Thinking About Homeschooling?
Whether you’re just checking out homeschooling or are fully committed to making it work for your family, you can take your first steps right here. This 28-page manual will give you answers to the most frequently asked questions about home education as well as show you how FPEA membership will play an invaluable role in the process.

How Can the FPEA Help Me Homeschool?
The Florida Parent-Educators Association exists solely to serve homeschooling families in Florida. The FPEA executes that mission in these ways:

- Support for the legal right to homeschool
- Local school board interaction and networking
- Support-group and nontraditional private-school networking
- An annual statewide convention
- Local conferences and events
- Informative communication tools
- Individual encouragement

What Exactly Is Homeschooling?
Home education, as defined by Florida law, is “sequentially progressive instruction of a student directed by his or her parent or guardian in order to satisfy the requirements of Statute 1003.21 and 1002.41.” The law is broad, giving parents quite a bit of freedom to direct their child’s education. Children of all ages are home-educated across the state, and many are entering college straight from their courses of study at home.

How Do I Legally Homeschool in Florida?
Home education is one of five legal ways to satisfy Florida’s compulsory-attendance law. Florida Statute 1003.01 (13) gives parents the choice of achieving regular school attendance through one of these provisions:

- Public school
- Parochial, religious or denominational school
- Nontraditional private school
- Home-education program
- Private tutoring program

Four of these options are in the private sector — ultimately parents choose the setting, curriculum, opportunities and experiences. In all cases, a child turning 6 before February 1 of the school year is subject to compulsory attendance and must attend school regularly the entire term.

Home-Education Program (Florida Statute 1002.41)
Under this statute, parents who teach and direct the education of their own children at home must notify their district school superintendent and meet the other requirements of this law. The child must show educational progress each year. These students are legally considered “home education students.” For information on the six responsibilities of parents under the law, see pages 6-8.

Non-Public Schools (Florida Statute 1003.23 [2])
Parents may choose to register their children in a non-public school (parochial, religious, denominational or nontraditional private). These schools are responsible for keeping attendance records and “enrollment registers.” Students enrolled in these schools, even if taught by their parents at home, are private school students. For more information about nontraditional private schools, designed to serve families that wish to teach at home, see page 11.

Private Tutoring Program (Florida Statute 1002.41)
Parents may choose to hire a private tutor to educate their children at home. The law requires a tutor to follow the same laws as a private school and to hold a Florida certificate to teach the grades and subjects in which instruction is given. These students, even though taught at home, are private school students.
What Are My Responsibilities Under the Home Education Law?

By definition, a home-education program is “sequentially progressive instruction of a student directed by his or her parent or guardian in order to satisfy the requirements of Statute 1003.21 and 1002.41.” The parent or guardian is not required to be a certified teacher or have any educational qualifications. As the parent or guardian, you are the primary instructor for, and supervisor of, your child’s education. Supplementary instruction through other activities is permissible and encouraged, including field trips, co-ops, lessons, sports, and dual enrollment at public or private schools.

How Many Responsibilities Do I Have?

Essentially, six stipulations must be followed to comply with the law as a home educator:

1. Send a notice of intent to your district school superintendent.
   Your written notice of intent must include only the following:
   - Name of each child (6-16 years old).
   - Birthdate of each child named.
   - Address.
   - A parent’s signature.

   The notice must be filed in your district school superintendent’s office within 30 days of beginning your home-education program. It is wise to do this immediately after establishing your program, especially if you are withdrawing your child from a public or private school, to ensure avoiding truancy allegations. Send your notice return-receipt requested to prove it reached its destination. Though there is no official form that must be submitted, a sample notice of intent may be found at fpea.com/about-homeschooling/free-resources. Simply write or type the information, then send it to your superintendent’s office.

2. Maintain a portfolio of records.
   Your portfolio must contain your documented records, which is “a log of educational activities which is made contemporaneously with the instruction and which designates by title any reading materials used.” “Contemporaneously with the instruction” means the documentation should occur at the same time as the instruction. This keeps your documentation and materials in chronological order, which aids in the evaluation or inspection process. Since Florida law does not require lessons to be planned or approved in advance, this allows for more spontaneity in your teaching and for capturing teachable moments. The portfolio must also contain sample materials, meaning “samples of any writings, worksheets, workbooks or creative materials used or developed by the student.”

3. Make your portfolio available for inspection by the superintendent upon 15 days’ written notice.
   Florida law requires you to make your portfolio “available for inspection by the superintendent or the superintendent’s agent, upon 15 days’ written notice.” The superintendent, or his or her agent, is not required to inspect the portfolio as a matter of routine, but does have the right to inspect it if the 15-day written notice is provided. You are not required to show your portfolio to anyone requesting it without proper notice. The inspection is only to make sure the portfolio satisfies legal requirements; the superintendent cannot evaluate its contents.

4. Submit an annual evaluation for each child to the superintendent.
   The law requires an annual educational evaluation, which the parent or guardian must file with the district school superintendent’s office. The parent is responsible to ensure the evaluation arrives there. It is suggested...
you send it certified mail, return-receipt requested. The annual evaluation is due by the anniversary date of the submission of your letter of intent. Nothing in the law requires families to comply with any other date, nor can the local school district enforce an arbitrary deadline.

The home-education law provides five evaluation options:

• Individual evaluation by a Florida-certified teacher of your choice.
• Any nationally normed student achievement test administered by a certified teacher of your choice.
• State student assessment test.
• Psychological evaluation.
• Any other method mutually agreed upon by the parent and the superintendent.

5. Preserve your child’s portfolio for two years. The law specifically states that “the portfolio shall be preserved by the parent for two years.”

6. Submit a letter of termination upon completion of your home-education program, upon enrollment in a public or private school, or upon moving from the county. You must file a notice of termination with the superintendent’s office within 30 days of the time you end your homeschool program. A notice of termination should include the same student information as the notice of intent. Once again, send your notice certified mail, return-receipt requested to prove it reached its destination. A notice of termination may be found at [www.fpea.com/about-homeschooling/free-resources](http://www.fpea.com/about-homeschooling/free-resources).

The six responsibilities outlined here are all that’s required of you under the law when you’re registered with the local superintendent.

For complete information on these six responsibilities, see pages 24-25 to find out how to become an FPEA member. Access to the full-length Guide to Homeschooling in Florida is a benefit of FPEA membership. The FPEA is an all-inclusive organization that operates in accordance with Judeo-Christian principles.

For as little as $30 a year* you can enjoy all the benefits of membership and join with thousands of like-minded parent-educators.

Join or renew your FPEA membership today by visiting [www.fpea.com](http://www.fpea.com).

* $30 for membership through an FPEA-recognized group, $40 for individual membership (rates subject to change)
How Can a Support Group Help Me?
There are support groups for all kinds of organizations throughout America, and homeschooling is no different. Homeschoolers have found strength and encouragement in unity. The number of parent support groups has grown considerably over the years. Every support group has its own personality — some growing quite large and being open for anyone who would like to join, with others limiting their size to maintain intimacy among the members. Regardless, each group serves a vital role in encouraging and supporting homeschooling parents.

We encourage you to join a local support group. If there are no support groups in your area, consider starting one — it only takes a few families to begin. Visit www.fpea.com/groups for help. We cannot overemphasize the importance of a support group in your homeschooling experience. Your effectiveness as a home educator sometimes hinges on encouragement from other like-minded people.

What Are the Functions of a Typical Support Group?
• Support and encourage its members.
• Disseminate proper information regarding the law, how to begin homeschooling and how to maintain an effective homeschool.
• Furnish ongoing information and instruction through newsletters and through monthly, bimonthly or even weekly meetings featuring guest speakers or parents from within the group.
• Sponsor annual or periodic seminars featuring homeschooling authorities.
• Sponsor weekly or monthly field trips for the children.
• Provide extracurricular activities and events such as spelling bees, science fairs, language-arts festivals, talent nights, art/music/dance classes, promotion and awards ceremonies, banquets/proms, etc.

• Provide or sponsor testing and evaluations.
• Promote annual curriculum fairs so curriculum distributors can display their products to homeschoolers.

No two support groups are the same, nor do they all offer the same services. When joining a support group, or if you begin your own, remember that all the functions listed above will rarely be present in any one group. Also be prepared to pay some membership dues. Most support groups, even volunteer groups, charge a fee to cover operating costs (printing, postage, office supplies, etc.).

How Do I Find a Support Group?
For a list of FPEA-recognized groups in your FPEA district, visit www.fpea.com/groups or call 877-ASK-FPEA (275-3732). To find your district, see pages 26.

What Are Nontraditional Private Schools and How Can They Help Me?
No matter how you educate your children, you will always be accountable to someone. Though many home educators in Florida notify their superintendents, a good number register with private schools of one type or another. These types of schools, known as nontraditional private schools and designed to accommodate those who school at home, are not confined to the traditional “brick and mortar” format associated with schools, though many do have facilities of some sort.

Those who prefer structure, assistance, accountability or formal credentials may choose this option. They prefer knowing someone like-minded will be reviewing their program, keeping them on track and giving them advice.

• Accountability: You deal directly with people who hold your religious, educational or philosophical views rather than with the superintendent’s office.
• Privacy: There is no required direct contact with any government employees.
• Stability: Nontraditional private schools have had
We cannot overemphasize the importance of a support group in your homeschooling experience.

Accountability

to take the steps necessary to comply with various laws, so are unlikely to disappear if problems arise.

- Experience: The aforementioned stability results in families that have schooled at home for many years. Thus, newcomers can draw from a large pool of experience, thereby avoiding common mistakes.
- Resources and Equipment: The corporate status of most nontraditional private schools results in the availability of traditional books and manuals, testing materials, video libraries, and tax deductions on donations of books and equipment.
- Credentials: Such schools have valuable credibility with other local schools, employers and organizations through transcripts, diplomas, dual-enrollment and vocational agreements with local colleges and universities, special access to certain scholarships, and other benefits.
- Activities: Participation in state and national activity groups, as well as those focused on older students.
- Advice: Principals, administrators and counselors typically can assist with problems and help deal with odd situations.

To find an FPEA-recognized support group or nontraditional private school serving your area, see page 26 to identify your FPEA district, then visit www.fpea.com/groups and click on your county to access a listing.

IEW’s simple-to-use method is guaranteed to work!

Visit I EW.com/FPEAgifts for free downloads to help get you started.

Andrew Pudewa
Founder and Principal Speaker

Teaching writing is hard!
We’re here to help.
Here’s how:

1. **IEW is easy to use:** We provide step-by-step instructions for using our materials.
2. **IEW is enjoyable:** Taught by Andrew Pudewa, both you and your children will laugh as you’re learning to write.
3. **IEW is flexible:** IEW works for students with a wide range of ages and aptitudes.
4. **IEW is a lifelong investment in your children:** Structure and Style provides them with skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and THINKING!
5. **There’s no risk:** We offer a 100%, no time limit money-back guarantee on everything we sell.
Where Do I Find Curriculum and Materials?

There are numerous answers to this question — more than you can imagine. But to make a good choice, you need to first analyze your own expectations, your family’s lifestyle and the needs of your children. Some families choose a traditional path and use only textbooks; some families use no textbooks at all. Most, if not all, teaching resources can be classified into one of several categories of educational philosophy.

Answering true or false to the following statements can help you determine the method of homeschooling that will best fit your family so you can choose material accordingly:

- I am most comfortable with traditional school methods.
- My children like workbooks.
- I’d like to teach children of different ages together.
- I’d like to take advantage of natural learning opportunities.
- I’d like to make character development my primary educational goal.
- My children love hands-on learning and projects.
- My child needs more time to mature.
- We’d like to develop in our children a Christian worldview.
- I believe a classical education is the best way to train young minds.

There are abundant sources for books and other materials through publishers, catalogs and book distributors. A complete listing of these can be found in the Guide to Homeschooling in Florida, accessible online to FPEA members (see pages 24-25 for information on how to become an FPEA member). Perhaps the best way to consider teaching material is to actually see it at the annual FPEA Florida Homeschool Convention. In the exhibit hall you will find a cross-section of materials for every learning style, teaching technique and budget. The Convention is held every May during Memorial Day weekend (see pages 22-23 for more information).
What If I Have a Child With Special Needs?

Parents who choose to homeschool their special-needs children operate on an elevated level of determination, courage and commitment. Not only must they go against the flow of the general public and educational experts, but they also must accept that certain schooling approaches that work well for other homeschool families are counterproductive for them.

However, just like all other home-educating parents, parents who homeschool children with learning difficulties strive to create a framework for effective learning. Finding a way to present material to a child while matching his learning style is one of the first steps in the process of developing any effective homeschool program, regardless of whether special needs are a concern.

Now, more than ever, resources are available to help homeschoolers meet the requirements of special-needs students. These resources include support organizations, newsletters, how-to books, manipulatives, textbooks, workbooks, evaluation personnel, testing and software. The problem is not necessarily in finding help, but in not being overwhelmed by the plethora of choices.

For complete information on homeschooling special-needs children, see pages 24-25 to find out how to become an FPEA member. Access to the full-length Guide to Homeschooling in Florida is a benefit of FPEA membership.

What If I’m a Single Parent?

The single parent who homeschools is typically stretched to the limit by the additional responsibility of working to support the household. Sometimes support groups and co-ops can help fulfill academic goals, but homeschool materials can be a financial burden as well.

The FPEA Foundation offers a Single Parents Scholarship designed to assist single parents as they tackle the challenge of homeschooling their children on their own. Through alliances with generous vendors, FPEA members who are single parents can apply for financial assistance in purchasing curriculum and supplies. Each applicant is reviewed individually, and upon approval receives a credit from participating vendors toward the purchase of educational materials. More information can be found at www.fpeafoundation.com.

What If My Family Faces Dire Circumstances?

Sometimes available grants help meet needs in special circumstances. The FPEA Foundation administers a Compassion Fund to address these needs as they arise. For more information, e-mail www.fpeafoundation.com.
Can I Homeschool My High Schooler?
Many parents new to homeschooling have the misconception that once their child reaches ninth grade, they must enroll him in a traditional high school. But a home-education program can start and end whenever you feel it is appropriate for your child. In fact, the high school years can be the most exciting. There can be multiple opportunities to explore personal interests in depth through intensive study, community service, advanced courses, travel and even dual enrollment at college.

Though the workload may be challenging at the high school level, you have many options available for completing high school courses:

- Obtaining the appropriate textbook and working through it.
- Private tutoring for hard subjects.
- Curricula on CDs and DVDs.
- Co-oping with other families (one parent teaching science while another teaches math, for instance).
- Florida Virtual School (www.flvs.net).
- Internships or apprenticeships.
- Dual enrollment at a community college or university.

What Are My Child’s Graduation Options?
Florida law does not compel attendance after age 16, but if you continue home-educating, it is advisable to keep submitting annual evaluations to preserve the student’s right to participate in dual enrollment, extracurricular activities and scholarships, and get good student discounts on auto insurance, etc.

Home educated students have been accepted into post-secondary programs with a parent generated diploma for the last 25 years. Florida statutes do not list specific graduation requirements for homeschooled students, but it is wise to follow a path that will enable you to achieve your post-high school goals. Although not required, the student may also obtain a diploma through a nontraditional private school by following that school’s graduation requirements.

Graduation can be a time of traditional celebration because the FPEA holds its annual State-wide Graduation Ceremony in conjunction with its annual Convention. In 2013, more than 260 students participated in this grand event for FPEA members only. See pages 24-25 to find out how to become an FPEA member.
How Do I Prepare My Child for College Admission?

Regardless of your child’s future, a transcript is an invaluable record of a student’s academic accomplishments, with course credit given in credit hours. “For the purpose of requirements for high school graduation,” according to Florida Statute 1003.436, “one full credit means a minimum of 135 hours of bona fide instruction in a designated course of study that contains student performance standards.”

Twenty-four credits are required for public-school students on the four-year track. There are many other graduation options available to Florida students. For more information on these, visit www.fldoe.org/bi/studentpro/grad-require.asp.

College-bound students should expect to take at least these courses to meet the entrance requirements for most Florida colleges: four credits of English; four credits of math, to include Algebra I and Geometry, three credits of science, to include biology; three credits in the social sciences; and two credits in one world language. It helps to know the requirements of the school of your choice and work backward to make sure your transcript reflects those requirements.

If you elect not to enroll in a nontraditional private school, you are responsible for maintaining a portfolio of your student’s work and compiling your own transcript. A transcript is simply a list of all the courses a student has completed, along with the grade and credit earned for each. It should also contain the student’s full name, address and date of birth. There are multiple resources to assist in compiling this information.

Homeschooled students are eligible for most scholarships, including Bright Futures. The requirements can be found at www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf, by calling 888-827-2004 or in the Guide to Homeschooling in Florida (available to FPEA members — see pages 24-25 for membership information).

Homeschooled students are eligible for most scholarships, including Bright Futures.

If a child can’t learn the way we teach, we should teach the way they learn.

Custom Learning Plans pre K-12 for outside-the-box learning

“Wings to Soar lets you move at your own pace. Some schools are just not willing to help each individual student, or give them the challenge they need. Kids need to be able to do work that’s right for them!”

- Daniel M. age 11

“Wings to Soar teaches you to think while you learn—not just to recite back facts. But they also grant you the privilege to expand on the topics that spark your interest which makes learning fun.”

- Jamie W. age 15

FREE Placement Assessment

www.wingstosoaronline.com

assess to start at current level
+ fill skill gaps

customized multimedia courses
+ hands-on rental kits

lay a solid academic foundation
+ grow love of learning

unlock potential
+ build confidence

open possibilities
+ foster independence

= Wings to Soar to pursue dreams through lifelong learning!
How Do I Register for Your Convention?
Since its inception in 1988, the FPEA Florida Homeschool Convention has gotten bigger and better all the time. At the Convention, homeschoolers get recharged and equipped to accomplish their educational mission. Come tour a spacious exhibit hall filled with more than 240 vendors displaying the latest in homeschooling curriculum and materials. Choose from a large selection of lectures and workshops designed to meet a variety of needs. And enjoy it all in the midst of a luxurious, family-friendly environment your kids will love!

Why Should I Stay at the Host Hotel?
The luxurious Gaylord Palms Resort in Kissimmee features a massive domed atrium, themed swimming pools, a giant screen for movie showings, and many other family-friendly amenities. Convention attendees receive a special room rate and enjoy the convenience of being onsite. The host hotel offers not only convenience and luxury, but by choosing to stay onsite, it allows us to keep the cost of Convention registration as affordable as possible.

What Topics Are Covered by Convention Speakers?
Workshop subjects are continually being planned. This list of some of the topics from recent years gives you an idea what to expect:

- Orientation to Homeschooling and the Law
- Help Distractible Students Succeed
- Breathing Life Into Language Arts
- Organic Multimedia Skills for Homeschooling Families
- Middle School English: How to Cover it All and Still Have Time to Breathe
- Homeschooling is a Journey, Not a Destination, So Hang in There!
- Reading ABCs
- Robotics as the Ultimate STEM Education
- Gone West! The Early Exploration of America
- Three Simple Goals for Your First Year
- High Schooling 101

FPEA members receive a deep discount on Convention registration — just one of the many benefits of membership. See pages 24-25 to find out how to become an FPEA member.

Whatever the time of the year, Convention details are continually being planned. For up-to-the-minute information on the status of the Convention, including program and registration details, visit fpea.com and click on Events.
Why Should I Become an FPEA Member?

By joining the Florida Parent-Educators Association, your family benefits in many ways, including:

1. Connection to Experts

The FPEA delivers personal access to District Directors (page 26). Just a call or a click away, these experienced homeschoolers answer questions, offer encouragement, communicate timely information and identify trends.

Your FPEA District Directors also work with you in dealing with local school officials, making sure homeschool laws are understood and followed.

The FPEA Guide to Homeschooling in Florida (free access for members) keeps 100-plus pages of expert advice at your fingertips. Also, the members-only Connect magazine is packed with helpful articles.

2. Protection of Your Rights

The FPEA helps safeguard your legal right to homeschool by keeping its finger on the pulse of what’s happening in Tallahassee and Washington. The FPEA partners with the Home Education Foundation (a full-time lobbyist) and the Home School Legal Defense Association. The annual FPEA Day at the Capitol shows legislators that homeschoolers have a united voice. The FPEA organizes and promotes a statewide network of local homeschool support groups. The FPEA website is a one-stop shop for information on groups in your area and how to connect with them.

The annual FPEA Florida Homeschool Convention unites thousands of homeschoolers statewide. And FPEA-sponsored local conferences and events cover topics ranging from getting started to obtaining college scholarships.

3. Discounts and Opportunities

FPEA members receive a deep discount on registration for the annual FPEA Florida Homeschool Convention (and a free advance copy of the Convention program), discounts on educational merchandise from participating vendors, and savings on HSLDA membership. The FPEA enables high school seniors to experience the joy of wearing a cap and gown at the FPEA Statewide Graduation Ceremony.

Unite with thousands of homeschooling families. Take advantage of invaluable resources and support. Gain powerful insight. Receive special discounts. Ensure lasting success. Make a move that will change your life. You can join the FPEA at a discount through an FPEA-recognized group or else receive an individual membership at a still-low annual fee. To become a member, visit www.fpea.com and click on Membership.

Where Do I Find More Information?

These 28 pages are only an introduction to everything you need to succeed in your homeschool. For complete details on everything covered here, become an FPEA member today. One benefit of FPEA membership is free access to the Guide to Homeschooling in Florida. This 100-plus-page manual contains full versions of the articles here, as well as information this publication does not cover. To become an FPEA member, visit www.fpea.com or call 877-ASK-FPEA.

How Can My FPEA District Director Help Me?

FPEA District Directors serve as volunteer contacts for homeschoolers looking for local groups and as liaisons between homeschoolers and local school districts. Directors are also available to help new groups. They also work on your behalf by informing public officials and the general public about the virtues of home education and the legal right to do so.
To contact your District Director, use the following list to find the e-mail address for your district, or find calling information at www.fpea.com and clicking on Get Connected in the About Homeschooling menu.

**Contact Information:**

**District 1:** district1@fpea.com
Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands, Manatee, Osceola, Polk, Sarasota

**District 2:** district2@fpea.com

**District 3:** district3@fpea.com
Baker, Bradford, Broward, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Union

**District 4:** district4@fpea.com
Collier, Miami-Dade, Monroe

**District 5:** district5@fpea.com
Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas

**District 6:** district6@fpea.com
Brevard, Indian River, Okeechobee, St. Lucie

**District 7:** district7@fpea.com
Glades, Hendry, Lee, Orange

**District 8:** district8@fpea.com
Lake, Martin, Palm Beach, Seminole, Sumter, Volusia

Ongoing access to your District Director is just one of the many benefits of FPEA membership. See pages 24-25 to find out how to become an FPEA member.
R.O.C.K. Solid

Your Florida Home School Company
Serving you since 1994!

www.rocksolidinc.com

1-904-751-3569
1-800-705-3452

Nathan and Lindley Rachal