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# Home Educating Special Needs Children in Minnesota

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MÂCHÉ has the desire to empower parents to love homeschooling the special children God has chosen for their homes. If God is leading you to keep or bring home your special child, MÂCHÉ offers the following support systems for parents who step up to this unique and wonderful challenge.

- **MÂCHÉ SPECIAL NEEDS ONLINE SUPPORT**

Be inspired and become informed with the insights of authors in our Resource section and gain further understanding with occasional special needs additions to our home page blog.

- **[Events for Parents of Homeschooled Children with Special Needs](#)**

Numerous helpful workshops, seminars, and conferences, will be listed by location and date as they become available.

- **MÂCHÉ Handbook Section**

Find vast amounts of resources and information about state requirements, testing, resources, lending library, and more in the 200-page *MÂCHÉ Handbook Online*, with 30 pages devoted to special needs alone. The handbook is a *member only* benefit.

- **[MÂCHÉ Special Needs Coordinator](#)**

If you have specific questions about homeschooling your child with special needs, send an e-mail to MÂCHÉ to contact the special needs coordinator. The coordinator is a *member only* benefit.

- **[MÂCHÉ SPECIAL NEEDS DISCUSSION FORUM](#)**

The special needs discussion forum provides a means for MÂCHÉ members to ask questions of the group about a particular issue and to share resources with one another. This forum is a *member only* benefit. You will need click the link above and login to Google (or set up a Google account) and then ask to join the group. MÂCHÉ will be sent an email, and after your membership status is verified, you will be approved to join the group.

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## FAQs about home educating special needs children

*(Answers comply with Minnesota homeschooling laws. If you live in another state, check with your state homeschool organization regarding specific state laws.)*

## From Public School to Homeschool FAQs

- **If I want to withdraw my child with special needs from public school, what steps shall I take?**

In addition to withdrawing your child from the public school, you will need to write a separate letter to formally withdraw your child from his or her individualized education plan (IEP). If you choose to continue services through the school district, you will not be allowed to completely withdraw from the IEP. However, you should ensure the new IEP covers only the subjects being taught by the school and not any subjects that you will be teaching at home.

- **If I homeschool, how do I access public school services for my child with special needs?**

Each public school district is required to provide special needs services to homeschool families that are equal to services provided to families who are enrolled in the school. The one contingency of this law is that the space has to be available within a school's special needs services. Therefore, if the district is already not able to supply resources and classes for the special needs children who are enrolled in the school, then they can deny services to homeschool families.

## Curriculum FAQs

- **What curriculum is best for my child with special needs?**

No single curriculum can meet the needs of any child, let alone all the needs of a child with learning challenges. Begin by determining the learning style of your child and identifying your own teaching style.

- **What factors should I consider when selecting a curriculum?**

Consider the following factors when you evaluate your child's curriculum needs:

- Learning style: auditory, visual, kinesthetic
- Length of assignments he or she needs to learn a subject
- Speed at which he or she can process information
- Types of activities that best reinforce or test what your child has internalized
- Whether or not your child needs to have a cohesive theme across subject areas

You also need to decide whether your teaching style requires more or less structure and how much time you are willing to devote to instruction.

- **What's the next step in selecting curriculum?**

There are three basic approaches to homeschooling:

- Textbook approach: teaching on a subject by subject basis (most familiar to people)
- Literature approach: core learning centers around books (also known as the Charlotte Mason method)
- Unit study approach: core learning focuses on various themes

None of these approaches are superior; each family needs to determine which approach suits them best. Once you have decided on a basic approach, begin to investigate the curriculum choices that align with the factors you identified earlier.

- **How shall I address my child's specific needs in language arts/math/handwriting?**

Most comprehensive curriculum products have add-on elements that teach these core subjects but can be interchanged with other products that better fit the needs of your child. Be aware that each of these subjects is taught in a sequential manner. It is very difficult for a child to switch curriculum because each level or module builds upon the previous ones. Your child may have a learning gap if you are not consistent in progressing through the levels in the prescribed manner. If a change is necessary, remember your child will need to back-track at various points to ensure building blocks are not skipped over or missed.

## Testing FAQs

- **Is my child with special needs required to test annually?**

Yes. Minnesota law requires every child between the ages of 7 and 16 to take a nationally norm-referenced standardized test.

- **Which tests can I use to meet the state testing requirement, and which tests are best for students with special needs?**

The MÂCHÉ Handbook lists all state-approved standardized tests. Some tests can be administered by the parent while others need to be administered by a certified tester. There is no specific standardized test specially gauged for students with special needs. However, many parents have found the Peabody Individual Achievement Test, which was designed to be administered orally during individual sessions, to be very compatible with children who have special needs.

- **What grade level of a standardized test shall my child use?**

Test your child at the same grade level he or she is working on at home, not at his or her age level.

- **What do I need to do if my child's standardized test score falls below the 30th percentile in a subject area?**

The law states that if your child falls below the 30th percentile you need to write in your record how you plan to change your curriculum to better meet the needs of your child in that subject area.

- **How do I meet the state testing requirements if my child is either non-verbal or does not speak English?**

This is a difficult situation; however, we recommend presenting a test to the child at his or her perceived grade level while translating as much of the material as possible. There is no legal requirement to provide translation, yet the test results would provide a more comprehensive view of your child's abilities if he or she is tested in his or her preferred language.

- **How can I request special accommodations for my child on the PSAT, SAT, ACT or any other similar test?**

Before your child is old enough to take college entrance exams, you need to record accommodations your child has been provided in his or her class work and standardized tests. These records will be required when you request special accommodations on the college entrance exams to ensure your requests are legitimate.

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## upcoming events for parents

MÂCHÉ Special Needs Support does not endorse the events listed on this page. This list merely provides you with opportunities to receive local training for your unique parenting needs. Truly, only you can decide what is appropriate for yourself and your children. So, take time to check events before registering for them or attending them. Prayerfully consider the information being presented using biblical precepts. These events require advance registration.

### JANUARY 10, 2012

**Pacer Center**, [www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/](http://www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/). "*Technology for Girls: Watson*". Where: Pacer Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55437. When: Tuesday, January 10, 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Cost: Free, but donations accepted.

### JANUARY 11, 2012

**Autism Society of MN (Ausm)**, [www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevaid=225390](http://www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevaid=225390). "*Solving Behavior Challenges Through Teaching: A Systematic Approach for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder*". Where: TIES Conference Center, 1667

Snelling Avenue North, St. Paul, MN 55108. When: Wednesday, January 11, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Cost: \$65 (members); \$85 (non-members).

**Autism Society of MN (Ausm)**, [www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevaid=225390](http://www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevaid=225390). "*Skillshop: Generalizing Social Skills Across Environments*" and "*Skillshop: Recognizing Seizures and How to Respond*". Where: Ausm office, 2380 Wycliff Street, Suite 102, St. Paul, MN 55114. When: Wednesday, January 11, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM (the two workshops run concurrently). Cost: \$25 (members); \$40 (non-members)

#### **JANUARY 17, 2012**

**Pacer Center**, [www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/](http://www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/). "Apps for Autism". Where: Pacer Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55437. When: Thursday, April 12, 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM. Cost: Suggest donation, \$10 - \$25.

#### **JANUARY 23, 2012**

**Pacer Center**, [www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/](http://www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/). "Accessible Instructional Materials and All About Digital Books - Updated Workshop Information". Where: Pacer Center, North Mankato (call for directions: 952-838-9000). When: Monday, January 23, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Cost: Free, but donations accepted.

**Pacer Center**, [www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/](http://www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/). "Understanding Challenging Behaviors" Where: Pacer Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55437. When: Monday, January 23, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. Cost: ??.

#### **FEBRUARY 1, 2012**

**Autism Society of MN (Ausm)**, [www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevaid=225390](http://www.acteva.com/booking.cfm?bevaid=225390). "Skillshop: Building Friendships Through Play" and "Skillshop: ASD, Dating and Relationships". Where: Ausm office, 2380 Wycliff Street, Suite 102, St. Paul, MN 55114. When: Wednesday, February 1, 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM (the two workshops run concurrently). Cost: \$25 (members); \$40 (non-members).

#### **FEBRUARY 21, 2012**

**Pacer Center**, [www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/](http://www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/). "Apps for Older Learners". Where: Pacer Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55437. When: Saturday, March 24, 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Cost: Free, but donations accepted.

#### **MARCH 12, 2012**

**Pacer Center**, [www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/](http://www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/). "*Finding Hope, Getting Help: Support for Your Child with Mental Health Needs*". Where: Pacer Center, Apple Valley (call for directions: 952-838-9000). When: Monday, March 12, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM. Cost: ??.

#### **MARCH 24, 2012**

**Pacer Center**, [www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/](http://www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/). "*Families Are Important: Understanding the Early Intervention Process in Minnesota*". Where: Pacer Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55437. When: Saturday, March 24, 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Cost: Free, but donations accepted.

#### **APRIL 12, 2012**

**Minnesota Association of Christian Home Educators (MACHE)**, [www.mache.org](http://www.mache.org). "*Homeschooling with Special Needs*". Where: RiverCentre, 175 West Kellogg Blvd, St. Paul, MN 55102. When: Thursday, April 12, 12:30 PM to 5:00 PM. Cost: \$10 - \$25.

**Pacer Center**, [www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/](http://www.pacer.org/forms/workshops/). *"Technology for Girls: What Is Your Reality?"* Where: Pacer Center, 8161 Normandale Blvd, Minneapolis, MN 55437. When: Thursday, April 12, 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM. Cost: Free, but donations accepted.

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