

Tricounty Home Educators Association Information Pack

Contact Us

Email: tricounty@tchea.org (a homeschooling parent will respond, email will get the quickest response)
Web: <http://www.tchea.org>
Phone: (609) 953-8831 (voice mail; a homeschooling parent will be contacted to return your call)

Present Scope

Tricounty Home Educators encompasses Burlington, Camden and Gloucester counties, and is made up of smaller groups that meet on a regular basis in homes or churches.

Activities

Tricounty seeks to organize activities that require large numbers of people. These activities include, but are not limited to, field day, sports programs, spelling bee, geography bee, science fair and chess club. We are pro-active in helping to organize information nights for those interested in homeschooling. These nights have been held with great success and allowed questioning of homeschooling parents by both moms and dads.

Leadership Support

We are seeking to support the leadership of the smaller groups by supplemental activities and meetings in which general information on activities is shared and larger group activities are planned.

Newsletter

We also publish a newsletter Nota Bene which seeks to keep people abreast of the activities as well as offer reviews of materials that are available and other information of interest such as field trips, plays, sports, etc.

See the Application Form on the last page.

You will receive issues published from August through July (beginning with the latest issue published) and a Tricounty Discount card, which will get you discounts at many area bookstores and other businesses selling school-related supplies. Please include a phone number and/or email address as well as your mailing address.

The History of Tricounty Home Educators Association

Tricounty Home Educators Association arose about a decade ago from a group based out of Fellowship Baptist Church in Mount Laurel, Home Spun Fun. The group expanded much beyond the church and therefore has taken on many new dimensions. The Leadership of Tricounty are evangelical Christians. Tricounty seeks to serve all homeschoolers.

NEW JERSEY LAW

The following information was copied from the New Jersey Department of Education's Website- Titled HOMESCHOOLING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(http://www.state.nj.us/njded/genfo/overview/faq_homeschool.htm)

In New Jersey, the Legislature under the compulsory education law (N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25) has permitted children to receive "equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school," including the home. The following homeschooling questions and answers are intended to assist parent(s)/guardian(s) and public school districts in dealing with issues that frequently arise in this context.

1. What are the New Jersey statutes regarding compulsory education?

The following New Jersey statutes apply to compulsory education:

- N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25 requires compulsory education in New Jersey: "Every parent, guardian or other person having custody and control of a child between six and 16 shall cause such child regularly to attend the public schools of the district or a day school in which there is given instruction equivalent to that provided in the public schools for children of similar grades and attainments or to receive equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school."
- N.J.S.A. 18A:38-31: "a parent or guardian or other person having charge and control of a child between the ages of 6 and 16 years, who shall fail to comply with any of the provisions of this article relating to his duties, shall be deemed to be a disorderly person and shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$25.00 for the first offense and not more than \$100.00 for each subsequent offense, in the discretion of the court."

The provision, "to receive equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school," in N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25 permits parent(s)/guardian(s) to educate the child at home.

• What are the New Jersey court decisions regarding homeschooling?

There are two major court decisions in New Jersey regarding homeschooling:

- State v. Vaughn 44 N.J. 142 (1965): This case deals with the procedures to be employed when parent(s)/guardian(s) are charged with failing to cause the child to attend school under the compulsory education law. During the prosecution of a case against parent(s)/guardian(s) for a violation of the compulsory education law, the State need only allege a violation of the statute. It is then incumbent upon the parent(s)/guardian(s) to introduce evidence showing that they are relying on one of the two statutory exceptions (day school or equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school). Once there is such evidence in the case, the burden of persuasion with respect to whether the education comes within the exception is with the State.
- State v. Massa 95 N.J. Super 382 (1967): In court, the parents were charged with failing to cause the child to attend school under the compulsory education law. The only issue before the court was whether the parents were providing equivalent instruction. The court held that the language under the compulsory education law, providing for equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school, required showing only academic equivalency and not equivalency of social development derived from group education. In educating the child at home, the parents were required to show only that "the instruction was academically equivalent to that provided in the local public school."

• What is the responsibility of the local board of education regarding compulsory education?

The compulsory education law (N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25) is enforced by the local board of education. If there is credible evidence that the parent, guardian or other person having custody and control of a school-age child is not causing the child either to attend school (public or nonpublic) or to receive equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school, the board may request documentation, such as a letter of intent from the parent(s)/guardian(s) showing that the child is either in nonpublic school or receiving equivalent instruction elsewhere than at school. The mere fact that a child has been withdrawn to be homeschooled is not, in itself, credible evidence of a legal violation. If it appears that the child is not receiving an education in accord with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, the board may wish to consult with its attorney regarding possible charges against the parent(s)/guardian(s) for failure to have the child educated.

- **What information should parents/guardians of a child educated elsewhere than at school submit to the local board of education when removing a child from school for homeschooling?**

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are not required by law to notify their public school district of their intention to educate the child elsewhere than at school. However, they are encouraged to do so in order that questions need not arise with respect to their compliance with the compulsory education law.

- **Is it the responsibility of the local board of education to review and approve the curriculum for a child educated elsewhere than at school?**

No. The law does not require or authorize the local board of education to review and approve the curriculum or program of a child educated elsewhere than at school. When parent(s)/guardian(s) educate a child elsewhere than at school, they are responsible for the educational outcomes of the child. The local board of education is not required or authorized to monitor the outcomes of the child.

- **May the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child educated elsewhere than at school request information regarding a curriculum from the local board of education?**

Yes. Parents may seek information about the school curriculum from the local board of education. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) request such information, the board must provide it since a district's curriculum is a matter of public record. The parent(s)/guardian(s) may be charged for the cost of copying documents in accordance with the rates established by law.

- **Should the local board of education establish a file for the child educated elsewhere than at school?**

A board of education is not required to keep a file on a child who is educated elsewhere than at school. If the board of education receives information from the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a child educated elsewhere than at school, the board may establish a file for a child for the sole purpose of documenting that the child is receiving an education as required by law.

- **Who is responsible for a child educated elsewhere than at school when the child is taught by a person other than the parent or when the child takes a correspondence course or network program?**

The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child educated elsewhere than at school are solely responsible for any program selected. The state or local board of education is not required or authorized to approve the selected program. The parent(s)/guardian(s) may work directly with any teacher or person or correspondence school or network regarding the program; but they are not required to do so.

- **Are the parent(s)/guardian(s) or persons teaching the child elsewhere than at school required to have a teaching license?**

No. The parent(s)/guardian(s) or persons teaching a child elsewhere than at school are not required by law to have a teaching license.

- **May a child educated elsewhere than at school participate in certain activities of the regular school curriculum or in extracurricular or sports activities?**

The local board of education is not required by law to allow a child educated elsewhere than at school to participate in the regular school curriculum or in extracurricular or sports activities. Such participation is at the sole discretion of the board once the child is identified as educated elsewhere than at school:

- Curricular And Extracurricular---A board of education may, but is not required by law to, allow a child educated elsewhere than at school to participate in curricular and extracurricular activities or sports activities. Before deciding to do so, however, a board of education may wish to consult with its attorney to consider the full implications of such participation.
- Textbooks---A board of education may, but is under no obligation to, loan books or materials to a child educated elsewhere than at school.
- County Shared-Time Vocational Schools---A vocational board of education should adopt a non-discriminatory policy regarding homeschoolers. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) are residents of the county, the child educated at home may apply on an annual basis to the county vocational school. The county vocational school may permit the child being educated elsewhere than at school to attend a shared-time county vocational school. N.J.A.C. 6:43-3.11(b) states the following: "to the extent that space is available, each type of program of vocational instruction offered by the State Board shall be made available to all pupils residing in the State," Once a child educated elsewhere than at school is enrolled in a shared-time vocational school program, the child then becomes a public school student and is entitled to the payment of tuition through the resident district.

- Special Education Services---In accordance with the federal special education law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C.1400 et seq.), the board of education must ensure that "all children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities attending private schools, regardless of the severity of the disability, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located and evaluated..."

When the public school district receives a written request for special education evaluation, the district must review the request in a meeting of the child study team, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and the regular education teacher. This procedure applies to children who are educated at home. At the meeting, current information about the child is reviewed to determine whether an evaluation is warranted. If an evaluation is warranted, another determination will be made regarding the assessment procedures. Written notice of the determinations is given to parent(s)/guardian(s). Once the assessments are completed, a meeting according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.3(i)1 is held to determine whether the child is eligible for special education and related services.

If the child is eligible for special education and related services, the public school district must make a free, appropriate public education available only if the child enrolls in the district. If the child does not enroll in the public school district, but the district chooses to provide services, the district would develop a plan for the services to be provided.

- **Is a child educated elsewhere than at school eligible for transportation to a shared time vocational school program?**

Once a child educated elsewhere than at school is enrolled in a shared-time vocational school program, the child then becomes a public school student and is entitled to the payment of tuition and transportation services. Transportation services are provided in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-1 and the rules and policies of the board of education.

- **Is a child educated elsewhere than at school eligible to participate in district/state testing?**

No. The local board of education is not required or authorized to test a child educated elsewhere than at school. The local board of education does not have to ensure through testing or another mechanism that instruction is being appropriately delivered or achieving its desired effect, to review the quality of instruction, or to monitor the results. A child educated elsewhere than at school is not required to sit for a state or district standardized test.

- **How will grade placement be determined for a child educated elsewhere than at school who returns to school?**

When a child returns to school following a period of homeschooling, the local board of education treats the child as any other new or returning child (i.e. assessed as to the acceptance of credits and the appropriate grade level for purposes of placement). There are no special provisions made for the child who was educated at home. Placement should be based on an objective assessment that is given to all students for that subject or grade. In assessing the child educated elsewhere than at school, the child may not be held to a higher standard than similarly situated students within the district or transferring from other public or nonpublic schools. Also, if a child educated elsewhere than at school re-enrolls in public school in order to obtain a high school diploma, an assessment is made as to the child's compliance with state and local requirements, as the board of education would with any new or returning student, since no diploma can be issued when such requirements are not met. Their assessment may include one of the following applicable to grade of entry: the fourth grade Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA), the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) and High School Proficiency Test (HSPT) or the Special Review Assessment (SRA).

- **Does a child educated elsewhere than at school receive a high school diploma from the local board of education?**

No. A child educated elsewhere than at school does not receive a state-endorsed high school diploma from the board of education. If a child educated elsewhere than at school re-enrolls in public school in order to obtain a high school diploma, an assessment is made as to the child's compliance with state and local requirements and eligibility for a diploma.

Please note that the **Homeschooling Questions and Answers** document is intended to promote general guidance for parent(s)/guardian(s) and school administrators, and does not constitute legal advice or state directives. A board of education may wish to consult with its attorney regarding specific situations or questions.

MAGAZINES

The Home Educator's Family Times

\$15/year

Homeeducator.com

Homeschool Enrichment

\$21.97/year

Homeschoolenrichment.com

Homeschooling Today Magazine

\$21.99/year

homeschooltoday.com

NATHHAN NEWS (NATIONally cHallenged Homeschoolers
Associated Network)

\$25/year

Nathhan.com

Practical Homeschooling Magazine

\$19.95/year

<http://www.home-school.com>

CURRICULUM / SUPPLIES

Bob Jones University Press

<http://www.bju.edu>

Children's Books

<http://www.childsbooks.com>

Christian Book Distributors (CBD)

<http://www.christianbook.com/>

Christian Light Publications, Inc.

Clp.org

Critical Thinking Press & Software

<http://www.criticalthinking.com/>

Debra Bell Home School Resource Center

<http://www.DebraBell.com>

Farm Country General Store

homeschoolfcs.com

Greenleaf Press

<http://www.greenleafpress.com/>

Homeschool Marketplace

Homeschoolmarketplace.com

Lifetime Books and Gifts

Lifetimebooksandgifts.com

Rod & Staff Publishers Catalog

Rodstaff.com

Sonlight Curriculum

<http://www.sonlight-curriculum.com>

Timberdoodle

<http://www.timberdoodle.com>

Whole Heart Catalogue

<http://www.wholeheart.org>

BOOKS

The Christian Homeschool
By Greg Harris

College Without Compromise
By Scott & Chris Wightman

Educating the WholeHearted Child
by Clay & Sally Clarkson

For The Children's Sake
by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay

The Homeschooling Father
Michael Farris (President, HSLDA)

How To Homeschool: A Practical Approach
by Gayle Graham

Charlotte Mason Companion
By Karen Adnreola

The Relaxed Homeschool
by Mary Hood

The Successful Home Schooling Family Handbook
by Raymond & Dorothy Moore

Teach Me Lord That I May Teach ...
by Barbara & Doug Smith

The Ultimate Guide to Home Schooling
By Debra Bell

Curriculum and Resource Help

100 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum
By Cathy Duffy

Christian Home Educators' Curriculum Manual
(Elementary Grades or Junior and Senior High edition)
by Cathy Duffy

The Big Book of Home Learning (Vol. 1-4)
by Mary Pride

How To Create Your Own Unit Study
by Valerie Bendt

Teaching Children: A Curriculum Guide to What Children
Need to Know at Each Level Through Sixth Grade
by Diane Lopez

Three R's Series and You Can Teach Your Child Successfully:
Grades 4-8
by Ruth Beechick

What Your Child Needs To Know When: An Evaluation Check
List of Grades K-8
by Robin Scarlata

LEGAL INFORMATION

(Tricounty is not affiliated with HSLDA, nor are we always in 100% agreement with HSLDA. However, HSLDA remains an excellent value in providing legal protection for your family.)

Home School Legal Defense Association
P.O. Box 3000
Purcellville, VA 20134
(540) 338-5600
www.hsllda.org

How would your family respond if social workers showed up at your door to check for “truant” children. Is your family prepared? How can we prepare?

The first thing we should do is to spend much time in prayer.

The second thing is to consider joining HSLDA. Their membership for the year is only \$115.00. If you join one of the local homeschool support groups that is a part of the Tricounty network, you can get the Tricounty group rate of \$95.00. You will need to ask your local homeschool support group leader to get this discount number. When you become a member of HSLDA, they will provide you with legal advice for situations affecting homeschooling.

A third step is to take an active part in monitoring and communicating with the state and federal legislatures. HSLDA, and our state ENOCH representatives try to alert us to legislation that will have an impact on homeschooling and families, both positive and negative.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Is it legal? Yes, it is legal in all 50 states, but the laws regulating it differ in each state. You should get a copy of your state's homeschooling law. Contact the Home School Legal Defense Association at HSLDA P.O. Box 3000, Purcellville, VA 20134, Phone (540) 338-5600 www.hslda.org

What about socialization? Learning to live and learn with others is a fundamental priority for parents. Doing so in a room of 25 - 30 people your same age is probably not the best environment to accomplish this. Age-integrated involvement with the rest of a child's family, other homeschoolers during special projects, and others in the community and church are the "classrooms" in which parents can most effectively teach these skills.

Can homeschoolers get into college? Absolutely. And thousands are enrolling every year. Be sure to get some advice from some parents who have gone before you; you'll need to keep thorough records for the last four years before your child wants to attend college, and will need to cover subjects required for admission into your program of choice.

How can I get my child to be faithful to do their assignments without me standing right over them? Here are some suggestions to help children become faithful in completing their lessons or projects without having to have a parent standing right over them all the time. Give them smaller, shorter assignments and let them have an opportunity to learn to be faithful and diligent in the small things before being given bigger lessons or tasks. To someone not used to being self-disciplined, even a regular amount of assignments becomes overwhelming. They feel as if it's too much, and that they will never finish! The younger the child, the shorter the assignments should be. If they are used to public or private school instruction methods, it takes some adjustment for many children to learn to work on their own, even if they have been homeschooled, but you have been bearing the "burden" of seeing that they are completing their work. When they have shorter, more obtainable goals, they will sense accomplishment when they are through and that will provide them with motivation for future assignments! Make the work neither too easy nor too hard. Keep the child aware of his progress. Notice the good things they do and praise them! Focus on future success and not past failures. Demonstrate your love and confidence in them! Make a big deal over them when they finish an assignment. Help them set goals and understand the purpose of their assignments. Take time to look it over and appreciate the child's work. When a correction is needed, be gentle, yet firm, and add encouraging words.

Don't you ever just get too tired to homeschool? We need to allow flexibility -- start school early, double up days, take sick days, snow days, here and there, and schedule great field trips. Some people school lightly year round, some do four weeks on, one week off; or eight weeks on, two weeks off; some take the whole month of December off. Take a break now and then - rest, pray, read, play, relax, and have fun. We need to do this to refresh our minds and our bodies and to get ourselves back in focus.

How do I know which curriculum is best for my family? Realize that there is no perfect curriculum. It's just a tool, and you can probably use just about anything if you're able to mold it to your family. However, it's best to constantly read books, magazines and catalogs, looking for better ways to teach. It's a learning process for the teacher that is on-going. Experiment with resources, and if they don't work, just get something else. To someone just starting out, read as much as you can get your hands on, then make a decision and stick with it for one year. You can switch to something else next year.

What do I do when it just seems like my child isn't "getting it"? Join with other parents, homeschoolers or not, and encourage and pray for one another. The answer is not in any technique; it is connecting with your child, discovering how God has uniquely crafted him or her, and watching them grow and develop.

How do you make sure you're covering "everything"? You won't! (no school does) It's better to instill a love for learning in your children and teach a few things well than to cram a multitude of facts into their heads and have them never want to look at a book again after they graduate! Make sure you cover the 3 R's and include quality books in their routine.

Don't they get bored staying home all the time? Don't stay home. If they are bored, it's an indicator that you are in a rut. Spend time at the library, in the swamp, in the woods, at the museum and wherever else your studies take you.

A SAMPLE LETTER OF INTENT

It is not the policy of Tricounty to give legal advise. We strongly encourage you to join the Home School Legal Defense Association, P.O. Box 3000, Purcellville, VA 20134, (540) 338-5600. www.hslda.org

HSLDA offers a sample letter of intent specific to each state to its members.

Letters of intent are not required by law for the state of NJ. Standardized tests are not required, but they can be helpful in helping you to assess your children, and in teaching them test taking skills. Many homeschooling families believe that it is best to minimize our contact with the school districts. However, there may be times when it is wise to send a letter of intent to your local school board. If the school district is aware that you have children that are not in the public school system, they may investigate for truancy. Families in NJ have pulled their children out of Christian schools and later found out that they were reported by their former Christian school to the school districts as truant. If you do decide to send a letter of intent, please do not send more than a simple overview. It would not be good to set a precedent for providing more information than they really need. HSLDA believes that our school districts are more likely to go after homeschooling families who seem less confident and more easily intimidated. You may wish to send the letter by registered mail, return receipt requested.

#123 My Street,
Mytown, NJ 07701
July 4, 1999

MY LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Superintendent
#456 School Street
Mytown, NJ 07701

Dear Dr. Name,

This letter is to inform you that my child [NAME & AGE] will be educated at home this coming school year.

We will be providing an equivalent education compliant with New Jersey Statutes 18A: 38-25.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me in writing at the above address.

Sincerely,
(signed)
Mr & Mrs CITIZEN

Visit the ENOCH website www.enochnj.org for additional resources

TRICOUNTY SUPPORT GROUPS & LEADERS

TRICOUNTY HOME EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

Mark & Sue August, tricounty@tchea.org
78 Skeet Road, Medford, NJ 08055

Burlington County Homeschool Support Group

Secular
(Mt. Holly)
Karen Walker, hometeachkids@yahoo.com

CHAPLET (Catholic Homeschooler Assn. with Papal Loyalty Educating Together)

Barbara Harkins, chaplet@chaplet.org

Christian Home Educators of S.J. (CHESJ)

(Berlin, Clementon, Voorhees)
Tricia Bright, teachmom-2@comcast.net

C.H.I.L.D. (Special Needs)

(Burlington, Camden, Gloucester Counties)
Wendy Reuther, wdr@cleanweb.net
103 Maryland Ave, Hainesport, NJ 08036

Cornerstone Home Educators

(Audubon, Cherry Hill, Haddon Heights)
Karen May, cornerstone.home.educators1@verizon.net

Doorpost Christian Homeschoolers of NJ

(Williamstown)
Joanne Walters, walters4jesus@yahoo.com

Gloucester County Christian Home School Assoc.

(Gloucester County)
Peggy Melchiorre, newmember@gcchsa.org

HIS Homeschool Coop

(Collingswood)
Kearicia Valiant, kjorval@yahoo.com

Living Waters Home Educators

(Tabernacle, Vincentown, Southampton, Medford)
Chris & Bobbi Cascarella, lwhs@comcast.net

Military Home School Support Group

Secular
(McGuire Air Force Base, Ft. Dix area)
Holly Brown, b_brown3@earthlink.net

Parents And Children (PACT)

Secular
(Gloucester County)
John & Terryann McSparran,
patriotsprinkler@prodigy.net
8 Hazel Court, Mickleton, NJ 08056

Potter's Hand Homeschoolers

(Moorestown, Cinnaminson, Delran, Maple Shade,
Palmyra, Pennsauken, Marlton)
pottershindhomeschoolers@yahoo.com

St Gabriel's Roman Catholic HS of Gloucester County

John & Terryann McSparran,
patriotsprinkler@prodigy.net
8 Hazel Court, Mickleton, NJ 08056

Sovereign Grace Church Homeschoolers (closed)

Mark & Sue August, mark.august@verizon.net
78 Skeet Road, Medford, NJ 08055

Village PCA Homeschoolers (closed)

Ken & Kathie Donaldson, drkwd@comcast.net

Education Network of Christian Homeschoolers, Inc. (ENOCH)

New Jersey Statewide Organization
phone: 609-222-4283 fax: 609-222-4282
www.enochnj.org

National Center for Home Education

(540)-338-7600
<http://nche.hslda.org/>

Nota Bene

A publication of the Tricounty Home Educators

Subscription Form

Please Fill Out and Return with your check to:

Tricounty Home Educators

78 Skeet Road

Medford, NJ 08055

Name		Spouse Name	
Mailing Address		Talents or Areas you are willing to serve the	
Email Address		How did you hear about the Nota Bene?	
Phone #		Support Group	
HSLDA Member?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes (check if current member)	What is the biggest issue affecting your homeschooling this upcoming year?	

Our subscriptions run from July - June. All subscriptions will end with the June issue irregardless of when subscriptions begin. If you subscribe after the first issue, you will receive the most recently published issue as a special mailing and all subsequent issues for the school year.

Cost is \$15.00 if subscribing before January 1, 2008.

Cost is \$7.50 if subscribing after January 1, 2008 for remainder of 2007 - 2008 school year issues.

All information is held in strictest confidence and is not shared or sold. Email and phone are used to verify addresses if mail is returned.