



# **PENNSYLVANIA HOMESCHOOL GUIDE**

**EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO START AND  
CONTINUE HOMESCHOOLING IN PA!**


## **WHAT'S INSIDE?**

- Registration as a Homeschooler in PA
- Special Education Requirements
- Homeschooling High School
- Documentation Requirements
- End of Year Evaluation
- Checklist
- Upcoming Workshops for a Deeper Dive

Look for the link symbol for more info!



# Register as a Homeschooler

Get familiar with the  [state law here](#)

TO BEGIN HOMESCHOOLING, SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING TO YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT:

1. Affidavit, signed and notarized OR Unsworn Declaration
2. Learning Objectives
  - One for each young person
3. Medical/Dental Forms
  - Required to begin homeschooling
4. If Special Ed (young person as an IEP), Learning Objective Approval

## Paperwork Samples to Print + Use:



### AFFIDAVIT + UNSWORN DECLARATION

- Elementary Affidavit
- Secondary Affidavit
- Unsworn Declaration-Elementary
- Unsworn Declaration-Secondary

At what age do I register young people as homeschoolers?

- Compulsory age in PA is 6 (by Sept 1)



### MEDICAL + DENTAL

- Medical form
- Dental Form

These forms are submitted at the start of homeschooling. Medical is submitted again in grades 6 + 11, and dental is submitted again in grades 3 + 7

When do I file this paperwork?

- File BEFORE beginning to homeschool and each year after by August 1



### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learning Objectives-Elementary
- Learning Objectives-Secondary

Note: Special Ed Learning Objectives need approval

Who can approve my learning objectives for special ed?

- You can schedule your learning objective approval with our Special Ed Evaluator, Teresa Giardina!



# QUESTIONS?

[homeschool@thedandelionproject.us](mailto:homeschool@thedandelionproject.us)

# Documentation Requirements



Your child's homeschool portfolio will document the following:

- Attendance showing 180 days
- Reading log
- Samples of learning experiences
- Standardized test score for grades 3, 5, and 8

Please see more specific requirements for high schoolers below!

## More on that...

### Attendance:

Unschoolers believe valuable learning is happening all the time, not just days that kids focus intentionally on academics. Check off all learning days on a calendar. Minimum 180.

### Reading Log:


Expand to include "watching" and "listening to." Log any notable independent/shared reading, podcasts, audiobooks, documentaries, Youtube videos, etc.  
This is a sample, not a comprehensive list.

### Learning Samples:

Samples of learning experience: Show how the magic is happening! Share about 10 varied ways learning happens in your young person's life. Keep it simple! Take some pictures and write some descriptions. Feel free to include young person's reflection on the experience!

### Approved Standardized tests:


- California Achievement Test (CAT)
- Comprehensive Testing Program (CTPIV)
- Iowa Test of Basic Skills
- Metropolitan Achievement Test
- Measures of academic progress (MAP)
- Peabody Achievement Individual Test – Revised Version
- Stanford Achievement Test
- Terra Nova
- Woodcock Johnson Revised Tests of Achievement III
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test III (WIAT-III).

Most choose the CAT test because it can be taken online and untimed  
 It's available here

Use code  
**FIRSTCAT**  
for \$5 off!



# Documentation FAQs



## What should my portfolio look like?

Portfolios can take any form--digital or paper. Some families take a rather comprehensive approach, while others document just a couple notable learning experiences for each month. Either option is totally fine. Make it work for you and your energy/capacity. Families have used Google Slides, private social media accounts, or online portfolio tools like Seesaw and easily share a link with us for evaluation purposes!

## What "learning experiences" can I document if my child isn't focused on academics?

While homeschooling in PA, you are NOT beholden to common core state standards. Instead, you are showing growth in their learning over time. Young people are learning all the time in interdisciplinary ways. Take photos of times they cook/bake, get immersed in imaginative play, explore nature, play a game, run an experiment, volunteer, count/spend allowance money, work a job, complete a chore, help with an errand, create art, ask big questions, seek answers. Ask **them** which experiences matter most, and include more of those in your portfolio!

## Unfortunately, under PA homeschool law there aren't any testing exemptions.

The only way to "get out" of testing is to file your home education program under the Private Tutor Option (a completely different law), and prove you have hired a certified teacher to teach your child[ren] the majority of the time. THE GOOD NEWS: Only your evaluator sees the score, they are not reported to the school district, and the score has no impact on the evaluation.

## Can I opt out of standardized tests for religious or other reasons?

# QUESTIONS?

[homeschool@thedandelionproject.us](mailto:homeschool@thedandelionproject.us)

# Homeschooling High School



Homeschooling High School in PA isn't as daunting as the law makes it sound! In order to earn a supervisor awarded/evaluator signed, state-recognized high school diploma, the student's transcript must show the following requirements:

- 4 English credits (including literature, composition, speech)
- 3 Math credits (including geometry and algebra)
- 3 Science credits
- 3 Social studies credits (including geography, civics, world history, PA and US history)
- 2 Arts/Humanities credits

## What counts as a credit?

In a conventional school, 1 credit = 1 year of a class. In homeschooling, 1 credit = 120 hours of learning, which can happen in a variety of ways.

You can also document .5 credits and .25 credits for smaller learning projects and count those towards the totals.

Examples:

- You could complete an Algebra course (work through a textbook, complete a Khan academy course, etc)
- You could watch 3 shows about an area of science, follow and engage some scientists on YouTube, and visit a science museum for .5 credits
- You could read a book series, watch the movie adaptations, and write a fanfic for 1 credit in Comparative Literature
- You could visit the historical society, interview government workers, compare old maps to new maps to see how things have changed, read and respond to local news articles, attend a rally or protest for a credit in Social Studies.

## How do I document credits for graduation?

Secondary students should keep track of their credits in a transcript that includes:

- Course title
- Credit amount earned
- Grade

## Wait, we have to grade classes?

Yes, the transcript should reflect grades for each class. Families can use any grading method that works for them. Letter grades (count towards a GPA) and pass/fail grades work!

**Check out our sample transcript here + feel free to make a copy of your own!**



# Homeschooling High School FAQs



**Do homeschoolers have to earn a diploma?**

No, homeschoolers do not have to receive a diploma and could work towards a high school equivalency option: HiSET Exam, GED, or 30 college credit option. [Learn more here.](#)



**What should I send to my district to show graduation?**

After your child's 12th grade evaluation, you'll send (1) 12th grade evaluation letter and (2) a copy of the supervisor awarded/evaluation signed diploma by June 30th. This will prompt your school district to record that your child has graduated and close your homeschool file.

**What if I pursue projects and interests that don't directly connect to the required academic credits?**

Unschooling supports young people in pursuing all kinds of interests and passions and those things can be represented in the transcript as electives. Young people can have as many electives as they want above and beyond the required credits. Things like dance classes, sports, service projects, home economics, babysitting, work experiences and more can be represented. If you have any questions about how to communicate these experiences on the transcript, your end of year evaluator can help!

**QUESTIONS?** [homeschool@thedandelionproject.us](mailto:homeschool@thedandelionproject.us)

# End of Year Evaluation



**By the end of the year you are required to:**

- 1. Find an evaluator who vibes with your style of homeschooling/ unschooling**
- 2. Schedule and end of year evaluation meeting**
- 3. Submit your Evaluation letter to your school district by June 30**
- 4. If planning to homeschool the following year, go ahead and submit next year's paperwork! It is due by August 1.**

**We'd love to support your family with end of year evaluations. They are virtual, so we can support ANY family in PA.**

**The Dandelion Project aims to create more access to homeschooling and unschooling in PA. Since 2019, we've grown our virtual evaluation service to support families from over 150 different school districts across the state! Our Evaluation schedule opens in January each year, and meetings are scheduled between April - June. We continue growing our team and our availability so we are a reliable resource for any family who needs this service. If you are new family, we encourage you to sign up for our newsletter on our website so you'll get earlier access to the schedule!**

**QUESTIONS?** [homeschool@thedandelionproject.us](mailto:homeschool@thedandelionproject.us)



# Evaluation FAQs



## Who attends the evaluation meeting?

The focus of the meeting is on the young person, and parents are welcome to join if they'd like. Parents are especially helpful for elementary aged young people who sometimes have a hard time describing what they do while unschooling. Often, secondary homeschoolers attend without a parent. Whatever works best for your comfort level, works for us!

## What happens during the evaluation meeting?

Along with the family, the evaluator reviews the portfolio, ask questions to learn more about learning experiences, and helps celebrate everything accomplished. The evaluator makes sure that legal requirements have been documented in the portfolio. We also support reflection of the previous year and setting intentions for the next. For high schoolers, evaluators support the family in brainstorming how the young person's experiences can be categorized on a transcript, including course name, credits earned, and grade. Families will determine the best grading methods and can use letter grades and/or pass/fail grades.

Elementary evaluations usually take between 30-45 minutes, while Secondary can take a bit longer--up to an hour. The evaluator will send the required evaluation letter to families within 24 hours of the meeting, and families can send that to their school districts by the June 30th requirement.

## How long does it take?

**Please note: This info is specific to evaluations done by The Dandelion Project. Evaluators outside of our org may do things differently.**

**QUESTIONS?** [homeschool@thedandelionproject.us](mailto:homeschool@thedandelionproject.us)



# PA Homeschool Law Checklist

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**Prior to Starting home education, submit to your school district:**

- 1) Affidavit or Unsworn Declaration**
- 2) Learning Objectives**
- 3) Medical/Dental record to school district**
- 4) If Special Ed, include Learning Objective approval letter from special ed evaluator**

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**Create a homeschool portfolio that includes:**

- 1) Attendance 180 days**
- 2) Reading/watching/listening to log**
- 3) Samples of learning experiences**
- 4) If in grades 3, 5, & 8 include results from standardized test**

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**If in grade 3, 5, or 8 complete approved standardized test**

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**Schedule end-of-year evaluation meeting (April-June)**

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**Submit evaluation letter to school district by June 30**

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**File paperwork (affidavit/objectives) with district by August 1 for next academic year**

# Need More Support?



**We offer workshops throughout the year to support families!**

## **Workshop: How to Start Unschooling in PA**

Topics covered:

- Paperwork and Documentation Requirements for Elementary, Secondary, and Special Education
- Exploring Learning Values
- Tools to Support Homeschooling: Set the Week, Intention-setting, Reflection

**Offered  
in July**

## **Workshop: Homeschooling High School**

Topics covered:

- Legal requirements for obtaining a Supervisor Awarded/Evaluator Signed Diploma + Other options
- Documentation and Portfolio
- Creating a Transcript

**Offered in  
September**

## **Workshop: Portfolio Development, End of Year, Q+A**

Topics covered:

- Documentation and Portfolio Development
- Evaluation Requirements
- Open space for participants to ask questions!

**Offered in  
January**

**Head to [www.thedandelionproject.us/events](http://www.thedandelionproject.us/events) to register for workshops**