

50-State Legal Requirements

Complete Breakdown of Homeschool Laws for All 50 States + DC

Homeschool Connects

Free Resource Guide

Last updated: March 2026

www.homeschoolconnects.com

Content is for informational purposes only. Verify state requirements with your state's department of education.

How to Use This Guide

Every state in the United States takes a different approach to regulating homeschool education. Some states require almost nothing beyond a parent's decision to teach at home, while others mandate formal notification, standardized testing, curriculum approval, or portfolio reviews. This guide gives you a single reference point for understanding where your state falls on the regulatory spectrum.

We organized this guide into three parts. First, you will find a quick-reference table covering all 50 states plus the District of Columbia. Each entry tells you the regulation level, whether you need to notify your school district, whether standardized testing is expected, and whether a portfolio or assessment review is part of the process. After the table, we break down what different regulation levels mean in practice, highlight specific requirements for the most regulated states, and walk through common compliance steps that apply across many jurisdictions.

Important Disclaimer

Homeschool laws change frequently. State legislatures may amend statutes, courts may issue rulings, and school districts may update their own policies at any time. The information in this guide reflects general trends and is not a substitute for legal advice. Always verify current requirements directly with your state's Department of Education or a qualified homeschool legal organization before making decisions about your family's education.

Key Terms Used in This Guide

Before diving into the state-by-state details, here are the core terms you will see throughout this document:

- **Notification:** A formal declaration submitted to your local school district, superintendent, or state agency stating your intent to homeschool. In some states this is a simple one-page letter; in others it involves detailed paperwork.
- **Testing:** A requirement that your child take a standardized test (such as the Iowa Assessments, CAT, or a state-specific exam) at certain grade levels to demonstrate academic progress.
- **Portfolio:** A collection of your child's work samples, lesson plans, reading logs, and progress records that may be reviewed by a certified teacher, school official, or evaluator.
- **Regulation Level:** A general classification (Low, Medium, or High) describing how much oversight and paperwork a state requires from homeschooling families.

Understanding Regulation Levels

Homeschool regulations differ dramatically from one state to the next. To help you quickly understand what you are dealing with, we classify every state into one of three tiers: Low, Medium, or High regulation. These categories are not official legal designations. They are practical groupings based on the total amount of paperwork, oversight, and reporting each state expects.

Low Regulation

In low-regulation states, families generally have the widest latitude to design their own educational programs. Many of these states require no notification at all. Others ask for a brief notice of intent but impose no further obligations. You typically will not need to submit curriculum plans, administer standardized tests, or provide work samples to any government agency. States like Texas, Idaho, and Indiana fall into this category.

Low regulation does not mean low quality. Families in these states still plan curriculum, set goals, and track progress. The difference is that the state trusts parents to manage these responsibilities without formal reporting.

Medium Regulation

Medium-regulation states strike a balance between parental freedom and government oversight. Most require you to file a notice of intent with the local school district or state department of education. Some also require standardized testing at designated intervals, such as every other year or at specific grade levels. A few ask for basic curriculum information or attendance records.

States in this tier include Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Ohio, and Washington. If you live in a medium-regulation state, expect to set aside a few hours each year for compliance tasks, but you will still enjoy considerable freedom in choosing how and what to teach.

High Regulation

High-regulation states impose the most detailed requirements. These typically include mandatory notification, annual standardized testing or professional evaluation, portfolio submission, and in some cases curriculum approval from the local school district. New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Vermont are the most frequently cited examples.

Families in high-regulation states should build compliance into their annual planning. Keeping organized records from the start of the school year will save significant time and stress when submission deadlines arrive. Many experienced homeschoolers in these states recommend using a binder or digital folder system to collect work samples throughout the year rather than scrambling at

review time.

State-by-State Requirements at a Glance

The following table summarizes the key homeschool requirements for all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Use it as a quick reference, then read the detailed sections that follow for deeper guidance on your specific state's expectations.

State	Regulation	Notification	Testing	Portfolio
Alabama	Medium	Required	No	No
Alaska	Low	No	Optional	No
Arizona	Low	Yes	No	No
Arkansas	Low	Required	Yes	No
California	Medium	Optional	No	No
Colorado	Low	Required	Yes	No
Connecticut	Medium	Required	No	Yes
Delaware	Medium	No	No	No
DC	Medium	Required	Yes	No
Florida	Medium	Required	Yes	Yes
Georgia	Medium	Required	Yes	No
Hawaii	Medium	Yes	No	No
Idaho	Low	No	No	No
Illinois	Medium	No	No	No
Indiana	Low	No	No	No
Iowa	Medium	Required	Yes	No
Kansas	Low	No	No	No
Kentucky	Low	No	No	No
Louisiana	Medium	Required	No	Yes
Maine	Medium	Required	Yes	No
Maryland	Medium	Required	Yes	Yes
Massachusetts	High	Required	No	Yes
Michigan	Low	No	No	No
Minnesota	Medium	Required	Yes	No
Mississippi	Low	Yes	No	No

State	Regulation	Notification	Testing	Portfolio
Missouri	Low	Required	No	No
Montana	Low	Required	Yes	No
Nebraska	Low	No	No	No
Nevada	Low	Yes	No	No
New Hampshire	Low	Required	Yes	No
New Jersey	Low	No	No	No
New Mexico	Low	Yes	No	No
New York	High	Required	Yes	Yes
North Carolina	Medium	Required	Yes	No
North Dakota	Low	Required	Yes	No
Ohio	Medium	Required	Yes	No
Oklahoma	Low	No	No	No
Oregon	Medium	Required	Yes	No
Pennsylvania	High	Required	Yes	Yes
Rhode Island	Medium	Required	No	Yes
South Carolina	Medium	Required	Yes	No
South Dakota	Low	Required	Yes	No
Tennessee	Low	Required	No	No
Texas	Low	No	No	No
Utah	Low	Yes	No	No
Vermont	High	Required	No	Yes
Virginia	Medium	Required	Yes	Yes
Washington	Medium	Required	Yes	No
West Virginia	Medium	Required	Yes	No
Wisconsin	Low	Required	No	No
Wyoming	Low	No	No	No

Reading the Table

Regulation indicates the overall level of state oversight (Low, Medium, or High). Notification shows whether you must formally inform your district or state. Testing indicates whether standardized tests are mandated. Portfolio indicates whether you must compile and submit student work samples for review. "Required" means the state mandates it. "Yes" means it is expected. "Optional" means it is available but not mandatory. "No" means there is no such requirement.

Low-Regulation States: What This Means for You

If you live in a low-regulation state, you have chosen one of the most flexible environments for homeschooling in the country. These states generally trust parents to direct their children's education without substantial government involvement. Here is what that looks like in practice.

Minimal or No Paperwork

Many low-regulation states do not require you to file any paperwork at all. You simply begin teaching your children at home. Others ask for a brief notice of intent, which is typically a one-page form or letter sent to your local superintendent. Once filed, you usually do not need to follow up with additional documentation.

No Mandated Testing

In most low-regulation states, there is no requirement to administer standardized tests. You are free to assess your child's progress using whatever methods you find most helpful, whether that means informal assessments, project-based evaluation, or commercially available tests administered on your own schedule.

States in This Category

The following states are classified as low regulation based on their current homeschool statutes:

- Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky
- Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada
- New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Dakota
- Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, Wyoming

A Note on "Low Regulation"

Low regulation does not mean no responsibility. As a homeschooling parent, you are still fully accountable for your child's education. Many families in low-regulation states voluntarily track attendance, administer periodic tests, and maintain portfolios for their own records, college applications, or future moves to states with stricter laws. Building good record-keeping habits from the start is always wise.

High-Regulation States: What to Expect

Four states consistently rank as the most regulated for homeschooling: New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Vermont. If you live in one of these states, planning for compliance should be a core part of your homeschool routine. Below is a detailed breakdown of what each state expects.

New York

New York requires families to submit an Individualized Home Instruction Plan (IHIP) to their local school district each year. The IHIP must list the courses you intend to teach, the textbooks and materials you plan to use, and your methods of evaluation. Throughout the year, you are required to file quarterly reports showing the number of hours of instruction completed and your child's progress in each subject.

At the end of each school year, you must submit an annual assessment. For grades 1 through 3, this can be a narrative evaluation from a certified teacher. Starting in grade 4, students must take a commercially published standardized test every other year, scoring at or above the 33rd percentile. In alternate years, a written narrative assessment from a certified teacher is accepted. New York also mandates instruction in specific subjects at each grade level, including math, English, science, social studies, health, physical education, art, and music.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania requires a notarized affidavit filed with the local superintendent before you begin homeschooling. The affidavit must include your objectives for each subject, evidence that your child has received required immunizations or has an exemption, and a statement that the education you provide will meet the goals outlined in the state education code.

You must maintain a portfolio of your child's work throughout the year, including log entries showing the number of hours and days of instruction, samples of writing, worksheets, and creative work, and a list of reading materials used. At the end of each year, a certified teacher or licensed psychologist must evaluate the portfolio and provide a written assessment. Students in grades 3, 5, and 8 must also take standardized tests. Pennsylvania is one of the few states that requires both portfolio evaluation and periodic standardized testing.

Massachusetts

Massachusetts operates under a framework established by the state Supreme Court, which requires families to obtain prior approval from their local school committee or superintendent before beginning to homeschool. You must submit an education plan detailing the subjects to be taught, the materials to be used, the hours of instruction, and the methods of evaluation.

The approval process varies by district, and some districts are more demanding than others. Once approved, you are expected to provide periodic progress reports or evaluations. Many districts accept a year-end portfolio review, standardized test results, or an evaluation by a certified teacher. The key challenge in Massachusetts is that requirements can differ significantly depending on which school district you are in, so it is essential to communicate directly with your local superintendent's office.

Vermont

Vermont requires families to submit a detailed enrollment notice to the Vermont Agency of Education each year by a specified deadline. The notice must include your child's name, age, and the names of the people who will be providing instruction, as well as a description of the curriculum you plan to follow.

At the end of each school year, you must submit an annual assessment. Vermont accepts several forms of assessment, including a certified teacher evaluation, a report from a commercial testing service, or a portfolio review. The state also requires that your homeschool curriculum cover specific subjects, including reading, writing, mathematics, citizenship, history, literature, science, and the arts. Vermont places strong emphasis on documentation and annual reporting, making it one of the most process-intensive states for homeschooling families.

Common Compliance Steps

While each state has its own unique set of rules, many compliance tasks are shared across jurisdictions. The following steps represent a general workflow that applies to most states with notification or reporting requirements. Always confirm the specifics with your state's laws before relying on this list.

1. Research your state's homeschool statute. Start with your state's Department of Education website and look for the section on home instruction, home education, or non-public school enrollment.
2. Determine which option applies to your family. Some states offer multiple pathways, such as operating as a private school, enrolling in an umbrella program, or filing as an independent homeschool.
3. File your notice of intent. If your state requires notification, submit your letter or form to the appropriate authority (usually the local superintendent or school board) by the deadline specified in the statute.
4. Prepare your education plan. In states that require curriculum details, write a plan listing the subjects you will cover, the materials you will use, and your schedule of instruction.
5. Maintain records throughout the year. Keep attendance logs, work samples, reading lists, and any test results organized and accessible. Even if your state does not require you to submit records, maintaining them protects you if questions arise.
6. Administer required assessments. If your state mandates standardized testing, schedule the test well in advance and choose an approved testing instrument. Many families use the Iowa Assessments, Stanford Achievement Test, or CAT.
7. Submit year-end documentation. States with portfolio or evaluation requirements will have a deadline for submitting your annual assessment. Mark this date on your calendar at the start of the year.
8. Renew your notification annually. Most states that require notification expect you to refile each year. Set a reminder at least 30 days before the deadline to give yourself time to gather any updated information.

Tip: Build a Compliance Calendar

At the start of each school year, create a simple calendar with every deadline your state requires: notification filing, quarterly reports, test dates, and portfolio submission. Spreading these tasks across the year prevents last-minute stress and keeps you in good standing with your district.

Withdrawing from Public School

If your child is currently enrolled in a public school, the process of transitioning to homeschool involves a few additional steps beyond simply filing a notice of intent. While the exact procedure varies by state and even by school district, the following guidance covers the most common scenarios.

Notifying the School

In most states, you should submit a formal withdrawal letter to your child's current school principal or registrar. This letter should state the effective date of withdrawal and, where required, indicate that you will be providing home instruction in compliance with state law. Keep a copy for your records and consider sending it via certified mail so you have proof of delivery.

Requesting Records

Before your child leaves the school, request a complete copy of their academic records, including transcripts, report cards, standardized test scores, and any individualized education plans (IEPs) or 504 plans. These documents are your child's property, and the school is required to provide them. Having these records on hand is important for documenting your child's educational history and may be required if you enroll in a new school or apply to college.

Timing Your Withdrawal

There is no universally required time of year to begin homeschooling. Some families start at the beginning of a traditional school year, while others withdraw mid-year. If you withdraw mid-year, be aware that some states count attendance days differently and you may need to document instruction hours from the date of withdrawal through the end of the school year. Check your state's specific rules on minimum days of instruction to ensure you meet any annual thresholds.

Handling Pushback

Occasionally, school administrators may try to discourage withdrawal or claim that you need their permission to homeschool. In most states, you do not need the school's permission. Your right to homeschool is established by state law. If you encounter resistance, politely reference your state's homeschool statute and consider contacting a homeschool legal organization for support. Remain calm and professional in all interactions, and keep written records of every conversation.

Special Situations: IEPs and 504 Plans

If your child has an IEP or 504 plan, be aware that these accommodations typically do not carry over to a homeschool setting because they are tied to the public school system. However, some states allow homeschooled students to access certain special education services through their local district. Research your state's policies on dual enrollment or shared services before withdrawing, so you can plan for any therapies or support your child currently receives.

Resources for Further Research

Navigating homeschool law can feel overwhelming, but you do not have to do it alone. The following organizations and resources can help you stay informed, connect with other families, and get legal support when needed.

National Legal Organizations

- Home School Legal Defense Association (HSLDA): The largest and most well-known homeschool legal organization in the United States. HSLDA provides state-by-state legal analysis, legislative tracking, and direct legal representation for member families. Their website includes a comprehensive map tool that summarizes each state's requirements.
- Coalition for Responsible Home Education (CRHE): A research-focused organization that publishes detailed analyses of homeschool legislation and policy across all 50 states.
- National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI): A research organization that publishes peer-reviewed studies on homeschool outcomes, demographics, and academic achievement.

State Departments of Education

Your state's Department of Education website is the most authoritative source for current homeschool laws and regulations. Most DOE websites have a dedicated section for home education or non-public school enrollment. Search for your state's DOE website and look for terms like "home instruction," "home education," "home school," or "non-public education." Many states also publish downloadable forms, notification templates, and FAQ documents specifically for homeschooling families.

State and Local Homeschool Associations

Nearly every state has at least one statewide homeschool association, and most have several. These organizations serve as hubs for local co-ops, support groups, field trip networks, and legislative advocacy. They are often the best source of practical, on-the-ground advice about how your state's laws work in everyday life. Many host annual conferences, curriculum fairs, and new-family orientations.

Online Communities and Forums

Online homeschool communities can be invaluable for connecting with experienced families in your state. Look for state-specific Facebook groups, Reddit communities (such as r/homeschool), and forums hosted by homeschool organizations. When seeking legal advice in these groups, always verify the information against your state's official statutes or consult with a legal professional.

Keeping Up with Legislative Changes

Homeschool laws are not static. State legislatures introduce new bills every session that could expand or restrict homeschool freedoms. To stay informed, consider signing up for legislative alerts from HSLDA or your state homeschool association. Many organizations send email updates whenever a relevant bill is introduced, amended, or voted on. Being aware of proposed changes gives you the opportunity to contact your representatives and participate in the legislative process.

Stay Current, Stay Confident

The single most important thing you can do as a homeschooling parent is stay informed about your state's laws. Set a reminder to review your state's DOE website at the beginning of each school year. Laws can change between sessions, and what was true last year may not apply this year. When in doubt, reach out directly to your state DOE or a qualified homeschool legal organization. Confidence comes from knowledge, and knowledge comes from staying engaged.

Final Thoughts

Homeschooling is a legal right in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, but the way that right is exercised varies widely depending on where you live. Whether you are in a state that requires nothing more than a parent's decision or a state that expects detailed annual reporting, the key to a successful homeschool experience is preparation.

Start by understanding your state's specific requirements. Use the table and detailed sections in this guide as a starting point, then verify the current rules with your state's Department of Education. Build a system for organizing your records, set calendar reminders for deadlines, and connect with other homeschooling families in your area who can share practical advice.

Remember that compliance is not the enemy of educational freedom. Meeting your state's requirements is simply the framework within which you operate. Inside that framework, you have extraordinary flexibility to tailor your child's education to their interests, strengths, and pace. Many families find that once they establish a compliance routine, it becomes second nature and takes very little time away from actual teaching and learning.

If you ever feel uncertain about a legal requirement, do not guess. Reach out to your state homeschool association, consult HSLDA, or contact your local superintendent's office. The homeschool community is large, supportive, and full of people who have navigated the same questions you are facing.

We created this guide because we believe every family deserves access to clear, straightforward information about their homeschool rights and responsibilities. We hope it serves you well as you begin or continue your homeschool journey.

About Homeschool Connects

Homeschool Connects is a free platform designed to help families navigate every stage of homeschooling. From understanding legal requirements to choosing curriculum, tracking student progress, and connecting with local co-ops, we are here to make homeschooling accessible and manageable for everyone. Visit www.homeschoolconnects.com to explore our full suite of tools and resources.

About Homeschool Connects

Homeschool Connects is a free platform helping families navigate their homeschool journey with confidence. We provide tools, resources, and community to make homeschooling accessible to everyone.

Visit us at www.homeschoolconnects.com

Take our free quiz: [Is Homeschooling Right for Your Family?](#)

[Browse curriculum reviews and comparisons](#)

[Connect with local homeschool groups](#)