating your children at any time in the school year, no matter what age or grade they are in. Associate boards and associate independent (private) schools have 14 days to advise you that you have been accepted – it is their decision. You may need to consider or apply with more than one.
- If your children are already enrolled in an institutional school, you do not have to contact them to inform them.
- Education plans must be consistent with the Student Learning Outcomes found [here](#)[†] or the Alberta Program of Studies found [here](#)^{††}. AHEA has a helpful page of Resources found [here](#)^{†††}.

Homeschooling vs. Home Education? What's the Difference?

Some people think that the term “homeschooling” in Alberta can refer to families who do “school at home.” Although there are various options, properly understood, home education technically only refers to when a parent retains control of their child’s education. This includes the education delivered by the parent or a person designated by the parent to deliver the home education program, laid out in the first two options below. The parent is ultimately responsible for the program. That is why it is called parent-directed. School at home more accurately describes teacher-directed education.

To be clear, think about who is delivering the education instead of where it is happening.

† www.aheaonline.com/pdf/home-education/resources/19-schedule-of-learning-outcomes-home-education-regulations.pdf

†† www.alberta.ca/programs-of-study.aspx#toc-2

††† www.aheaonline.com/home-education-info/resources

Parent-Directed Home Education Options

These two options fall under the Home Education Regulations.

Option #1 – Unsupervised (Notification Only, No Funding (NONF) Option)

- You can notify the minister's office of your intent to home educate your child. A link to that form can be found [here](#)[†].
- You are not eligible for reimbursement funding.
- Under this option, you do not need to select a school board to supervise your program and you are not required to submit your program plan to the Minister.
- You are still responsible for following either the Standard of Learning Outcomes or the Alberta Program of Studies.
- For more information on this option, please go [here](#)^{††}.

Option #2 – Supervised

- In this option, you as the parent retain the responsibility to direct and deliver the education of your children under the Home Education Regulations. A link to that form can be found [here](#)^{†††}.
- You must notify with a willing school board, but it can be anywhere in the province. It can be a willing resident/local school board, a willing non-resident school board or private (independent) school. Look for one that complements your priorities. AHEA's list of parent-directed associate boards is listed [here](#)^{††††}, as well as a helpful list of questions to give you a start in sorting this step out.
- The associate board will assign an Alberta Certified Teacher, sometimes called a facilitator, who will conduct at

† www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/edc-home-education-notification-form-program-not-supervised-by-school-authority.pdf

†† www.aheaonline.com/political-updates/a-liberty-goal-achieved-nonf-is-a-reality-this-fall

††† www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/edc-home-education-notification-form-program-supervised-by-school-authority.pdf

†††† www.aheaonline.com/home-education-info/home-school-boards-supervising-authorities

least two evaluations of the progress of the student in each school year. You can review their website for information on the staff and can request a facilitator if they seem like a good fit for your family. They may or may not have room for a new family, but it doesn't hurt to ask! You can also request a change in facilitators in the following years if you would like to look for a better fit within the same board.

- The parent decides how and where evaluations take place, whether that is in the home or another agreed upon meeting place, and if they would like any external testing done (CBST, CAT or PAT) which can be obtained by the associate board.
- Education plans must be consistent with the [Student Learning Outcomes](#)[†] or the [Alberta Program of Studies](#)^{††}.

Teacher-Directed School-at-Home Programs

These last two options are also available but do not fall under the Home Education Regulation.

Option #3 –Shared Responsibility (Formerly Called Blended)

This option consists of both a parent-directed home education portion of the program operating under the Home Education Regulation and teacher-directed home-based school portion operating under the School Act. Funding is based on the percentage of the program that is delivered by the parent. The program must be at least 20% parent directed and no more than 80% teacher directed. The teacher directed part of the program must be taught by the teacher and follow the Alberta Program of Studies.

Option #4 – Teacher-directed Fully Aligned (Sometimes Referred to as Distance-Learning)

This is a fully teacher-directed home-based program and operates under the School Act. The teacher is responsible for the delivery and evaluation of your child's program. Please note

[†] www.aheaonline.com/pdf/home-education/resources/19-schedule-of-learning-outcomes-home-education-regulations.pdf
^{††} www.alberta.ca/programs-of-study.aspx#toc-2

that there is no funding for students/families at all, whether by reimbursement, purchase order or direct procurement in this scenario. It can be online or print-based.

How Does Funding Work in Alberta?

The Alberta Government does provide funding to home educating parents towards items on their program plans, through the associate board, if you have chosen the supervised option.

- 50% of the funding grant paid to the associate board must be offered to the parents/guardians of home education student as reimbursement for instruction materials and services that support the instructional program at home.
- Parents must notify with an associate board before September 29th of the current school year to be eligible for the reimbursement funding. Notifying earlier is advisable to ensure space with the associate board of your choice.
- Parents must be a resident of Alberta as of September 29th, the count date of the current school year.
- Parents are required to notify of your intent to home educate any child who is between the ages of six years and 16 years of age on September 1st of the current school year.
- Parents who submit receipts for at least 75% of eligible expenses will receive their entire grant.
- Parents have up to two years to access their portion of each year's home education grant.
- Parents will be allowed to transfer some, or all, of the parental portion of the home education funding to their associate board, for the board's education supports, should they choose to by signing a Parental Declaration Form.
- Parents may choose to decline or not claim the parent portion of the home education funding grant. Alberta

Education will recover the unclaimed/declined portion the year following the two year period you can claim in. This will happen automatically and no form is required from you.

What Am I Required to Teach in Alberta?

One of the main reasons parents choose to home educate their children is for the freedom to teach them what they believe is important. In Alberta, parents are allowed to choose their own curriculum which must follow the [Schedule of Learning Outcomes](#)[†]. Alternatively, they many also choose to have their curriculum follow the [Alberta Program of Studies](#)^{††}.

Other Common Questions:

What Are Some Things You Might Like to Teach at Home?

Home education does NOT have to look like school-brought-home. There are many methods that work better at home than in a classroom environment. Don't replicate a system that you didn't choose. The real benefits of Home Education are that you can make it work for your family situation. While structure can be important for children, school hours and content don't always have to look like a brick and mortar school's hours and content. Some ideas for learning are:

- Topics that interest you
- Topics that interest your child
- Important Life Skills - Home Management, Financial Management, Relational Skills
- Outdoor Education
- Skills Needed to Facilitate Life-long Learning
- Real-World Learning Opportunities
- Local History
- Family History
- Canadian & World History

Where Do I Get Materials From Which to Teach My Child?

There are many sources of curriculum and materials available for the home educating family today. Sources of material include the internet, home education catalogues and magazines (search using the word "homeschool"), the AHEA website for

† www.aheonline.com/pdf/home-education/resources/19-schedule-of-learning-outcomes-home-education-regulations.pdf
†† www.alberta.ca/programs-of-study.aspx#toc-2

[resource recommendations](#)[†], and the Exhibit Hall at the [AHEA Convention](#)^{††} which takes place each spring.

What Materials are Right for My Family?

Usually access to material isn't as much a concern as the decision on which material might be right for your family. Assessing the needs and goals of your family are important in deciding which materials you might like to pursue. Do you need a lot of guidance with how or what to teach? Consider an all-in-one program which might come with lessons plans. Do you like to create your own curriculum? Consider a unit study or gather your own set of resources. Online classes are available (both using public and/or private curriculum) which include higher level courses which the parents may feel they need some help.

Record Keeping

You need to keep records of your child's learning progress. This can be done in a variety of ways using their work samples, assessments or tests, etc. to create portfolios or a more formal transcript with grades. This can include verbal or written forms, as well as formal or informal interactions by you as the parent.


What About Socialization?

Socialization is subjective and depends on what socialization goals are important to you. Studies show that home educated students develop as well or better socially, emotionally and psychologically than institutionalized children and youth. Depending on the socialization opportunities and experiences that are important to your family, research finds that generally home educated student and their parents are community minded and very involved in a broad range of extra-curricular activities. Don't miss some of the studies supporting successful home education results at the end of this document.

Unless you live in a bubble and your children never go out of the house, there will be lots of opportunity for socializing. Now it may not look like what happens in traditional schools because your child will have more opportunity to interact with people of

[†] www.aheaonline.com/home-education-info/resources

^{††} www.aheaonline.com/convention/shopping/list-of-exhibitors



all ages not just their own peers. Socializing will look a lot different. Socializing will happen at the grocery store, the dentist, the library and everywhere you go. You need to allow your children to talk to the tellers and librarians and the mailman. In fact, this is one of the benefits many parents list when describing why they home educate.

Also, most communities offer lots of possibilities for children to socialize with children their own age, from reading hours at the library, to community sports and other activities. Depending on the interests and needs of your child, you might want to consider extra-curricular activities. The possibilities and resources for home educators these days seem endless. A good way to stay informed of what's happening in our province is to connect with a local support group or check out our AHEA - Events Page.

Many home education families get together to do activities like swimming lessons, archery, co-ops, field trips, etc., to help their children connect with other children that are home educated. Sometimes there is too much opportunity for socialization and as families we need to step back and try to stay home for a while.

Will my child be weird? Well possibly!! Will they be socially backwards? Maybe!!

It depends on what you are comparing your child to. If you compare your child to the culture, he/she may not fit in. Your child may not be up on the latest trend. Your child may be into books and reading and maybe a bit young and naïve for their age compared to schooled children. But looking at the ever-changing trends and how fast children are expected to grow in areas they are not ready for, it is ok for them to be considered different. If they are passionate about something, they may not have the same opportunity to explore that area at school as they do at home. Regular school doesn't help children be themselves as they may always be looking to fit in. It should not be seen as being weird but rather see it as being unique and willing to be yourself. At home you get to be yourself all the time. No peer pressure. **Peer pressure is not socialization.**

How do I Teach a Variety of Ages of Children Together?

Parents of multiple children are often challenged to manage a variety of ages and stages of children under their roof, but home education actually lends itself to this “one-room classroom” concept. While some subjects are probably better individually levelled for example math and language arts, others can more likely be combined such as history and science. Individual and group learning can be accommodated in a variety of ways and may change somewhat year to year. Learning from an older sibling, or dealing with a younger sibling, can teach modelling and mentoring skills.

Stay Connected

Home educating parents whether new or old need to stay connected with other families so they can get support when they are feeling overwhelmed, when they need some encouragement, and when they just want to spend time with likeminded people.

- Finding a good support group in your community is very beneficial in your home education journey. At these meetings you share your struggles, successes and get real encouragement. You can find a list of home education support groups at aheaonline.com
- Following home education Facebook groups can also bring a lot of support. AHEA has a [Facebook page](#) that is encouraging and keeps you updated to what is happening in Alberta. You can follow some local ones or even some from encouraging home education speakers.
- **Supporting AHEA's work on your behalf is important.** AHEA is in constant communication with the Minister of Education and the Department, as well as other organizations, to represent home educating parents and their children and defend home education as an excellent viable education choice. We provide information on home education in Alberta, the regulations and the latest efforts on your behalf. Please consider a monthly donation! www.AHEAonline.com/donate

- Becoming members of HSLDA Canada, which is a legal defense group that may represent home educating families when they have been falsely accused by government of wrong doing.

Important Links

- The Complete Home Education Regulations can be found here:
www.qp.alberta.ca/documents/Regs/2019_089.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1kpVpB6_epZsQx4whioZl5TlyPk3r2gfe_cx-PA0Av-7w2oZLwLcFNv2c
- The Complete Standards of Reimbursement can be found here:
<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/ff02773f-ba94-4c4d-90e6-7fc82b18a110/resource/e829dbb7-da2d-4d3a-874e-2160ce26e393/download/edc-standards-for-home-education-reimbursement-2020-2021.pdf>
- The Schedule of Learning Outcomes can be found here:
<https://www.aheaonline.com/pdf/home-education/resources/19-schedule-of-learning-outcomes-home-education-regulations.pdf>
- The Alberta Program of Studies can be found here:
<https://www.alberta.ca/programs-of-study.aspx#toc-2>
- A Sample Education Program Plan can be found here:
<https://www.aheaonline.com/pdf/home-education/resources/sample-education-program-plan.pdf>

Resources Used

- Home Education Reasons and Research, Brian D. Ray
- [Home Education in Canada](#), Van Pelt (2003)²
- [15 Years Later... Home Educated Adults](#), A Synopsis, Van Pelt, Allison, Allison (2009)³

² Home Education in Canada, Van Pelt (2003)
<https://cche.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/SummaryFinal.pdf>

³ 15 Years Later... Home Educated Adults, A Synopsis, Van Pelt, Allison, Allison (2009)
<https://cche.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/2009StudyPrint-1.pdf>

AHEA Website - Further Resources

www.AHEAonline.com

www.aheaonline.com/home-education-info

www.aheaonline.com/home-education-info/glossary-of-terms

www.aheaonline.com/home-education-info/resources

www.aheaonline.com/home-education-info/home-school-boards-supervising-authorities

www.aheaonline.com/political-updates

www.AHEAonline.com/members/become-a-member

www.aheaonline.com/donate

www.aheaonline.com/store

PERSONAL NOTES:



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Are you considering home educating your children? Do you want to know how home education works in Alberta and how it can work for your family? AHEA is pleased to provide this little booklet to help you navigate the wonderful journey of home education.

For more information, see AHEAonline.com

**To support AHEA,
see AHEAonline.com/donate**