

GHEA

GEORGIA HOME EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Dear Georgia Home Educator,

Welcome to the most challenging and exciting adventure of your and your children's lives. The Georgia Home Education Association (GHEA) is dedicated to helping you have the most successful and fulfilling home education experience possible. GHEA is a non-profit corporation that provides information and resources to **all** families involved in home-based, parent-directed, privately-funded education in Georgia. GHEA was founded in 1992 by a group of home schooling parents who had a vision for uniting and strengthening Georgia's home educators through effective communication tools, high quality resources and services, and relevant teaching and encouragement. We are committed to the advancement of home education and to the protection of every family's right to home educate their children and consider it part of our mission to help families across Georgia involved in this alternative education choice. Part of that commitment is making sure that home schooling families in Georgia receive accurate, up-to-date information about homeschooling. Home education is a serious commitment for any family. Those who have chosen this path consider it a "way of life." We strongly recommend that you research and study this undertaking before deciding that home education is the right educational choice for your family. If and when you decide to homeschool, we are there to help you, no matter what your circumstances.

Georgia has an excellent home study statute. This law is easy to fulfill, but compliance is essential. Non-compliance with our law can result in truancy charges being brought against you. A summary of the Georgia law and your responsibilities associated with it are included on the back of this letter. If you have any questions, please contact our office.

GHEA offers many valuable and practical resources for homeschooling families. We offer parent education seminars, an annual convention (usually the first weekend in May), and in-service training in choosing curriculum, getting started, home schooling children with special needs, and how to homeschool through high school. We also offer an up-to-date website (www.ghea.org), e-mail counseling at info@ghea.org, and phone counseling at 770-461-3657. During the annual state legislative season from January through March, we are actively monitoring political activity in our state legislature. Part of our mission is to provide relevant information regarding homeschooling. Any pertinent legislative information is updated and available on our website during this time. We actively participate in Home Education Day at the Capitol activities in February as a partner with Home Education Information Resource (www.heir.org). Please check our website for those dates and activities.

Georgia is the fifth-largest homeschooling state in the United States with approximately 50,000 home schoolers state-wide. Consequently, there are numerous support groups throughout the state that are able to provide local help and support for families and children. Contact information for these groups is available on www.ghea.org.

You have received this letter from your local school superintendent's office; however it is **not** the school district's job or responsibility to instruct or help you home educate. They are not required to provide you with materials or supplemental help. Please contact us or a local support group if you need help or counsel.

Welcome to home education!

GEORGIA

Compulsory Attendance Ages: “between 6th and 16th birthdays.” Official Code of Georgia Annotated § 20-2-690.1. However, if a child is under 7 and has attended more than 20 days in a public school, he is subject to the compulsory attendance laws. § 20-2-150(c).

Required Days of Instruction: 180 days. Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-690(c)(5).

Required Subjects: A basic academic educational program that includes, but is not limited to, reading, language arts, math, social studies, and science. Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-690(c)(4).

Home School Statute: Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-690(c).

1. Parents must submit a declaration of intent to home study to the local superintendent within 30 days after the establishment of the home study program and by Sept. 1 every year thereafter. This declaration must include the names and ages of students, the location of the home school, and the time the parents designate as their school year. Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-690(c)(2).
2. The home school must provide “a basic academic educational program.” Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-690(c)(4). (see “subjects” above).
3. Each school day must consist of four and one-half hours. Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-690(c)(5).
4. Attendance records must be kept and submitted to the superintendent each month. The records will “not be used for any purpose except providing necessary attendance information.” Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-690(c)(6).
5. Parent must write an annual progress report and retain it for three years. Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-690(c)(8).
6. “Parents or guardians may teach only their own children in the home study program ... but the parents or guardians may employ a tutor who holds at least a high school diploma or a GED equivalency diploma to teach such children.” § 20-2-690(c)(3). No specific amount of hours required for tutor to teach.
7. According to the Attorney General of Georgia, the local superintendent does not have the authority to require parents to affirmatively produce evidence of their continuing compliance with the law in the operation of home study programs or require the production of documents. Although the superintendent has the authority to “request” such materials, he cannot require parents to submit them. 1986 Op. Att’y. Gen. No. U86-19.
8. This statute resulted from a home school decision by the Georgia Supreme Court, *Roemhild v. Georgia*, 251 Ga. 569, 308 S.E.2d 154 (Ga. 1983), which found the former law to be “unconstitutionally vague.” *Roemhild*, 308 S.E. 2d at 159. The court reasoned: “...we conclude that the statute is not sufficiently definite to provide a person of ordinary intelligence, who desires to avoid its penalties, fair notice of what constitutes a “private school...”” *Roemhild* at 158. “Furthermore, the statute violated a second due process value in that it impermissibly delegates to local law enforcement officials, judges, and juries the policy decision of what constitutes a private school.” *Id.*

Teacher Qualifications: The “teaching parent” must have at least a high school diploma or a GED diploma. Or the parents may employ a private tutor who has a high school diploma or a GED equivalency diploma. Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-690(c)(3).

Standardized Tests: Children must take a national standardized achievement test every three years beginning at the end of the third grade. “Test scores are not required to be submitted to public school authorities.” Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-690(c)(7).