

HOW TO HOME EDUCATE FOR FREEDOM AND SIMPLICITY

I. Legal Issues

- A. Get a copy of the laws about home education (from the Network or your legislator) and read them.
- B. Choose a method of dealing with government officials.
- C. Contact officials only for children:
 1. age 8 or older
 2. who turn 8 within the first 2 weeks of your districts "official" start of the school year.
- D. Do only what the law requires. Do not submit to extra requirements made by officials. This will protect you and other home educators from dangerous precedents. Avoid telephone and personal contact especially if you feel you may be intimidated.
- E. If you are in compliance with the law and receive a negative contact from officials do one of the following:
 1. Ignore illegal requests.
 2. Reply in writing explaining the law.
- F. Methods of dealing with school officials
 1. Private tutoring
 - a. Obtain a criminal clearance (form is available from the state police and may take about 4 weeks to process) and a copy of the tutor's teaching certificate.
 - b. Tutor writes a letter to the local superintendent of schools stating:
 - 1) S/he is a Pennsylvania Certified teacher and has enclosed a copy of her/his certificate.
 - 2) S/he has obtained a criminal clearance and has enclosed a copy.
 - 3) S/he will be instructing the children of a single family.
 - 4) S/he will be providing the majority of instruction to the children for the required time in the English language.
 - 5) S/he will receive a fee or other consideration for her/his work.
 - c. Since this is the only information required of a private tutor, do not give any further information like children's names, ages, description of fees, educational plans, etc.
 - d. The tutor may be either parent or someone the parent hires.
 2. Act 169 (Home Education Program)
 - a. Make or obtain an "affidavit packet" that includes: a completed, notarized affidavit form, a list of objectives, a medical exemption form (or medical forms) and file it with the local school superintendent prior to the commencement of the home education program and annually thereafter on August 1 (See *The PA home education laws* or *The Pennsylvania Home Education Handbook*).
 - b. Keep a log (list) for each child: designating the titles of reading materials used.

- c. Keep *samples* of any writings, worksheets, workbooks or creative materials used or developed by the child.
 - d. Find an evaluator. Check the evaluator's requirements and, if necessary, explain the legal requirements to her/him. You are not legally required to do more than the law states.
 - e. If the child is in grades 3, 5 or 8, you could purchase a test and arrange for someone close to the child (friend, relative, sibling) to administer the test. Or you could test a friend's child while she tests your child. You can stay with your child during testing.
 - f. Have your child evaluated. Take with you: the child, her/his portfolio including the log, samples, and for grades 3, 5 and 8 test scores. Ask the evaluator to write a short letter "certifying that an appropriate education has occurred".
 - g. Mail or take the portfolio, including the evaluation letter, to your local school district by June 30.
3. No Contact/ Underground Non-compliant
 - a. Do not contact school officials.
 - b. It may be wise to keep records in case school officials contact you.

II. Educational Issues

- A. Read a wide variety of sources, attend Pennsylvania Home Education Network's series of meetings on the basics of home education, and talk to other home educators to find out about educational methods and how children learn.
- B. Wait until your child shows readiness before beginning to teach her/him.
- C. Avoid spending money unnecessarily on superfluous curriculums, books, etc. Use the library and everyday materials around the home. Give your child educational materials like a globe, art supplies, chemistry sets, books, etc. as birthday and other gifts.

- III. We recommend joining the Pennsylvania Home Education Network to stay informed about legal developments, and to both create and be involved in a positive environment for home educators across our state.

Note: These guidelines are not intended as legal advice.