

# HOMESCHOOLING IN NORTH CAROLINA

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We have several families here at Acorn Ridge that have chosen to educate their children at home. While it is our desire to encourage and inform, it is not our intention to pressure or intimidate a parent that is not homeschooling into doing so. Our desire is to be a ministry and blessing to all the families the Lord has given us. We realize that homeschooling is not for every family. Nevertheless, we count it an honor to be of help, encouragement, and a source of information in any way we can. Homeschooling in North Carolina has been increasing since 1985. In January, 1998, there were around 1,046 homeschools in our state. The NC General Assembly passed a very favorable law on June 20, 1998, that helped rapidly increase that number. Today, according to the North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education (NCDNPE), there are approximately 75,000 homeschools in this state representing nearly 200,000 students.

We are often asked the necessary steps to form a home school in North Carolina. This is really a very simple process. In this state, homeschools are governed by the NCDNPE. North Carolina is the only state with such a division. Common questions include the following : *“How do I start to homeschool my child?” “What is the legal process?” “What do I need to do first?”* The following is a guide that is by no means exhaustive, but will help you get started in this endeavor.

**Step 1:** Once a parent has made the decision to homeschool in North Carolina, they must file a Notice of Intent with the NCDNPE to open and operate a homeschool. This is simply a letter stating your intention or desire to withdraw your child from public school for the purpose of establishing a homeschool. The school’s current principal will need a copy of this letter for his/her files. Do not withdraw your child until the NCDNPE acknowledges your Notice of Intent.

**Step 2:** Submit proof to the NCDNPE that you as a teacher have at least a high school diploma.

**Step 3:** You will need to select a name for the school and an administrator. An example would be “The Learning School” or “The Corinthian Academy.” Once you have chosen a name for your school, it cannot be changed. Often the father of the home is named as chief administrator, and he will represent that school to the state.

**Step 4:** Once your school is opened, you will need to keep attendance records showing that you homeschool on a regular basis for a minimum of nine calendar months excluding reasonable holidays and vacations. The NCDNPE suggests 180 school days. Sample attendance records for your convenience is also on the NCDNPE website.

**Step 5:** You will also need to keep all immunization records up-to-date unless you have a waiver. Keep these on file at all times.

**Step 6:** You will need to administer a nationally standardized achievement test each year within one year of beginning your school. There is much more information concerning this on the NCDNPE website as well.

While the law passed in 1988 was a good one and homeschooling thrived under it, advocate groups such as North Carolinians for Home Education noticed room for improvement. The needed change was in the definition of “homeschool.” On March 5, 2013 NCHE asked state representatives to file bills in the NC House and the Senate to make the change in the legal definition of a home school. The bill was passed unanimously and was signed into law on May 30, 2013. Today, the NC home school law defines a homeschool as a “nonpublic school consisting of the children of not more than two families or households where the parents or legal guardians or members of either household determine the scope and sequence of academic instruction, provide academic instruction, and determine additional sources of academic instruction.” This places complete control of the child’s education in the hands of the parent(s) who make the decision to provide academic instruction in the home. While state law gives parents tremendous liberty concerning their child’s education, it is of utmost importance that a structured schedule is maintained and the parent is held accountable for that instruction.

We trust this article answers some of the questions that many have concerning starting a homeschool. Again, I want to point you to the NCDNPE website for further reading, **[www.ncadmin.nc.gov](http://www.ncadmin.nc.gov)**. There are many homeschool support groups online and locally in central North Carolina. Acorn Ridge has been privileged to host our own support group for many years. Its purpose is to assist, encourage, edify, and support the task of educating our children. If you are a Christian homeschooler in or around Moore County and are interested in joining ARBC’s homeschool support group, please contact us at 910-464-3310 or email us at [info@acornridge.org](mailto:info@acornridge.org). Our group meets on the third Thursday of each month during the school year for a time of fellowship for mothers and children alike.