

children learning and living naturally at home and in the community

The Educating Parent

HOMESCHOOLING and UNSCHOOLING in AUSTRALIA

Registering as a Home Educator in the ACT

Congratulations on your decision to educate your children at home and within the community instead of at school!

Home educators seek the best education possible for their children and make use of the whole community, learning from many sources and in many different environments, as well as the home. Home educators often refer to themselves as homeschoolers or unschoolers.

This information will give you some clues as to what to do next... There is a great deal of useful information available on the internet and hopefully this brief guide will help you get started.

Our family began home educating in South Australia in 1985 and Robin and I now help our children provide opportunities to learn at home and in the community, which we find immensely rewarding and pleasurable.

If you have any questions please join my online [The Educating Parents](#) support group. Or tap into 30+ years of accumulated experience and information by reading any of the hundreds of articles on [The Educating Parent](#).

Support Groups

First of all, remember you aren't alone in your decision to home educate. There are tens of thousands of home educating students registered across Australia. Many families join local or regional home educating groups for support. These offer companionship and support for parents and children, as well as educational opportunities, excursions, activities and camps.

Chat to local home educating families and, if you can, attend one or two group gatherings. This will help you get a feel for what home education is and what it can be, and how different families teach their children at home. You can also ask any questions you may have about how to register, saving you time and worry.

Online support groups are very popular, especially those that connect local home educating families together for the purposes of organising excursions, play-dates, picnics, camps and other social and educational events. The sharing of information, advice and tips that occurs through online support groups is invaluable and especially helpful during the early weeks and months of home educating.



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[The Educating Parent Support Groups Directory](#) includes a list of support groups in the Australian Capital Territory.

There is a growing body of reassuring academic literature available in home education in Australia: see [Summary of Australian Research on Home Education](#).

How to apply

In the ACT you are able to develop your own education programs to suit your family and your individual children.

As requirements differ around the country we encourage you to read through the relevant legislation and become familiar with the [regulations](#) in your state or territory. If in doubt about your rights and responsibilities seek legal advice.

Home education is protected under the [United Nations Declaration of Human Rights](#). Centrelink legislation regarding the 'return to work' requirement of parents with school-aged children includes an [exemption from the activity test for home educating parents](#).

From birth to the age of 6 years there is no legal requirement for a child to attend a child care centre, kindergarten or pre-school.

The ACT [Education Act](#) requires children of compulsory school age to either be registered as a home educating student or be enrolled and attending school.

Compulsory school age is defined as a child of or above the age of 6 years but under the age of 17 or the completion of year 12. Home educating students are registered with the ACT Education Directorate. It is possible to register a child older or younger than the compulsory school age if it is in the best interests of the child.

In the first instance parents request an application for provisional registration, a period lasting up to 6 months, by using the Directorate's [contact form](#).

You will need to provide certified copies of your child's birth certificate and proof of residency in the ACT, and any copies of relevant court orders regarding the child. It is recommended that parents apply to register no later than 10 days after the child has been withdrawn from school. The Education Act requires parents to apply not later than 10 days after either the start of the school year, or 10 days after the child begins to live in the ACT, or 10 days after the child turns 6 years of age.

If you wish to continue home educating you have 20 business days before the provision registration expires to apply for registration. This involves a written statement demonstrating that are able to meet the required conditions (as above) in a written statement known as a Parent Report. It also involves meeting with an Au-



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thorised Person (AP) at the Directorate's offices. Home educating children are welcome at the interview but do not have to attend.

There is no prescribed format for the Parent Report. It simply needs to demonstrate that you are prepared to meet the conditions as set out and required for registration.

Parents are required to:

- conduct the home education from the home base listed on the registration certificate;
- provide a high-quality education that values the individual needs, interests and aptitudes of your child and prepares him or her to become an independent and effective local and global citizen;
- record (document) the educational opportunities is offered to the child that foster his or her developmental needs, including the child's educational progress;
- describe and record strategies used to help the child to learn;
- make available learning programs, activities, materials or other records for inspection;
- apply in writing for registration before provisional registration ends;
- apply to renew the registration in writing at least 3 months it expires;
- Prepare an annual report detailing the educational progress of the child.

It is expected that the education of the child will meet the standard set out in the [Australian Curriculum](#).

A Home Education Liaison Officer (HELO) is available to provide assistance to home educating parents.

Registration may be granted for up to two years. Progress Reports are required annually. The progress report needs to describe how your child is learning and demonstrate that he or she is being provided with high quality education opportunities and experiences. A simple list of learning activities is considered insufficient. Templates are available, however you can prepare your Progress Report in whatever way works best for your family.

If your application is not approved you can ask, in writing, for a review of the decision.

Requests to renew registration must be made 3 months prior to the end of the registration period shown on the certificate of registration. You will need to include both the Parent Report and Progress Report with your application to renew.

It is worth noting that children whose permanent address is in the ACT but who are not residing there, that is travelling, are not considered registered as home educating as it is a condition of the registration that home education must be provided from the ACT home base listed on the registration certificate.. They can re-apply for provision registration on their return to the ACT.

It helps to organise your application, learning program and resources before withdrawing your children from school as this provides a level of educational continuity for them. Arrange to collect all of their be-



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longings, return school property and library books, on their last day and let the teachers know that you have applied for home education registration.

Many families find it is useful to keep a copy of their registration certificate in their bag when out and about. Some families use it to obtain discount on learning materials or entrance to museums and exhibits. It can also be used to prove that the children are not truanting from school.

More information about how to apply and registration requirements is provided in the booklet [Frequently asked Questions – Home Education Registration in the ACT – 2019](#).

Part Time School / Home Education

This is possible in the ACT: you need to discuss this option with your school's principal and with the Home Education Liaison Officer.

Completing the Paperwork



For most families registering is a simple and easy process without problems. However, from time to time problems do occur: it is with this in mind that we provide the following information.

Read all paperwork carefully.

It is advisable to ask for confirmation in writing (email) for any dates and times of meetings made by phone. In addition, it may help you to be adequately prepared if you ask for an agenda or outline of what will be discussed or information required for any meetings.

Within reason, you are able to negotiate a different date for the meeting that suits you if the one offered is inconvenient.

Keep a dated log of any phone conversations together with brief comments about what was discussed or re-

solved. Although in most cases this isn't necessary it has proven to be helpful in cases where home education isn't granted.

Keep copies of any correspondence.

If you find the application process daunting and overwhelming join a local online support group: there are plenty of people who can give you a hand prepare your application or review.

If at any time anyone asks you for a reason why are home educating your children, simply state that after considering all other options you believe home education to be the best educational choice to meet the individual learning needs of your children. There is no requirement for you to give personal or detailed reasons. Outlining how the school system has failed your child may be cathartic, but remember, the person assessing your application is probably someone who has worked as a teacher in the school system and may



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complaints of maladministration, for example, when Directorate staff do not follow their own policies or legislation.

be biased.

Keep your home educating records (Parent Reports and Progress Reports) until the child is 17. Never supply original copies of your children’s work, take photos or photocopies.

Local support groups will have examples of approved registration applications and reviews that can help you confidently prepare your own. See also See [The Educating Parent](#) for more examples. These show some of the many possible and different ways families home educate.

Ongoing Issues

- Complains about the home education process can be lodged using the [Education Directorate Contact Form](#).
- [The Ombudsman ACT](#) will investigate serious

Download our FREE The Educating Parent Resource Directories today!

 <p>Introduction to Home Education</p>	 <p>BIG List of Books about Home Ed</p>	 <p>National and State Support Groups</p>	 <p>Home Educating Families in Business</p>	 <p>Aussie Homeschool and Unschool Blogs</p>
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