

IHEN Homeschooling Help Sheet

Thank you for writing to the Indiana Home Educators' Network.

We understand that the decision to educate your children outside of the public schools is a big one, and it didn't come lightly.

We also understand that this process might seem a little confusing and stressful. Rest assured, we have all been there. And it's not as bad as it seems. :-)
So please take a breath and take heart. Our motto is: Helping Hoosiers Homeschool and we intend to do just that.

Homeschooling in Indiana is as easy as parenting. Yes, we know parenting isn't very easy. But think about it; you've raised a child this far without a license, special registration papers or permits. You can feed, clothe and teach manners, proper social behavior and basic hygiene. You are the only person alive that cares about your child as much as you do. With a dedicated effort on your part, you can foster or rekindle an appreciation for learning in your child. You can skip public school and in the process, get your children back from a social environment that is and has been nothing like a family for all the years he or she has been in school. Once you have transferred your child from a public school to your private homeschool, over half of the work is done.

Is this going to be easy? No.

Are there people who can do this for you? No.

Are there people as close as e-mail who can give you advice and confidence? Yes!

Is it worth it? Yes times two!

IHEN & IndianaHomeschoolers:
We've been Helping Hoosiers Homeschool since the turn of the century™.

Mission: The Indiana Home Educators' Network (The IHEN Web Project) and IndianaHomeschoolers Statewide Networking and Discussion E-list is dedicated to assisting Indiana home educators by providing access to personal contacts, information and resources related to all aspects of home education. IHEN facilitates open communication among home educators, support networks and resource providers throughout Indiana.

Here are the basics to get you started:

1. If you have or are going to transfer your child from a public school in which the child is currently enrolled, and the school superintendent has asked you to "Report Your Enrollment" to the Department of Education (he or she might have used the incorrect term, 'Register') then go on-line and do that. If, however, you were NOT asked by your local school superintendent to report enrollment, then you needn't do so. This is very important: If you were told by anyone other than the school superintendent to report your enrollment as a homeschool, then you are not required by law to do so. Just say that you will handle it later and leave it at that. You can learn more about this issue on the following web page:

http://www.ihen.org/IHEN-NewHSers/about_reporting_enrollment.htm

2. You will find a sample letter of transfer with a commentary regarding its use here:

http://www.ihen.org/content/documents/forms/student_xfer.htm

3. If the situation is different than the above, whether you have reported your enrollment in you homeschool or not, as long as you are officially transferred or withdrawn from the public school, you can now begin homeschooling. The attendance of your child is what is important to the public school. If they have a letter from you or some document that alerts them to the status of your child, they should be fine and they will have nothing more to do with your homeschooling. You are now a private school.

4. It's common to take a little break from 'schooling' when you start. Don't expect to jump right into text books and worksheets. Take some time to do some reading, while encouraging your child to do the same. Go to the library and tell your child to check out as many books on as many subjects as he or she wants. As long as they're reading what interests them, they will be engaged in an activity that will help them remember what it is like to pursue one's own interests. This will also help you gauge their current reading skills. Do not discourage ANY book choice except books you, as a parent, deem inappropriate based on content.

5. Read our brochure on getting started. There are a few reading suggestions for you there:

<http://gettingstarted.ihen.org/>

6. Subscribe to our statewide discussion list, IndianaHomeschoolers, on YahooGroups. There, you can ask as many questions as you like. Subscribe at:

<http://www.IndianaHomeschoolers.com/>

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7. Check out our Statewide Homeschool Support and Resource Directory at:

<http://www.ihen.org/directory>

Find your county and start looking for all of the resources available close to you. If your county isn't in the directory, the IndianaHomeschoolers list is the next best place to ask for information.

8. The IHEN.org web site has several pages of information, articles, links and more... all there to Help Hoosiers Homeschool. Bookmark it at:

<http://www.ihen.org/>

9. If you have more specific questions or concerns or circumstances that we need to know about, you can contact one of our IHEN County Contacts at CountyContacts@ihen.org Just mention your county in the subject line so we know who to forward your mail to.

10. If all else fails and you don't know what to do, you can write to: Help@ihen.org and we will see what we can do. :-)

We hope we have helped get you started. The most important thing you can do, is slow down, get to know your child again, talk about what he or she expects with homeschooling. Don't be afraid to let them know you're not sure either.

Home education isn't a schooling technique as much as it is a lifestyle. No two people approach home education the same way. Much like parenting styles are never totally the same.

Homeschooling will be as unique as your child. It will also be the best decision you ever made for your child and your family.

Best of luck, and please keep in touch through our network of e-mail lists and web sites. It's what we're here for.

Sincerely,

The IHEN Volunteer Staff
ihen@ihen.org

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