

## Getting Started

### *How do I get started?*

Below you will find just a few of the commonly asked questions when starting a homeschooling curriculum. Please contact us if you have more questions.

#### **Ask questions! There are no dumb questions.**

- Educate yourself on *how* to home-school...here are a few ideas.
- Visit some friends that home-school in the area to get an idea of what questions to ask, and get a feel for how a home-school might look. Take notes write things down when you visit. Remember we are all different.
- Decide which support groups best fit your family, and subscribe to their newsletters if they have one or subscribe to their emails.
- Read a few books on homeschooling. There are many books on home-schooling; one of my favorites is *The Ultimate Guide to Homeschooling* by Debra Bell. She is a homeschooling mom from Pennsylvania. Recommended also, is subscribing to a home-schooling magazine. This can get quite costly so choose carefully. A couple of good ones for beginners might be *The Old Schoolhouse*, *Teach Magazine*, or *Homeschooling Today*; just to name a few to get you started.
- Visit websites of prospective magazines and call the circulation number to see if they are willing to send you a free copy to look over.
- Visit some home-school activities, this is where you will find experienced homeschooling parents who will be glad to share their experiences with you.
- You will want to familiarize yourself with the Pennsylvania Home Education Law (located on member's page)

*How do I withdraw my child from public school?* This step is not hard, but the school districts can be very intimidating. Don't let them intimidate you!

- First thing you must do is write "A Letter of Intent to Homeschool" to the school district. You can find a sample of this letter (located on member's page). In Pennsylvania, usually the superintendent of your district is the head of homeschoolers in your district.
- Next, you will need to print out a copy of an Affidavit (located on member's page) fill out what you can without signing it. You will sign it in front of the notary. Here's a little secret, most school districts will notarize your affidavit for free, because it is school business. Call and ask..
- You will have to write out "Educational Objectives" (sample) for your student for the year. These things except for the "Letter of Intent" are to be done every school year you home-school.
- Finally you will need to go to your schools administrative office and file a "withdraw" notice. At the same time, hand them your Educational Objective, Affidavit, and Letter of Intent to Home-school. They will know what to do from there.

*What About Homeschooling Teenagers?* This topic can be very lengthy. We will approach a few topics on this, but for the most part, the best thing to do is attend meetings of a support group and ask questions!

*How will my teenager get a high school diploma?* Well, there are a few ways to accomplish this in Pennsylvania; One way is to present one to him after all the requirements have been met. This is considered a "homemade" or "home-created" diploma.

- Your child can take a G.E.D. (General Education Diploma) test and receive a diploma.
- Another way is to enroll in a home-school diploma program that is recognized by the state of Pennsylvania as accredited, (ex., Pennsylvania Homeschool Accreditation Agency or Erie County Home School Diploma Association). These agencies/programs have guidelines from the state that must be met by the student to receive a state backed diploma. There are other diploma programs available; these are just a few to get you started. Do your research to find out what diploma program will best suit your students needs for graduation.

*Doesn't my child need a transcript to get into college?* Many families prepare their own home-school transcripts; these have been accepted by many colleges and universities. Other parents use transcripts prepared by their diploma program. Parents concerned about college admissions will want to read And What About College?, by Cafi Cohen; this book offers several different approaches to college admissions for home-schoolers. Another highly recommended book is High School: A Home Design Form-U-La, by Barb Shelton. This book shows you how to record all the things you do in a transcript format.

