

Homeschooling in Pennsylvania

A FACT SHEET



Getting Started:

Beginning of the year:

1. **Affidavit.** The law requires that parents file a notarized affidavit with their local school superintendent when they begin homeschooling for that year. This affidavit is stating that you wear in writing that you meet certain stipulations. Before turning it into the school administration, this form does need notarized:
 - That instruction will be given in English
 - That the person supervising the home-education program is the student's parent or legal guardian
 - That said parent or legal guardian has a high school diploma or equivalent
 - That the student has received any immunizations & any other health and medical services required by law (or that the student has a religious or medical exemption to the same)
 - That no adult living in the home or any person having legal custody of the student has been convicted of particular crimes within the past 5 years
 - And that the home-education program will comply with the state's provisions

Where can I get this affidavit notarized?

- Some school districts will notarize for you. Ask the administrative office if this is an option for you. I ALWAYS ask for a receipt or copy of the notarized affidavit for my records.
- Contact your local state representative office. They may also notarize for homeschool affidavit.
- Local Township or Borough offices.
- Local Bank/Attorney office.

****Some may ask for a small fee for the notary services. I have never paid as there are many free options in my community.****

In regard to the submission of any other paperwork along with the affidavit and objectives, the affidavit should be enough. **You should never need to submit a copy of your high school diploma, a vaccination record, a criminal clearance or any other “supporting documentation” if you attest to these in your affidavit.**

When do you submit this to the school district? Pennsylvania law says: “A child who will turn 6 on or before September 1 must begin a home education program that school year. A child who turns 6 after September 1 must begin a home education program no later than the start of the following school year.” This means if your kiddo is 6 years old before September 1 and you want to homeschool, you will need to file an affidavit/objectives for your child. If they turn 6 after September 1st, you do NOT need to submit an affidavit/objectives for them (you can still teach them their current school work but you do not need to notify the school district that you are homeschooling.).

- Starting homeschool for the FIRST time?
If this is the case, you need to have all your paperwork turned in before you begin any schooling or count any school days. Typically, by the end of August. Remember, you need everything turned in by the end of June so make enough time to get in 180 days of instruction.
- Continuing to homeschool (and have in the past already submitted paperwork)?
If you are homeschooling again, you need paperwork turned in by August 1st of the upcoming school year you plan to homeschool.
- Withdrawing your kids from school to begin homeschooling?
You can withdrawal your kids from school at any time and begin homeschooling. Make sure you file all the necessary paperwork before you begin. You can count the days (towards your 180 needed for the school year) your child has already completed at their school before you withdraw them to homeschool.

2. **Educational Objectives:** the law also states, along with the affidavit, to submit “an outline of proposed education objectives by subject area. The required outline of proposed education objectives shall not be utilized by the superintendent in determining if the home education program is out of compliance...”

Keep these objectives broad/general. Don't stress, these can be changed throughout the year as you get into a good rhythm. Treat these as goals you have set for yourself and your children. You are the **Supervisor**; you are in charge and make decisions for your child's education. These objectives are basically your goals and with any education program, goals can change.

Don't worry if you don't even have curriculum picked out. Things will fall into place as you go. If you have questions, feel free to ask me or your evaluator.

If you are unsure about what to do, see the sample objectives on our website.

Just be sure to include all the required subjects.

- For **elementary** (grades 1-6), you need: English (spelling/reading/writing), Arithmetic, Science, History of US and PA/Civics/Geography (social studies), Safety Education (including fire safety), Health/Physiology, Physical Education, Music, Art.

- For **Secondary** (Grades 7-Graduation), you need: English (language/literature/speech/composition), Science, Social Studies (geography/civics/World History/US &PA History), Mathematics (General/Algebra/Geometry), Art, Music, Physical Education, Health, Safety Education (including fire safety).
- **Special Education:** If your child has a current IEP, you may need to get your homeschool objectives approved before turning them in. Check out the information regarding this on the AskPauline website for more guidance. <http://askpauline.com/hs/homeschoolaffidavit.html#objectives>

- 3. During the school year: Portfolio.** Families keep a portfolio of work which shows that their children are learning the required subjects for the required amount of time (180 days or 900 hours -- elementary; 180 days or 990 hours secondary).

This collection of work (portfolio) shows off the work that the students are doing. It can also include photos taken on field trips, student compositions, and a list of books read. Remember, your evaluator only wants to see **progress**.

I encourage families to pick a few examples for each course from the beginning, middle, and end of the year. Have **fun** with this. It could even be turned into a wonderful assignment that your kids help put together. They can enjoy looking back at this portfolio for years to come.

****Check out the Portfolio Checklist I have FREE on our website to help you include everything you need.**

This will help when preparing documentation to show your end-of-the-year evaluation with an approved evaluator.**

- 4. Standardized Testing: 3rd, 5th, and 8th Grade.** This is one requirement that needs added to the portfolio, *“in grades three, five and eight results of nationally normed standardized achievement tests in reading/language arts and mathematics or the results of Statewide tests administered in these grade levels”*

- California Achievement Test
- Comprehensive Testing Program (CTPIV)
- Iowa Test of Basic Skills
- Metropolitan Achievement Test
- Peabody Achievement Individual Test – Revised Version
- Stanford Achievement Test
- Terra Nova
- Woodcock Johnson Revised Tests of Achievement III
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test III (WIAT-III)
- ... or the PSSAs

** Anybody, except the parents themselves, can give the tests. Some testing sites will also offer a proctor (often on-line...we use the Iowa Test through BJU) to administer the test and provide quick, printable results.

Remember, no other grades need testing. Only 3, 5, & 8. **

5. **End of the school year: Evaluation.** In the spring, the families meet with an evaluator of their choosing. This evaluator reviews the portfolio, interviews the child, and certifies in an evaluation letter that the student is getting an appropriate education.

The evaluator can be a certified teacher, a licensed psychologist, a non-public school teacher with recent experience, or anybody else with the advanced approval of the superintendent.

Many evaluators are themselves homeschooling parents. You can usually find a list of evaluators on various Diploma Association websites such as PHEA or ECHSDA. The evaluator is tasked with looking for "progress."

6. **End of school year: Turn in evaluation letter.** By June 30, the parents must turn in to their school superintendents the evaluation letter which states that the student is getting an appropriate education. The evaluator chosen by the parents, not the state, determines if they can continue homeschooling. I make sure to give the evaluator's letter to the school but also keep a copy for my own records.

TIP: When I turn in my evaluator's letter for the completed year, I also turn in my affidavit and objectives for the upcoming year. Once these are all turned in, you can start counting school days as of July 1 for the upcoming year. 😊

Happy Homeschooling!

Check out my website for downloads, paperwork, tips, and curriculum help!

www.cookfamilyhomestead.com