

Your Guide To **HOMESCHOOLING** *in Colorado*

**A simple overview of
everything you need
to know about ...**

- ✓ What Homeschooling Actually Is 2
- ✓ Colorado's Law 4
- ✓ Curriculum & Teaching Methods 5
- ✓ Community, Support, & Resources 6
- ✓ Your First Steps 8

**Whether you are new to homeschooling
or new to Colorado, or both ...
this simple guide is
*for you.***

CHEC.org

Christian Home Educators of Colorado



Defending your family's freedom and helping you homeschool with confidence

We've been here since 1990, and our team of homeschool parents and grads have helped tens of thousands of families to successfully homeschool. We've been through it, and we're ready to help you, too!

Let's go!

Clickable links
throughout this guide!



Homeschooling is...



Parent-Directed and Free From Government Control



Growing in Popularity

Private, parent-led, home-based education is an age-old traditional practice that a decade ago appeared to be cutting-edge and “alternative,” but is now bordering on “mainstream” in the United States. There are about 2.3 million home-educated students in the United States, and it appears the homeschool population is continuing to grow (at an estimated 2% to 8% per annum over the past few years). It may be the fastest-growing form of education in the United States.¹



Academically Successful

A 2018 data analysis revealed that Colorado private homeschool students are scoring at the 84th to 91st percentile (on average) across the subjects of reading, language, math, science, and social studies on standardized academic achievement tests. This is 34 to 41 percentile points above the U.S. public school average.²



Tailored to Each Student

As all parents know, every child has a unique personality and learning style, as well as emotional and relational needs. Homeschooling allows you to get outside the box of traditional schooling and ask, “How can I best meet my child’s needs?” — and then tailor their education accordingly. That might look like one-on-one time working through a subject he or she is struggling with, adapting your curriculum to allow your students more time to focus on subjects they’re passionate about, or even allowing them to learn responsibility by taking charge of their own education.



Time-Saving

Homeschooling allows our students to work at their own pace and not have to wait for other children before moving on to the next concept, or they can take more time as needed to master a concept. Thus, they’re able to accomplish a lot more in their own time frame. Many homeschool students have been able to devote themselves to becoming proficient in music, writing, computer programming, or agriculture, as well as starting their own business, getting involved in the community, and much more.

(1) Ray, Brian D. (2018). Research facts on homeschooling. Retrieved March 18, 2018 from <https://www.nheri.org/research-facts-on-homeschooling/>. And Redford, Jeremy; Battle, Danielle; & Bielick, Stacey. (2016, November). Homeschooling in the United States: 2012. National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.

(2) Ray, Brian D. (2010). Academic achievement and demographic traits of homeschool students: A nationwide study. Academic Leadership Journal, 8(1). Retrieved April 19, 2016 from <http://www.nheri.org/AcademicAchievementAndDemographicTraitsOfHomeschoolStudentsRay2010.pdf>

For more homeschool research and more in-depth interpretation of research, please contact: National Home Education Research Institute (NHERI), PO Box 13939, Salem OR 97309, USA | www.nheri.org | (503) 364-1490 | mail@nheri.org | Copyright © 2018 by Brian D. Ray.



A Safe, Nurturing Learning Environment



Proven to Build Strong Character



A Fantastic, Eternally Life-Changing Option

In Deuteronomy 6:5-7, parents are given the amazing responsibility (and privilege!) of passing on their faith to their children: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up* (ESV). This natural integration of our love for Jesus into everyday life happens most naturally when we're the ones teaching our children throughout the day.



I loved the flexibility that we had in our schooling; if we didn't always get book work done, it was because we were expanding our learning in other ways by seeing and experiencing real life. It also made it possible for our parents to disciple us in the ways of the Lord, which included teaching principles about character both during school and in the rest of life."

—KAYLA
HOMESCHOOL

Lots of families *consider* homeschooling but are *wary* of things like...

- **Qualifications** — "I'm not qualified!"
- **Relational Issues** — "I can't deal with my kids for that much time!"
- **Financial Issues** — "I can't afford it."
- **Socialization** — "My kids won't be socialized."

We've covered these common concerns (and more), and why homeschooling really can be the best way to prepare your children for a life of service and success, in a **free online video course**.

Homeschooling
in *Colorado*
A **FREE** Online Educational Course

Get free access at

ColoradoHomeschool.com



Colorado's Law

So we're agreed ... homeschooling is fabulous! Now it's time to get started. First up, take a look over all three options for homeschooling under Colorado's law.

1 The Homeschool Law (Notice of Intent)

Under the homeschool law (titled "Home-Based Education Law"), parents file a Notice of Intent (NOI) annually with any school district in the state of Colorado, at least 14 days prior to beginning homeschooling.

The NOI must include:

- student(s) name and age(s)
- the student(s) address
- the projected number of hours of attendance
- the parent's signature
- the name of the independent school (IF you submit assessment results to an independent school)
- (No other information is legally required, unless the student was habitually truant)

Other requirements for this legal option include:

- Provide education for 172 days a year with an average of 4 hours a day
- Maintain records permanently (including attendance data, assessment results, and immunization/exemption records)
- Assess students in the 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th, and 11th grades (they need to achieve higher than a 13% composite score on a nationally standardized test) OR be evaluated by a qualified person who determines they have shown sufficient academic progress according to their ability

2 A Colorado-Based Independent School

Parents enroll their students in the independent school of their choice (located in Colorado), which then serves as an "umbrella" for their home education program, releasing them from the obligation to report to a school district and from following the home-based education law specifics mentioned in #1 above. Every school's policies, benefits, and enrollment fees differ.

We loved this option so much that we launched our own **CHEC Independent School!** Here's a basic overview of CHEC IS policies:



- Keep and submit annual attendance records showing 172+ days a year
- Submit assessment results on school years that end in odd-numbered years for grades 3-11 (may choose standardized testing, a professional evaluation, or the CHEC IS Parent Evaluation option)
- Cover required subjects

[CHECIS.org](https://www.CHECIS.org)

3 A Colorado State Teacher's License

If a parent, adult relative, legal guardian, or designated tutor has a current Colorado State Teacher's License, then there are no requirements [per CRS 22-33-104 (2) (i) (I)]. You are free to choose your own curriculum and keep records for yourself, but you are not required to turn records in. (If you do file an NOI, you will have to follow the Homeschool Law and would not be allowed to use an unrelated tutor.)

Check out the easy, at-a-glance comparison chart of these options at

[CHEC.org/law](https://www.CHEC.org/law)

Curriculum

Alright, we're legal now: so how does the teaching actually work? Enter curriculum. There are so many choices, from textbooks to videos to online ... but rest easy. If it's your first year, consider choosing a simple curriculum-in-a-package. As you get more comfortable, you may want to begin to pick and choose different options for each subject.

The beauty of homeschooling is that you can tailor your education to meet your individual child's needs!

Not sure where to begin looking? Here's a quick list to get started:

Full Curriculum Packages (great for your first year!)

- Abeka
- Alpha Omega/Monarch
- BJU Press
- Master Books
- ACE: Accelerated Christian Education

Subject-Specific

- Generations (history, literature, Bible)
- Apologia (science, worldview, math)
- Math-U-See (math, language arts)

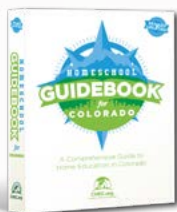
Other Resources

- Homeschool Summits Exhibit Hall (sign up for a free event to access): HomeschoolSummits.com
- Timberdoodle (hands-on learning)
- Rainbow Resource (wide selection of curriculum & general help)
- CathyDuffyReviews.com (great reviews of curriculum)

We highly recommend coming to the **Rocky Mountain Homeschool Conference** to check out all your curriculum options in person. (Learn more at rockymountainhomeschoolconference.com.)

Learning & Teaching Styles

Identifying your child's **learning style** goes a long way toward helping you teach effectively. [This article](#) and [this article](#) are both helpful explanations to help you identify how your child learns best.



Just as important as your child's learning style is your own **teaching style**. Montessori, classical, eclectic, and so on — [read this article for a helpful breakdown](#).

For more details on discovering your student's learning styles and choosing the best curriculum, check out chapter four, 'Choosing Curriculum,' by Cindy Puhek, in The Homeschool Guidebook, available at CHEC.org/Guidebook.

Looking for *help* sorting through the options?

Sign up for this **free online event** (and then upgrade to the All-Access Pass if you like) that will help you...

1. Evaluate your curriculum options with a Christian worldview
2. ...to identify the right fit for every student for every subject
3. ...so you can homeschool with confidence!

HomeschoolSummits.com/Curriculum

Homeschool Curriculum
ONLINE SUMMIT 2.0

Community, Support, & Resources

You're legal, you've got books: now you need all the rest! Here's a small preview of the



Attend one of CHEC's **Homeschool Introductory Seminars** for new homeschooling families.

[CHEC.org/intro](https://www.checcolorado.org/intro)

Find a **local homeschool group** or at least several other families in your area who also homeschool, to provide friendship, group activities, and ongoing support. (Visit the online directory to find one in your area.)

[CHEC.org/groups](https://www.checcolorado.org/groups)



Sign up for a free subscription to the **Homeschool Update Magazine** which will give you ongoing encouragement, help you develop your "homeschool expertise," and notify you of upcoming homeschooling events.

[CHEC.org/subscribe](https://www.checcolorado.org/subscribe)

Join the **Colorado Homeschool Freedom Team**, led by Carolyn Martin, CHEC's Homeschool Legislative Liaison. Pray, give, donate, and volunteer to help us keep a close watch on the Colorado Capitol for homeschool liberty, parental rights, and religious freedom issues. Also consider joining Home School Legal Defense Association ([HSLDA.org](https://www.hsllda.org)), which provides legal services for homeschooling families and has been instrumental in preserving homeschool freedoms nationally.

[CHEC.org/freedom](https://www.checcolorado.org/freedom)



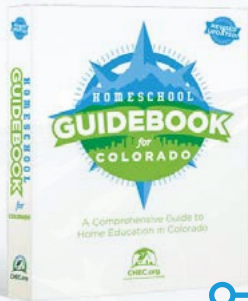
Join the CHEC **Colorado Homeschool Discussion Facebook group**. Get connected with other homeschoolers, learn about upcoming events and activities, and ask questions in this statewide community of homeschoolers.

[CHEC.org/fbgroup](https://www.checcolorado.org/fbgroup)

Participate in one of our **online Homeschool Summits**; these free, week-long online events feature video interview sessions from dozens of homeschool and parenting speakers from across the country, bringing thousands of Christian families around the world the resources and encouragement they need to homeschool with confidence and pass on the faith to their children.



HomeschoolSummits.com



Purchase the **CHEC Guidebook**, a valuable resource with incredibly in-depth how-tos for everything from homeschooling preschoolers to graduating high schoolers to starting a homeschool group (including lots of worksheets and resource recommendations). This book is written specifically for Colorado homeschoolers, and you definitely need a copy!

CHEC.org/guidebook

Check out the fun family events on the **CHEC Community Calendar**, a regularly-updated list of upcoming events just for homeschoolers and/or great for the whole family, including lots of free days!



CHEC.org/community/community-calendar



Rocky Mountain Homeschool Conference

Attend the **Rocky Mountain Homeschool Conference** hosted by CHEC annually in June. Over three days, 2,000+ parents find the training, resources, and encouragement they need for Christ-centered homeschooling through nationally-acclaimed homeschool speakers, education experts, and curriculum providers.

Get equipped for your homeschool journey!



RockyMountainHomeschoolConference.com

Your First Steps

You know the basics. Now here's where to head next. We promise: You can do it!

It's time to make your research turn into action. Your homeschooling adventure is about to begin!

1 Remember what true education is.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. (Proverbs 1:7)

Christian home education has the potential to be the best living demonstration and fulfillment of the definition of education (see right).

“Education is the bringing up of a child...education comprehends all that series of instruction and discipline which is intended to enlighten the understanding, correct the temper, and form the manners and habits of youth, and fit them for usefulness in their future stations.”

— WEBSTER'S 1828
DICTIONARY

2 Commit.

- **Are you willing to make education a priority?**
 - Schedule your day in order to accomplish your priorities — education must now be one of them.
 - Commit yourself to at least one full year. There will be failures and successes; give yourself time to work out the difficulties.
- **Are you committed to be homeschooling parents?**
 - Be willing to develop a godly attitude yourself. (Education begins with the parent, not the child!) What you do speaks louder than what you say!
 - Be willing to learn.
 - You're in God's school of character training.
 - You will learn many things along with your children.
- **Are you able to recognize your own strengths and weaknesses?**
 - Use your strengths to enhance your children's education.
 - Do not let your weaknesses be a point of discouragement, but a challenge to overcome or work around.
- **Are you willing to do what it takes to be successful?**
 - Research your options thoroughly by reading books, attending training seminars, meeting with veteran homeschoolers, and searching online.
 - Discipline your schedule, budget, and lifestyle to accommodate this change.
 - Commit to not comparing and instead finding joy! Your own journey will be unique and beautiful, even if it doesn't match “the Jones.”

3 Know your children.

- **Consider your child's strengths and weaknesses.**
 - Teach to their strengths (interests, learning styles).
 - Be aware that their weaknesses will cause frustration for both of you (short attention span, undeveloped skills).
 - Observe your child's likes and dislikes and use them as rewards and consequences.
- **Set limits and establish rules for family and school time behavior.**
 - Stay on the journey of learning to effectively lead your children.
 - If you have less respect and control than you would like, homeschooling may be the opportunity to gain control through consistency.
- **Watch for signs of frustration in your child such as crying, complaining, or becoming angry.**
 - Frustration tends to be manifested when too much time is taken to accomplish a task (example: never completing library books may indicate the reading level is too difficult).
 - Areas of frustration (math or language arts, for example) are obvious when a skill is undeveloped (learning gaps) and a child has difficulty accomplishing a given task.

4 Set and keep a schedule.

- **Establish a workable routine.**
 - Know the balance between organization and flexibility.
 - Don't compromise time spent teaching the core subjects (math, reading, writing, etc.) and Bible.
 - A regular eating, sleeping, working, and school routine can give security to your children.
 - Schedule visits, appointments, special activities, shopping, etc., for the afternoons, when optimal learning time has passed.
- **Make time for yourself.**
 - A quiet time before the children get up will set the tone for your day.
 - A 15- to 20-minute reading break or rest time in the afternoon can give you added energy for the remainder of the day.
- **Eliminate frustrations.**
 - Avoid texting or answering the phone during school time (turn it off if needed).
 - Take care of the things that bother you most BEFORE teaching begins: dirty dishes in the sink, unmade beds, or laundry. With these things accomplished, your mind will be clear to focus on the day's academic tasks.

5 Consider how you want to structure your homeschool.

These resources can help you learn even more:

- *102 Top Picks for Homeschool Curriculum* by Cathy Duffy
- *A Survivor's Guide to Home Schooling* by Luanne Shackelford and Susan White
- *Education: Does God Have An Opinion?* by Israel Wayne
- *For the Children's Sake* by Susan Schaeffer Macaulay
- *Home Grown Kids, Home Style Discipline, Home Style Teaching, Home School Burnout* and others by Dr. Raymond Moore
- *Homeschooling for Excellence* by David and Micki Colfax
- *Home Schooling: The Right Choice* by Christopher Klicka
- *Schoolproof, The Big Book of Home Learning*, and other books by Mary Pride
- *Teaching Children* by Diane Lopez
- *The How and Why of Home Schooling* by Ray Ballmann
- *Upgrade and Keep the Faith: On Education* by Kevin Swanson
- *You Can Teach Your Child Successfully* (math, language arts, and reading booklets by Dr. Ruth Beechick)
- Subscribe to a homeschooling magazine like the *CHEC Homeschool Update*, *Homeschooling Today*, *Practical Homeschooling*, or *Home School Digest*.

6 Decide what you really want to accomplish.

- **Establish work skills and habits for your children:** clean room, pick up, make bed, household chores, or yard work.
- **Write down yearly goals for each child. These goals solidify your plan, demonstrate your seriousness, keep you organized, and help you focus.**
 - Include character goals: attitudes, character qualities, obedience, etc.
 - Set academic goals: educational objectives for each subject.
 - Develop goals for physical skills: eye-hand coordination, baseball, piano, etc.
- **Establish a monthly plan, divide textbooks into appropriate sections, break down your yearly goals for each area.**
 - Set a weekly plan using a teacher plan book.
- **Have a daily schedule and predictable routine to accomplish your goals.**
 - Add field trips and special projects.
 - Keep a record of library books that have been read.
- **Have grace for yourself and your children when the Lord allows interruptions.**

7 Keep in mind these common mistakes.

- **"There is only one way to homeschool." Actually ...**
 - Children have different types of learning styles.
 - You can't treat every child alike.
 - Methods may change with the age and needs of your child.
 - Your friend who homeschools may seem to have the perfect situation and use the best curriculum, but your family is not the same, and their curriculum may not work for you.

- **“Homeschooling is the best thing that has happened to our family, and everyone who is a responsible parent should teach at home.” Actually ...**
 - Glorifying homeschooling is not necessary. Homeschooling isn’t the end-all-be-all.
 - Be realistic. It will require changes in your family’s lifestyle and time commitments.
 - Commit yourself to following God’s direction for your own family and encourage others to find God’s will for their families.
- **“My homeschool needs to look like public school education.” Actually ...**
 - Failure to keep learning enjoyable can cause your children to lose interest in education.
 - Overly serious parents prevent the joy of discovery.
 - Overly structured parents often stifle exploration and the development of personal interests.
 - No need to purchase all the “typical” school supplies right off (maps, whiteboards, desks). Ease into it and find out what you really need and will use before you invest.
 - Desks and school bells are not required for learning; the couch is a great place to read a book, and each child’s schedule could differ.
 - Make learning fun and be enthusiastic about it yourself!
- **“Now why did I think this was such a good idea last year?” Instead ...**
 - Keep your vision by reviewing the goals you first established.
 - Don’t be distracted by your children’s/teens’ resistance or lack of purpose and direction.
 - Because a young person doesn’t have the wisdom and experience to make important life decisions during the teen years (and younger), he should not be the one who determines the kind of education he receives. God gave fathers, as the heads of their families, the responsibility to direct their children, not vice versa.
 - Parents, be careful of peer pressure yourself. Don’t seek the approval and acceptance of others. Do what is right for you and be willing to stand alone in what God has called you to.

8 Remember these secrets of success.

- Start your day with God.
- Be patient — with your children and yourself.
- Stay teachable — you’ll be tested in new areas.
- Be flexible — don’t bring the institutional classroom environment into your home.
- Use your family resources — older children can help younger children, and grandparents can participate in special interest areas.
- Develop good relationships with neighbors, grandparents, and other relatives.
 - Are you perceived as being friendly and open?
 - Do your children respect others and their property?
- Have Dad choose a subject in which he can be involved two to three evenings a week or early mornings before work.
- Pray with your spouse about your frustrations and needs.

Ready for your homeschool adventure?

If the answer is “not quite!” then call us! We’d love to chat in person and answer your questions. We’re here 5 days a week, so call at 720-842-4852.

So ... why homeschool?

by CHEC Executive Director **Steve Craig**

Hello! My name is Steve Craig and I am privileged to serve as the Executive Director for Christian Home Educators of Colorado. My wife, Tara, and I were both homeschooled and were incredibly blessed to have been raised by parents who were willing to make the sacrifices that were needed to educate us at home.

Homeschooling's impact on our lives has been huge — and that's why Tara and I are so passionate about inspiring others towards an education model that can set parents free to be the primary influencers of their children's educational and spiritual growth.

While studies show that homeschoolers excel academically, what really gets me excited about homeschooling is not its ability to produce smart students, but rather the opportunity it presents to help those students love God with all of their heart, soul, and mind. As Christian homeschoolers, we believe that our primary task is making disciples for Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19).

But how do you make a disciple?

Jesus set a pretty clear example of the best way to make disciples: He picked a few guys and spent lots of time just being with them and teaching them.

It was very much a walk-along-talk-along kind of relationship. Reminds me of Deuteronomy 6:6–7.

"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of

“Jesus set a pretty clear example of the best way to make disciples. It was very much a walk-along-talk-along kind of relationship.”



STEVE AND TARA WITH THEIR FIVE CHILDREN: CARSON, CHRISTIANA, ANGELINA, JEWEL, AND ARIEL

them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

This passage really gives us the blueprint of home discipleship, the very heart of homeschooling. To be sure, the home is not the only place where discipleship should be happening. But it sure is a good place to start!

So why would God recommend this kind of walk-along-talk-along approach for teaching children about His ways? Did He just miss the memo that the best way to educate children is to line up a bunch of desks in a room and fill them with squirming kids, 8 hours a day? Not really.

I think God’s methodology of disciple-making really originates from His own character.

From the opening pages of the Bible, God makes it abundantly clear that He is a relational God. He wants to be with His people. Over and over, God said to the patriarchs and the nation of Israel, *“I will be with you.”*

Even Christ’s very last words on earth remind us of His promise, *“I am with you always...”*

Now, suppose a parent’s actions communicate to a child that “I’d rather not be with you.” Won’t it be hard for the child to picture a God who wants to be with him?

You see, biblical discipleship is built on the idea that we help others to understand and know a relational God within the environment of relationship. And that is where homeschooling comes in!

That’s why we homeschool: We believe it can be the best way to relationally disciple our children towards their Savior, Immanuel.

Wherever God has you in your journey as you consider homeschooling, remember God gives special honor to those who prioritize the disciples of Jesus Christ — even the little ones (Matthew 10:42). And you will certainly not lose your reward if your life is spent turning your children to righteousness.

“And those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the sky above; and those who turn many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever” (Daniel 12:3).

Carrying on the Vision,



Steve Craig

