

# Quick Start Guide to Homeschooling High School

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Don't let the unknown deter you from homeschooling through high school. Whether you're experienced or brand new to homeschooling, you can design and implement a schedule and educational plan that is enriching and rewarding for both you and your students.

## Planning is Key

The high school years are different than the elementary years. Teens are able to work more independently, and many will enjoy taking part in the planning process.

Ideally, you will want to sketch out a big-picture plan that includes the courses your student will study across grades 9-12. If your student is younger, include their middle school years too. If your student is older, don't worry! Just start with where they are at. Use a [template](#) like this one to organize your ideas.

Minnesota's [homeschool law](#) outlines the requirements that all homeschool parents should follow, including the subjects that should be taught. Remember that these subjects can be offered anytime, and not necessarily every year. In fact, I encourage parents to eliminate the repeat that is commonly built into a student's academic plan across the middle and high school years. This frees up blocks of time to pursue other interests.

Standards set for public schools do not apply to homeschool. However, some parents find it helpful to review the course sequence taught in public schools when developing their plan. For college-bound students, it is also helpful to review college admission recommendations so your plan meets your graduate's goals.

You will likely make adjustments as you go along, but this time spent planning will give you confidence and allow you to focus on one year at a time.

## Choose Resources

Don't try to be a public school at home. Their methods, resources, and goals are different than yours. [Research](#) shows that homeschool graduates consistently excel in every area of life – from college to career to community involvement.

You won't need to be a rock star parent to accomplish it all. When it comes to homeschooling, you have options. Consider yourself the Director of your student's education and use all the resources available to you. These might include textbooks, video-based curriculum, personal tutors, independent study, small group studies, team science labs, along with online or in-person classes offered from homeschool co-ops. Many teens like variety, so plan together. [Heppner's Legacy Homeschool Resources](#) in Elk River, MN are experts in helping you choose curriculum.

I approached each year with a fresh look at what would work best for our family. Sometimes our schedule looked the same as the prior year, but often it changed depending on the needs of a student, their developing interests, or a change in our schedule. Having a "Why" statement can help you make decisions for your year. For us, we wanted: "To graduate creative, resourceful, critical thinkers who love the Lord, and are positioned to act on His call."

## Earn College Credit

**PSEO:** Some teens are ready for an academic challenge. [Minnesota's Dual Enrollment program](#) allows high school students to enroll in college courses, earning both high school and college credit. Even if your teen is not sure of their plans after graduation, it's generally a good idea to plan as though they may attend college, so they are prepared for that option.

PSEO, Postsecondary Enrollment Options, allows qualifying students in grades 11-12 can take courses on a full- or part-time basis, online or on campus. There is no charge to students for tuition, books, or fees. Each participating MN college or university sets its own admissions requirements, so it is useful plan early. Tenth grade students are eligible to enroll on a more limited basis.

Students can enroll in courses at participating community, state, private, or technical colleges. PSEO can be a great resource for students to take upper-level math, lab-based science, foreign language, or vocational training. Motivated and well-prepared students are earning two-year degrees while in high school.

**CLEP:** Another option for early credit is CLEP, [College Level Exam Program](#), offered by The College Board. Comprised of 34 exams, many in subject areas that overlap high school and introductory college courses, it allows students of any age to test out of introductory level college courses. Many of these subjects are also taught in high school so it saves students time and money by only having to study once and earning college credit by passing a CLEP exam. Read [Getting Started with CLEP](#) to learn more.

## Prepare for the Future

Helping to prepare your teen for life after high school is one of the most important tasks you'll have as a parent. Think of grades 9-12 not just as the last four years of high school, but the first four years of a college or career plan.

**Teach Life Skills:** Each year, make a list of 10 skills you want to be intentional about teaching. Include things like money management, basic first aid, meal planning, and home repair. Make a list and give your teen a chance to swap out two for something they want to learn. Here are [some ideas](#) to help you get started.

**Build Employment Skills:** As your teens get older, holding internships and part-time jobs are an important step in building skills and developing career and college-readiness. Look for employers that are mentors and jobs that focus on skill development. I encourage students to work at a front-desk position where they will greet customers, practice first-impressions, and develop valued communication skills.

**Foster Civic Engagement:** Connect with resources in your community and get to know your neighbors. Depending on where you live, start with joining clubs that align to your student's interests like 4-H, Civil Air Patrol, speech and debate, robotics, community theater, outdoor adventures, sports teams, or art classes. Your teen will enjoy meeting with friends and participating in activities that include people of all ages.

**Explore Career Direction:** It is important to realize that the career decision making process, is just that, a process. It is not an event. Having a career direction prior to graduation will help you customize their final years of high school to support their graduation goals. Research clearly shows that *parents* are the #1 influence on their child's career choice. Help your teens discover their innate talents and skills. Foster decision-making skills and provide opportunities to develop their knowledge of the world of work.

## Maintain Academic Records

As you go along, keep a record or transcript of your student's studies. This includes all courses and learning activities in grades 9-12, plus any high school-level courses completed prior to grade 9. There are several [transcript templates](#) available online to help you get started. Since you will be awarding letter grades and credits with each course, I recommend setting calendar benchmarks for each course of study to ensure students are on track to complete within the planned time frame. Using a [weekly assignment sheet](#) can be helpful. Ultimately, parents will issue a diploma to their homeschool graduates.

## Finding Answers

You will have questions! We all do. Start by reviewing the resources on the [MÂCHÉ](#) website. You can also connect with a local homeschool co-op or a trusted homeschool friend. And if I can help you with Career or Academic Advising, please [connect with me](#).

High School is the best time to homeschool!

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