

Washington Homeschool Organization
Home-based Instruction
Parent Qualifying Course



held in partnership with



North Idaho College

This course meets the Washington State requirements for a
Parent Qualifying Course in Home-based Instruction under RCW 28A.225.010(4)(b)

Given by Jen Garrison Stuber
WHOcontact@washhomeschool.org
© 2018 Jen Garrison Stuber

Introduction

Socialization

Qualifying

Compulsory Attendance

 Form to withdraw an <8yo

Declaration of Intent

 Declaration of Intent Form

11 Required Subjects

 Parental Responsibilities

 Nature of Education

 Transcript and Diploma

 Transcript Letter

 Occupational Education

 Science

 Mathematics

 Social Studies & History

 Health

 Language, Reading, Writing, Spelling

 Appreciation of Art and Music

Annual Testing/Assessment

Record Keeping and Graduation

Part Time Attendance and Ancillary Services

 Request Form

Running Start

Beginning the Homeschool Journey

Reading List

Some Things I Wish I'd Known When I Started

But what do I DO?

Glossary

Qualifying

45 college quarter credits
or
Parent Qualifying Course
or
Supervised by a certificated person
or
Superintendent approval

RCW 28A.225.010

(4) For the purposes of this chapter and chapter [28A.200](#) RCW, instruction shall be home-based if it consists of planned and supervised instructional and related educational activities, including a curriculum and instruction in the basic skills of occupational education, science, mathematics, language, social studies, history, health, reading, writing, spelling, and the development of an appreciation of art and music, provided for a number of hours equivalent to the total annual program hours per grade level established for approved private schools under RCW [28A.195.010](#) and [28A.195.040](#) and if such activities are:

(a) Provided by a parent who is instructing his or her child only and are **supervised by a certificated person**. A certificated person for purposes of this chapter and chapter [28A.200](#) RCW shall be a person certified under chapter [28A.410](#) RCW. For purposes of this section, "supervised by a certificated person" means: The planning by the certificated person and the parent of objectives consistent with this subsection; a minimum each month of an average of one contact hour per week with the child being supervised by the certificated person; and evaluation of such child's progress by the certificated person. The number of children supervised by the certificated person shall not exceed thirty for purposes of this subsection; or

(b) Provided by a parent who is instructing his or her child only and who **has either earned forty-five college level quarter credit hours** or its equivalent in semester hours or **has completed a course in home-based instruction at a postsecondary institution or a vocational-technical institute**; or

(c) Provided by a parent **who is deemed sufficiently qualified to provide home-based instruction by the superintendent** of the local school district in which the child resides.

Notes:

* 45 college quarter credits

(This is about 24-30 semester credits, or 1 year, full time college. It does not have to be a US college. The credits do not have to be in education. They can be in welding, or history, or cosmetology, or astronomy, or culinary or math or anything else. They just need to be from a college).

*Take a Parent Qualifying Course

* Hire a WA state certificated teacher to provide oversight

If you have a teacher friend or relative, this works great, and can often be free. Your local homeschool group will be the best place to find this person if it's a path you want to pursue.

* Gain superintendent approval.

This has been done at least twice in the history of homeschooling in WA state. I've been working on a webinar on how to do this successfully. It works best for someone who has homeschooled elsewhere and is coming new into WA without college credits.

Further Notes:

You do NOT have to prove how you qualify to homeschool, but the law requires that you do qualify in one of these four ways.

The check box on the DoFI is ONLY checked if you take the second option and hire a teacher, not if you take the PQC. (You'd be surprised how many people are confused by this).

It is WHO's position that being signed up for a PQC is sufficient for removing your kids and beginning homeschooling. It's our position that you don't have to wait.

The PQC certificate is good to infinity and beyond. It's a one time class, and you're done forever.

**Keep your original
PQC Certificate of Completion
here for safekeeping and easy access.**

Compulsory Attendance



RWC 28A.22.5010

(1) All parents in this state of any child eight years of age and under eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend the public school of the district in which the child resides and such child shall have the responsibility to and therefore shall attend for the full time when such school may be in session unless:

(b) The child is receiving home-based instruction as provided in subsection (4) of this section;

(4) For the purposes of this chapter and chapter [28A.200](#) RCW, instruction shall be home-based if it consists of planned and supervised instructional and related educational activities, including a curriculum and instruction in the basic skills of occupational education, science, mathematics, language, social studies, history, health, reading, writing, spelling, and the development of an appreciation of art and music, provided for a number of hours equivalent to the total annual program hours per grade level established for approved private schools under RCW [28A.195.010](#) and [28A.195.040](#) and if such activities are: [Provided by a parent, educating his or her child only with one of the qualifications seen in the Qualifying Section).

If Your Child is Enrolled in School:

If your child is already in school, you will need to formally withdraw h** from school before you begin homeschooling. In most cases, the school will have a form, 1-2 pages in length for you to file. This formal withdraw does two things: it frees your child's seat for another child (this is very valuable for another child if you live in a crowded district), and it prevents the school district from beginning a Becca Bill (truancy) charge against you. If the school does not have a form, we recommend writing a letter, and taking two copies in. Request that one copy be placed in your student's file, and the other be signed for your files. You only need very simple wording -- something along these lines:

I (name of parent) am hereby withdrawing (name of student) from (name of school) , effective (date) .

Then add two lines below, one labeled "Parent Signature and Date" and the other labeled "School Official Signature and Date."

If your child is 5, 6, or 7, *he has now reverted to being as educationally free as *he was as a toddler. Some school officials erroneously believe that 5-7 year olds who have been enrolled in school must also submit a Declaration of Intent. This is incorrect. The HBI law only covers students 8-18. You can choose to use this as a teaching moment, but if you want to avoid an altercation, you can simply smile at them sweetly, thank them for their time, and, in 1-3 years, when your child turns 8, submit the Declaration of Intent for that child. **See next page for a form to withdraw a child <8yo.**

For children 8-18, the next step (and you can withdraw and declare on the same day) is to proceed to the Superintendent's office (usually housed in the district office) to submit your Declaration of Intent. You may do this in person or via the US Post. From that point on, throughout your homeschooling journey, you'll submit annually on September 15th.

If Your Child is Not In School, and is Turning Eight: it is time to submit your DofI.



Washington Homeschool Organization

PO Box 66960

Seattle, WA 98166-0960

WHOContact@washhomeschool.org

I, _____, hereby formally withdraw _____
(parent) (student)

from _____, effective _____.
(name of school) (date)

(signature) (date)

Records may be sent to: _____

RCW 28A.225.015

Attendance mandatory—Six or seven year olds—Unexcused absences—Petition.

(1) If a parent enrolls a child who is six or seven years of age in a public school, the child is required to attend and that parent has the responsibility to ensure the child attends for the full time that school is in session. An exception shall be made to this requirement for children whose parents formally remove them from enrollment if the child is less than eight years old and a petition has not been filed against the parent under subsection (3) of this section. The requirement to attend school under this subsection does not apply to a child enrolled in a public school part-time for the purpose of receiving ancillary services. A child required to attend school under this subsection may be temporarily excused upon the request of his or her parent for purposes agreed upon by the school district and parent.

Here is the part IN THE SAME SECTION OF THE LAW that DOES NOT REQUIRE A DECLARATION:

(4) This section does not require a six or seven year old child to enroll in a public or private school or to receive home-based instruction. This section only applies to six or seven year old children whose parents enroll them full time in public school and do not formally remove them from enrollment as provided in subsection (1) of this section.

RCW 28A.200.010

(1) Each parent whose child is receiving home-based instruction under RCW [28A.225.010\(4\)](#) shall have the duty to:

(a) File annually a signed declaration of intent that he or she is planning to cause his or her child to receive home-based instruction. The statement shall include the name and age of the child, shall specify whether a certificated person will be supervising the instruction, and shall be written in a format prescribed by the superintendent of public instruction. Each parent shall file the statement by September 15th of the school year or within two weeks of the beginning of any public school quarter, trimester, or semester with the superintendent of the public school district within which the parent resides or the district that accepts the transfer, and the student shall be deemed a transfer student of the nonresident district. Parents may apply for transfer.

If your child (regardless of age) is enrolled in school before you begin homeschooling, you should formally withdraw him or her before you begin homeschooling, to avoid a Becca Bill (truancy) charge. Your child's school should have a form (1-2 pages) for this. You may withdraw your child from the school and declare your intent to homeschool at the superintendent's office on the same day. If your school doesn't have a form, you can write the following: "I [name of parent] hereby withdraw [student name] from [name of school], effective [date]" and then add two lines, one labeled "Parent Signature and Date" and the other labeled "School Official Signature and Date." If you use this method, take two copies; ask that one be placed in your student's file, and keep the other for your records.

Please be advised that some districts have chosen to interpret the phrase "Each parent shall file the statement by September 15th of the school year or within two weeks of the beginning of any public school quarter, trimester, or semester" to mean that these are the *only* times that a parent may submit the Declaration of Intent. WHO rejects this interpretation. The law does not give a school district the right to reject a Declaration of Intent; the Declaration of Intent is not a request for permission to homeschool. It does two things: it relieves the school of their burden to provide your child an education, and it provides you with protection from a charge of truancy. If the superintendent's office rejects your Declaration of Intent, send it via USPS (either Return Receipt Requested or Certified Mail), which will provide you with confirmation that the school received your Declaration of Intent, and that you have fulfilled your obligation under the law.

A second known issue is that many (most, even) of the school districts in our state are offering families forms that are wildly out of compliance with the law. The only information required is the name and age of the child, and if or not a certificated person is supervising. (The parent signature and address verifies that you are a resident of the school district to which you are submitting). WHO's follows the format prescribed by the superintendent of public instruction. If your school is asking for further information (birth date, grade, if or not you've previously attended school, racial data, statements of "understanding" about graduation from the district, etc.) on the Declaration of Intent they provide, you may treat these as optional and do not have to answer.

The Declaration of Intent does two things:

- 1) It relieves the school of their burden to provide your child with an education (because of compulsory attendance, you have to go -- because you have to go, they have to take you).
- 2) It provides you with protection from a charge of truancy for your children ages 8-18.

There are only 5 things required to be on the DofI, according to the law:

- 1) Your child's name
- 2) You child's age (not their birthdate)
- 3) Your name
- 4) Your address
- 5) Check the box if you hired a teacher to provide oversight

WHO has a Declaration of Intent that is in compliance with the law (see previous page).

Many school districts ask for far more than the law allows them to.

You may consider any other information on a Declaration of Intent to be optional, as it is.

You may opt to use WHO's DofI form.

The first DofI is due on your child's 8th birthday. The second and subsequent are due 15 September each year.

No child under the age of 8 need be included on the DofI. Never. Ever. Never. Ever. Never. Ever. Never. Ever. Never. Ever.

Some (many) school district personnel are confused about this. They think, if a child under 8 was enrolled in school, that you must file a DofI so they can "keep track of them" when you withdraw. This is simply not true. Here is the law:

RCW 28A.200.015(4): (4) This section does not require a six or seven year old child to enroll in a public or private school or to receive home-based instruction. This section only applies to six or seven year old children whose parents enroll them full time in public school and do not formally remove them from enrollment as provided in subsection (1) of this section.

Schools may not use your DofI information to market to you. They may send you school-district or school-wide information, but they may not send information only to homeschoolers. If you hand carry your DofI in, they may market their ALE, PPP, or VA programs to you in person.

You may mail in your DofI.

I used to send two copies and an SASE, and my district would stamp both and send me one back. You do not have to keep a copy. You may want to make a copy for your own records (it's useful for getting educator discounts etc.).

**Keep a copy of your annual
Declaration of Intent
here for safe keeping and easy access.**

Declaration of Intent to Provide Home-Based Instruction

This statement must be filed annually by September 15 or within two weeks of the beginning of any public school quarter, trimester, or semester. Send this form to the superintendent of the public school district within which you reside, or the district that accepts the transfer.

Public School District: _____

Address: _____

A parent who intends to cause his/her child or children to receive home-based instruction in lieu of attendance or enrollment in a public school, approved private school, or an extension program of an approved private school must file an annual declaration of intent to do so in the format prescribed below:

I do hereby declare that I am the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of the child(ren) listed below; that said child(ren) is (are) between the ages of 8 and 18 and as such are subject to the requirements found in chapter 28A.225 RCW Compulsory Attendance; I intend to cause said child(ren) to receive home-based instruction as specified in RCW 28A.225.010(4); and if a certificated person will be supervising the instruction, I have indicated this by checking the appropriate space.

Child(ren)'s Name(s)	Age
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The home-based instruction will be supervised by a person certificated in Washington State pursuant to chapter 28A.410 RCW.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____
Date

Street Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

The Law,

RCW 28A.200.010 Home-based instruction — Duties of parents.

Each parent whose child is receiving home-based instruction under RCW 28A.225.010(4) shall have the duty to:

(1) File annually a signed declaration of intent that he or she is planning to cause his or her child to receive home-based instruction. The statement shall include the name and age of the child, shall specify whether a certificated person will be supervising the instruction, and shall be written in a format prescribed by the superintendent of public instruction. Each parent shall file the statement by September 15 of the school year or within two weeks of the beginning of any public school quarter, trimester, or semester with the superintendent of the public school district within which the parent resides or the district that accepts the transfer, and the student shall be deemed a transfer student of the nonresident district. Parents may apply for transfer under RCW 28A.225.220;

RCW 28A.225.010

(4) For the purposes of this chapter and chapter [28A.200](#) RCW, instruction shall be home-based if it consists of planned and supervised instructional and related educational activities, including a curriculum and instruction in the basic skills of occupational education, science, mathematics, language, social studies, history, health, reading, writing, spelling, and the development of an appreciation of art and music, provided for a number of hours equivalent to the total annual program hours per grade level established for approved private schools under RCW [28A.195.010](#) and [28A.195.040](#)

This is critically important:

RCW 28A.200.020 states that "parents who are causing their children to receive home-based instruction shall be subject only to those minimum state laws and regulations which are necessary in ensuring that a sufficient basic educational opportunity is provided to the children receiving such instruction. Therefore, all decisions relating to philosophy or doctrine, selection of books, teaching materials and curriculum, and methods, timing and place in the provision or evaluation of home-based instruction shall be the responsibility of the parent except for matters specifically referred to in Chapter 28A.225 RCW."

Nature of Education:

The homeschool law (RCW 28A 225.010) also states that "the legislature recognizes that home-based instruction is less structured and more experiential than the instruction normally provided in a classroom. Therefore, the provisions relating to the nature and quantity of instructional and related educational activities shall be liberally construed."

This allows you, the parent, great latitude in how you go about covering the 11 subjects. This is the part of the law that lets you choose anything from a Classical education to Unschooling or anything in between.

This bears repeating:

"ALL decisions relating to philosophy or doctrine, selection of books, teaching materials and curriculum, and methods, timing and place in the provision or evaluation of home-based instruction shall be the responsibility of the parent."

At the other end of this journey, when you graduate your student, at the very least you need to equip them with an official transcript and an official highschool diploma.

A transcript is a list of courses, credits, and grades.

A diploma is a single page documenting the completion of a course of study, in this case, graduation from highschool.

The following page is a letter that explains why your homeschool highschool transcript and diploma are “real,” using WA law to justify it.

This is imperative.

I hope that this next paragraph is something that you will never need.

If you become estranged from your children, you still need to provide them with an official transcript and an official highschool diploma. It is nothing less than a dereliction of your duty as a homeschool parent under Washington state law, “and place in the provision or evaluation of home-based instruction shall be the responsibility of the parent” for you to do any less. Even if your kid ends up as a hoodlum, a drug addict, or even just a such a jerk that you are disowning h**, you need to fulfill this obligation.

Now, you're homeschooling, and what you're going to find is that homeschooling greatly increases your family ties, and, like I said, I hope that you will never ever need that paragraph. But remember that if your drugged out hoodlum jerk of a kid went to public school, he or she could still call up and get a transcript – and, having made this choice for h** education now, it is something you will still owe h** in the future. Even if *he has to make the request, and pick up the result through your attorney because of the order of protection. I consider this your duty, and you should, too.

Sorry to bum you out on that note, so let's move on to the nature of education.



Washington Homeschool Organization

PO Box 66960

Seattle, WA 98166-0960

WHOContact@washhomeschool.org

Under Washington State law, the requirement for compulsory attendance is satisfied in one of three ways: attendance in a public school, private school, or home-based instruction [the legal name for homeschooling in our state] (RCW 28A.200.010). The state makes no distinction in the “legitimacy” of these forms of education, but rather holds them as *equally valid ways* in which to fulfill the compulsory attendance requirement.

The state specifically places the requirement for creating student records for home-based instruction on the parents (RCW 28A.200.020) further specifies that the “state hereby recognizes that parents who are causing their children to receive homes-based instruction under RCW 28A.225.010(4) shall be subject only to those minimum state laws and regulations which are necessary to insure that a sufficient basic educational opportunity is provided to the children receiving such instruction. Therefore, all decisions relating to the philosophy or doctrine, selection of books, teaching materials and curriculum, and methods, timing, and place in the provision or *evaluation of home-based instruction shall be the responsibility of the parent* except for matters specifically referred to in this chapter” and (RCW 28A.225.010(5)) that the “legislature recognizes that home-based instruction is less structured and more experiential than the instruction normally provided in a classroom setting. Therefore, the provisions of subsection (4) of this section relating to the nature and quantity of instructional and related educational activities shall be liberally construed.”

Our law sets parent-created records, transcripts, and diplomas as the standard for home-based instruction students. Thusly, they should be accepted in the same manner as the transcripts and diplomas of their public and private school counterparts.

On behalf of the Washington Homeschool Organization Board,

Jen Garrison Stuber,
Advocacy Chair



There are people in the world.
They have jobs.

The state board of education defines it, in part, thusly, " **Occupational Education** classes (usually, but not always, Career and Technical Education (C TE) classes) **give students a chance to sample instructional programs within areas of their interest and particular career pathways of their choice**. CTE classes include agriculture, business, technology, cosmetology, health, and more (Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board). " [Emphasis mine].

In our home, we feel our daughter's computer usage, carpentry and farming and sawyering, music lessons (as she does not want to be a builder or a farmer, but rather a songwriter), permaculture design course, strawbale building course, training at the fire department (including things like CPR and first aid), all count toward her occupational education. When she was younger, I would have pointed toward her mini-internships with a florist and a caterer, a weaver and a spinner, her projects fencing, building tree forts, animal care, cooking, and learning the keyboard, etc. When she was a really wee one, our trips to farms, grocery store tour, candy maker's tour, fire department tour, police station tour, fieldtrips to the courts and the gravel pit, etc. -- things having to do with jobs of all sorts – these all count. (Looking at that list, I can't help but think, "Wow! Look at all the occupational education she would have missed out on if she were stuck at school!").

Library	Power/Water Company	Grocery Store
Fire Station	Train Yard/ Refueling Depot	Candy Shoppe
Landmarks	Bakery	
Restaurant Tour	Winery	Seed Plant/Grass Farm
Skate Park	Newspaper	
Grand Coulee Dam	(journalist office and printing)	
Mt. St. Helen	Walking Tour of Public Art	Nursery
Zoo	Police Station	Arborist
Orchard/ Farm Tour	Jail	Florist Shoppe
Local Manufacturer	Asphalt Plant / Quarry	
Sewage Treatment Plant	Theatre (and Cinema)	



Biology

- Anatomy
- Botany
- Genetics
- Microbiology
- Paleontology
- Zoology

Chemistry

- Inorganic
- Organic
- Environmental
- Food Chemistry
- Radiochemistry

Physics

- Mechanics
- Thermodynamics
- Quantum mechanics
- Relativity (Special and General)
- String Theory

Healthcare

- Medicine
- Veterinary
- Pharmacy

Earth Science

- Ecology
- Geology
- Meteorology
- Oceanography

Astronomy

- Astrophysics
- Cosmology
- Planetary science

Engineering

- Aerospace to Web

Formal

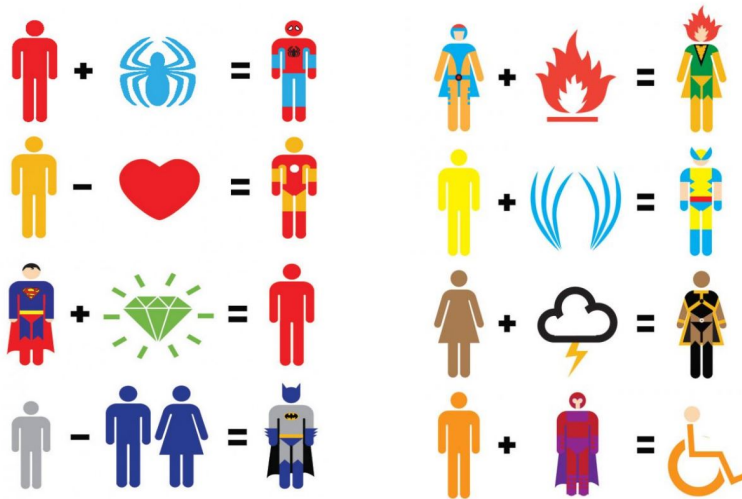
- Formal Logic
- Theoretical computer science
- Game theory
- Systems theory
- Control theory

Social

- Anthropology
- Archaeology
- Economics
- Linguistics
- Sociology

Interdisciplinary

- Artificial Intelligence
- Forestry
- Forensics



- Counting and number sequencing
- Addition and subtraction
- Multiplication and division
- Fractions
- Order of operations
- Positive and negative numbers
- Solving equations
- Graphs
- Algebra – Elementary to Advanced
(algebraic expressions, linear equations, inequalities, functions, quadratic equations)
- Geometry
- Algebra II
- Trigonometry and Logarithms
- Calculus
- Probability and statistics



The study of the other people and cultures of the world.

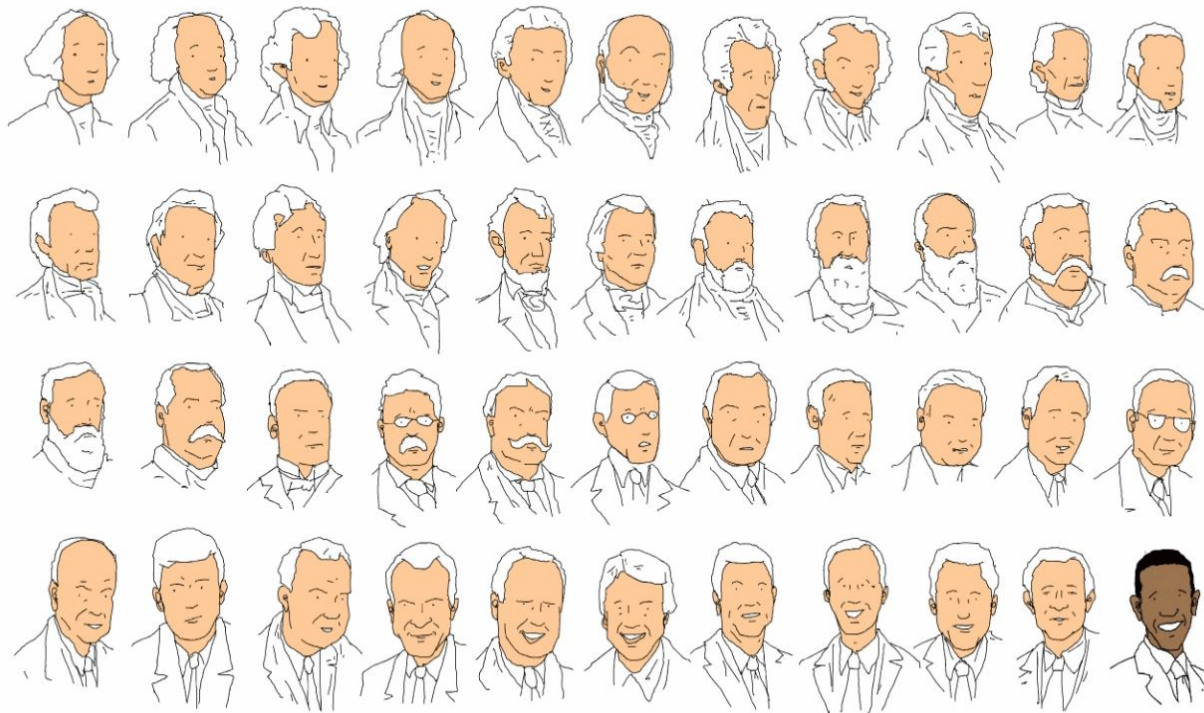
]

The Following are the WA public schools' scope and sequence for Social Studies and History:

- Kindergarten Self (near & far, now & then)
- First grade Families (near & far, now & then)
- Second grade Community (near & far, now & then)
- Third grade Culture: People, Places, and Environmental

- Fourth grade WA State History
(local tribal history)
(for 5th and 6th see the History page)
- Seventh grade Washington State History
and Government (local tribal history)





Fifth grade	US History (pre-colonial period to Independence)
Sixth grade	World Geography & World History (Ancient Civilizations)
Seventh grade	World History (600-1450) & WA State History and Government
Eighth grade	US History and Government (primarily 19 th Century)
Ninth grade	World History (1450 to Present)
Tenth grade	World History (1450 to Present)
Eleventh Grade	World History (primarily 20 th and 21 st Centuries)
Twelfth Grade	Contemporary World Problems and Civics



These are topics covered in the WA State public schools:

Injury Prevention

First Aid

Violence Prevention

Food Groups and Nutrients

Beverages

Label Literacy

Caloric Intake and Expenditure

Disease Prevention

Nutritional Planning

Anatomy and Physiology

Growth and Development

Puberty and Development

Reproduction and Pregnancy

HIV Prevention

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Self-Identity

Healthy Relationships

Self-Esteem

Body-Image

Expressing Emotions

Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

Emotional, Mental, and Behavioral Health

Substance Use and Abuse

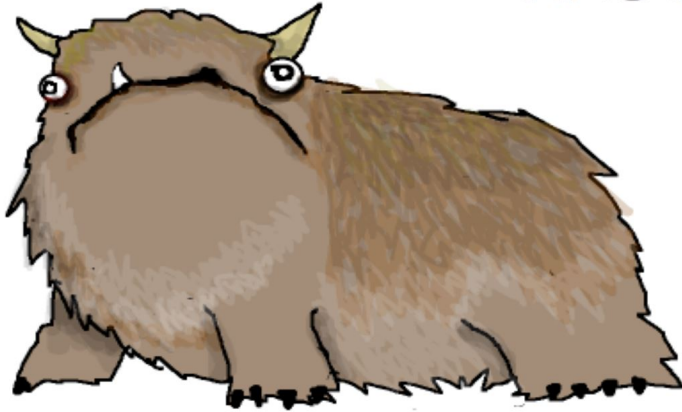
Effects

Prevention

Treatment

Legal Consequences

ALOT



Some definitions:

Reading: the visual or manual intake of communication from the page.

Writing: the commitment of language to paper for transmission to others.

Language: the oral and aural paths of communication.

(May also include foreign languages, computer languages, and manual (signed) languages.)

Spelling: an agreed upon set of rules dictating how words are written in a given language.

The public school's scope and sequence for ELA (English Language Arts) can be found on the OSPI's (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction's) website. It is extremely detailed for each grade, as WA has adopted the CCS (Common Core Standards).

E.D. Hirsch's series "What Your ___ Grader Needs to Know" is far more approachable, if you're looking for an overview by individual grade. Your local library will have it.

The ultimate goal of a solid education here should be a reader who can read fluently and can research things *he finds and does not understand, a writer who can spell, punctuate, and use grammar correctly, and a person who can think critically, do research, and reason.



“An appreciation of.” Not “famous artist” or “accomplished musician.” Just “an appreciation of music and art.”

Here’s just a few forms of music and art: museums, concerts, theatrical performances, street performances, Shakespeare in the park, movies, television, radio, public art, sculptures, paintings, drawings, weaving, jewelry, ironwork, woodworking, pottery, engraving, printing, collage, mosaic, calligraphy, animation, illuminated manuscript, illustration, photography, stained glass, tapestry, computer art, architecture, poetry, prose, drama, music, conceptual art, video games, book making, fashion design, ballet, ballroom dancing, salsa, tango, line, tap, belly, Latin, flamenco, and hip-hop dancing, singing, blues, classical, country, gospel, indie, rock, rap, soul music.

There’s art history, art movements (Renaissance, Realism, Impressionism, Cubism, Fauvism, Expressionism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Abstract, Pop Art), art terms (contrapposto, fresco, chiaroscuro, avant-garde, oeurve, trompe l’oeil, en plein air, colour, hue, form, perspective, line, shadow), art materials (gesso, glaze, pastels, watercolour, tempera, kiln, charcoal, newsprint), musical terms (tempo, creshendo, alto, soprano, cadence, canto, capo, prelude, flat, sharp, improvise) . . .

iios9

An appreciation of.

RCW 28A.200.010

(1) Each parent whose child is receiving home-based instruction under RCW [28A.225.010\(4\)](#) shall have the duty to:

(c) Ensure that a standardized achievement test approved by the state board of education is administered annually to the child by a qualified individual or that an annual assessment of the student's academic progress is written by a certificated person who is currently working in the field of education. The state board of education shall not require these children to meet the student learning goals, master the essential academic learning requirements, to take the assessments, or to obtain a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement pursuant to RCW [28A.655.061](#) and [28A.155.045](#). The standardized test administered or the annual academic progress assessment written shall be made a part of the child's permanent records. If, as a result of the annual test or assessment, it is determined that the child is not making reasonable progress consistent with his or her age or stage of development, the parent shall make a good faith effort to remedy any deficiency.

(2) Failure of a parent to comply with the duties in this section shall be deemed a failure of such parent's child to attend school without valid justification under RCW [28A.225.020](#). Parents who do comply with the duties set forth in this section shall be presumed to be providing home-based instruction as set forth in RCW [28A.225.010\(4\)](#).

Test or Assessment

Each year, between 8 and 18, you have to test or assess once annually. Here's the law:

RCW 28A.200.010(1)(c) Ensure that a standardized achievement test approved by the state board of education is administered annually to the child by a qualified individual or that an annual assessment of the student's academic progress is written by a certificated person who is currently working in the field of education.

Let's take those one at a time:

The Test option. The test has to be three things:

1) A Standardized achievement test (so, not a placement test, or a end-of-year test from your curriculum company, or an IQ test). From your youth, you may recognize the CAT or the Iowa, the Terra Nova, or the BASI. From WA public schools over the last decade, you'd recognize the WASL, the HSPE, the MSP, and the Smarter Balanced. From highschool, you'll recognize the SAT, ACT, and PSAT (these all count toward the annual testing, so you don't need to "double up" in those years).

2) Approved by the state board of education. The SBE doesn't want to field 10,000 homeschool family's questions about testing, so they ruled that if Buros (<https://marketplace.unl.edu/buros/>) has reviewed it, it's a-okay with them. There are (pretty literally) no tests you can purchase as a parent that haven't been reviewed by Buros. (There's really only about a half dozen standardized achievement tests out there available to homeschool parents anyway).

3) Administered by a qualified individual. It is the testing companies who qualify individuals to administer their tests. In some cases, like, say, the Woodcock-Johnson, you have to be a psychologist who has specialized training in the administration of this test to give it. Obviously, most of us do not

qualify. But there are plenty of companies catering to homeschool families' testing needs, and if they will sell it to you to give to your own children at home, then it fulfills this part of the law.

Note on tests: Most tests are normed to be given in the spring of the year of the name of the test. So, for example, a 5th grade test is meant to be given somewhere between April and June, at the end of 5th grade. This has an effect on the percentile score. There's a raw score (how many you got right or wrong), and then the percentile score (how well did you do against all the other people who've taken this test?) If you take the 5th grade test in the fall, as you're beginning, and it's normed for the spring, then you're up against everyone who already finished 5th grade, not those who are just starting that work, and your percentile is likely to be lower. There are some companies now who are norming for other points in the year, because they've had enough homeschoolers do them at other points in the year to have data for those percentiles.

The Assessment option. The assessment also has three criteria:

- 1) That it's written.
- 2) That it's performed by a WA certificated person (a teacher).
- 3) That the teacher be currently working in the field of education.

(It is WHO's position that the teacher need not be working for money to be working in the field of education. If said teacher is homeschooling h** own children, that counts).

So the big question on everyone's mind is going to be this: How do I pick which one to do?

That depends.

If you're just starting out, or if you have a kid with huge test anxiety, or you have a kid with special needs, or you want some real life interaction and feedback, you might want to choose an assessment and do it right now, as you're starting out, to have a baseline.

If you want to know how your kidlet stacks up against kids of the same age over the past 40-50 years, you might use a test.

If you just want to fulfill your obligation under the law, choose the cheapest, easiest thing you can find, do it, file it in your records, and move on with your life.

For us, we had two purposes:

- 1) Be in compliance with the law.
- 2) Let Alaetheia have experience with the standardized test format prior to the SAT/ACT/PSAT.

After a few years, I gave up even opening the test scores when they came in -- as far as I could tell, they just said, "Never try to teach this child anything, because then she bombs that section of this test." I literally have a file drawer full of unopened test scores upstairs (the child is 21 and graduates with two bachelors' degrees this June).

IMPORTANT:

The test/assessment exists for you to have an external metric by which to measure your child. The scores are for you and you alone (unless you go enroll in a school -- we'll talk about that later, in the records). Do the thing that makes the most sense for you and your kidlet. You can test this year and assess next year. You can do all assessments or all tests. Totally up to you.

Do I have to test my <8yo?

No.

Can I test my <8yo?

Yes -- you're educationally free and may do or not do whatever you want with the <8yo.

Can I test with the school?

Yes. Go to the school in late September to find out their testing dates and get them to order extra test(s). One note: make sure that you will get the scores for your files. A few years back, when they did the Smarter Balanced Field Test, no one (not the teachers, not the schools, not the parents) got scores, so that would not have counted for the testing requirement that year.

My kidlet turns 8 at the end of the school year, do I have to test h**?

No, wait until the first full year.

What happens if my kidlet does poorly on the test or assessment?

The law has an answer for this: "If, as a result of the annual test or assessment, it is determined that the child is not making reasonable progress consistent with his or her age or stage of development, the parent shall make a good faith effort to remedy any deficiency." (RCW28A.200.010(1)(c)).

Do I have to turn the scores in somewhere?

Asked and answered, and the answer is still "no." (Unless you transfer to and enroll in a public school -- more on this in the post on keeping records).

Are you sure?

Yes.

Really?

Yes.

What if my child is working at wildly different grade levels in things?

If, for example, your child is 10/11yo and would be a 5th grader, you might choose a 5th grade test. If *he is working at a 7th grade and above level, I might choose a 7th grade test. This goes the other way, too -- if you have the same child working consistently at a 4th or 3rd grade level, don't frustrate them with the 5th grade test -- use the one that's appropriate to h** stage of development.

From the OSPI's "Pink Book"

State Board of Education

Examples of Approved Standardized Achievement Tests for Home-Based Instruction Use

Parents providing home-based instruction for their children may use any standardized achievement test that has been evaluated by Buros Institute of Mental Measurements (www.unl.edu/buros), the test evaluation organization recognized by the State Board of Education under WAC 180-52-070.

Testing is one of two options for meeting the statutory annual assessment requirement: [See RCW 28A.200.010(3)].

The tests listed below are examples of the kinds of tests parents may use.

REVISED OCTOBER 2002

Formal Test Name	Test Publisher
Brigance	Curriculum Associates, Inc.
California Achievement Tests, Fifth Edition (CAT/5)	CTB/McGraw-Hill
California Diagnostic Tests (CDT)	CTB/McGraw-Hill
Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills (CTBS)	CTB/McGraw-Hill
Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)	Riverside Publishing Company
Iowa Tests of Educational Development (ITED)	Riverside Publishing Company
Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Seventh Edition (MAT/7)	Harcourt Educational Measurement
Peabody Individual Achievement Test (PIAT)	American Guidance Service, Inc.
Stanford Achievement Tests (SAT)	Harcourt Educational Measurement
Stanford Early Achievement Test (SEAT)	Psychological Corporation
Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP)	Riverside Publishing Company
TerraNova	CTB/McGraw-Hill
American College Testing (ACT)	American College Testing, Inc.
PLAN (pre-ACT)	American College Testing, Inc.
Scholastic Aptitude Test I: Reasoning (SAT)	The College Board
Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test (PSAT)	The College Board

(Revised 10/2002)

RCW 28A.200.010

(1) Each parent whose child is receiving home-based instruction under RCW [28A.225.010\(4\)](#) shall have the duty to:

(b) Ensure that test scores or annual academic progress assessments and immunization records, together with any other records that are kept relating to the instructional and educational activities provided, are forwarded to any other public or private school to which the child transfers. At the time of a transfer to a public school, the superintendent of the local school district in which the child enrolls may require a standardized achievement test to be administered and shall have the authority to determine the appropriate grade and course level placement of the child after consultation with parents and review of the child's records;

I am going to reiterate what I said earlier about transcripts and diplomas:

At the other end of this journey, when you graduate your student, at the very least you need to equip them with an official transcript and an official highschool diploma. This is imperative.

I hope that this next paragraph is something that you will never need.

If you become estranged from your children, you still need to provide them with an official transcript and an official highschool diploma. It is nothing less than a dereliction of your duty as a homeschool parent under Washington state law, “and place in the provision or evaluation of home-based instruction shall be the responsibility of the parent” for you to do any less. Even if your kid ends up as a hoodlum, a drug addict, or even just a such a jerk that you are disowning h**, you need to fulfill this obligation.

Now, you're homeschooling, and what you're going to find is that homeschooling greatly increases your family ties, and, like I said, I hope that you will never ever need that paragraph. But remember that if your drugged out hoodlum jerk of a kid went to public school, he or she could still call up and get a transcript – and, having made this choice for h** education now, it is something you will still owe h** in the future. Even if *he has to make the request, and pick up the result through your attorney because of the order of protection. I consider this your duty, and you should, too.

RCW 28A.150.350

Part-Time Students -- Defined -- Enrollment Authorized, section (2) is the law that guarantees part-time enrollment for privately schooled and homeschooled students.

The WACs (Washington Administrative Codes), or rules, that administers the Part-Time Student law are in Chapter WAC 392-134 Finance -- Apportionment for Part-Time Public School Attendance. It details how part-time enrollment is administered. Of interest to homeschoolers are three WACs in that chapter:

WAC 392-134-010 Attendance Rights of Part-Time Public School

WAC 392-134-020 Provision of Educational Program to Part-time Public School Students -- Reports -- Sites

WAC 392-134-030 Compliance With Rules as a Condition of State Funding

The Attendance Rights WAC states very clearly that part-time enrollment must be allowed. The Provision of Educational Program WAC states that courses must be provided to part-time students at the same level and quality as for full time students. And the Compliance With Rules WAC talks about the financial penalties the district must bear if they do not allow part-time enrollment.

Part Time Attendance and Ancillary Services

As a homeschooler or private schooler, you are entitled to attend your local school on a part time basis and/or use ancillary services (the law defines this as anything that is not a "class"). We also have "school choice" in WA, allowing you to attend a school in another district. In the former case, you are a full class citizen, entitled to anything you would otherwise be entitled to as a full time student. In the latter case, it is contingent on space availability.

You do not have to take a class to receive ancillary services (though some school districts like to try to make you do that).

You are responsible for any transportation outside the normal routes and times.

In elementary school, you are generally limited to the "extras" (music /art / PE), because they are the only courses that are at a set and scheduled time. (The 3rd grade teacher may intend to do math every morning at 10am, but *he might have to bag it on Monday, English might run short on Tuesday, etc.).

Ancillary services include special needs services (speech, occupational therapy, etc), sports, the prom, etc. WIAA sports (highschool) will require an inordinate amount of paperwork -- suck it up.

To sign up for part time attendance and/or ancillary services, merely go to your local school and find out what they need from you to enroll.

The school's funding is contingent on their compliance with this law. Occasionally, they need to be reminded of this fact.

From the OSPI's "Pink Book."

(sample format only)

(Name of Public School District)

**Request for Part-Time Attendance or Ancillary Services
From Private School Student or a Student Receiving
Home-Based Instruction**

Name of student _____ Birthdate _____ Grade _____

Address of student _____

City and zip code _____

Name of parent _____

Telephone: (Work No.) _____ (Home No.) _____

IF REQUEST IS MADE BY PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENT:

Name of private school: _____

As the parent of _____, I attest that the services requested are not provided in the private school that my child attends.

Services requested: _____

Public school where service is requested: _____

Signature of parent or guardian: _____

Date: _____

Service or course requested and date(s) student wants to participate:

Service/course: _____ Date: _____

Service/course: _____ Date: _____

Service/course: _____ Date: _____

Service/course: _____ Date: _____

Return to: office of the local school district superintendent

RCW 28A.600.310

*(1) **Eleventh and twelfth grade** students or students who have not yet received the credits required for the award of a high school diploma and are eligible to be in the eleventh or twelfth grades may apply to a participating institution of higher education to enroll in courses or programs offered by the institution of higher education. A student receiving home-based instruction enrolling in a public high school for the sole purpose of participating in courses or programs offered by institutions of higher education shall not be counted by the school district in any required state or federal accountability reporting if the student's parents or guardians filed a declaration of intent to provide home-based instruction and the student received home-based instruction during the school year before the school year in which the student intends to participate in courses or programs offered by the institution of higher education. Students receiving home-based instruction under chapter [28A.200](#) RCW and students attending private schools approved under chapter [28A.195](#) RCW shall not be required to meet the student learning goals, obtain a certificate of academic achievement or a certificate of individual achievement to graduate from high school, or to master the essential academic learning requirements. However, students are eligible to enroll in courses or programs in participating universities only if the board of directors of the student's school district has decided to participate in the program. Participating institutions of higher education, in consultation with school districts, may establish admission standards for these students. If the institution of higher education accepts a secondary school pupil for enrollment under this section, the institution of higher education shall send written notice to the pupil and the pupil's school district within ten days of acceptance. The notice shall indicate the course and hours of enrollment for that pupil.*

Basic steps:

Be a junior or senior.

Take placement test (COMPASS, ALEKS, Asset – small fee, at college).

Continue to Declare Intent to Homeschool.

Enroll in local highschool.

See guidance counselor for Running Start Eligibility Form.

Take paperwork to college to enroll.

Running Start

Running Start is a WA state program for highschool juniors and seniors to attend the CCs (and a few of the 4-year schools) in the state. It is NOT based on age. We've had kids as young as 10 do RS. I helped a 12yo a few years ago enter the program. Homeschoolers can also do Running Start.

This is my recommendation for the order in which to pursue this:

- 1) Take the placement test at the college. RS only pays for college level courses, so you might as well know if you tested into college level English and math before you do a bunch of paperwork only to find out you're not ready.
- 2) File your Declaration of Intent (this is so you're still a homeschooler and don't have to pursue a diploma).
- 3) Enroll in your local highschool (in a grossly oversimplified explanation of how the funding works, the state pays the school, the school takes 7% off the top, and the school pays the college).
- 4) The HS will give you a "Running Start Enrollment Verification Form" which you will then take to the college
- 5) Where you will enroll in the college and register for your courses.

Repeat steps 4-5 for the next 5 consecutive quarters, not including summer.

Notes:

There is no "red shirting" in Running Start. The clock starts ticking the first quarter you enroll. If you take one credit, that's all you get that quarter. If you take off a quarter, that quarter is gone. You get 6 total. Most people start in the fall and go F-W-S, F-W-S, but not everyone starts in the fall.

Running Start is one of the reasons to NEVER commit a grade level to paper, as most schools will try to lock you in to one-grade-per-year and insist that you could neither be ahead nor held back.

It is easier for a precocious child to get into RS than one who was held back. It is VERY difficult to argue the homeschool case for someone older than 16-17 junior and 17-18 senior, although the law, like the rest of the public school law, does allow students up to 21 to participate (there are some restrictions on older students w/r/t finishing graduation requirements at the public schools, which is why it's hard to do it later.

First, breathe. I'm completely serious.
Take a deep breath in. Hold it. Breathe out.
Again. In with the good air; out with the bad air.

You're probably not going to get the homeschooling thing completely "right" from the start, and the longer your kidlets were in school and the more of them you have, the more different directions are probably going to be good fits for you. (And also give you fits, depending on the day). Breathe again.

Here's the good news: you can't mess up your kids any faster than the schools would have. It may take a while to find the groove that works for you and yours—and that's okay, too.

In this section, I'm going to give you some thoughts on beginning the homeschool journey, but—and this is key—I want you to remember that it's a JOURNEY. Homeschooling is categorically different from school in several very important areas, not the least of which is that you're going on an adventure with the folks you love the most. You don't have to stay on the railroad tracks, running at set speeds down a set path—that's the school model. You're in a car on the highway, the byway, the backroads, and the side roads. You can park and decide to walk the trails. You can put your car on the train, or you can have it towed. You can ditch the car and get a [vardo](#) and [a horse](#). You can hike with just a tent and some sturdy boots. It's your journey, and your destination is whatever you make it, and whenever you make it.

That's a lot of freedom. It's time to breathe again.

Finding yourself before finding others

Homeschoolers divide on five major areas of contention: Religion. Politics. Parenting Style. Methodology. Goals.

Religion.

You'd think this one is pretty straight forward, but it's not. There are homeschoolers who homeschool for religious reasons and homeschoolers who homeschool for other reasons. There are religious homeschoolers who homeschool for reasons other than religion. There are different religions among the homeschoolers who homeschool for religious reasons. And there are religious homeschoolers who homeschool for reasons not related to religion. (Dizzy yet?)

The most important part of this is whether your religious convictions are a main determining factor in who you choose to spend time with. If you do not associate with people of other religions, or non-religious people (or, conversely, if you're atheist or agnostic, and prefer not to interact with people who are religious), then you will want to find a homeschool group that is specifically in line with your religious (or areligious) worldview. Fortunately, most groups who have this inclination are pretty straightforward and up front about it, and provide prospective members with a "statement of faith" or a "mission statement" that reflects that world view.

Politics.

In this particular case, I'm not talking strictly about US voting party affiliation (although that does happen to factor into it in many cases), but the main thrust has to do with *why* you decided to homeschool. Are you homeschooling because it's something you always planned to do? Are you homeschooling in response to things that happened at school? Do you think the schools are broken? Do you think they're irreparable?

Parenting Style.

What are your parenting politics? Are you an authoritarian, authoritative, or permissive parent? Do you practice attachment parenting? Do you spank? Do you describe your family as a "democracy"? a "benevolent dictatorship"? something else? After religion, there's nothing that brings a homeschooling group (IRL or online) to blows faster than major disagreements in the politics of parenting.

Methodology.

There are a lot of different ways to homeschool. At one end of the spectrum, you can set up a classroom in your home, hand a chalkboard and a flag, and conduct a very formal "school" program with your children. On the other end of the spectrum are unschoolers, many of whom specifically avoid anything that looks or feels the least bit "schoolish." And there's a LOT of homeschoolers in between. For that matter, if you have more than one child, you're quite likely to do quite a bit of picking and choosing between different curricula and methodologies to suit each child's interest and learning styles.

Secondary to the methodology you choose for your homeschooling journey is the question of who "is" or "is not" a homeschooler with the advent and growth of online virtual schools and parent-partnership programs (PPPs). In many states, participation in a public school program requires relinquishing your rights and freedoms as a homeschooling family and becoming a public school family whose children attend school from the comfort of their own home. There's quite a bit of frustration on both sides, as virtual and PPP families feel rejected by independent homeschooling families, and the independent homeschooling families see virtual and PPPs as potential threats to independent homeschooling.

Goals.

I suggest that any homeschooling family starting out write down a few goals. I can't tell you what to write here—it's going to reflect your family and your family culture. If you're homeschooling for one year so that you can take advantage of a travel opportunity and your goal is for your children to reintegrate smoothly at the beginning of the next school year, that goal is dramatically different from the family who's taking it one year at a time, and different still from the goal of the family who's in it for the long haul.

On Paper

So what's this all look like on paper? Here's a brief look at my family:

Religion. We're Christian, specifically Episcopalian, which makes us moderate and oddities (most Episcopalians who choose an alternate to the public schools send their children to Lutheran or Catholic schools. Part of this is because of the lack of Episcopal parochial schools in some geographic areas—some of it is economic, as the ones that do exist tend to be expensive). We homeschool for educational, not religious reasons, and we like to meet all kinds of people from all walks of life. IRL, this means that the local group we're in is the local “inclusive” group, whose description reads:

SHS is a diverse group of homeschooling families in the Inland Empire. We include and celebrate families across the spectrum of homeschooling styles and philosophies, and have no official political, philosophical, or religious orientation. SHS exists both as an active online resource and an IRL alternative to other local homeschool groups as a place for hshers to play, learn, and relax with each other in a context where homeschooling, not religion, is the primary common denominator. (More about the group at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Spokanehomeschoolers/>)

Politics.

We think the schools are broken. We didn't come to this conclusion all at once, but over time, reading John Caldwell Holt, John Taylor Gatto, Nancy Wallace, Grace Llewellyn, and others. I suspect attending school will come up at some point, and I'm not sure how we'll deal with it. I suspect we will have a reading/assignment list to prepare for attending a public school, and a good deal of “understanding talks” before we'd concede.

Parenting Style.

We're a benevolent dictatorship. Our style of parenting is very warm and loving and authoritative. We have some pretty specific responsibility requirements to match rights, and we're always open to renegotiation, but we've never kidded ourselves that we're anything but a benevolent dictatorship. We feel it's our responsibility to be careful parents, and help Farmergirl become the best adult she can be.

Methodology.

We started out with a Classical leaning. I was completely and totally in love with the Trivium, and working through Latin and Rhetoric, and doing Spencerian Penmanship . . . I can not even begin to tell you how in love with this idea I was. If I had been homeschooling myself, that's exactly the track we'd still be on, and I'd be eating it up. This was not a good fit for Farmergirl.

We've ended up in some weird unschooling-apprenticeship-unit-studies-grandmother-assisted-spelling-and-geography mixture that seems to be suiting us just fine. You may have a similar mix. It's okay. (Breathe again). The brilliant and wonderful thing about homeschooling is that you get to make these choices—you get to cherry pick what works best for you.

Goals.

What's your goal? This is the one that's probably the most difficult to put on paper. Here's ours, which we call our "graduation requirements":

- 1) Ability to use the library and other research.
- 2) Ability to write well.
- 3) Reasonably high score on SAT or ACT to facilitate entry into college, if she's inclined.
- 4) Small house built to completion.

I don't presume to know what your goals are, or what they should be—and I don't think ours are the only ones. (And, certainly, not necessarily practical, depending on your lot size, CCRs, or zoning). but I think it's a question worth asking yourself, and that it helps a lot on the questions of "What should we do tomorrow?" and "What should we do this year?"

- How Children Learn by John Holt (rev. 1995, Perseus Publishing)
- Learning All the Time by John Holt (reprint 1990, Addison Wesley Publishing Company)
- Instead of Education by John Holt (reprint 2004, Sentient Publications)
- Teach Your Own: The John Holt Book of Homeschooling by John Holt and Patrick Farenga (rev. 2003, Perseus Publishing)
- The Teenage Liberation Handbook by Grace Llewellyn
- The Unprocessed Child: Living Without School by Valerie Fitzenreiter
- Challenging Assumptions in Education by Wendy Priesnitz (2000, The Alternate Press)
- The Book of Learning and Forgetting by Frank Smith (1998, Teacher's College Press)
- Dumbing Us Down: The Hidden Curriculum of Compulsory Schooling by John Taylor Gatto (rev. 2002, New Society Publishers)
- The Unschooling Handbook : How to Use the Whole World As Your Child's Classroom by Mary Griffith (1998, Prima)
- Punished By Rewards: The Trouble with Gold Stars, Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes by Alfie Kohn (1999, Mariner Books)
- Real Lives: Eleven Teenagers Who Don't Go to School by Grace Llewellyn (1993, Lowry House)
- In Their Own Way by Thomas Armstrong (rev. 2000, Jeremy P. Tarcher)
- Better Than School: One Family's Declaration of Independence by Nancy Wallace (1983, Larson Publications)
- Child's Work: Taking Children's Choices Seriously by Nancy Wallace (1990, Holt Associates)
- Deschooling Society by Ivan Illich (1971, Harper & Row)

Some things I wish I had known before I started:

You can do this.

I wish, on the days when we were at each other's throats, that I had sought the advice of an experienced friend – that I had gone and said, “We're doing this, and it isn't working, and I need you to tell me that it's okay to pursue a different path, and I need you to say that my relationship with my kid is more important than clinging to my end of this struggle.”

It's okay to be scared. Anyone who is homeschooling and says they aren't scared is either lying, or second generation. We're all terrified, regardless of the bravado you see. We're all making it up as we go along, and we're all terrified that we'll do a bad job. We're all afraid that our choices will go down on our children's permanent records, somehow irrevocably damaging their entire futures. And it's all just a big, fat, scary lie. And it's okay to be scared. It means you're doing it right.

You can't mess up your kid any faster than the schools would. --Jen

People will always try to stop you from doing the right thing if it is unconventional.
Warren Buffett

“Any child who can spend an hour or two a day, or more if he wants, with adults that he likes, who are interested in the world and like to talk about it, will on most days learn far more from their talk than he would learn in a week of school.” ~ John Holt

Learning—real LEARNING—starts when, for whatever reason, the learner wants it to start. It proceeds if the aim is clear and what's being learned connects logically and solidly to existing knowledge. It's strengthened when mistakes are made, clarifying the potential and limitations of the new knowledge. It's reinforced when it's put to frequent, immediate, meaningful, real-world use. It becomes permanent when it's made part of the learner's organized, consciously known “master” structure of knowledge.

Valerie Strauss, The Washington Post

“The master of the art of living makes little distinction between his work and his play, his labor and his leisure, his mind and his body, his education and his recreation, his love and his religion. He hardly knows which is which; he simply pursues his vision of excellence in whatever he does, leaving others to decide whether he is working or playing. To him he is always doing both.” – Buddha
Children come into the world beautifully designed to direct their own education. They are endowed by nature with powerful educative instincts, including curiosity, playfulness, sociability, attentiveness to the activities around them, desire to grow up and desire to do what older children and adults can do. --Peter Gray, Salon.com

http://www.salon.com/2013/08/26/school_is_a_prison_and_damaging_our_kids/

I think of myself and my role as a facilitator, cheerleader, chauffeur, guru, guide, mentor, and sometimes instructor. I'm there for the things she needs, and I get out of the way the rest of the time. Here's a bit of our week, circa March of 2008, when my daughter was 12:

Saturday: Apprenticed with local florist. Continued our 52 Churches project with a visit to the local Kingdom Hall for the annual "Memorial Meal." You can read about that here, if you're inclined:

<http://52churches.garriber.org>

Sunday: Hid Easter eggs. Cut and stacked wood from 3 trees for fire. Found Easter eggs.

Monday: Worked on reports from Sat. and ongoing US history project (reading). Ballet. Unloaded ton of hay into barn.

Tuesday: Attended knitting group.

Wednesday: Worked with local homeschool family, assisting children with lessons, and playing. Visited local produce/grocer. Ballet lessons.

Thursday: Went to museum, picked piece of art, and sat and drew for 1-2 hours.

Friday: I don't know what we did on Friday. Spring was slowly trying its darnedest to sprung, but we could as easily had snow as sun that week.

Saturday was the annual Spin-In, an all-day conference meeting, and an evening of pizza and dance fun at the ballet studio.

That's what that week looked like for us. But we're weird and live in the woods--so I would expect your week to look different (unless you're also weird wood dwellers).

Get engaged. Your role here is not silent observer and chauffeur.

You're the guide, the guru, the nudge, the muse, the facilitator.

Five ideas for next week:

Monday) Trip to the library. Hit up the children's/teen librarian--there's nothing librarians like better than making book recommendations to young readers.

Tuesday) Pick up a copy of the Audubon Society or Sierra Club's tree book for your area. Identify all the trees in your yard (or expand to the neighbor's or local park if you're in too urban an area to have more than a dozen trees in your yard).

Wednesday) Go on your grocery store's tour. The grocery you shop at most frequently. Be surprised when looking out the backside of the milk display is the highlight of the trip.

Thursday) Stop at a place you've been meaning to and haven't. That cool looking house, the new shop, the odd landmark or historical sign.

Friday) Take your notebooks, hit your favourite coffee shop, bring along pens and pencils and colours and sit and do an "Hour of Art." Doodle, write, draw, scribble, compose . . . sip your decaf and do art for one hour.

You can bring friends along on any of these. Join a local group if you haven't. Find at least one family you mesh with well. Set yourself up for self-directed success by providing open opportunities.

Glossary

Accredited/ Accreditation: A set of standards set by an accrediting body (often made up of representatives from the institutions the standards are applied to). Accreditation is often used as a selling point for curriculum and programs offered to homeschoolers and private and public schools. It is also occasionally wielded by institutions and groups against homeschoolers (public schools demanding that a homeschooler have “accredited” credits to accept them for credit toward graduation (this is not legal in WA), or colleges or sports associations asking for “accredited” transcripts or diplomas). Here is a document that explains this concept more fully: [Transcript Letter](#).

ALE: See Alternative Learning Experience.

Alternative Learning Experience: a public school program that does not meet on the traditional M-F 8-4 schedule. These programs include those in the juvenile justice system, programs for at-risk youth, programs for teen parents, Parent Partnership Programs, and others. It is possible to attend a ALE on a part time basis and retain your HBI (homeschooling) status. Because you can be a full time student in these programs but only “attend school” a day or two per week, it is important to know what FTE your school is reporting you as to know if you are homeschooling and attending part time, or if you are enrolled as a full time public school student and are not homeschooling.

Ancillary Services: anything offered in a public school that is not a “course” or “class.” This includes, “any cocurricular service or activity, any health care service or activity, and any other services or activities, except “courses,” for or in which preschool through twelfth grade students are enrolled by a public school. The term shall include, but not be limited to, counseling, psychological services, testing, remedial instruction, speech and hearing therapy, health care services, tutorial services such as home or hospital instruction for the physically disabled, and sports activities.” Homeschooler access to part time attendance and ancillary services is guaranteed by law in your local school, and is available on a space-available basis at a “choice” school.

“An eligible part-time public school student who qualifies as a resident of a public school district pursuant to the definition of a “resident student” set forth in chapter [392-137](#) WAC, as now or hereafter amended, shall be entitled to attend the schools of the district within his or her attendance area tuition free on a part-time basis. Eligible part-time public school students who meet the admission policies of a public charter school shall be entitled to attend the school tuition free on a part-time basis.

An eligible part-time public school student shall be entitled to take any course, receive any ancillary service, and take or receive any combination of courses and ancillary services which is made available by a public school to full-time students. Eligible nonresident part-time public school students may be enrolled at the discretion of a public school district pursuant to the terms and procedures established for nonresident student attendance in chapter [392-137](#) WAC, as now or hereafter amended.” [WAC 392-134-010]

The school’s funding is conditioned on their compliance with this law: “Each public school district and charter school shall certify compliance with this chapter as a condition to the reimbursement of costs

pursuant to RCW [28A.150.250](#), [28A.150.260](#) and [28A.150.350](#), as now or hereafter amended. State and federal funds shall be withheld in whole or part or recovered in whole or part through reduction in future entitlements of a district or charter school as necessary to enforce the provisions and intent of this chapter.” [WAC 392-134-030]

Classical Homeschooling: A homeschool methodology that follows the Trivium (the “three-fold road”) through the stages of Grammar, Dialectic, and Rhetoric, using the subjects of grammar, logic, and rhetoric to “give children valuable [tools of learning](#) which enables them to grasp, understand, and act on any other subject, area of study, or problem encountered in college and in adult life.”

Compulsory Attendance: The age at which, by law, a student must attend school. In WA, this is from 8-18. When a child in WA turns 8, you must send h** to school, or begin homeschooling. Until then, you don’t have to qualify. You don’t have to declare. You don’t have to cover the 11 subjects, and you don’t have to test or assess. You don’t have to send him to school and you don’t have to homeschool until *he’s 8. *he’s as free as *he was when *he was born. (It’s totally fine to do anything you want, including formal instruction between now and then, but there is no legal requirement to do so, even if your only plan was to send *he to school).

DofI: see Declaration of Intent

Declaration of Intent: The annual document you send to the school district relieving them of their duty to provide your child with an education and providing you with protection from a charge of truancy.

The Declaration of Intent is a document submitted on the child’s 8th birthday or when you begin homeschooling a child over the age of 8, and every 15 September thereafter. Under absolutely no circumstance does a child under 7 need to be included on a Declaration of Intent, even if the child was previously in school, or even if the child is attending school on a part time basis.

The Declaration of Intent needs to include the child[ren]’s name[s], and age[s], your name and address, and a check if you have hired a teacher to provide oversight as your method of qualifying to homeschool. No additional information is required, and we recommend not offering additional information, especially “grade level” which can lock your student in to a one-grade-per-year advancement and prevent h** from accessing programs that are not for h** “grade” at a later time, including Running Start.

Deschooling: The process by which a student formally enrolled in school and their parent steps away from and out of the “schooly” mindset, and find their bearings in their new homeschool relationship. As a general rule of thumb, this process takes about a month per year the student was in school, not including summer vacation. It often does resemble summer vacation. The goal is, in part, to step away from the mindset that the student awaits input from the teacher, away from the mindset that learning is this thing that only happens in school, and away from the false dichotomy of “school” and “home.” You goal, in part, is to bore your student into wanting to re-engage in h** education, and to allow h** to find h** passions and interests. Deschooling is often the most painful, difficult part of

homeschooling for the parent, but those who do it find the rest of their homeschooling goes so much better.

11 Subjects: The eleven subjects homeschoolers are required to cover over the course of their homeschooling. These include reading, writing, spelling, language, math, science, social studies, history, health, occupational education, and art and music appreciation.

FTE: see Full Time Equivalency

Full Time Equivalency: a unit of measurement used by the public schools to count student and teacher (and other school employee hours). In general, 1.0 FTE is full time (though there are a few cases where one might exceed 1.0 FTE), and anything less than 1.0 FTE is part time.

HBI: see Home-Based Instruction.

H:** shorthand for him or her.

Home-Based Instruction: the legal name for homeschooling in WA.

Homeschooling: as defined narrowly in WA law, homeschooling is “provided by a parent, educating his or her child only” with the parent bearing all the responsibility (including financial) and retaining all the freedom.

Mastery or Teaching to Mastery: A teaching paradigm that removes time from the equation and focuses on completion being synonymous with mastering the material. Someone “teaching to mastery” will make sure the student has mastered the material before moving on to the next subject.

1,000 hours: There is no number of days to homeschool requirement. There is a 1,000 hour requirement for 8-18yos. Read more here: <http://washhomeschool.org/1000-hours-of-homeschooling/> 1,000 hours and here: <http://washhomeschool.org/email-day-11-subjects-hours-instruction/> 11 Subjects Hours of Instruction and here: <http://washhomeschool.org/required-hours-per-subject/> Required Hours Per Subject

PPP: See Parent Partnership Program.

Parent Partnership Program: a public school program designed originally to bring the homeschool community back into the public school system. These programs are often erroneously referred to as “homeschooling” or “home-based instruction.” These programs are public-school-at-home, and are not homeschooling, as defined in WA law. It is possible to attend a PPP on a part time basis and retain your HBI (homeschooling) status. Because you can be a full time student in these programs but only “attend school” a day or two per week, it is important to know what FTE your school is reporting you as to know if you are homeschooling and attending part time, or if you are enrolled as a full time public school student and are not homeschooling.

Part time Attendance: Part time attendance at your local public school is a right guaranteed to homeschoolers under WA law. Part time is anything less than full time, and is measured in a unit called an FTE. Full time in 1.0 FTE or more.

Homeschooler access to part time attendance and ancillary services is guaranteed by law in your local school, and is available on a space-available basis at a “choice” school.

“An eligible part-time public school student who qualifies as a resident of a public school district pursuant to the definition of a “resident student” set forth in chapter [392-137](#) WAC, as now or hereafter amended, shall be entitled to attend the schools of the district within his or her attendance area tuition free on a part-time basis. Eligible part-time public school students who meet the admission policies of a public charter school shall be entitled to attend the school tuition free on a part-time basis.

An eligible part-time public school student shall be entitled to take any course, receive any ancillary service, and take or receive any combination of courses and ancillary services which is made available by a public school to full-time students. Eligible nonresident part-time public school students may be enrolled at the discretion of a public school district pursuant to the terms and procedures established for nonresident student attendance in chapter [392-137](#) WAC, as now or hereafter amended.” [WAC 392-134-010]

The school’s funding is conditioned on their compliance with this law: “Each public school district and charter school shall certify compliance with this chapter as a condition to the reimbursement of costs pursuant to RCW [28A.150.250](#), [28A.150.260](#) and [28A.150.350](#), as now or hereafter amended. State and federal funds shall be withheld in whole or part or recovered in whole or part through reduction in future entitlements of a district or charter school as necessary to enforce the provisions and intent of this chapter.” [WAC 392-134-030]

Religious Curriculum: Curriculum whose basis is in a particular religion or doctrine. In general, a religious curriculum will weave the religious instruction in with each subject (including math and science).

Running Start: A state funding program for highschool juniors and seniors to access the community colleges (and some of the 4 year schools) for up to 6 quarters. Eligibility is based on grade, not age. The youngest person we know to attend RS was 10. [I’ve personally helped a few 12yos through the process. ~Jen GS] In general, the process for signing up begins in the spring of the sophomore (10th grade) year. We suggest approaching the college first, and taking the placement tests, as RS does not pay for pre-curriculum coursework. Then you’ll go to your local highschool and enroll (in a grossly oversimplified explanation of this, the state pays the school, the school takes 7%, and then the school pays the college). In some districts, the district office will take the RS application. The school counselor will then give you the Running Start Eligibility Verification Form, which you will take to the college to register for classes. You’ll repeat the last two steps for up to 6 consecutive quarters, minus the summer.

Secular Curriculum: Curriculum whose basis is not in a particular religion or doctrine.

***he:** shorthand for he or she.

Socialization: the trite, knee-jerk reaction that you will have every time you mention that you homeschool. Most people don’t generally mean socialization (the process of internalizing the norms

and ideologies of society. *Socialization* encompasses both learning and teaching and is thus “the means by which social and cultural continuity are attained”) but rather “socializing.” They’re asking, “If all the other children in the world are in school, aren’t your children lonely, or bored, or weird, or all three?”

Unschooling: Originally coined by John Holt in his books on school reform and his popular magazine *Growing Without Schooling*, unschooling homeschool methodology that is learner-led. Currently, Pat Farenga, who took over GWS after Holt’s death, defines it as “giving the child as much freedom as the parent can comfortably bear.” Within the unschooling community, there is a continuum of unschoolers from “radical unschoolers” who apply the methodology across all aspects of their lives, to “learner led” or “interest-driven” unschoolers, whose unschooling focus is on their academics.

VA: See Virtual Academy.

Virtual Academy: an online public school. These public schools take place entirely in the home with the parent acting as an unpaid public school employee.