



California Homeschool Network

Strengthening the Voice of California Homeschoolers™

Charter School Independent Study Programs

The Public School Option

2018 Edition

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California Homeschool Network (CHN) was founded in 1994 by a statewide group of homeschooling families. We are an inclusive group which means we serve families that choose all homeschooling styles and from all religious and ethnic affiliations. We are an organization of energetic and dedicated homeschooling families working to preserve our own educational freedom and helping families provide an excellent education for their children.

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Welcome To Public School Homeschooling!

If you are just getting started, your first step is to choose a legal alternative to public school. The CHN publication *Just The Facts* will take you through your options step-by-step. If you have not read that publication yet, go back and start there. Download it from the CHN website www.californiahomeschool.net.

If you have already decided to use an Independent Study Program through a Charter School and are looking for further help, this guide will give you tips on what to do next and resources to help you get started.

Choosing a Charter School

A Charter school is a tuition-free public school operating under the terms of a charter with a school district, county, or state department of education. Some charter schools offer only traditional classrooms held at their school site, but others offer Independent Study Programs or hybrid programs with some days spent in a traditional classroom and others spent doing independent study. California Code pertaining to charters offering independent study beings at §51745. California charter schools are allowed to enroll students in their county or in adjacent counties *Education Code §47605.1(c)*.

- Your children will be enrolled in a public school
- Your children will be required to meet regularly with a credentialed teacher
- You will be signing a written learning agreement with the school
- The curriculum you use must be aligned with Common Core standards
- Public school students cannot use religious curriculum to meet educational requirements of the charter.
- Samples of your child's work along with other records will be turned in to the teacher
- The teacher will issue grades
- Charter school students are required to participate in standardized testing and parents are asked to sign a contract at enrollment that states that they will allow their child to be tested. In the spring when state testing occurs, some parents decide to opt out, as is a right for parents in all public schools. Because those parents signed an agreement to test when they registered their child, some charters will either disenroll the student or refuse to enroll them the next year. This is stressful for everyone, so be sure to read your Charter contract carefully!

Although these points define all charter schools, each school is going to operate a little differently from the others. The most important consideration in choosing a program is to find one that respects your authority as the parent and works with you to serve your child's individual educational needs. Ask questions before choosing, and remember that you can change your child's enrollment to a different legal option at any time during the year.

LOCATING PUBLIC/CHARTER ISPs

- Search the State Charter School Locator:
www.cde.ca.gov/ds/si/cs/ap1/imagemap.aspx
- Check with site-based public schools
- Ask local and online support groups



A worksheet for evaluating charter schools

School Name: _____

School Model	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent Study <input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid (____days at school + ____days at home)
Do parents direct a portion of funds?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes... \$
Is curriculum provided?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Where is the school chartered?	Charters may enroll students from their own district or from adjacent counties only
Who is on the board of the school, do the parents on the board live locally?	
If funds can be directed, where is the vendor list? Are there local vendors?	
If funds can be directed, can new vendors be added?	
Are there restrictions on hours/days of the week when work must be completed?	
Are students required to work a specific number of hours per day?	
How will attendance be verified?	
How often do you need to meet with the teacher and where?	
What work must the student turn in to the teacher?	
What records must you turn in to the teacher?	
Will you be included in the evaluation/grading of your student?	
When and where is standardized testing? If you opt out, what are the consequences?	

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Ideally, you will want to meet with the teacher before the school year starts to determine if he/she is going to be a good fit for your family and have an opportunity to read through the written learning agreement, but that is not always an option. Your relationship with your teacher is one of the most important aspects of having a good experience in your charter, so remember that you can request to switch teachers, although the school may not be willing or able to accommodate your request. You may also switch schools or homeschooling options at any time during the school year. The written learning agreement may contain details that will regulate how your program operates, so be sure to read it carefully.



Choosing Curriculum

Part of your teacher’s job is to assist you in putting together a course of study that meets your child’s educational needs. Just like regular public school, charter school independent study programs can be rigorous and academic or more relaxed. Some charter Independent Study Programs will require you to work through their curriculum while others will allow you to put together your own. To assist you in organizing your curriculum, we have assembled worksheets for grades 1-6 and grades 7-12 based on the branches of study required to be offered by public schools *Education Code §51210*. Schools must *offer* these subject, but parents/students choose which subjects they will study.



A worksheet for choosing curriculum for 1st through 6th grade

Subject Grades 1-6	How I will approach this subject (ideas, books, textbooks, online resources, classes, activities)
English (literature, speaking, reading, listening, spelling, handwriting, composition)	
Mathematics (concepts, operational skills, problem solving)	
Social sciences (anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, sociology, government, economics)	
Science (biological, physical ecological,, experimental)	
Visual and performing arts (dance,music, theatre, and visual arts)	
Health (personal and community health, nutrition)	
PE (200 minutes each 10 school days, exclusive of recesses and lunch period)	



A worksheet for choosing curriculum for 7th through 12th grade

Subject Grades 7-12	How I will approach this subject (ideas, books, textbooks, online resources, classes, activities)
English (literature, language, composition, reading, listening, speaking)	
Social sciences (anthropology, economics, geography, US and world history, political science, psychology, sociology, gov/civics, economics, parenting skills)	
Foreign Language	
PE (Grades 1-8: see chart for elem.. Grades 9-12: 400 minutes each 10 schooldays, must include self defense/safety)	
Science (physical, biological ecological)	
Mathematics (must include Algebra I)	
Visual and Performing Arts (dance, music, theater, visual arts)	
Applied Art (consumer and homemaking education, industrial arts, general business education, general agriculture)	
Career Technical Education	
Automobile Driver Education	



Common Concerns

What about socialization?

Some charters offer opportunities for their students to get together for field trips and activities, but making sure your child has adequate opportunities to socialize ultimately rests with you. You could participate in community activities like sports and scouts or enroll in specialty classes like gymnastics, martial arts, theater... Many local communities have homeschool park days, online support groups and Facebook groups where you can find friends.

- [CHN Local Contacts](#) can tell you about support groups, park days, and activities in your area
- Online support groups can help you connect with local homeschoolers in your area
- CHN offers Campouts, the CHN Expo and special events

Can I unschool while enrolled in a charter?

Unschooling is vaguely defined as trusting that a child will find their own best path to learning without regulation by traditional school curriculum, teachers and experts. Some charter students are allowed to follow a relaxed schedule and curriculum, and some charter teachers are open to more relaxed, interest based learning. But charter students must still provide work samples from the branches of study required to be taught in public school to a public school teacher.

Can my high school student enroll in community college classes if I am with a charter?

Many community colleges do allow high school students to concurrently enroll. A student needs to submit a signed form giving permission from their parent and from their school. Check with your teacher to see if your charter will allow this.

What if I am unhappy with my charter school, teacher or with the experience my child is having?

You may switch schools or switch homeschooling options at any time during the school year.

- Our web site www.CaliforniaHomeschool.net has information on all of the alternatives to traditional school.
- CHN offers online email support www.californiahomeschool.net/about/chn-mailing-lists/
- CHN offers support on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaHomeschoolNetwork>

Download a copy of this publication for FREE!

Visit CHN's web site www.CaliforniaHomeschool.net and print out your free copy for reference.

Call CHN's Homeschool Hotline - 800-327-5339

Call us if you have any questions or concerns about your homeschooling. Leave your name, phone number, and question, and a volunteer will return your call.

Your Membership in CHN Supports California Homeschooling

The California Homeschool Network was founded to aid you in having a successful homeschool experience. It is through our combined group efforts that we can help California's homeschoolers with our statewide support lists, annual Family Expo, legal support, legislative monitoring, camping trips, publications and outreach efforts. Please consider joining CHN and help us continue fulfilling our motto:

Strengthening the Voice of California Homeschoolers