

Homeschool Overview

What are my options to homeschool in Iowa? How do I get started?

Families may consider several options available in Iowa for home school instruction. These include Independent Private Instruction (IPI) and Competent Private Instruction (CPI). Regardless of which path you select, you do have to engage in instruction for a minimum of 148 days each school year, or 37 days each quarter. Depending on the path that you feel is the best fit for your family, you may need to complete Form A and return it to the school district that you live in. Some districts offer a Home School Assistance Program (HSAP). This is a locally determined option, but if your district offers this option, you may want to consider the benefits of participation in this as you make your decision.

All families who homeschool, regardless of the path that you choose, may select the curriculum and instructional materials that you feel are best suited to your students and your educational goals. The Iowa Department of Education does not recommend or require a specific curriculum. You may want to keep in mind that if you select CPI Option #2, and are dual enrolled, you do have to provide proof of adequate progress annually. This may be done in several ways – but if you choose to participate in an annual assessment to document progress, students in first through fifth grade are required to test in the areas of Reading, Language Arts and Math. Students in sixth grade through twelfth grade are required to test in Reading/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. This may help you in guiding your selection of materials.

If your student has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and is receiving special education services or supports, you will need to contact the district that your child is enrolled in and schedule an IEP meeting to discuss how the IEP will be addressed. This should be done as soon as possible since the decision to homeschool has a potential impact on IEP services.

Students who have been homeschooled may re-enroll in a public school at any time. Please be aware that students in grades K – 8 are placed with peers of the same age. For students in high school, this is a bit more complex and involves discussion related to content covered in the homeschool setting to help in selecting classes that will be most appropriate for you student. It is important to be aware that for students in high school, it is a local decision to award credit for course work completed in the home school setting. This can impact the potential for the student returning to the public school to earn a diploma and graduate with their peers. Please check with the district with regard to their policy.

Independent Private Instruction (IPI) is instruction provided by the family, without any interaction with the local school district. There isn't a form to complete and return to the district. However, I do encourage you to consider notifying the district that you will be engaging in Independent Private Instruction, the name(s) of the student(s) involved, the location this will take place and who is responsible for instruction. This can be done by phone, email or other written notice. The Superintendent or a person they designate may ask for this information. By providing it as you begin, you establish that your children are being provided with instruction and truancy is not a concern. You do need to adhere to the 148 days of instruction noted above, and select materials and curriculum for your students. You may request courtesy testing if you wish, and the district does have to provide Drivers Education Instruction for your child. If you have a student in high school, they may participate in Concurrent Enrollment courses. Your child or children may re-enroll in the local district at any time, or you may choose to switch to one of the Competent Private Instruction options at any time.

Competent Private Instruction (CPI) includes several choices, depending on what you are wanting and your educational goals. This is instruction that may be provided by a person with a current Iowa teaching license, or led by a person who is not endorsed as a teacher in Iowa, and may include dual

enrollment for academics, activities or special education. As stated above, you do have to engage in instruction for a minimum of 148 days/year or 37 days/quarter, and you may select the curriculum that you feel is best.

Competent Private Instruction Option #1 is instruction provided by a person with a current Iowa teaching license. This can be through participation in a Home School Assistance Program (HSAP) if your district has one, or by a person that you retain privately. If you have a current Iowa teaching or substitute license, or substitute authorization, you may also be considered the teacher for your child. You do have to complete Form A and return to the local school district if you are retaining a teacher privately, or wanting to dual enroll. You will need to provide the name and BOEE folder number of the teacher that is working with the child(ren), unless you are participating in a HSAP.

You may dual enroll with the local district for academics, to participate in activities or for special education services. Since you are working with a person with a current Iowa teaching license, you are not required to provide annual proof of adequate progress. If you are participating in a HSAP with your local district, they may require an annual assessment as a condition of participation in the program.

Competent Private Instruction Option #2 is instruction provided by a person without a current Iowa teaching license. This can be a parent or other person that you select to support your child(ren)'s education. You select the curriculum and materials that you feel are best, and engage in instruction for a minimum of 148 days/year or 37 days/quarter. You are required to complete and return Form A for each child you are providing instruction for and return to the local school district. You may dual enroll for academics, to participate in activities, or for special education services, or for materials only. The difference between CPI Option #1 and CPI Option #2 is that you are required to provide proof of progress annually, and instruction is provided by a person who does not have a current Iowa teaching license.

Competent Private Instruction Opt out testing is the third CPI option, and is similar to Independent Private Instruction. You engage in instruction as described in each option above, but you are not providing proof of progress annually, and may not dual enroll for any academics, to participate in activities or for special education services. You are not required to complete any forms, and the district may not contact you for any reason. I do encourage families who choose this option to consider notifying the district that they are using CPI opt out testing to establish that instruction is being provided and that truancy is not a concern. I am inserting a link to the Private Instruction Handbook in the email for you. This will explain each in greater detail, as well as provide other information that you will find helpful.

Sincerely,

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