



Home Education in QLD - FAQ

Compiled by the Admin team at [Home Education QLD](#):
please join this group for additional support and information

Homeschooling is a legal and valid alternative to education provided within a school setting, but the requirements differ from state to state. Qld has its own legislation, requirements and processes regarding home education.

Please always refer to the Education Department [Home Education Unit](#) (HEU) for official requirements.

However, starting down the road to homeschooling can seem very confusing and daunting. The following Frequently Asked Questions provides a short overview of the rules and requirements to clarify some of those processes.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can I legally educate my child at home? How?

You either need to register for Home Schooling with the HEU, or apply with a Distance Education (DE) Provider (which is usually linked to a school).

[Legislation covering Home Education in QLD -Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#) (updated January 2017). Refer to “Part 5” for Home Education.

By what age does a child have to be registered with HEU?

The “compulsory participation age” is between **6.5 years to 16 years** (though if the child has finished year 10 regardless of age they are no longer “compulsory”). This is the age where a

child must either be enrolled with a school (including DE) or registered to Homeschool with the HEU.

Hang on ... I thought Prep year was compulsory in QLD now? How does that work for homeschoolers?

In January 2017 the law changed to “make Prep compulsory” which has created a lot of confusion amongst homeschoolers. In a nutshell, the new laws:

- are about instructing SCHOOL principals to ensure children entering Year 1 have the skills and capabilities required, typically achieved by the child completing a Prep year;
- make schools responsible for this requirement, not parents;
- did NOT change the compulsory age for a child to have commenced with a recognised form of education. This age remains at of 6.5 years;
- but DOES allow children to be registered for homeschooling earlier than before, but only IF the parent CHOOSES to. The child CAN (not must) be registered anytime in the year that the child turns 5.5 years by December 31st.

Home school parents who think they may end up sending their Prep aged child to school for Year 1 are advised to register for the Prep Year, as it will make it easier to satisfy the entry requirements. However, even without this a child can be accepted into Year 1 at school without doing Prep, at the principal’s discretion if he/she believes the child to have the necessary capabilities etc.

This is the [relevant section of law](#).

Ok, so how do I register for home schooling?

All [registrations](#) must be applied through the HEU using their application form (available on their website or phone for them to mail you the paperwork).

What about writing a plan? How do I do that? What have I gotten myself in to!

The HEU provides planning templates as well as many examples on their website. It is also really helpful to check out approved plans of other home educators (check the Files section of this and other groups).

If you are unsure, use one of the templates provided by HEU.

A good check list to keep in mind are the requirements outlined on the HEU website of the education plan for registration is that it “**shows evidence of a high-quality education**” that:

- **has regard to the age, ability, aptitude and development of the child concerned**
They want to see that YOU know where your child is up to, their needs, strengths and

challenges, and that you can SHOW how you have taken this into account when making you plan)

- **takes account and promotes continuity of the learning experiences of the child concerned**

They want to see that you are looking at what the child has done before and how they went with that, and are helping the child to progress and build upon this.

- **is responsive to the changing needs of the child concerned**

Again, they want to see that you will be able to observe how the child is doing (record) and to then take those observations, work out what they mean, and make any required adjustments to always be meeting your child's needs.

- **reflects and takes into account current understandings related to educational and other development of children**

They want to see that you know where children of a similar age would be “up to” and what they would be learning. This is a hint for you to at least show you are aware of the National Curriculum, if not reference it.

- **is responsive to the child's need for social development**

This is where you can show all the ways your child will have contact with other people - peers, community etc. Again they like you to show how this relates to your child's particular needs and temperament.

- **is supported by sufficient and suitable resources**

This is where you can really convince them of all the different tools you will be putting in your home ed tool bag. A resource is everything from books, apps, websites, activities, classes, mentors etc. The more you mention, the better.

- **is conducted in an environment conducive to learning**

They just want to know how you will modify and/or chose your child's surrounding to optimise your child's learning. Eg, if they are very tactile maybe you will be incorporating the outside environment more, or if they get easily distracted how you will be reducing external noise etc.

So when can I pull my child out of school to start homeschooling?

Legally, your child cannot be registered (full or provisional) with HEU and enrolled in a school at the same time.

When you send in your application form, you are automatically provisionally registered. Therefore you can un-enroll your child from school from the time you send your registration application to HEU.

You can receive Provisional Registration for 60 days without the need for a Plan (from the date they receive your app)

A school cannot demand to see your HEU registration, nor do they have any jurisdiction over the home school registration process. If you have any issues with un-enrolling from school, it is recommended that you speak to the HEU and/or seek support from an experienced home schooler.

Tell me about reporting. It sounds scary!

Reporting is a requirement of Registration and is due on the **10th month anniversary** of the registration date. So if your child was registered on March 5th, then the **Report** would be due on the next January 5th.

Although it may seem terrifying, it really is a great opportunity to reflect on the year gone by and show off some of the little steps or big steps your child has made over the last year.

Everyone's Reports will be different, as our children are all different. Whilst there is no mandated format you must follow when reporting, there are some registration requirements and a few "golden rules" which make the whole process far less stressful and possibly, even enjoyable.

Have a look at the **Report Template** provided by HEU to give you an idea of what they want. If you are not sure, use their Template/s for your own Report.

Samples are KEY. The HEU is pretty strict that you must provide **SIX (6) samples** - 2 each for three subjects.

You must include a **pair of samples for English, Maths and a third subject of your choice.**

They want the Samples to show **evidence of learning and/or a change.** This is why they ask for Samples from **2 different time points in the year.**

Photos are great. They love photos. But photos without analysis, explanation and commentary are not. Especially if they form one of your samples.

Yes, the **HEU prefer written samples;** but if that is a problem for your child then be creative - parent journals, student journals, scrapbook entries, transcripts, typed work, photos, schematics/ drawings etc. If you provide video/ audio don't assume they will accept it - include a "hard copy" of the work (stills, description etc) as well.

They are not assessing your child's ability. **They are assessing YOUR ability to provide, record, analyse and adjust learning opportunities to your child's needs.** They want to know the PROCESSES that occurred, and WHY.

The more you explain your observations, the child's needs/strengths/ challenges, what actions you took in response to those needs/ challenges, how THAT worked out, what needs to happen next and why etc... the better picture you can provide HEU.

Check out [HEU's video about submitting reports](#).

Do I really need to register?

Well technically it's a legal requirement. Registration can also assist in access to:

- support from HEU,
- photo student id,
- school based apprenticeships,
- school dental vans
- regional school- sporting competitions
- participating in NAPLAN

Also it can enable continuation of certain Centrelink payments and eligibility for various Centrelink activity exemptions. (See below).

Can I get a teacher to come to my home and teach my child if I am registered with HEU?

This is a tricky area. Technically you, the parent need to be the provider of your child's education. You can also employ a qualified teacher to come to the home, but you **MUST** include that in your Registration information.

If you use a tutor, or your child attends classes and courses, this is just a resource, not a paid teacher delivering the child's home education. However, if you plan to use Samples from learning that was facilitated by someone else, be very careful as HEU can get a little funny with this - they want to see what input YOU had with that learning.

What is a Show Cause notice? And what should I do if I get one?

Feel free to ask in our group or message an admin, or join the Deregistration group if it has gone past the due date. Effectively provide what they ask for by the due date and you will be fine.

Is the HEU the same as the HEN and HEA?

No. The **HEU** (Home Education Unit) is the Education Authority that oversees the registration process and supports parents to meet their obligations regarding the standards for registration. [HEU Policy statement of Responsibilities and Process](#)

HEN (Home Education Network) is a non-profit support group offering information, support and activities to home educating families and families enquiring into home education. Members are also entitled to discounts on various educational programs, such as Athletics, Reading Eggs, Skwirk, Maths Online and Rosetta Stone. HEN members are also able to enter the Australian Mathematics Competition and the Australian Informatics Competition with

HEN as their ‘school’. Members receive weekly news emails and also have access to the social network section of our website as well as the forum. [Join HEN today](#).

The **HEA** (Home Education Association) was a national not-for-profit association run by volunteer home educators.

Can I get a Centrelink payment, funding or allowance for homeschooling my child?

There is no special payment or funding available for home educators. However, home education may affect the rate, conditions and eligibility for certain payments. Proof of full registration with the HEU or enrolment with DE is always required. This includes:

Newstart: May be eligible for an exemption from “mutual obligation” activities (such as looking for jobs, studying, attending job ready programs etc). You will still need to “report” to Centrelink as usual.

Newstart - Single Parent: May be eligible for a higher rate of payment.

Parenting Payment - Single: Same as Newstart.

AIC (Assistance for Isolated Children): Financial subsidy available for parents of children whose medical condition/ disability means they need to be educated at home as school attendance would be detrimental and would likely result in 20 or more days absence a year. https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/forms/sy040?utm_id=7m

Hints and Tips to Help with HEU

When you start home education it is overwhelming, there is a lot to take in.

Most people have never investigated education further than “which school is best”. You can’t be expected to know it all now, you can only base your Plan on as much as you choose to research, so do what you can to get as much information as you can manage, right now.

Choose a path that feels like it might work now, as you don’t know what will happen in the future. If you are not confident then a prepackaged Program may be helpful to you to have a guide. We have [links](#) to those in our group.

If you really aren’t sure of what you might do then check out the variety of Distance Ed options – some are very flexible and do provide teacher based assistance. We have [links](#) to some of these in our group too.

In terms of how to write your Plan: If you have read lots (or are experienced) or just know what you want to do then start with that; if you want to try out some new websites, a variety of resources, books and ideas then use that as your starting point; if you want to follow a particular pedagogy (eg Montessori, Steiner, Charlotte Mason), then use that as your guide to write your own program. If you have no idea then start with brainstorming all the fun exciting or interesting things you want to do and build from there. If you want a prepaid package curriculum then start from there, HEU still want to see how that will suit your child's needs.

Reading is something that you will have to make some time to do, as there are a few aspects to get your head around in terms of what's required and how HEU like to see it (or you could meet up at a with someone and have a chat to get an understanding to help too).

1. PLANING TIPS

Plans are to show HEU that you, as your child's TEACHER, are capable of planning what your child needs to learn.

The Plan is really providing proof that you have the skills to observe your child's learning needs, then make adjustments as needed, and source what they need to learn more.

They want to hear you have done your research and have some ideas and can plan activities, and that you are providing appropriate material suitable to where your child is currently at (so you have to tell them what skills and abilities your child does or doesn't have and why you are planning what you are).

Plans don't have to be followed, they like to hear how you were flexible and followed your child's needs and changed what you had planned and why and how you were receptive to your child's learning needs (when you write your Report).

Read the HEU website on [Planning](#) – they have documents to help and answers to many common questions.

Read some other [Plans](#) and Templates in the Files section of our group under 'Learning'.

Under section 208 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* the parent is to provide a summary of the educational program to be used for the home education of their child. *This documentation should show evidence of a high-quality education (see above FAQ).*

- *is responsive to the changing needs of the child as indicated by the short and long term educational and personal goals*
- *has regard to the age, ability, aptitude and development of the child concerned*
- *is conducted in an environment conducive to learning*
- *is responsive to the child's need for social development*

- *utilises suitable and **relevant teaching strategies** to deliver the educational program to the child*
- *engages the child in a **range of rich and varied learning experience***
- *is supported by sufficient and suitable **resources***
- *uses strategies for **monitoring educational progress**.*

You don't have to use any of their Templates but you do need to include some particular elements - (which are like the 8 points above but in easier English):

- *Goals - long and short term*
- *Learning Environment*
- *Motivational environment (is a new one they are pushing)*
- *Social Opportunities*
- *Reference to some bigger plan (Australian Curriculum, Montessori, Steiner)*
- *At least 5 Learning Areas/subjects - **with details about where your child is at, some ideas about what you might do and how you might cover it, why you are intending to learn in a particular way, why you chose those resources and tools and direction.***
- *Some Resources for each Learning Area (check out some here <https://www.facebook.com/notes/home-education-qld/websitesresources-to-help-build-your-own-planprogram/2049986598566610/>)*
- *A statement or 2 at least, about keeping copies of everything and dating it and a diary for Report time.*

2. Reporting Tips

HEU recommend keeping a diary or some record of learning throughout the year, so you can identify learning, as well as all work completed, photos are good too - some people keep electronic records.

READ the REPORT PACK they send – YES its HUGE, yes its onerous but this is what you need to read to ensure you come close to providing what they need. we have it in Files here [Set 1](#) and [Set 2](#) (including Template)

USE THE **REPORT TEMPLATE** (but not the 30 page table Plan at the end) – if you use this you should easily provide exactly what they want – it doesn't have to be huge.

Reports are about showing them how YOU have helped and supported your child, more than the child's skill level or ability, they are checking you are capable of educating your child to ensure "high quality learning".

The paper work is more about your ability as their "teacher" than your child's skill/ability. So don't stress about the level of your child, focus on how you are supporting them and how they are improving.

HEU need get a picture of your child and how you have been learning over the year so tell them.

Re-read your past Plan and look over the Goals and details so you can respond to those goals and see what you did or didn't do.

The **6 dated Samples are key** - if you don't provide comparative pairs of Samples in English Maths and 1 other Learning Area you won't be approved. The Samples should be between 3-6 months apart - and need to be dated.

Samples can be a variety of media and you can also use a "Diary Entry" if needed and describe the details of the Learning. Look at the options in the [Australian Curriculum portfolio documents](#). You need to be across what level your child is at so do look at these.

Samples can be something they struggled and needed help with as a 1st Sample, and then how they have mastered it, or can do it more independently or more complex as the 2nd Sample.

HEU only know what you tell them - you don't have to share things that may cause more trouble than its worth - but if you choose to put in some negatives then include some ideas around how you will address those negatives else expect recommendations and more advice from HEU (which can be helpful if you word it right - they may send good links and ideas - instead of telling you off). Focus on the positives.

They really don't want to read a 30 page report. I'm sure they prefer them to be concise and to answer the questions they ask in the Report Template. They likely have a check list they need to satisfy based on those template questions, so the answers to their questions in the Report. But you can add more if you choose to illustrate further.

Use last year's Plan as a base to write your next year Plan; sometimes just a few words need adjusting.

Get someone **experienced to read your draft Plan and or Report** before you send it. – our group has a [list of volunteers](#) that can help.

Our volunteers have extensive experience with HEU paperwork and requirements, and are keen to help support and empower others that are looking for assistance and guidance in writing their plans and reports. Please add your own name if you are happy to volunteer.

Step 1 - Go to our 'Files' section and read some of the Plans and Reports that have been approved. This will make it easier for you to chose a format/style that you feel comfortable with. Also read some of the information on the HEU website about preparing a Plan.

<https://education.qld.gov.au/schools-educators/other-education/home-education>

Step 2 Pick a *Template* (from our Files or there are 3 on the HEU website linked above) and download it to use or use the *Headings* to start your own Plan/Program. eg Long Term Goals, Short Term Goals, Resources, Learning Environment, Learning areas etc.

Step 3 Brainstorm with your family, ideas, projects, curriculum you want to do - check out our other documents to help with resources and texts etc. Use those ideas as a base to start identifying ways to learn about those ideas. You can also look at the different Curriculums (Montessori, Steiner, Charlotte Mason, Australian etc – see below for a brief description of these approaches) to get ideas and also pre-made packages you can purchase to support your Plan (we have documents with some of those too).

Step 4 - When you are stuck or have a DRAFT and you want someone to read and provide feedback then message one of the people below and see if they have the time. Or post in group for some ideas (as people are an awesome resource).

A reminder that our Home Education QLD group is here to provide the support and experience to help others home educate. There is no government service that helps you with the options and choices, we are filling a gap for many families that would be unable to get registration or make an informed choice for their families on all the options.

The Home Education Unit (HEU) is a government body authorised with making a judgement on if we can home educate, based on what we provide in paper format to them. For some people this can be very challenging. We all agree there are many concerns around this process and a united voice of a large body of people is what is required to lobby government to make changes from the top down, we don't advise approaching HEU directly with broader systemic issues as individuals, as they have no control or authority over anything outside their department legislation (and it often causes more waves and further restrictions).

This group is for parents to help parents – we TRUST that by sharing our paperwork you are using the documents in our files as they are intended. These have been shared generously by families within our very supportive community to give you some ideas about how to write your own and enable you to feel confident in educating your child. Documents are clearly not for copying or on-selling: to do so would be highly illegal, a breach of trust and not the intention in any of the support groups.

In the last 2 years there has been SIGNIFICANT growth in individuals offering paid services offering assistance to write plans and reports for people. We recognise that people may feel overwhelmed, are not confident or are simply unaware how to write their own programs and reports, and can understand that recent trends of HEU becoming more particular with what they want to see may be feeding into this. The Admin team strongly suggest caution and research when purchasing such services.

If you do seek a business that helps with writing Plans, do look for someone with significant experience being approved in the recent past (eg at least 5 years) -and maybe ask in group other peoples' experience with the business in consideration.

Through contact with those parents who have used such services, we have come across shocking situations where some individuals have taken significant money from parents despite having no experience with home education or HEU (simply citing their teaching degree as credentials), having their plans/reports then not being approved by HEU, or even plagiarizing files from our documents.

We **STRONGLY** encourage you to write your own Plans as that is what you need to deliver or use throughout the year and **YOU** need to understand and be across what is in your Plan. The process of developing your Plan is overwhelming when you start but can also be very satisfying once completed. We have that list of volunteers to help too, so seek them out.

Different Approaches to Home Education

There are so many different “types” of homeschooling - it is so confusing!

Finding your own style or what works for you is all part of the journey. There are a number of different styles from Traditional or Classical through to Unschooling. All are acceptable ways to educate your family. Have a read here of some of the styles: taken from Beverley Paine's very informative [The Educating Parent](#) website from her *Choosing Homeschool Curriculum* booklet (download her five free Resource Directories too).

“Are you prepared to be flexible, willing to try different approaches? There are as many ways to homeschool as there are families doing it. Find others who homeschool and ask them how they do it. Ask to "hang out" with them for a few days. Before you begin buying workbooks or an expensive curriculum, take some time choosing a homeschooling method. You need to find an approach that suits not only your children's learning styles, but one that you will be comfortable using as well. Choose from any of the following styles, or mix and blend to create a personalised , unique educational approach.

*** Traditional School-at-Home Methods**

Most homeschooling parents start here, emulating how the child learned at school, or copying how they were taught as a child. This method works well with children who respond well to order and structure. The homeschooling day is set up using a regular time table, progress is charted with check-lists, and curriculum texts are used in each of the nationally accredited subject areas. This approach usually includes grading, testing, adherence to daily schedules and school terms.

*** Unschooling**

The child's education is built around the child's interest with the child determining how, when, and what to learn. Unschooling is a rejection of school-based methods of instruction, preferring to use whatever is useful to facilitate learning. The parent is not regarded as a 'teacher' but as a 'facilitator' - someone who helps the child find appropriate resources to support learning. The emphasis is on retaining, or rediscovering, the child's natural inclination and enthusiasm for learning.

*** Unit Studies: A Topic-Based Approach to Learning**

Unit studies begin with a democratically chosen topic or theme, around which a collection of educational activities is built which touch upon learning in all curriculum areas. Often the topic chosen is of high interest to the child. Unit studies can be tailored to suit the needs of different age or ability children in the family, with everyone studying the same topic, but different elements and at different levels at the same time. A unit study continues until interest wanes, or projects and activities are completed. Families who use unit studies as their main approach often complete 'lap books' or web sites as permanent records of the study.

*** Natural Learning / Informal Learning / Natural Curriculum**

Similar to Unschooling, where learning is personally meaningful and of high interest to the child, but less 'child-directed' and more 'family-centred'. Children learn the skills and knowledge necessary for healthy and holistic development and growth within the everyday context of home and community. There is an emphasis on learning life-skills, as well as practical activities and skills, development of work ethic, self-reliance and service to others.

*** Classical Education**

The three-part classical method is intended to literally 'train a child's mind'. This approach teaches children to think, rather than teaching 'subjects'. At its core is the 'Trivium', an educational process that recognises that children learn differently at different ages. It begins by teaching children basic facts across all subjects, then encourages the development of independent or abstract thought, before finally producing adolescents who can reason and use language to communicate eloquently. It is a rigorous and structured approach.

*** Charlotte Mason**

Charlotte Mason, a 19th century educational reformer and devout Christian, believed in promoting the value of good habits, nature study and insisted that children learn from quality literature - "living books". Narration - the retelling of what has been read or learned - is used to demonstrate learning and comprehension. Copy-work reinforces thoughts and ideas while simultaneously teaching handwriting. A sense of the 'big picture' of human history is taught

through the use of a "century book". Combines practical life skills with a sound literature based education.

*** Waldorf / Steiner Influenced Education**

Holistic in nature, Steiner education educates the whole child with its motto of "head, heart and hands". Younger children focus on arts and crafts, music and movement, and nature in a strict progression and structured way. Reading is taught from age seven. Older children learn self-awareness and reasoning skills. Children do not use text books in the early years; instead they create their own books and understanding. Television and computers are deemed deleterious to creativity. There is an emphasis on natural materials and spiritual development.

*** Montessori**

In a controlled learning environment made up of 'learning centres' stocked with Montessori learning materials, children learn at their own pace by freely selecting highly structured activities developed to teach innately those things the child is developmentally ready to learn. Montessori materials are generally made from natural materials and there is an emphasis on learning life and practical skills. Many families find they are able to make their own Montessori materials following instructions found on the internet.

*** Eclectic Approach**

Many homeschooling families relax into an 'eclectic' approach, selecting the best teaching strategies from various sources, including the different homeschooling approaches. This approach generally builds on individual children's learning styles and needs as well as the needs of the homeschooling family. It is highly flexible to changes in circumstances and can easily capitalise on learning opportunities as they arise.

*** Distance Education**

Once available only to remote students through the state school system, distance education is available through private correspondence schools, and usually offer a Christian based curriculum. Enrolled students learn via correspondence or over the Internet in a traditional 'school-at-home' way, with parents usually marking work which is then sent to be recorded on the student's portfolio. This approach is often expensive and restrictive, requiring families to adhere to a rigid timetable. Certificates are awarded at the completion of school studies.

*** Computer / Internet based**

Instead of using traditional text books, some families use educational computer programs and online learning programs available in all subject areas. Children complete interactive lessons using the computer. Feedback is immediate and some programs automatically compile student progress records. There is opportunity for group learning situations using blogs, forums, chat

rooms, etc. Computer based learning needs to be supplemented by physical activities in the traditional subject areas, as well as face-to-face social interaction. Free internet resources take time to find, and good quality programs can be expensive.

*** School-Sponsored and Part-Time Homeschooling Programs**

Some families are able to negotiate part time attendance at school for a variety of reasons. Not officially available in all states, especially in state schools. Private schools may charge a fee. Some schools or programs offer classes in individual subjects, while others offer an entire curriculum. Families lose some homeschooling autonomy.

*** Using Homeschooling Learning Cooperatives**

As the number of homeschooling families increase support groups grow to serve their social and educational needs. In some metropolitan areas informal 'learning cooperatives' evolve over time or are formally begun. These typically offer classes for groups of children in a range of subject areas, to suit the needs of the homeschooling community. Fees are paid to the cooperative or to the individual offering tutorage. As in a school setting, there are rules to be followed as well as timetables and schedules. Homeschool cooperatives usually require parents to supervise their own children at all times whilst participating in lessons or group activities. Parents are usually required to become involved in the cooperative in a direct way. More common that homeschool cooperatives are local support groups that offer regular social get-togethers for parents and children in an informal setting, either in a park or playground, or at each others' homes. Individuals and groups organise educational excursions to places of interest or work.

Changing course to reach your desired goal is NOT failure! Most home educating families take a year or three to 'find' a style or approach that suits them. Sometimes a family can use one approach with one child and another for the other children. It is not unusual for families to begin with one approach and then change over time. We began our home educating journey with school-at-home and slowly relaxed into an unschooling and then a natural learning approach. This included, on occasion, access to part-time school, enrolment in distance education courses and involvement in homeschool cooperatives.”