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[Home](#) > [Resources](#) > Printer-friendly PDF

FAQs about homeschooling . . .

Tags: [beginning](#) [diploma](#) [legal](#) [Minnesota](#) [parenting](#) [socialization](#)

What is home education?

MÂCHÉ believes the traditional family is the foundation of society and that parents have the God-given responsibility to determine the proper education for their children. Home education takes place when children are primarily taught and educated under the authority of their own parents in their own home. We believe that parents, not government, should determine the curriculum and standards for their own children. MÂCHÉ believes that home education fulfills its highest calling when parents educate their own children according to Christ-centered, Biblical principles.

What are the advantages of home education?

- Learning together builds strong family relationships. Home education is a lifestyle, not a project.
- Parents have greater opportunity for character training with their children.
- Parents are able to choose the worldview through which they will teach their children.
- Parents are able to tailor a curriculum and course of study to their child's individual abilities, learning style, needs, and future goals.
- Parents have the flexibility to move at the child's pace, spending more time or less time mastering particular concepts or subjects.
- Children receive one-on-one tutorial-style teaching.
- Children have more time to pursue areas of interest.
- High school students can jump-start their college education or career preparation.

what are the disadvantages of homeschooling?

According to homeschoolers' feedback, the biggest disadvantage facing the homeschooling family is loss of income. Someone must be home, at least part-time, to facilitate the children's learning. At a time when it can often be difficult to get by on two incomes, it can be a real challenge to get by on just one.

Some of the other difficulties facing homeschooling parents include lack of confidence in their own and their children's abilities, public and/or family criticism, and adjusting career goals and work schedules to accommodate the needs of the family. One last challenge humorously cited by homeschoolers is that of housekeeping. When you use your home full-time for homeschooling (and in some cases even for work), things can get a bit messy. But don't worry, those books piled high on the coffee table, the science experiment on the table, and the art project in the patio are all signs that your child is learning.

Who may educate in Minnesota?

Any parent may home educate in Minnesota provided the provisions of Minnesota statute 120A.22 are met.

What about socialization?

This is the number one question people ask homeschoolers. The *1828 American Dictionary of the English Language* defines the word "social" as "relating to men living in society; disposed to mix in friendly converse; companionable."

Many homeschoolers have discovered healthy socialization takes place when children are exposed to people of all ages in various settings, rather than being limited to a classroom and a group of students all about the same age. Children learn social skills in everyday activities such as trips to the grocery store or library, visits with grandparents, church activities with friends, support group activities, park days, and community activities. Most importantly, children often receive their most valuable socialization in the nurturing environment of home and family.

How do I get started?

- Read books about home education and talk to homeschooling parents. Attend a MÂCHÉ Considering Homeschooling Workshop or come to the annual MÂCHÉ Conference for workshops pertaining to new homeschoolers.
- Become convinced that home education is what you and your spouse want for your family.
- Develop a Mission Statement. This keeps you aware of your purpose for home education.
- Set goals for the year.
- Choose and order curricula. The annual MÂCHÉ Conference is a great place to view the wide variety of curricula and resources available to home educators - in person.
- Become acquainted with your materials.
- Create a learning environment in your home.
- Plan a daily schedule and prepare lessons in advance.
- Keep written records.
- Follow state laws of accountability.
- Give teaching top priority for your time.
- Find a homeschool support group in your area.
- Realize that there will be trial and error. Be willing to adapt as needed.

What does it cost to home educate?

The cost of home education is as varied as the individual families who teach their children at home. It depends on many factors.

- The type of curriculum and resources you choose to purchase.
- The amount and type of extracurricular activities in which your child participates.
- Field trips you choose to take.

Home education is an investment - a very worthy investment - in your children and their future!

what about other options?

Government-funded programs for home educators are enticing. They provide free materials and educational experiences to homeschooling families. But what price do parents pay to participate in these programs? You might want to check out the DVD in MÂCHÉ's store, *Exposing a Trojan Horse*, which uncovers the hidden costs of parents participating in government-funded programs for home educators.

Virtual Charter Schools have increased in popularity in recent years. This taxpayer-funded system attempts to achieve a sort of "compromise" between a public school education and a real homeschooling experience. The idea is that, using a Government-sanctioned curriculum, the student can have a homeschool-like experience, while the parents enjoy such benefits as academic excellence and cost savings. But is this reality? Do Virtual Charter Schools deliver what they promise?

The answers to these questions are a resounding "No!" These and other virtual Charter School myths are addressed powerfully by the Idaho Coalition of Home Educators (ICHE). In short, ICHE says, *"The practical effect of enrollment in a virtual Charter School program is to bring the public school district into the home of the student."* We enthusiastically recommend the Idaho Coalitions's entire analysis, provided [here](#).

Minnesota's experience with publicly-funded virtual academies mirrors the poor results found in other states like Idaho. John Tuma, MÂCHÉ board member and Legislative Liaison, noted the following concerning virtual public school at home:

"Recently the highly respected office of the Legislative Auditor, in a programmatic review of minnesota's publicly funded online schools, found performance of online schools woefully lacking, in comparison to students who attend traditional public schools, the full-time online students' academic test scores were significantly lower, they showed less progress, and in some cases their dropout rate was eight times higher. "MÂCHÉ and other homeschool leaders have been warning about the dangers of these government-funded programs for years, and now the studies are bearing out the concerns we have raised. You can find the Office of the Legislative Auditor's report is available online at <http://www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us/ped/pedrep/k12oll.pdf>."

How does my home educated child receive a diploma?

Parents create and maintain their child's transcript and issue the diploma. Home educated students are not required to take any of the state-mandated tests that are required for public school graduation. There are factors that you will want to consider, depending upon the path that your child wants to take upon graduating from homeschool. Here are a few helpful resources for homeschooling through high school.

- *Homeschooling Through High School* website: www.hslda.org/highschool
- *Transcript Pro* and *Transcript Boot Camp* DVD: www.edplus.com
- *Mentoring Your Teen: Charting the Course to Successful Adulthood* by Dr. Ronald and Inge Cannon: www.edplus.com
- *The High School Handbook: Junior and Senior High at Home* by Mary Schofield: www.cheafca.org

will my children be able to get into college if they are homeschooled?

Homeschoolers are accepted and recruited by some of the top universities in the country because of their maturity, independent thinking skills, creativity, and strong academic preparation. Homeschoolers perform above average on the ACT. Success on the ACT test reveals that the courses taken by high school students to prepare for college have been effective. Homeschoolers also placed highest on the SAT college entrance exams, higher than private and public school students.

In addition to academic success, homeschoolers have had athletic success in college. Coaches are recruiting homeschooled athletes, and in 2001 the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) declared about 100

homeschooled students eligible for athletics as freshmen at major universities, up from 85 the year before. An article in Time magazine on September 11, 2000, reported that 26 percent of 35 homeschooled applicants had been accepted into Stanford University's 2000-2001 freshman class. This is nearly double the rate of overall acceptance.

will my homeschooled child be able to function in the "real world" as an adult?

Those exploring homeschooling for the first time sometimes worry that their child will not be able to function in the "real world" if they don't attend "real school" and have the same social experiences as schooled children. But what do schools really do? They separate kids by age and ability, reinforce class and gender stereotypes, and limit children's interactions to short recess periods. Schoolchildren are forced to socialize with children only their own age and are trapped in a room six to seven hours a day, allowed to view the outside world only through a textbook. Where in the real world are adults forced to socialize with only someone their own age? Competition, bullying, consumerism, and cruel teasing are often the social values children learn at school.

Homeschooled children are more likely to base their decisions on values they learn from their parents instead of feeling compelled to go along with the crowd and accept the behavior of what other children are displaying as the "norm". Because homeschoolers spend so much time out in the real world, they are able to communicate well and get along with both adults and children. They even get along with their siblings, and it is common for homeschooling families to receive positive comments about their children's strong, warm sibling relationships.

How do I get more information about homeschooling in Minnesota?

The MÂCHÉ website and newsletters, *The Paper MÂCHÉ* and *The Non-Paper MÂCHÉ*, contain current issues, tips, and information that will be a great benefit to you as a new homeschooler. The *MÂCHÉ Handbook Online* is a 200+ page wealth of information for all home educators. These publications are member only benefits.

Source URL (retrieved on 05/21/2013 - 7:04am): <http://www.mache.org/resources/article/12-02-2011/faqs-about-homeschooling>