



you can
homeschool through
high school



Can I home-
school my high
schooler?



Homeschooling through high school can be a wonderful journey with your teen. These four years span the transformation from awkward adolescent to accomplished, confident young adult. During this time, you have the opportunity to reinforce family relationships, which will guide your teen as he or she practices good decision-making skills and provide support to stand firm against pressure to conform to undesirable standards.


In addition, the flexibility of homeschooling allows young people to spread their wings and explore their interests to a much greater extent than their traditionally educated peers.

Homeschooling gives teens the gift of time—time to practice and master an instrument, time to explore artistic expression, time to write a short story or novel, time to develop athletic prowess, time to explore various careers, time to start a small business, time to develop and display leadership skills, time to serve both the

community and the church, and time to deepen family bonds.

We invite you to consider the option of homeschooling through high school. You probably have many questions, and even a few concerns. Hopefully, this booklet will help address those.

This booklet is just a *starting point*—for even more information and a wide range of helpful resources, visit our Homeschooling Thru High School webpages at hslida.org/highschool.

The  indicates that specific related resources can be found at hslida.org/highschool/YCHLinks.

Before the bell rings



What are your teen's expectations?

What are yours? Take some time to thoughtfully discuss this important decision and how it would work in your family. Consider together the pros and cons of homeschooling through high school. Share the reasons you believe homeschooling is the best choice for him or her right now and together write down your vision and goals for the high school years.

Can I really teach high school-level courses?

Yes, you can! Depending on the curriculum you choose, most of the preparation may have been done for you. Teacher guides, CDs, DVDs, lesson plans, unit studies, tests, and quizzes are available from most publishers. As alternatives to teaching high school courses yourself, you can hire a tutor; enlist the aid of another family member or a friend; use an online, DVD, or CD course; enroll in a distance learning

course; sign up for a high school co-op class; or take advantage of dual enrollment.

No one is an expert in everything! In the subjects you feel shaky on, you can learn right along with your student. By providing an example of what it means to be an independent learner, you are teaching your teen lessons that will last the rest of his or her life.

Are help and support available?

Absolutely! Many local and state homeschool organizations lend support to those teaching high schoolers. Classes and activities for homeschooled high school students are offered in many areas.

On the Homeschooling Thru High School website (hsllda.org/highschool), HSLDA has gathered a wide variety of resources to help you prepare for navigating the high school years, including a free monthly e-newsletter covering topics on which many parents have questions (hsllda.org/highschool/newsletter.asp). And



YOU CAN DO IT!

When we initially started homeschooling, we had no idea we would be homeschooling through high school. But as we saw God blessing our efforts with academic success and spiritual growth in our children, we felt like God wanted us to exercise faith and continue into the high school years.

With the encouragement of a family we knew who had graduated several children from their homeschool, we developed our own four-year high school plan. Details came together once we had a framework in place. We used a combination of courses that included group classes taught by friends, tutoring, outside homeschool classes, and dual enrollment. Our children also played sports at a local Christian school that welcomed homeschoolers.

There are many options available to help you homeschool successfully. We encourage you to go forward into the high school years with confidence!

—Randy and Julie Hirscher

be sure to read HSLDA's *Home School Court Report* column Getting There, which provides information and encouragement for those just beginning as well as those finishing the high school journey (hsllda.org/courtreport).

If you are an HSLDA member, our high school consultants are available to answer your questions by phone and by email. You will benefit from discussing various options with homeschooling veterans.

Where do I find curriculum?

Talk to veteran homeschooling parents in your area for tips. You can find many resources at state homeschool conferences, at curriculum fairs, in catalogs, in homeschooling magazines, and on the internet. The Homeschooling Thru High School website lists curriculum providers in all subject areas. 🏠

How do I develop a four-year high school plan?

Your teen's post-high school goals are the primary consideration when planning out a high school program—he may need your help in discovering his interests, skills, and possible future vocational goals.

Most students are preparing for a career, military enlistment, or college. To determine what high school courses your student needs, refer to HSLDA's brochure, *A Guide for Homeschooling through High School*. To help you determine your student's current academic level, you may want to use a standardized achievement test or a curriculum provider's placement test (often free). 🏠

If you are withdrawing your student from a public or private school, follow all the steps previously discussed to determine your teen's post-high school plans. HSLDA members can download state homeschool laws (including required minimum hours and required subjects) and notification forms from hsllda.org/laws. If your teen has completed any high school-level courses, be sure to ask the school for your teen's current transcript.

For help developing a four-year plan for the high school years, see the three sample high school plans in *A Guide for Homeschooling through High School*. More detailed information is available in *Develop a High School Plan* (hsllda.org/DevelopHighSchoolPlan), which will help you chart your way as you consider course options for your teen. For personalized assistance, HSLDA members can call or email our high school and struggling learner consultants. 🏠

What about transcripts and a diploma?

A transcript is a concise record of your student's high school courses. Begin creating a transcript for your teen in 9th grade (or whenever he or she completes the first high school-level courses) and then simply add to the transcript upon completion of each high school year. 🏠

Simplify Your Recordkeeping and Transcript (hsllda.org/SimplifyRecordkeepingTranscript) covers documentation in depth.

A diploma is a document that bears record of the completion of a prescribed course of study. In most states, the homeschooling parent can award a diploma. HSLDA's legal

department has answered the most frequently asked questions regarding homeschool diplomas at hsllda.org/highschool/diploma.asp.

How do I teach high schoolers along with younger children?

There are many ways to address this challenge. Try focusing on your younger students while your high schoolers are completing assignments, taking online courses, or attending classes outside the home. If your younger children take naps, use this time to give attention to older students. As their time permits, enlist older students as teaching assistants for the younger children. Writing out assignments for each child the night before will give a smooth beginning to the day.

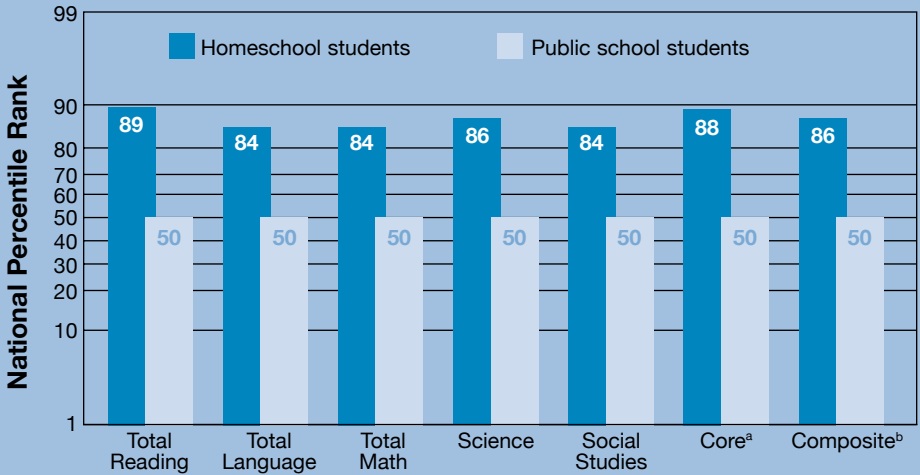
As much as possible, align history and science curricula, so the whole family can concentrate on similar topics throughout the school year.

When your high school student takes biology, the middle school children can study life science, and elementary students can study the human body, plant life, or animal life. This greatly enhances discussions around the dinner table.

Depending on the maturity and academic level of your high schoolers, some subjects can be combined and taught to students in different grade levels at the same time. However, careful attention should be paid to maintaining high school-level work for the older students.

As your high schooler matures, one of your goals will be to inculcate ownership of her education. Under parental guidance, teens should grow in their ability to learn independently in the areas of researching information, outlining textbooks, studying for exams, and writing essays.

Academic Achievement, Grades K-12



Achievement Test Subject Areas

Homeschool Progress Report 2009:
Academic Achievement and Demographics
(HSLDA and Brian D. Ray, 2009)

- a. Core is a combination of Reading, Language, and Math.
- b. Composite is a combination of all subtests that the student took on the test.

High school memories



Are you wondering whether the choice to homeschool means your teen will miss out on the exciting experiences and fond memories you remember from your high school days? Make a list of the activities that are important to your student and the experiences you would like him or her to have. With planning, homeschooling can provide as many or even more opportunities than a traditional school environment for your high schooler to learn, grow, and thrive!

Where will my student find friends?

Your high schooler can find friends in many of the same places other kids do—at church youth groups, homeschool support groups, and extracurricular activities such as 4-H, Scouts, CAP, JROTC, part-time jobs, volunteer work, music lessons, theater productions, debate, and so on. Extracurricular activities round out your teen’s education and provide opportunities to develop leadership skills, hone communication skills, and serve in ministry opportunities. 🎓

What about the prom and graduation?

Your teen can build special high school memories with friends and family. Creative options include attending a local high school prom as a guest or working with a support group to host a homeschool prom or formal banquet.

For graduation, consider hosting your own ceremony, combining resources with other families for a joint graduation ceremony, or working with a homeschool support group to plan a graduation and reception at a church or public facility. You may opt to celebrate this milestone in another way—a senior trip, an art show, a concert, an original play, a party, or a barbecue honoring those who have impacted your student’s life.

Be sure to check out the many options for homeschool events and graduation supplies online. 🎓

How can my teen participate in high school sports?

With more and more families choosing to homeschool through the high school years, new opportunities for participation in high school sports are now becoming available. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility

Center provides resources, forms, and checklists so that homeschoolers can apply to participate in college sports.

Options include:

- **Public school teams**—Check to see if your state has equal access laws which allow homeschooled students to try out for spots on local public school teams.
- **Private school teams**—Contact local private schools to see if they permit homeschooled students to try out for their teams.
- **Homeschool teams**—New teams are being organized throughout the country by homeschool groups and parents. Check out state-by-state resources online. 🏠
- **National and regional homeschool sports associations**—National and regional tournaments are increasing, as are organizations offering support for homeschool teams. For state resources, visit our landing page. 🏠

An excellent alternative to school sports is participation in community sports associations such as neighborhood swim teams, YMCA, YWCA, the Amateur Athletic Union, Babe Ruth League, and American Legion Baseball. 🏠

What about sports scholarships?

If your teen plans to play college sports, start thinking ahead so you can ensure that he or she complies with the NCAA eligibility requirements formulated specifically for homeschooled students. 🏠

What if my teen doesn't want to be homeschooled?

Don't be discouraged if your student wants to attend a school outside of the home. Some teens tend to concentrate on what they think they are missing instead of considering the many advantages of high school at home, such as a flexible schedule, time to devote to subjects of personal interest, the ability to begin college-level work while still in high school, and opportunities for internships.

Homeschoolers have a unique opportunity to plan, document, and present extracurricular activities that will impress college admission boards, so utilize these precious four years to help your teen develop specialized skills, volunteer in the community, compete in debate / mock trial, earn a top award from a recognized organization, or seek intercultural/international opportunities. All of this will broaden your teen's perspective.

THE HOMESCHOOL EXPERIENCE

I enjoyed homeschooling through high school. I took some courses at home, and others (like lab sciences) in group settings with other homeschoolers. I played soccer on recreational teams and even played for a public school team one year. Speech and debate was another extracurricular activity that honed my people skills and also improved my research and writing. Homeschooling allowed me to learn in a variety of beneficial ways and was instrumental in forming me into who I am today!

—Brady Kawk

If your young person misses classroom interaction, consider having him or her take a course with class participation either online, at a homeschool co-op, or at a community college. Encourage your homeschooled teen to get involved in extracurricular programs and activities such as sports, theater, debate, choir, and volunteer work.

Many homeschool graduates later admit that although reluctant at first, they are now glad that their parents persevered and stayed the course.

If you have a reluctant student and need some encouragement, visit our landing page for links to a large selection of great newsletter articles. 🎓



Homeschoolers “are the epitome of Brown students,” says Dean Joyce Reed. “They are self-directed, they take risks, and they don’t back off.”

Brown Alumni Magazine, “Homeschooling Comes of Age,” January/February 2002

In a survey of over 5,000 adults, about 95% were glad that they were homeschooled.



Approximately 82% would homeschool their own children.



Of the 812 survey participants who had children age 5 or older, 74% were already homeschooling.



Life after high school



What about college?

The first wave of homeschool graduates has already proven itself in community colleges and universities across the nation. Many admissions officers are familiar with homeschooling, and some institutions even post their homeschool admission policies on their websites. Colleges want focused and motivated students who love learning. With accurate transcripts, comprehensive course descriptions, summaries of extracurricular activities, and competitive college entrance test scores, homeschooled applicants are now welcome at almost all post-secondary schools.

Maximize your student's chances of acceptance by visiting college websites and understanding minimum high school credit requirements. Take these into consideration as you plan out your student's high school program. 🎓

Homeschooled students also have many opportunities to earn college credit while still in high school through dual enrollment, distance learning, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests.

What if my student doesn't go to college?

Encourage your teen to develop his or her interests as much as possible during high school, and provide opportunities to take classes in a variety of subjects. Aptitude testing can yield valuable career options that your student will want to investigate. Start with career resources found online or at your local library. Check our website for testing resources.

An apprenticeship or internship is a worthwhile experience for any student. A homeschooled student may have the flexibility to work several hours a week with a professional in an area of interest. Sources of possible internships may be acquaintances and friends, local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and political campaigns. 🎓

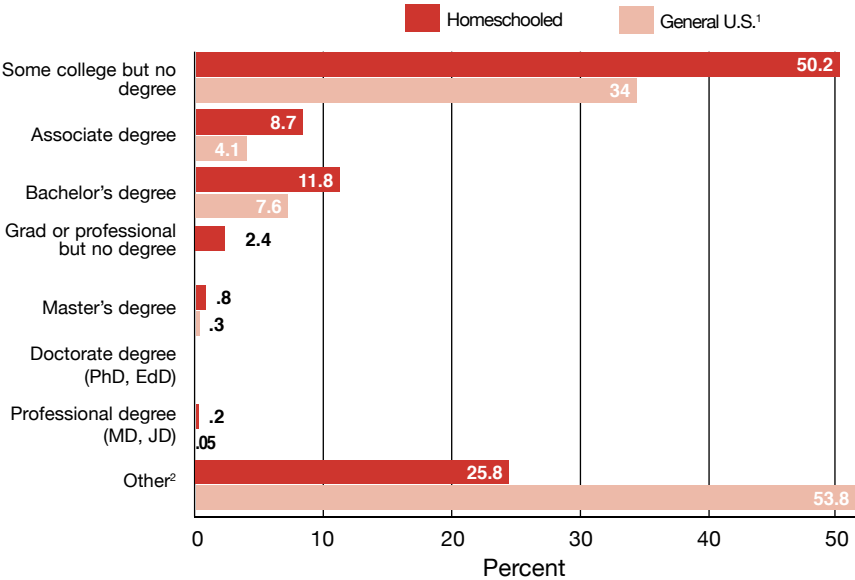
DIFFERENT PATHS

One thing we have noticed in our journey with our five oldest children is that they each are unique with different interests, and they take different paths to attain their goals.

Some of our kids have earned a college degree by finding creative ways to afford college—our second daughter received a full scholarship to a small Christian college, and our second son's appointment to a military academy came with a full scholarship. Our kids have also pursued alternatives to college that are much less expensive and still accomplish their desired goal.

—Brad and Fawn Winsted

Educational Attainment of Homeschoolers and the General Population, Ages 18–24



¹ Source: United States Census Bureau (2003, March 21). Educational attainment of people 18 years and over, by metropolitan and nonmetropolitan residence, age, sex, race and Hispanic origin: March 2002. Retrieved 8/27/03 online census.gov/population/socdemo/education/pp1-169/tab11.pdf. Washington, DC: Author.

² Other = Less than high school, high school graduate, voc/tech program but no degree, and voc/tech diploma after high school.

Note: Total does not equal 100 due to rounding errors from original data source.

Ray, 2003

FINDING THE “HOMESCHOOL SPECIALISTS”

I thought I could only homeschool through middle school because I thought I was responsible for teaching every subject. However, I discovered that just as high school teachers specialize, I could send my children to “homeschool specialists”—other moms who had a passion for a particular subject and the knowledge to teach it. In fact, one mom—a science teacher with a well-equipped lab and experiments that really worked (unlike mine)—inspired my daughter to become a registered nurse.

We also used the local community college for several classes, which showed my children that college wasn’t scary and they were ready for it.

—Jane Choi

“Many homeschooled teens supplement their education with community college classes, taking over the direction of their education much earlier than other kids their age.”

Fox News, “First Wave of Homeschoolers Comes of Age,” April 5, 2002

Benefits of HSLDA membership

Why should I become an HSLDA member?

As a member of Home School Legal Defense Association, you are joining 80,000 homeschooling families across the country in support of homeschool freedom. HSLDA gives you 24/7 legal protection for your right to homeschool. Other member benefits include email updates on homeschool legislation, discounts with retailers nationwide, and a variety of homeschool resources.

Your membership dues help not only your family, but the entire network of homeschooling families across the United States. HSLDA represents families to their school districts and in court, lobbies for favorable state and federal legislation, and speaks out in the media in support of homeschooling.

Another advantage of membership is HSLDA's support during the high school years. Wondering how to make academic decisions, juggle your schedule, stay motivated, or seek specialized help? As an HSLDA member, you can receive personalized assistance from our high school and special needs consultants. Even after your students have graduated from high school, HSLDA will represent them in the workplace and in college if they encounter discrimination because they were homeschooled.

Why continue my membership with HSLDA when homeschool laws are so favorable in my state?

The privilege to homeschool is a hard-won victory. If we do not remain vigilant in protecting our freedoms, we will lose them. Because laws in one state can impact laws in other states, we need to stand together to preserve the right to homeschool for our grandchildren.

How do I join HSLDA?

Visit hsllda.org/join or call 540-338-5600.

We joined HSLDA to help support other homeschoolers who were in "difficult" states. The day a social worker showed up on our doorstep, we understood just how powerful it was to have the attorney deal with it and not to be alone.

—Collin and Margie A.

We needed HSLDA, personally, twice in 13 years of homeschooling. However, even more important is that they are protecting our freedoms every single day.

—Laurie C.

HIGH SCHOOL

CONFIDENCE