



What is Homeschooling in Wisconsin?

We hear the word “homeschooling” a lot, but how it is used can be confusing. As the COVID 19 pandemic has forced more families to do school at home, people sometimes use the word “homeschooling” to mean “anyone doing any kind of learning in their home.” But under the law, not everyone learning at home is legally “homeschooling.”

In Wisconsin, we have a longstanding law that defines “homeschooling” and protects the rights of all Wisconsin families. Legal “homeschools” in Wisconsin are called home-based private educational programs.

HOME BASED ~> these programs are not based in any institution.

PRIVATE ~> these programs are privately controlled.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS ~> legal homeschools provide programs of education.

Under our Wisconsin law, a homeschooling parent or legal guardian takes full responsibility for educating their child.

When a parent or guardian chooses to homeschool, they must file a form with the state Department of Public Instruction each year. This simple report informs the state that they are exercising their right to homeschool, reports the enrollment in their homeschool, and affirms that they will meet the requirements of our law.

Under our state law, each homeschool administrator must provide a set number of hours each year of sequentially progressive instruction, which must include the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and health. Other topics of study may be included. These hours of instruction must be provided to only one family unit at a time, either by the parent or guardian or by a person they designate.

That’s it. There are no other forms to file and no set curriculum, nor required tests or reports. Wisconsin law fully recognizes and secures the right of every parent or guardian to direct their own child’s education, according to their own principles and beliefs. This right is secured by our state law, by case law rulings of the Supreme Court of the United States, and by the Constitution of the United States.

WHPA has been here since the beginning, when our founding members helped Wisconsin’s legislators thoughtfully craft our homeschooling law to affirm our rights and ensure our freedoms.

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