

Dear Home Educator,

The rights and responsibilities of a parent who provides home school and the rights of the child in the home school are provided in the following sections of Montana Code:

1. A home school is the instruction by a parent of his child, stepchild, or ward in his residence §20-5-102 (2) (e) MCA
2. To qualify its students for exemption from compulsory enrollment under §20-5-102 MCA, a home school
 - a. shall maintain records on pupil attendance and disease immunization and make the records available to the County Superintendent on request;
 - b. shall provide the minimum aggregate hours of pupil instruction in accordance with §20-1-301 MCA;
 - c. must be housed in a building that complies with applicable local health and safety regulations;
 - d. shall provide an organized course of study that includes instruction in the subjects required of public schools; as a basic instructional program pursuant in §20-7-111 MCA;
 - e. shall notify each fiscal year the local County Superintendent of Schools of your intention to home school your student(s). §20-5-109 MCA
3. A parent has the authority to instruct his child, stepchild, or ward in a home school and is solely responsible for
 - a. the educational philosophy of the home school;
 - b. the selection of instructional materials, curriculum, and textbooks;
 - c. the time, place, and method of instruction; and
 - d. the evaluation of the home school instruction. §20-5-111 MCA

By choosing to educate your child at home, you have assumed the complex role of teacher, registrar, record keeper, and selector of textbooks and curriculum. If you need help, you can contact the two home school networks and the county superintendent's office. We do offer a registration card that gives you a discount at some bookstores and area businesses in Bozeman, which will be mailed upon receipt of your notification. A complete homeschool packet is available by mail or you can view or print the following forms online.

1. Home School Report

This form is to assist you with annual notification. No specific form is required so you may call, email or send your notification in a letter format to the county superintendent's office. It's important to remember that until you notify this office, you have not complied with Montana law for exemption from compulsory attendance requirements.

2. Federal Government Programs

This page is to be completed when you notify us. Federal law requires that these programs be offered to everyone, so please sign the Notification of Opportunity to Participate form even if you do not want to take advantage of them. In order to benefit from any program except special education during the next school year, the form must be returned by October. Brief explanations of available programs are included.

- If you do NOT complete this form, the school district in which you live is required to send a copy to you by registered mail.
- If you check NO, you will not receive any further notification of federal programs until you tell us differently.

- If you check that you do wish to be notified, a participation form will be sent you in the spring by the school district.

3. Attendance Record

According to §20-1-301 MCA, all home schools must provide the minimum aggregate hours:

- 360 hours for kindergarten or 720 hours for a full-time kindergarten
- 720 hours for grades 1-3
- 1080 hours for grades 4-12

Please submit a copy of your attendance records to the office at the end of each year or when you notify us the following year. We have included a form that may be used or you may send a note that you have completed the minimum number of aggregate hours.

4. Home School Groups

- Gallatin Valley Home Educators' newsletter subscription information and 2011-12 volunteer list.
- The directions for accessing the Bozeman Home School Network webpage and their contact is included.

5. Websites and Resource Books

Look up "curriculum for school subjects" and "Distance Learning" to get to websites that will help you choose your curriculum or refer to Montana Guide to Home Education link.

6. Montana Content Standards and Benchmarks

Montana's Board of Public Education recently adopted the Common Core Standards for the state of Montana. Visit www.opi.mt.gov and choose "Curriculum & Assessment" for information about them.

For more information on Gallatin County public, private, and home schools, visit our website at www.gallatin.mt.gov choose "Departments" then "Superintendent of Schools."

I hope that you will consider me as a resource person. If you have any questions, please feel free to phone, fax, or e-mail. I applaud your efforts and determination to conscientiously teach your children at home. Education is extremely important for all children, and the child is what education is all about.

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