

How do families home educate?

There are as many ways to home educate as there are families home educating. The method of learning that you choose to adopt is entirely up to you and your child; you can use any approach that you consider to be suitable.

A family's approach to home education is likely to grow and evolve over time. It is important to realise that the law does not require you to have to have a perfect plan in place before you begin home education.

Alternative Approaches to Home Education

Education can be highly successful in many ways other than the approach which is necessary in school. Please visit our FAQ page on Educational Philosophies for more information.

The practice of most home educating families tends to fall somewhere between two 'ends' - structured and autonomous. However you choose to home educate at first, you may find that your methods will change as you become more experienced and confident.

- **Structured:** Some parents may wish to teach in a formal manner, using a fixed timetable that keeps school hours and terms, and a curriculum based on traditional school subjects - perhaps the national curriculum. If a return to school is likely in the future, many families prefer to plan their education in a similar way to school and with reference to the national curriculum for that reason. Sometimes a structured approach is the child's choice.
- **Autonomous:** Other families take advantage of the fact that home educated children do not have to follow the national curriculum or a timetable, allowing them to have far greater flexibility. They may choose an autonomous approach, allowing the child to determine the areas of study and to decide how, when and what to learn, using individual interests and a natural curiosity as a starting point. Children whose enthusiasm for learning has been seriously affected by school problems often benefit from this relaxed and child-centred approach.

Learning How To Learn

The home educating parent or carer does not need to know everything - a more important skill these days, in view of the ever increasing availability of information (much of which soon goes out of date), is learning how to think, how to learn, and where to find information when needed. Libraries, television, museums, historic buildings and many other educational resources are available to all, and the internet is an invaluable source of information and a point of contact with other home educators.

The Cost of Home Education

Many local home education groups can arrange group discounts for trips to places of interest and some establishments offer an education discount that is also open to home educators. Education Otherwise maintains a listing of concessions for members. There is no funding available directly to home educating families: please see our 'Funding for HE' information sheet for more details.

Education Otherwise publishes the following Information Sheets, which are also available as pdfs to download from the EO website at <http://www.education-otherwise.net>

Home Education England and Wales • Home Education and Lone Parents (England and Wales) • School Attendance Orders (England) • The Law and Home Education in England and Wales • Educational Philosophies (England) • Home Education and the Local Authority (England) • Funding for Home Education (England) • How people home educate • Home Education and Special Needs (England) • Children Missing Education (England) • Deregistering a Child from School (England) • Home Education and Exams (England) • Flexischooling (England) • Child Benefit (England)

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