

If you would like more information about home education in New Zealand, go to www.nchenz.org.nz



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Canterbury Home Educators Inc



WHAT IS
HOME
edu**Ca**tion?

WHAT IS HOME EDUCATION?

In New Zealand, all children aged between 6 and 16 years of age are required to enrol in and attend a registered school. Home education is where parents or legal guardians take responsibility for the education of their children, instead of enrolling them in school (from the Ministry of Education website).

Parents are free to decide how to facilitate their child's education. There are many ways to do this i.e. "school-at-home" curriculum-based learning, through to child-led interests driving learning experiences. Home education allows the family to individualise their child's learning to incorporate their interests, needs, abilities and personalities.

WHY DO FAMILIES/WHANAU HOME EDUCATE?

The reasons for home education are as many and as varied as each of the families who are home educating. Each family has their own unique story and circumstance as to why they have chosen this option.

For example, for some children the school environment has not aligned with their personality, learning pace or way of assimilating knowledge and their family is looking for a different way. Or some whanau choose to integrate their child's learning with their values, tikanga/culture and lifestyle in the informal setting of the home right through their childhood years. In all instances the security and nurture that comes from one-on-one allows most home educated children to be confident, motivated learners, and encouraged to be contributing members of society.

HOW DO YOU HOME EDUCATE?

Home education is not Te Aho O Te Kura Pounamu/The Correspondence School, although some home educators do use Te Kura for various reasons. There are other pre-prepared curriculums/programmes available ranging from the NZ curriculum over-view from the Ministry of Education through to lesson-by-lesson plans from preschool to the end of secondary school. Even internet or library searches on subjects bring up a myriad of lesson plans or suggestions for activities or projects. Home education should fit in with your lifestyle, so you are free to include any or all of these resources into your child's learning environment. A valuable thing to do is to talk to existing home educating families and ask what they do. Te Kura and curriculum bought from overseas can be a big financial investment so seeing how they work and what's involved, and visualising how it would fit into your philosophy of learning is important before you commit any time and money.

WHAT ABOUT SOCIALISATION?

This is one of the main concerns that people have regarding home education. There is a popular misconception that home educators isolate their children from the 'real world' and other children. In general the total opposite is true.

Most home educated students have ample opportunity to mix with other children through sports clubs, youth groups, extended family and home education support groups – where they encounter a wider age range than is encouraged or even possible in schools.

Home educated children probably spend more time in the 'real world' than children in schools. Shopping, going to the bank, etc is a natural part of your week, so what better way to learn about these things than actually going and doing them?

The Education Review Office has this to say about the socialisation of home educated children:

'Concerns that homeschooled children are marginalised in terms of opportunities for socialisation are generally addressed by homeschooling parents and homeschooling support groups through the provision of additional social activities. Not one report in the study suggested that a greater emphasis on social interactions would be beneficial'. (ERO, *The Quality of Home Schooling*, 1998).

HOW DO HOME EDUCATED STUDENTS GAIN QUALIFICATIONS?

More and more employers do not look at qualifications alone in prospective employees. Qualifications are often ranked well down the list of desirable qualities employers look for.

If a qualification is necessary to gain entry to a particular tertiary course, or is required by an employer, there are many different avenues available today. There is the ability to apply to University through the Special Admission pathway. Other internationally recognised qualifications eg Cambridge exams and the Baccalaureate Diploma Programme can be accessed by home educating students, and from 16 years of age Te Kura or other NCEA credit courses (eg STAR courses) are an option. Some employers may just require a written explanation and/or a portfolio of equivalent experience.

IS IT LEGAL?

Yes. The Education Act of 1961 states that attendance at a registered school is compulsory from 6 years of age, but we may ask for an exemption from this. The exemption is granted through the Ministry of Education to satisfy the statement that your child will be "taught at least as regularly and as well as in a registered school". Again, there are many people and resources available to help with the exemption process. Refer to the "Home Education How Do I Get Started" brochure. Or for more information go to nchenz.org.nz