



Home-Based Learning in Alberta 2 Programs - 3 Choices

Parent-Directed Home Education Program	Program Considerations	Teacher-Directed Program at Home
Principal of school or authority supervises program.	Government Oversight	Principal of school supervises program and reports to elected school board or private school authority.
Faith-based education possible if supported by board/authority policies.	Faith-Based Education Possible?	Faith-based education available in Catholic Boards and Private Authorities – based on their policies. Alternative faith-based programs in public schools are subject to the policies of the public school board that supervises them.
Learning occurs in a home-based environment and/or in the community.	Where does learning occur?	Learning occurs in a campus, in the community or in a home-based environment.
Parents and school work together to support education of the child, parent directs learning plan.	Relationship and Roles	Parents and school work together to support education of the child, teacher directs learning plan.
Parental choice. May choose to align to Alberta Program of Studies or not. Must include disciplines of Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies.	Curriculum Choices Learning Plan	All learning plans must align to the Alberta Program of Studies.
Parental choice. Must support learning goals and objectives in the Learning Plan.	Curriculum Choices Resources	Teacher's choice. Teachers apply their professional judgement to choose resources to meet the needs of students and the learning plans for their students and classes. These plans must follow the Alberta Program of Study. Modification is only available with documented special needs or circumstances.
Parental choice. Parents instruct students directly or may delegate to other people (noted in documentation).	Instruction	Teachers must be actively, regularly and consistently interacting with students for the purposes of instruction. This is defined in the Guide to Education and the Teacher Quality Standard (TQS).



Home-Based Learning Programs and Choices

Parent-Directed Home Education Program	Program Considerations	Teacher-Directed Program at Home
<p>Parents complete ongoing assessment and evaluation of learning.</p> <p>Teachers supporting program (facilitators) must evaluate progress for formal reporting 2x per year minimum.</p>	<p>Assessment/Evaluation</p>	<p>Teachers must be actively assessing student progress on a regular and consistent basis. They must use the results of their assessments to inform future instruction. Teachers evaluate the progress of students related to the Alberta Program of Studies and this is formally reported to parents.</p>
<p>As per funding manual, allocated to school boards and private authorities after September 30th confirmation of enrolments. Typically totals approximately \$1600 per student.</p>	<p>Funding to Support School Boards and Authorities</p>	<p>School Boards receive an instructional grant of approximately \$6700 per student. Private School Authorities receive 70% of this allocated funding. Funds are released in phases throughout the year based on registered students in the school.</p>
<p>As per current regulations, school boards and private authorities must allocate a minimum of 50% of funding (approximately \$835 per student) for reimbursement to parents for resources necessary to support the Learning Plan. Reimbursements must be completed with submission of original receipts.</p>	<p>Reimbursements to Parents</p>	<p>School Boards and Private School Authorities must use these instructional funds to provide instruction to students. They may use the funds to support community-based activities, field trips, guest speakers, purchase resources (like PE equipment) etc.</p> <p>NOTE: As of August 31, 2016, schools are no longer allowed to reimburse parents directly for resources to support a home-based program.</p>
<p>School Boards or Authorities are responsible for providing support to parents for the development of the Learning Plan and access to resources to support Home Education. School Boards and Private School Authorities are responsible to provide staff who are knowledgeable and supportive of Home Education.</p>	<p>Supports for Program</p>	<p>Supports for instruction (guest speakers, resources, swimming lessons, field trips, etc.) are provided through school-based policies and programs organized under the supervision of each school principal.</p>
<p>School Act - interpreted mainly through the Home Education Regulation</p>	<p>Governing Legislation</p>	<p>School Act- interpreted through multiple regulations</p>

HOME-BASED LEARNING CHOICES

Home-based Parent Directed Choice

- **100% Parent-Directed.**
- **Learning** occurs at home and/or in the community.
- **Highest level** of parental choice and flexibility.
- **Highest level** of parental responsibility.
- **Completion of high school** – a Home Education Certificate of Completion.
- **Post-secondary transitions** possible to some universities and college programs with careful planning. Usually useful to consider starting this planning around grade 7.

Home-based Blended Choices

- **Program is a combination** of parent-directed and teacher-directed learning.
- **Learning** can occur at home, in the community and/or on a campus.
- **A minimum of 50%** of the Learning Plan must be teacher-directed.
- **Parental choice and flexibility** is determined by the % of each program choice.
- **Parental responsibility** is determined by the % of each program choice.
- **Completion of high school:** An Alberta Education Diploma is possible with careful planning.
- **Post-secondary transitions** to college and university programs are determined by the diploma and course choices of the student. Usually useful to consider starting this planning around grade 7.
- **Example A:** Student learns math, language arts and French with the direction of a teacher. Student learns PE, Music, Art, History and Science with the direction of a parent. The reporting and the funding are determined according to the % of each program choice. The student learning occurs at home and in the community.
- **Example B:** Student learns math, language arts, science, music and PE with the direction of teachers and learns history, geography and graphic design with the direction of a parent. The reporting and funding are determined by the % of each program choice. The student learning occurs on campus for math and science, at home for language arts, history and geography, and in the community for graphic design under the tutoring of a community instructor.

Home-based Teacher Directed Choice

- **100% Teacher-Directed.**
- **Learning occurs** at home and/or in the community.
- **Least level** of parental choice available.
- **Least level** of parental responsibility.
- **Completion of high school:** An Alberta Education Diploma
- **Post-Secondary transitions** to all college and university programs possible depending on course choices. Usually useful to consider starting this planning around grade 8.

HOME-BASED LEARNING MYTHS



In Home Education or parent-directed programs, the parent has exclusive responsibility for all choices related to program design, the development of the Learning Plan, selection of resources and methods of evaluation.

All parents must register their programs with an approved school board or private school authority. For the most part, parents and teachers/principal usually enjoy a friendly, respectful relationship. However, it is important to understand that, under law, the principal of the school supervises the Home Education program and is responsible for ensuring programs and teachers support the parent. Principals must approve the Learning Plan prepared by the parent. If at any time the principal determines the program is not meeting reasonable learning goals for the student, they can ask the parent to revise the plan and activities. Parents, as well, have the choice to withdraw from the school and seek registration elsewhere. The principal is responsible for documenting the school's evaluation in the Alberta Education record which is owned by the Alberta Government. Parents can see the record; they cannot delete items from the record. It is important to note that every school only has one official principal that is recognized by Alberta Education. Any other "principal" designations are for the internal use of the school only.

When parents choose a teacher-directed or parent-directed program, they grant complete control over their child's education to the government.

Registration in any program never grants complete control to the government. The right of parental control is highlighted in the UN Declaration of Parental Rights drafted after the Second World War. In teacher-directed programs, parents exercise these rights and responsibilities by partnering with teachers and schools to support student learning in and out of the campus or home-based learning location. Parents can also exercise their vote for a school board or choose to support a private school authority that supervises their child's education. In a Parent-Directed Home Education program, the parent is granted much more autonomy over the learning experience. However, the school board or authority is still in a supervisory role.

You can provide a special needs program through Home Education that is "just as good" as a teacher-directed special needs program.

There is no evidence for this claim. Each child's unique special needs require careful consideration and planning in the same way that a parent carefully chooses the level and type of health care services they access. Parents have the responsibility to seek advice, mentoring and input for their child's unique needs. It is possible that a parent-directed Home Education program is the "best" choice for a student with special needs. It is also possible that a student's needs are better met in a home-based teacher-directed program, a blended program or a campus program. Often, as a child ages, their needs and needs of a family change. We are grateful for parental choices in the province of Alberta that are available to parents of students with special learning needs.

You can register your student with a "Supervising Agency" or a Home School Board. Supervising agencies provide a better level of support and are more autonomous than school-based Home Education programs provided by public, separate or private schools.

For many years in the history of Home Education in the province, school boards and private school authorities have chosen to contract instructional services to private societies or organizations who are often, in turn, governed by their own "board". These organizations have developed Home Education programs that operate under the authority of the school boards or private school authorities that are named in their contract for services. Many of these organizations have brand-recognition in the province and have provided significant leadership and advocacy for Home Education. **We are all grateful for their work.** However, all "supervising agencies" or "Home School Boards" are under the legal authority of an Alberta Education approved school board or a private school authority and its principal. They are not autonomous. The same regulations apply and the same level of government authority exists in all programs. While many programs claim to be "the best", there is no evidence to support this claim. Many programs in the province offer significant support to parents who choose Home Education and have teachers with experience and expertise in Home Education. Some school authorities provide the choice for blended and teacher-directed home-based programs and some do not. The fact that some programs offer more choices to parents does not diminish their ability to provide a high level of support to Home Education families.

If I don't use my parent reimbursement funds, I have less accountability or no accountability to the government for my program.

Parents can access the allotted parent funding in a Home Education program to support the goals, learning objectives and activities in the approved Learning Plan. Accountability is not related to the level of funding used. If a parent doesn't access the funding available to them, they still have the same accountability to the requirements in the Home Education Regulation and they are still supervised at the same level by their chosen School Board or Private School Authority.