

How Can I Homeschool?

As you begin your homeschooling journey, it is important to know your legal obligations and requirements. There are many people who do not agree with this form of education. We must be wise as [Matt. 10:16](#) encourages us and stand firm in our beliefs as [1 Peter 3:13-16](#) illustrates. Homeschooling families need to be aware of the laws and be able to show that they are obeying these laws. Being diligent in these matters makes it easier to defend the right to home educate our children ([Heb.13:17](#)).



We must know our rights as US citizens. We are responsible to voice our concerns and opinions, and we have the choice in this country to give our children's education over to a public or private authority. Once a child is released to the authority, that authority is the one that has the right to make decisions without parental consent, because consent was given upon release. This is important to remember as you consider even a private school. You are consenting to their basis or form of education, which may or may not always line up with your family values.

State of Alabama



The state of Alabama does not have a home school law, and it is actually illegal to "homeschool". However, home education is legally available through two different avenues:

1. Private Tutor

Most families do not choose this avenue. A private tutor is required to be certified by the state, to cover required subjects, to keep a daily register of work and attendance, and to make reports as the state board requires.



2. Church School

This is the first choice for most families! There is no direct state or local government involvement, and church schools will allow "off-site instruction" for families that want to home educate. Many church schools are purely "off-site", but each school will establish its own requirements of teachers/parents. Technically, a church school's only requirement for the state is that an attendance register is kept of the students. [Visit this link](#) for a list of Birmingham area church schools.

The Most Important Part

When enrolled in a church school, a **church school enrollment form** must be signed and filed with the local superintendent. The law actually states that the parent should submit this form to the local school superintendent. The parent must first have their church school administrator sign the form, confirming enrollment. Then, the original form with original signatures should be sent certified mail to the superintendent. A copy of the form and the certified receipt should be kept with important papers at home.

Many homeschool legal experts say that Alabama has one of the best homeschool options in the country. For Alabama homeschoolers, the main problem has been the fact that church schools can be expensive and sometimes unreasonable. It is important to "shop" around and make sure that you are enrolling in a school that will give your family the support it needs at a reasonable cost.

Fortunately, children do not have to be enrolled in a church school (or any school) until the school year that they will be or become 7 years old. For a brief overview of the wording of the Alabama law regarding homeschooling, please visit <http://www.hslda.org/laws/analysis/Alabama.pdf>.

- Kristy Trent

Kristy Trent has been officially homeschooling for over 8 years and currently coordinates [Highlands Homeschoolers](#), a homeschool support group in the Birmingham, AL area. This article is an excerpt from discussions at the New to Homeschooling workshops that Highlands Homeschoolers offers each summer.