

Taking Children Out of Public or Private School

While it's usually easier to start homeschooling right from the beginning so that you can work your way into it gradually, it's never too late either. Once the decision to homeschool has been made, you can take your children out of school immediately or you can leave your children in school till the end of the semester or the final day of the school year.

If you are not going to be taking your child out of school immediately, don't say anything to the teachers or administrators just yet. Telling them in advance that you are planning to educate your children at home can cause problems, so it's best to wait until the last possible moment to do this.

One mother says: "I had to put up with arguments with teachers who felt my decision to homeschool was an insult to their abilities, as well as having a child scrutinized in an attempt to have her labeled ADHD, as well as having her minor speech impediment suddenly become a big deal. These things occurred in an attempt to keep her tied to the school for special services."

If it will be a while before you actually withdraw your children from the school, use the time that you have to prepare for homeschooling by reading everything about home education that you can find. This would include homeschool magazines, books on learning styles, and samples of homeschool curriculum.

There is usually no formal process or specific withdrawal form that must be completed. However, to help prevent any trouble with the truant officer, notify the school principal or administrator when you remove your children. You should be able to do this in the school office, but remember to wait until the day you are actually withdrawing them. Ask for a copy of your child's records to take with you.

If your child is at least 6 years old and is less than 16 years of age, then you will need to file with the County School Superintendent a notarized Affidavit of Intent to Homeschool along with a certified copy of the child's birth certificate within 30 days of starting homeschooling. Be sure to keep a copy for your records.

The affidavit of intent needs to be filed only once and is not required again, unless the child is returned to public school and subsequently re-enters home schooling. If a child is moved from home instruction to public or private school, or if there is a change of address, the County School Superintendent must be notified so that the child's file will be current.

Remember, no matter how much "proof" you have that taking your children out of school is best for them, you are not going to change the minds of critics. It's important to stick to your convictions, based on your beliefs and knowledge of your own children.

After you have pulled your child out of school, the first thing you need to do is relax and take it easy. Start slowly and be patient as you go through the process of "deschooling." Now is a good time to get to know your child better by reading and discussing good books, doing hands-on projects, and just having fun together. However, you might at least want to keep up with their math so they don't get behind on that.

If your child misses his or her friends, you can invite them over. If your child feels lonely, try to get him or her involved in some outside activities. Homeschool support groups offer many opportunities for kids to get together for field trips, park days, and classes.

Homeschooling is a big step and it takes teamwork. You and your child may have some difficulty adjusting at first, but soon you will settle into your new routine of learning at home. Congratulations on your decision to homeschool, and best wishes for a successful homeschool endeavor!