



**Orange County
Public Schools**



Information Packet

Home Education ELC 8

445 West Amelia Street

Orlando, FL 32801

(407) 317-3314

FAX: (407) 317-3211

www.schoolchoice.ocps.net

Orange County Public Schools

Home Education Program (HEP)

Welcome to the Homeschooling Community:

My name is Connie Albers, a mother of five amazing children. I'm your FPEA (Florida Parent-Educators Association) District 7 Director serving all of Orange county. My husband and I have been homeschooling for over 19 years. It is such a rewarding adventure and one that has the potential to change your family forever.

The FPEA has helped families for the last 25 years as the oldest and largest state homeschool support group. We are a nonprofit organization with nearly 10,000 member families that exists solely to serve homeschooling families in every district in the state. We support you and your right to homeschool as well as organize one of the largest conferences in the United States. Our support includes defending the legal right to homeschool, working with local school board officials, promoting support group networking, hosting local conferences and events, producing informative publications, encouraging parents and hosting a statewide homeschool convention

FPEA has a valuable website that is sure to give you all the information you need for a successful school year. Please go to www.fpea.com and click on Support Groups and then District 7 to get an idea of what is located in your immediate area. These groups not only offer academic classes, park days, and field trips, but also necessary support of encouragement as you get to know others just like yourself!

I've enclosed a copy of the free Starting Point, which is available on line or hard copy to be given to anyone interested in beginning homeschooling. If you would like more, I will be glad to get them to you.

As you preview this packet of information, jot down your questions and concerns. We at FPEA and District 7 are here to help you by serving you the best we can. You can reach me at district7@fpea.com or call 1-877-ASK-FPEA.

Connie Albers

FPEA District 7 Director



Philosophy

Orange County Public Schools recognizes and respects a parent's right to choose home education as a valid option for the education of his or her child and seeks to build and maintain a positive relationship with home educating parents through mutual understanding and positive communication.

Overview

The Florida Home Education Program (Florida Statutes 1002.41) is sequentially progressive instruction of a student designed and implemented by the parent or guardian in order to satisfy the requirements of the compulsory school attendance law (Florida Statute 1003.21). A Home Education Program is not defined in law or rule as a school. The purpose of the Home Education Program is to permit parents to comply with the compulsory school attendance law while teaching their children at home. For the purpose of this document, "parent" refers to the parent or guardian.

To establish a Home Education Program, a parent must provide written notice to the district school Superintendent of intent to establish and maintain a Home Education Program. The Home Education Program applies only to students ages six through sixteen.

The parent who assumes responsibility for educating a child at home also assumes the responsibility for providing curriculum, educational materials, and evaluations necessary to determine student progress. The school system does not supply textbooks, curriculum guides, or educational standards for the home-educated student.

A family that has established a Home Education Program as required by statute may enlist the help of a tutor, the Florida Virtual School, correspondence courses, or other means to provide the sequentially progressive instruction.

Requirements of the Home Education Program are outlined in Florida Statutes and are provided in this packet. Please keep this information with your important papers as it will be a valuable reference for you in the coming months.



Frequently Asked Questions About Home Education

Statutory Requirements

Q. Once I make the decision to home educate my child, what must I do first?

A. A written notice of intent to establish a home education program must be provided to the school district superintendent. This notice must include the name of the parent assuming responsibility for the education, the name(s) and birth date(s) of the child(ren), home address, and phone number.

Q. Do I have to hold a teaching certificate to teach my child at home?

A. No. A parent is not required to have a valid Florida teaching certificate to home educate his or her child.

Q. Will there be expenses associated with home educating my child, and will I be responsible for all of them?

A. Yes, there will be expenses associated with home education: books, materials, and any other instructional materials you choose to utilize. All expenses for the home education program are paid by the parents.

Q. What are my responsibilities as a home education parent?

A. As set forth by Florida Statute 1002.41(1)(a), to establish a Home Education Program and maintain compliance, the parent must:

1. Provide written notice to the school district Superintendent of intent to establish and maintain a Home Education Program.
2. Maintain a portfolio or records and materials for each student that contains:
 - a) A log, made contemporaneously with the instruction and which designates by title any reading material used, and
 - b) Samples of any writings, worksheets, workbooks, and creative materials used or developed by the student(s)
3. Preserve each student's portfolio for two years and make it available for inspection by the Superintendent, upon a 15-day written notice.
4. Provide an annual educational evaluation of each student by:
 - a) Selecting a teacher holding a valid regular Florida certificate to teach academic subjects at the elementary or secondary level to review and discuss with the student the contents of the portfolio, or
 - b) Having the student take a nationally-normed student achievement test that is administered by a certified teacher, or
 - c) Having the student take a state student assessment test, or
 - d) Having each student evaluated by a psychologist holding a valid, active license, or
 - e) Having each student evaluated with any other valid measurement tool as mutually agreed upon by the Superintendent's designee and the student's parent prior to the evaluation.
5. Submit the results obtained from the annual educational evaluation in writing to the Superintendent's designee.

Q. What do I need to keep in my child’s portfolio?

- A. The student’s portfolio must contain a log, made contemporaneously with the instruction and which designates by title any reading material used, and samples of any writings, worksheets, workbooks, and creative list of materials used or developed by the student(s). The Home Educator must preserve each student’s portfolio for two years and make it available for inspection by the Superintendent, upon a 15-day written notice.

Q. Will Orange County Public Schools tell me what I should teach?

- A. No. Once a student is withdrawn from the Orange County Public Schools and registered in a Home Education Program (HEP), the decision of what to teach, when to teach, etc. is the parent’s responsibility. To view the competencies taught in various courses, visit our website at www.ocps.net. Select the icon “Departments”, and then click “Curriculum”.

Q. How do I arrange for the annual evaluation of my child?

- A. There are five options for evaluating your child:
1. Selecting a teacher holding a valid regular Florida teaching certificate to teach academic subjects at the elementary or secondary level to review and discuss with the student the contents of the portfolio, or
 2. Having the student take a nationally-normed student achievement test that is administered by a certified teacher, or
 3. Having the student take a state student assessment test, or
 4. Having each student evaluated by a psychologist holding a valid, active license, or
 5. Having each student evaluated with any other valid measurement tool as mutually agreed upon by the Superintendent’s designee and the student’s parent prior to the evaluation.

Q. What happens to my child’s annual evaluation when I send it to OCPS?

- A. The Superintendent is responsible for reviewing the annual educational evaluation of the student in the Home Education Program. If the student is not demonstrating educational progress at a level commensurate with his/her ability, the Superintendent will notify the parent, in writing, that appropriate progress has not been achieved.

The parent will have one year from the date the written notification is received to provide remedial instruction to the student. At the end of the one-year probationary period, the pupil shall be reevaluated. Continuation in a Home Education Program is contingent on the student demonstrating educational progress commensurate with his or her ability at the end of the probationary period.

Q. What are the consequences if I do not submit an annual evaluation of my child to the district?

- A. Florida Statute 1002.41(2)(c) requires the parent to provide an annual evaluation for each child. Failure to do so places the Home Education Program in non-compliance and the Superintendent may, after notice to the parent, terminate the Home Education Program and require the child to enroll in the public school of residence to meet the compulsory attendance law.

Q. Do I have to teach my child myself, or are there other educational avenues available?

- A. A family that has established a Home Education Program as required by statute may enlist the help of a tutor, the Florida Virtual School, correspondence courses, or other means to provide the sequentially progressive instruction.

Q. If I hire a tutor to teach my child, who is responsible for the records?

A. If a private teacher is hired to provide instruction for the child, the parent is responsible for maintaining the child's portfolio.

Q. How do I know if my child passes to the next grade?

A. That is the parent's decision. If the student re-enters public school, testing or performance review by the school's administration may indicate another grade level as more appropriate placement.

Q. What should I do when it is my intention to no longer home educate?

A. Provide written notice of termination of your home education program to the Superintendent within 30 days of the termination.

Q. Does OCPS provide opportunities for Exceptional Education Students?

A. Yes. Students that have been staffed into an Exception Education Program and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) may receive services. You must contact your zoned school for ESE services.

Q. May my child participate in interscholastic, extracurricular activities offered at public schools?

A. Yes. Home education students may participate in interscholastic, extracurricular activities as long as they meet the requirements of Florida Statute 1006.5. Home education students must be given the same opportunity as public school students. The law prohibits any requirement that would make participation less accessible for home education students. Florida Statute 1002.41 only addresses the participation and requirements of public school and home education students. There is no requirement that public schools provide activities to private school students.

Q. What grade levels are allowed to participate in interscholastic, extracurricular activities?

A. Florida Statute 1002.41 primarily applies to students in grades 9 – 12 but does not prohibit students in lower grades from participating in activities involving interscholastic competition.

Q. What if the interscholastic, extracurricular activity requires a class be taken in order to participate?

A. In accordance with Florida Statute 1006.15(4)(c), a home education student must be able to participate in curricular activities if that is a requirement for an extracurricular activity. For example, the school must allow a home education student to take a band class during the day if that class is required for participation in the school's marching band.

Q. If my child participates in interscholastic, extracurricular activities offered at public schools, must he/she comply with school entry immunization requirements?

A. Yes. Home education students who participate in interscholastic, extracurricular activities must meet the same immunization requirements as other students attending public school.

Q. How does the district determine the school at which my child may participate?

A. Districts permit home education students to participate at the school for which they would be zoned based on home residence.

Q. Do home education students have the same opportunity as public school students to enter the college of their choice?

A. Yes, depending on their qualifications and the admission requirements of the post secondary institution.

Q. Is there an opportunity for home school students to qualify for a state scholarship?

A. Yes. Home education students may qualify for a scholarship through the Bright Futures Scholarship Program. For information about this program, call the toll free number in Tallahassee (1-888-827-2004).

Q. How does a parent seek support from others who are teaching at home?

A. There are home education support groups in every district. One statewide group is the Florida Parent Educators Association (FPEA). The toll free number is 1-877-275-3732. Parents with internet access may also search online and visit websites for the various home education oriented organizations.

Practice & Procedures

Q. How may I find additional information and support?

A After you have submitted your written Notice of Intent, you may contact the Florida Parent Educators Association (FPEA).

P. O. Box 50685

Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250-0685

1-877-ASK-FPEA

Website address: www.fpea.com

E-mail address: district7@fpea.com

Q. Where may I order state adopted instructional materials?

A. State adopted instructional materials may be ordered from the Florida State Book Depository, P. O. Box 6578, Jacksonville, FL 32236, telephone (904) 781-7192, at the parent's expense. Visit the Florida State Book Depository website at www.fsb.com.

Q. How may I locate an evaluator for the annual evaluation?

A. Parents may contact the Florida Parent Educators Association at 1-877-275-3732 or call the Home Education office at 407-317-3314 to obtain the names of available evaluators.

Q. Will the district award my child a diploma?

A. No. School districts are not authorized to award a diploma to a home education student.

Q. Can a child who has been home educated enter/return to public school?

A. Yes. Any student who is within compulsory attendance age has the right to enroll in public school. Current district policies and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) standards govern the grade placement of any transfer student.

Q. Will OCPS accept my child's high school credits awarded by the HEP?

- A. Yes. According to specific policy *IKF- Graduation Requirements, Letter B. Titles: Credit From Non-Accredited Schools and Home Education Policies (Grades 9 – 12)*, adopted by the School Board July 27, 1999, students transferring from Home Education Programs may be provisionally placed in grades 9 – 12 based on presentation of documentation that course performance standards have been mastered for each course for which credit is requested.

Credits granted for courses from Home Education Programs shall be assigned the grade of “S” on the receiving school transcript. Students transferring from Home Education Programs must enroll on a full-time basis and earn a specific minimum number of credits in order to qualify for a high school diploma.

Evaluation of the transcript will be conducted when your child enrolls at the high school for which they are zoned based on home residence.

Q. What is OCVS (Orange County Virtual School) & Florida Virtual School?

- A. OCVS is your very own Orange County Virtual School. Featuring local highly qualified Orange county teachers, No cost & no waiting. OCVS also offers a full time program grades K-12 where students can earn a High School Diploma. For more information on the OCVS full time program please visit their website at www.ocvs.ocps.net. The Florida Virtual School is a statewide online middle and high school that provides online courses to all students in affiliated school districts throughout the State of Florida.

Q. How may I get further information regarding OCVS &/or Florida Virtual School?

- A. Visit OCVS at www.ocvs.ocps.net &/or Florida Virtual School at www.flvs.net.

If you plan to participate in the Home Education Virtual School Grades 6-12, go to the OCVS website and complete the following steps.

1. Go to www.ocvs.ocps.net and click the **Home Education Logo** on the top right hand side.
2. Click on **Go** (Blue Tab). Click: **“I live in Florida”**. Choose county: **Orange**. Choose a student type: **Home Education**. Click: **Continue**. Click: **Browse Course Catalog**-Choose Courses. Choose segment, Choose preferred start date, Course Availability: Select a District Franchise: **Orange County Virtual School**, select start date, Click: **Add to Backpack**. When finished adding courses click: **Continue**, Click: **Create my account**, enter requested information, Click: **Sign Up**, Log out of student account.
3. Create a Guardian Account by clicking on **“Apply for Guardian Account”**. Parent/Guardian is required to create a Guardian Account and approve course request on line. This account will also allow guardians to monitor the progress of their students.
4. The Home Education office will verify the Home Education enrollment when the Notice of Intent is received in the Home Education office.
5. After registration is successfully completed: Your teacher will contact you within a week of the first day of class. **Check your account daily by logging into <http://vsa.flvs.net>.**

Enrollment cannot be verified and courses cannot be assigned until the Home Education Office has processed the Notice of Intent to Establish a Home Education Program.

Q. What “keywords” will help me search for home education websites?

- A. The keywords “Florida Home Education” and also “home education” will yield many results as you search for home education websites.

Q. How may I get information regarding OCPS Career & Technical Education Virtual Center?

A. The Career & Technical Education Department offers several online adult high school credit course offerings. The courses are teacher-directed and are re-purposed from the Florida Virtual School content written to DOE course standards. Registration is open entry/open exit so students may enter and exit at any time. Once students have registered, they will receive an email welcome from their teacher with directions on how to begin the course. **For further information, call 407.317.3200 ext. 2002828.**



LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

During the 2000 legislative session, Florida Statutes relating to students enrolled in a home education program were amended.

Students who exhibit a pattern of nonattendance in public schools and enroll in home education as a means of meeting the compulsory school attendance law must meet specific requirements. They include:

- The parent or guardian of a child who has been identified as exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance enrolls the child in a home education program, will be (a) provided a copy of the law and the accountability requirements, and (b) referred to a home education review committee.
- The committee is composed of the district contact for home education programs and at least two home educators who have conducted a home education program for at least three years and who have indicated a willingness to serve on the committee.
- The home education review committee will review the portfolio of the student every 30 days during the district's regular school terms until the committee is satisfied that the home education program is in compliance with the law.
- If the parent or guardian fails to provide a portfolio to the committee, the committee will notify the superintendent. The superintendent will terminate the home education program and require the parent to enroll the child, within three days, in a public school supported by public funds; a parochial, religious, or denominational school; or a private school supported in whole or in part by tuition charges or by endowments or gifts.
- After the home education program is terminated, the parent or guardian is not eligible to re-enroll the child in a home education program for 180 calendar days. Failure of a parent or guardian to enroll the child in one of the attendance options previously listed after termination of the home education program will constitute noncompliance with the compulsory attendance requirements and may result in criminal prosecution.

ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL
HOME EDUCATION PROGRAM

Directions for Filling out the Notice of Intent to Establish a Home Education Program.

Within 30 days of the establishment of a Home Education Program the parent or guardian must file a notice of intent. Students must reside in Orange County. The following form is provided by OCPS for your convenience. If using this form, please fill out all sections.

Parent/guardian Information

- ⌚ Last Name, First name of parent(s) or guardian(s)
- ⌚ Residence address including apartment and zip code
- ⌚ Home phone/work phone and email

Student information- you may list up to 2 students on this form.

- ⌚ Last Name, First Name of Student(s)
- ⌚ Date of birth of student(s), MM/DD/YYYY
- ⌚ Grade that the student is in on the day this application is completed.
- ⌚ Name of former school
- ⌚ Gender
- ⌚ Ethnic and place of birth
- ⌚ Social Security (Optional)

Students who are entering Home Education from public school must be withdrawn from the public school before the notice of intent can be processed. Please make sure that you have officially withdrawn from the public school and attach a copy of the withdrawal form to this notice of intent. You should keep the original withdrawal form for your records.

Additional Information

⌚ **Participation in OCVS/Florida Virtual School (grades 6-12 only)**

If you plan on participating in OCVS/Florida Virtual School for grades 6-12 please check here. You must first go to the OCVS website and complete the following steps.

1. Go to www.ocvs.ocps.net and click the **Home Education Logo** on the top right hand side.
2. Click on **Go** (Blue Tab). Click: **"I live in Florida"**. Choose county: **Orange**. Choose a student type: **Home Education**. Click: **Continue**. Click: **Browse Course Catalog**-Choose Courses. Choose segment, Choose preferred start date, Course Availability: Select a District Franchise: **Orange County Virtual School**, re-enter start date, Click: **Add to Backpack**. When finished adding courses click: **Continue**, Click: **Create my account**, enter requested information, Click: **Sign Up**, Log out of student account.
3. Create a Guardian Account by clicking on **"Apply for Guardian Account"**. Parent/Guardian is required to create a Guardian Account and approve course request on line. This account will also allow guardians to monitor the progress of their students.
4. The Home Education office will verify the Home Education enrollment when the Notice of Intent is received in the Home Education office.
5. After registration is successfully completed: Your teacher will contact you a couple of days before the first day of class. Check your account daily by logging into <http://vsa.flvs.net>.

For assistance with establishing your FLVS account, visit the website www.flvs.net or call 407-513-3587.

(The Home Education office will confirm your status with Florida Virtual School when this notice of intent is received.)

⌚ **Date the program started.**

Must be within 30 days of today's date.

⌚ **Parent signature and date.**

Your signature is verification that you have read the Home Education Packet, understand that the district does not issue grades nor a high school diploma in the Home Education Program, that all curriculum materials must be provided by the parent, agree to abide by the requirements of Home Education as stated in the Florida State Statutes and understand that failure to submit an annual evaluation will result in termination in the Home Education Program.

⌚ **You must enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope with this application to receive confirmation of registration.**

State Statutes only require that the Notice of Intent shall be in writing, signed by the parent, and shall include the names, addresses, and birthdates of all children who shall be enrolled as students in the home education program. The following form is provided by OCPS for your convenience.



**ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL
HOME EDUCATION PROGRAM**

NOTICE OF INTENT TO ESTABLISH A HOME EDUCATION PROGRAM

Please print all information - incomplete applications will not be processed.

Parent Information				
Last Name		First Name		
Address	Apt#	City	FL	Zip
Home Phone		Work Phone		
Email address: _____		Social Security # (optional) _____		
Student Information				
Last Name		First Name		
Date of Birth	Grade	Prior School		
Male ___ Female ___	White ___ Black ___	Hispanic ___ Asian ___	Am. Indian ___	Multiracial ___
Place of Birth: _____				
Last Name		First Name		
Date of Birth	Grade	Prior School		
Male ___ Female ___	White ___ Black ___	Hispanic ___ Asian ___	Am. Indian ___	Multiracial ___
Place of Birth: _____				
Participation in OCVS/Florida Virtual School (grades 6-12 only)				
___ Yes , I have established an account		___ No, I am not participating		
Date the Program Started _____				
Current Public School Students - Copy of withdrawal form attached ___ Yes				
Your application will not be processed if a withdrawal form from your current public school is not attached				
All Home School Students are required to submit an Annual Evaluation				
Example: If your "Date the Program Started" is September 1 st , an annual evaluation is due into our office every year by September 1 st . If you choose to withdraw your student from Home Education, you must notify us in writing. Failure to submit the annual evaluation will result in the withdrawal of your student from Home Education.				
I do hereby agree with the statements above and I am aware that school districts are not authorized to award high school diplomas to home education students. ___ Yes				
Parent Signature _____			Date _____	

Date received by OCPS

Return this form to:

**Orange County Public Schools
Ronald Blocker Educational Leadership Center
Attention: Home Education – ELC- 8th Floor
445 W. Amelia Street
Orlando, FL 32801

Fax: 407.317.3211**

Orange County Public Schools – Orange County, Florida
HOME EDUCATION WRITTEN EVALUATION FORM
(The use of this form is not required. It is provided by OCPS for your convenience.)

Upon review of the portfolio and discussion with the pupil named below, I have found that the pupil has demonstrated progress at a level commensurate with his/her ability. Florida Statute requires that I hold a valid regular Florida certificate to teach academic subjects at the elementary or secondary level. My signature below attests to my qualification.

Signature of Florida Certified Teacher/Evaluator

Evaluation Date

Name of Teacher/Evaluator (Please Print)

Certification Number

Date of Certification Expiration

Student's Name: _____

Student's Date of Birth: _____ **Current Grade:** _____

Student's Address with apartment #: _____

Student's Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____

Mail to: Orange County Public Schools
Attention: Home Education
Ronald Blocker Educational Leadership Center – 8th Floor
445 W. Amelia St., Orlando, FL 32801
Fax: 407-317-3211

If you would like to receive notification acknowledging receipt of this Written Evaluation Form, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. It is assumed that you will continue to home educate your child(ren) unless you submit a written notice of termination.

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TO BE COMPLETED BY ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Student Number _____ School Year _____

Date received by OCPS

Orange County Public Schools – Orange County, Florida

NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF HOME EDUCATION PROGRAM
(The use of this form is not required. It is provided by OCPS for your convenience.)

In compliance with Florida Statutes 1002.41 (1) (a), this is written notice to terminate the Home Education Program for the following child(ren):

Name of Child	Date of Birth

Reason for Termination: (optional)

- _____ Returning to public school – Orange County
- _____ Moving out of District
- _____ Moving out of State
- _____ Other (Please specify) _____

Name of Parent(s)/Guardian: _____

Address _____
Street Apt# City Zip Code

Telephone _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian/Date _____

Termination Date _____

Date received by OCPS

Mail to: Orange County Public Schools
Attention: Home Education
Ronald Blocker Educational Leadership Center – 8th Floor
445 W. Amelia St., Orlando, FL 32801
Fax: 407-317-3211

On-Line Resources For Home Educations

All website addresses are assumed to begin with the usual <http://www> , unless otherwise noted. Most browsers today will accept and find the website simply by entering what is listed below.

A great starting place – hundreds of links: www.Homeschool.com

Why not see what **Orange County School System** has to offer at www.ocps.net

Our wonderful **Orange County Public Library** has numerous resources for Homeschoolers. You can order books on-line and have them delivered to your home, call to order books, use the internet for free at most locations and prepare for the GED, SAT and lots of other standardized tests, all at no cost. Please, make use of it! <http://www.ocpls.lib.fl.us/>

Useful links about Home Education:

Fpea.com	Florida Parent Educators Association-huge support group
Home-ed-magazine.com	request a free issue
Flvs.net	Florida On-line High School and more- free courses
Hslda.org	Legal Defense of Home Schooling
www.fldoe.org	Fl Dept. of Education (DOE)
Nhen.org	National Home Education Network
Free-ed.net/	Free Online Classes
Dir.yahoo.com/Education/Theory_and_Methods/Home_Schooling/	
Ed.gov/free/	Home-school.com
Homeschooling.about.com/	Homeschoolzone.com
FloridaHomeschoolhelp.com	http://www.FloridaHomeschoolhelp.com

Educational Websites:

Algebra.com	www.Nasa.gov
Algebrahelp.com	Physics.org
Chem4Kids.com	Smithsonian.org
Inforplease.com	Eduweb.com
Internet101.org	Biography.com
Edhelper.com	History.org
Europe.org	Pilgrims.net
Maps.com/learn	Congress.org
Math.com	CoolMath.com
Spelling.com	Discovery.com
NationalGeographic.com	Florida4H.org
Scholastic.com	http://www.iss.stthomas.edu/studyguides
Pbs.org	TryScience.com

Some Classic/Standard Curriculum Sellers:

Abeka.com	Thehomeschool.com	Saxonpublishers.com
Calvertschool.org	Criticalthinking.com	Tutoring.com