

Frequently Asked Questions



Haven Learning Center

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We accept the following Credit cards



The following is a list of frequently asked questions about home schooling that Haven Learning Center receives on a regular basis. If you have a question that does not appear on this list, please feel free to contact us at:

Frequently Asked Questions

<mailto:haveninfo@havenhomeschool.com>

Why do families choose to home school their children?

Across the United States, more and more families are turning to home schooling as the solution to their children's education needs. There are many reasons for this trend, the most common being parents' strong desire to disassociate their children from negative influences often found in public schools. In addition to the rampant problems of drugs, gangs, increasing sexual activity and decreasing morals, parents are now also concerned for the personal safety of their children while at school. These parents welcome the opportunity to devote more personal attention to the individual needs of their children and ensure that their children receive a quality education in a safe environment supervised by the parents. Flexible schedules and individualized curricula often allow students the chance to receive a superior education at home. Many students take advantage of this flexibility to pursue other interests concurrently with their education. Learning the family business, fashion modeling, hot air ballooning, herpetology, dirt bike racing and theater arts are all examples of activities in which Haven Learning Center's student have been involved. And the increased interaction between parents and children serve to strengthen the family unit.

We at Haven have recently seen a trend in which Haven students are not removing themselves from traditional schooling forever; rather, they home school for a two-year period (on average), returning to public or private school later. This break from traditional schooling allows students the time to catch up on basic academic skills or courses that were missed along the way. Another reason some families choose home schooling has to do with the student's health. Sadly, health concerns make it difficult for many students to meet the stringent public school attendance codes adopted by many states. At the same time that public school attendance laws have become stricter, we have seen an increase in illnesses such as allergies and depression. The average high school student carries a quite heavy load today. Stress-related illnesses among teenagers are not a surprising result. Home schooling offers an ideal alternative for these students to remain academically on track.

Nationwide, how many home schoolers are there?

Home schoolers are in good company! In 1997, Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home School Education Research Institute (<http://www.hslda.org/docs/study/ray1997/03.asp>) estimated that there were 1.23 million children home schooled in America during the 1996 – 1997 school year. (See Strengths of Their Own: Home Schoolers Across America Ray, 1997) At the current growth rate, we estimate that the school year of 2000 – 2001 would see America with about 2.3 million home schooled children. Here at Haven Learning Center, we have seen a 33% increase in annual enrollments. We currently have about 150 enrolled students.

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Will I legally be able to use Haven Learning Center to home school in my home state?

Each state has its own laws governing home schooling. (Home schoolers in most states are fortunate in that they are able to use Haven Learning Center's programs.) It may be that you can use one of our programs, but not another. For example, your state may require that you have a teaching staff or teacher overseeing your work, in which case Plan would not be allowed. But Plan B or the Haven School could be used. The Home School Legal Defense Association provides a useful state-by-state breakdown of the laws governing each state. Accurate information, tact and respect when dealing with public authorities – as well as prior planning – will help you to avoid possible complications. Haven Learning Center is always happy to work with you in adapting curricula to meet the home school regulations existing in your state.

If I home school now, will my child be able to return to public or private school later?

As in the case of state laws, each school will make that decision independently. States have different laws regarding the transfer of credits between schools, but it is almost always left to the discretion of the principal of the receiving public school. The principal will often follow the guidelines of the school district. So the best answer to this question is to check with the school or schools you believe your child will most likely be returning to. Private schools have a tendency to be much more accepting. Many have a policy of testing a student for admittance.

While most colleges have long been supportive of home schooling, we are now finding that other public and private schools are changing their opinions and becoming much more supportive and accepting of home schooling than they were as little as five years ago. To our delight here at Haven, several public school counselors have requested information about our services and given recommendations of our programs to students!

If you are considering pulling your child out of public school for home schooling, it is important that you speak to your school counselor to ask about the school's re-admittance policy for home schoolers. Be very specific. For instance, high schools are going to have stricter re-admittance policies than elementary or middle schools. This is due to the credit and course requirements for graduation. A school may answer "no" when asked if they accept home schooling credits if they think that you purchased books on your own and graded all the work yourself (even though many home schoolers are very successful this way). These schools are often more open to the idea of a correspondence school in which all schoolwork is overseen and graded by qualified teachers, such as with our Haven High School Program. Assume that the student might return to her original school at a future time and talk to the counselors before deciding which Haven program best suits your needs. A Haven counselor will also be happy to advise you.

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Will home schooling affect my child's chances of entering college?

This is often the major concern of parents considering home schooling. The good news is that most major colleges welcome home schoolers. Surprisingly, it is sometimes easier for home schoolers to be admitted into a college than it is to be admitted into public high school.

Each college will have its own admission policies, and your child will need to apply just as if he had attended a public or private school. Considering a particular college? Check out the admission policies now. Make sure that the student has taken all the required courses. If a required course is not available to you, talk to an admissions officer about possible substitutions. Many colleges will ask for a record of high school courses taken and resultant grades – a high school transcript. If you are not using a home schooling program that provides this service, you will need to do it yourself. Haven Learning Center's Middle and High School Programs prepare report cards and transcripts for you. But if you use Haven's Umbrella program, you'll need to prepare your own. (Don't worry; we will be happy to help you.)

Prepare for, study for and take your SAT examinations on time. Need a scholarship? Start looking for them as early as the 10th grade and, yes, many scholarships are available to home schoolers. You can buy informative books listing the current scholarships available. Libraries often have them, but you need to make sure that they are current. Your local public school counselor should have this information and will often be happy to help. The Internet is also an excellent resource for you to search for financial aid and scholarship information.

Memorize the five Ps! Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance! With knowledge and planning, your home school experience can be successful and rewarding

What are the SAT examinations, and why are they important?

The College Board, a not-for-profit educational association, was founded in 1900 to support academic preparation for higher education. Colleges, universities and scholarships use your academic record, SAT Program test scores, extracurricular activities, teacher recommendations and answers to application questions to see how well-prepared a student is for college-level work. The College Board provides various tests, such as the SAT I: Reasoning Tests, the SAT II: Subject Tests, and the SAT II: Writing Test. Most colleges require the SAT I for admittance. Your score is compared against the scores of two million other students who take the SAT I each year. Your high school transcript – a record of your courses taken, grades and class rank – is the best single indicator of how well you will do in college.

For more information, contact [The College Board](#).

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How have home-schooled students performed on standardized achievement tests?

Parents are switching to home schooling because it works. In studies done by Dr. Brian Ray of the National Home Education Research Institute, data was collected for standardized academic achievement tests for the 1994 – 1995 school year. Home school students from grades K – 12 were compared against public school students from grades K –12. In every subject area, home schoolers scored on average 30% higher than their public school counterparts!

Furthermore, the studies found that the longer a student had schooled at home, the higher the increase in the standardized test scores. In particular, a significant jump occurs after the completion of the second year of home schooling. (See *Strengths of Their Own: Home Schoolers Across America* Ray, 1997)

Time Magazine (February 21, 2000. Vol.155 N. 7 Special Issue Visions 21) reported that the national average SAT score for test takers in 1999 was 1016. The national average SAT score for test takers in that same year who identified themselves as home schoolers, however, was 1083 – an amazing 67 points higher!

How long does it take to settle into a regular home-schooling routine?

Parents need to allow for a transitional period of time when moving from a traditional schooling method to home schooling. Our experience at Haven Learning Center has been that it takes about three months before students settle into their home schooling routine. Time is needed for the student to discover best learning styles, what time of day he focuses best, which schedule works best for he and his family. Everyone involved in the home-schooling process learns self-discipline and time management skills. Haven's Home Schooling Guide Book and customized weekly lesson plans will help you organize your time more efficiently, assess skill development, and maximize your opportunities to succeed. What wonderful and useful life skills to learn!

Some students, in our experience, seem to experience an emotional transition period. Some sleep a lot, some are moody, and others act as if a huge weight has been removed from their shoulders. We believe that the students are experiencing something similar to what young children in day care often experience. Parents of young children in day care often complain that their children act like little monsters when they get home from day care – yet the day care worker who watched them all day will say that they were perfect little angels! We believe that the stresses of the day just build up inside them and when they get home – to their "safe place" – they just let go! It's probably the healthiest thing for them to do! Similarly, students do experience significant stress at school. It can be mild, as in the form of mild peer pressure, or more severe. When they transition to home schooling, they are now in their "safe place." It's time to let go! Be aware and empathetic to this process; however, at the same time, do your best to set up a regular routine from the very beginning. In time, the student will adjust.

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Am I qualified to teach my child at home?

You are the person most qualified to answer this question. You know your child better than anyone else and have the deepest love and concern for her. You are the caretaker of her emotional and academic development and therefore are in the best position to make decisions regarding her well-being. You have already taught your child many useful skills, such as how to walk, how to speak, and how to tie her own shoes.

The need for parental guidance will differ from family to family. Some students will require a lot of individual attention, while others will work very well on their own. As students age and mature, they should take more and more responsibility for their own education, learning to better manage their time and work more independently.

You do not need a teaching degree to effectively teach your child! Actually, you are better off seeing yourself as a mentor or guide in your child's education. The emphasis should not be on your teaching, but on the student's learning. It is not necessary that you be an expert on the subject matter.

There are many resources out there to help you. If algebra intimidates you, consider hiring a math tutor or joining a home schooling support group. You might find someone happy to teach algebra if you consider trading by agreeing to mentor in your area of expertise (Literature? Art? Spelling?) Finally, consider a grading service correspondence school (both services offered by Haven Learning Center). The more difficult the subject matter, the more you'll benefit from the service. One-to-one tutoring has many advantages over classroom learning. Students do not move on to the next concept until the present one is mastered. Curricula and teaching methods can be adapted to the student's individual learning style and academic level.

How many hours a week should I devote to home schooling?

This depends on your goals as a home schooler and is going to vary depending on situations. Factors to consider are the student's i.e., grade level and learning style. On average, students should plan on spending between 3 – 4 hours per day on their academic work. For families concerned about meeting certain state attendance requirements, keep in mind that "elective" studies can also be considered as part of the school day. Many personal activities, such as hobbies, part-time employment, or religious studies can be considered as an elective course. Keeping accurate records with a simple time sheet can save you from problems that could arise later.

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I work during the day – is it still possible for me to home school, and do you recommend it?

Check with your state's legal requirements. In most states, the answer to this question will be "yes." Be sure that the student is old enough to be legally left at home alone. In general, this is probably around 12 years of age. By this age the student can work on at least a majority of her schoolwork independently. The rest of the schoolwork can be completed when you are home and help is available.

Do we recommend it? This is a tough question. In general we'd have to say that it is best if a parent can be at home to supervise. However, we have so many families whose children are so unhappy at a traditional school. Either they are not getting what they need educationally, or their emotional well-being is threatened. Inappropriate social influences, health problems, safety concerns – whatever the reason, it seems that even if home schooling for them is not the most ideal situation, it could easily be an improvement over their current situation. So, in the end, you are the best judge. Do consider whether your child can be trusted at home alone. You'll need to make sure that you set ground rules about who can visit during the day. Also, make sure that you cover basic safety procedures for a child at home alone – a must for any child. Many communities are also instigating daytime curfew laws, so this is another aspect that would need to be addressed.

For working parents, we strongly suggest enrollment in the Haven Middle School, Haven High School or a similar type program. It will save you from becoming overwhelmed from the pressures of having full-time jobs and being home-schooling parents.

How can I teach several children of various ages all at once?

This is a challenge – and yet, it's not hard as you think! It does take planning. Older students will be doing much of the work independently. It won't take long for you to get intimately acquainted with each of your children's learning styles and needs. Let us give you an example. Your little 7-year-old, Suzie, is a great reader. She reads voraciously, with pure enjoyment and above grade level. While you enjoy discussions with her about her literature work, she actually needs very little help. In fact, you like to discuss Suzie's literature assignments while driving her to soccer practice!

Your son, Johnny, age 12, is currently having a little trouble with his math. (Those pesky fractions!) He needs more help and direction with math right now. So a smart parent might have a schedule set up like this... Johnny works on his math at the kitchen table at 11:00am each day, while you are busy preparing lunch for the family. If Johnny needs help he only needs to call you over to him! Since you know that it is important to be available to Johnny right now, this would be a good time to have Suzie working independently on her literature. She loves to read; she finds it easy and is therefore unlikely to require a lot of help from you during this time period.

With larger families, older siblings can often be quite beneficial in mentoring their younger brothers or sisters. Science projects, history studies and field trips can cover multiple age levels. Plan your time wisely and you'll find home schooling is easier than you think.

You'll also find that home schoolers in general are a generous and resourceful lot. There is a lot of help and advice out there for you to draw from if you get involved with other local home schoolers. In the future, Haven Learning Center will host a Web page offering free advice, field trip ideas and other fun projects that help keep home schooling fun.

Frequently Asked Questions

What about socializing with other children? Will home schooling deprive my child of beneficial interaction with other children?

Ten years ago, this was probably the most commonly asked question by media and non-home schoolers. Lately, we find the question is rarely asked, if asked at all. This is most likely due to the fact that home-schooled students have often proved to be the best "socialized" kids around! More often we are likely to read about the unhealthy social relationships that are fostered in many of the public school systems.

However, it is, and should remain, a valid parental concern. Most youths will socialize, they will, in fact, demand opportunities to do so. Home schooling parents have a unique opportunity to provide their children with opportunities to develop HEALTHY relationships. Youth groups, church groups, community sports and many other opportunities exist for healthy fellowship.

The following findings were reported in the study "COMPARISON OF SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT BETWEEN HOME AND TRADITIONALLY SCHOOLED STUDENTS" by Shyers, L. Edward, Ph.D., University of Florida, in 1992:

"Traditional schools provide for regular classroom contact with children of the same age, and it is assumed that this regular contact with other children aids appropriate social adjustment. By their very nature, home schools do not provide for regular formal classroom contact with children other than siblings. Because of this obvious difference, parents, educators, legislators and courts have questioned whether children schooled at home are as socially well adjusted as their age mates in traditional programs. Investigation of this possible difference was the focus of this study.

The results of this study imply that children between the ages of 8 and 10 (sample universe for the study) have similar beliefs about themselves regardless of how they are schooled. All age groups in both research populations had self-concept scores higher than the average national average as measured by the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale.

The results of this study further indicate that children from both schooling environments participating in this study achieved scores on the Children's Assertive Behavior Scale revealing slightly passive understanding of social situations.

According to the results of this study, children between the ages of 8 and 10 who had been educated entirely in a home school had significantly fewer problem behaviors, as measured by the Direct Observation form of the _Child Behavior Checklist_, than children of the same age from traditional schools. Children of this age in this study, who had been educated entirely in traditional schools, revealed problem behaviors above the normal range for national populations of the same age."

It can be concluded from the results of this study that appropriate social skills can develop apart from the formal contact with children other than siblings. This supports the belief held by home school proponents

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My child has special needs. Will we be able to meet these needs at home?

Before doing anything, know the specific learning challenge. A child with special needs will require more time and commitment from you. We imagine that you already know this! Many families find that traditional schooling is simply unable to offer the kind of attention needed. Home schooling allows for the entire curriculum to be designed specifically to best suit the child. So home schooling can actually offer a tremendous advantage over traditional schooling for the child with special needs.

For instance, if we are speaking of the learning disability dyslexia, this term actually covers a wide range of symptoms. Does the student see a mirror image of the entire page she is reading – or is it only certain letters within the words that are flipped? Is it the same letters each time? Some kids are actually seeing the space between the letters and not the actual letters at all. Then design your curriculum and teaching method to best address that problem. There are many different methods of teaching – lecture-based, textbook-based, video-based, computer-based. Employ the method that best works for your child.

At Haven Learning Center, we have been experiencing a dramatic growth in the number of ADD- or ADHD-diagnosed students enrolling over the last few years. Most are doing very well. The ability to tailor the courses to their needs and to break often and get away from classroom distractions has proven to be very beneficial.

Which home-schooling method or program should I use?

First, you must check into your state's legal requirements and discover which programs are legal for you to use. In most cases, you will be free to pick and choose. But check anyway – this is not an area in which you want to make a mistake.

Second, consider whether or not you wish to have a religious doctrine included within your child's curriculum.

Third, consider the learning style that best suits your child, and look for a program that best suits that style. Remember, you do not necessarily need to purchase your entire curriculum from the same source – unless your state requires that you do. Shop around.

Fourth, consider cost and your budget.

Fifth (and this one is important!), consider the likelihood of the student returning to a public or private school. Which curricula will those schools accept? Call them and find out! In general, public high schools will be the most discriminating. The older the student, the more strongly that we recommend the use of a correspondence program!

Sixth, how much time do you have available to spend each day home schooling? Home schooling affects the entire family and everybody's needs should be considered.

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What expenses are involved in home schooling?

This will vary greatly and depends on the types of programs you are using. If you use a service to help you, you can expect for this to be the major portion of your cost. The range of services offered, as well as the quality of the service, will be the biggest determining factor in pricing.

Material costs also vary greatly. Many families buy used books from local home schooling support groups. Younger children can reuse books completed by older siblings. Community libraries and the Internet are excellent sources for teaching aids and reading/research materials.

At Haven Learning Center, the average student spends about \$125.00 - \$200.00 a year on quality school books. These can be purchased all at once, or spread out over the course of the year. Students enrolled in the Haven High School and Haven Middle School Programs will spend less, as they do not need to purchase teachers' editions and answer keys. At Haven, we reuse and recycle textbooks to keep the costs down for you. A variety of curricula are available, ranging from the more economical to the more elite, including interactive computer software. Haven will also purchase back current textbooks in good condition.

Haven services vary and depend on the amount of support you desire. The "Haven Umbrella Program" is the most economical, the best value being "Plan B." Parents will be expected to do the main bulk of the work.

In the Haven High School and Middle School programs students are actually enrolled in the full-service correspondence school, Haven Learning Center. Students who successfully complete the High School program receive a Haven Learning Center High School diploma. The Haven High School Program is a college preparatory program. Many Haven Learning Center graduates have enrolled in major universities, trade schools or local colleges for further studies and have gone on to have successful careers. While we tailor the studies to meet the needs and abilities of the student, we do make every attempt to teach the best academic education possible for that student. Haven's programs are high-service, high-quality programs. Although it costs more than our Umbrella Program, the added services offered with Haven's Correspondence School make this a wise choice. Please read further in "Haven Services" for more detailed information.

How do I get started with home schooling?

Step 1 – Do your research. Pay particular attention to your state home schooling requirements. If the state requires you to register with the state, then you must do so. Consider registering with the Home School Legal Defense Association, too. They do a wonderful job serving and protecting home schooling families across America.

Step 2 – Choose your home schooling service and supply source. If you choose Haven Learning Center, refer to our [Enrollment Checklist](#).

Step 3 – If you have not formally withdrawn the student from his current school, you must do so now. For this step, your local home school support group will have the best information for your area, particularly if you are coming from the local school system. Some school districts are more accepting and supportive than others. Any school district can make trouble for you if it wishes to, even if the law is on your side. Avoid pitfalls by arming yourself with information.

Step 4 – Decide upon a curriculum. Often there are state-mandated requirements for home education that will determine what courses you must study. (Click here to view a list of your states requirements.) You should also choose some elective courses that interest you.

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Step 5 – Buy your materials and do the work! Fortunately, home schooling provides families with the opportunity to tailor the education to meet the student's needs, interests, family budget and schedule. Choose textbooks that best match your student's learning style and academic abilities. Haven Learning center offers a set of comprehensive diagnostic skills assessment tests to help you with your decisions.

Even if you have never been successful in the past with your schooling, you can be now! But make no mistake – home schooling is not a screen to hide behind. If the student is not doing the work, he is a dropout.

Does Haven Learning Center write and publish its own textbooks, or do you purchase from another source?

Haven Learning Center purchases its textbooks from other sources. Saxon, Jamestown, Merrill, Steck-Vaughn and Scott Foresman are just a few of the excellent publishers whose textbooks we use. We feel that it is very important that our textbooks are written by the top names in education and are easily recognized by all school officials. This helps to ensure that the curriculum guidelines for each subject area in each state are met. By using recognized curricula, students experience a smoother transition from traditional schooling to home schooling, and back, if needed.

The staff at Haven Learning Center is continually researching new textbooks to add to our selection, in order to provide you with the most complete range of curricula to meet a variety of educational needs, styles and budgets. Haven also publishes a variety of textbook study guides designed to assist the home schooler.