

# Thinking about homeschooling?

One of the first things you will want to do is take a look at the New Jersey Department of Education's Homeschooling FAQ:

[https://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq\\_homeschool.htm](https://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq_homeschool.htm). Here you'll find the requirements for homeschooling according to NJ law.

Another of your first steps will be to determine HOW you want to homeschool. We've all seen these types of pictures:



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This is the homeschooling method often called School-at-Home or the Traditional Method. It can be either online or use traditional textbooks. You can find a more detailed description here: <http://homeschooling911.com/how-to-home-school-traditional-methods/>.

This isn't the only way to homeschool though! In addition to the Traditional Method, there are many other broad approaches to homeschooling: the Classical Method, the Charlotte Mason Method, the Montessori Method, the Waldorf Method, Unit Studies, the Eclectic Method, and Unschooling are often mentioned.

The **Classical Method** is rigorous, based on the reading of the Great Books (<https://www.greatbooks.org/>) and the Applied Trivium of Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric (<https://www.improvek-12education.org/content-rich-education/classical-trivium>), along with the use of Socratic Dialogue

(<https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-the-socratic-method-definition-examples.html>). This is the method proposed by Susan Wise Bauer in her popular book *The Well-Trained Mind*

(<http://ipac.hclibrary.us/polaris/search/title.aspx?ctx=1.1033.0.0.2&pos=1>). Learn more about the Classical Method here:

<https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/homeschooling-styles/classical-homeschooling/> and here: <https://thebestschools.org/magazine/homeschool-style-right/#classical>.



The **Charlotte Mason Method** is all about “living books” that draw the reader into learning more about a subject: the books are typically narrative in style and written by an enthusiastic authority. Nature walks are the second key ingredient of the method. These are supplemented by short lessons, journaling, arts, and crafts. Learn more about the Charlotte Mason Method here:

<https://thebestschools.org/magazine/homeschool-style-right/#charlottesmason> and here: <https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/homeschooling-styles/charlotte-mason-method/>.



The **Montessori Method** is all about encouraging independence, self-reliance, and practical life training through tactile experiences. Manipulatives are a big part of math and language arts, and “prepared environments” are used to encourage learning without expecting rewards (like grades). The “method is well-proven as a child-friendly humanistic educational model.” Learn more about the Montessori Method here: <https://thebestschools.org/magazine/homeschool-style-right/#montessori> and here: <https://www.montessori.edu/homeschooling.html>.



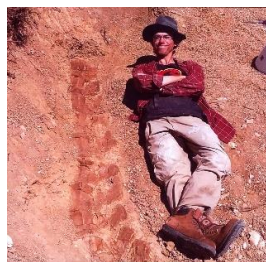
The **Waldorf Method** is a holistic liberal arts education in which art and music are as important as reading and math, and moral development is as important as intellectual development. Electronic media (TVs, computers, video games) are discouraged for young learners in favor of learning by interaction and engaging in physical activities. Learn more about the Waldorf Method here: <https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/homeschooling-styles/waldorf-homeschooling/> and here: <https://waldorfinspiredlearning.com/just-starting-with-waldorf-homeschooling/>.



**Unit Studies** are usually incorporated within another homeschool method as a way of teaching all subject areas using a single theme. For instance, a unit study on Ancient Egypt might include reading age-appropriate historical novels set during the period, studying the geography of Egypt, using math to make calculations about pyramids, learning about floods in science. Unit studies will incorporate fun activities that enhance learning, such as writing with hieroglyphics, making an ancient Egyptian recipe, or mummifying a chicken (<https://www.wikihow.com/Mummify-a-Chicken>). Learn more about Unit studies here: <https://thebestschools.org/magazine/homeschool-style-right/#unitstudies> and here: <https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/homeschooling-styles/unit-studies/>.



The **Eclectic Method** is often called “relaxed” homeschooling. It adheres to no single method, instead incorporating aspects of many. This is often where homeschooling families end up after a time, once you learn how your students learn best and how you teach best! It is easily adaptable to allow a child to pursue a passion. For example, Christopher Paolini, author of *Eragon*, wrote the book at age 15 as part of his homeschooling; and this Hunterdon County individual followed his passion for dinosaurs with many science electives in high school, and by age 20, he ended up on the team that discovered the second and most complete specimen of *Suuwassea* in the world:



Learn more about the Eclectic Method here:

<https://thebestschools.org/magazine/homeschool-style-right/#eclecticeducation>

and here: <http://eclectic-homeschool.com/>.

**Unschooling** has as many different definitions as it has practitioners. Terms that you will often hear to describe unschooling include “child-led”, “learn-as-you-go”, and “delight-directed.” The Homeschool Mom puts it this way: “Parents don’t coerce or require academics if they are unschoolers, but they do provide rich experiences such as library visits, read-alouds, things to build with, opportunities to pretend, resources other than curriculum, and more.”

(<https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com/homeschooling-styles/unschooling/>).

Learn more about Unschooling here:

<https://thebestschools.org/magazine/homeschool-style-right/#unschooling> and

here: <https://unschoolrules.com/unschooling-resources/>.

## How Do Unschoolers Learn to Read?

Comics	Street Signs
Being Read TO	Cereal Boxes
Text/Phone messages	Billboards
Movie Subtitles	Kit Directions
Menus	Instructions
Letters From Grandma	Maps
License Plates	Birthday Cards
Historical Markers	Graffiti
Play Programs	Price Stickers
Church Bulletins	Store Names
Minecraft Chat	Social Media
Ebay item Descriptions	Road Signs
Notes from Mom	Diary
Trivia Games	Pokemon Cards
Magnetic Poetry Words	Post Cards



## Confused? Overwhelmed?

Relax! You don't have to reinvent the wheel with your homeschooling; there are plenty of others who are making similar journeys. Find your local support group, playgroup, co-op, Scouting group. Look for homeschool programs through the YMCA, the local park service, sports organizations. Search social media to see if you can find other homeschoolers in your area. Start your own group if all else fails!

And talk to us here at the library. We have lots of suggestions for materials you can use and can help you find what you need. Call Youth Services at 908-788-1432 (Headquarters) or 908-730-6834 (North County). Marianne Sievers is the homeschool liaison and can be reached at [msievers@hclibrary.us](mailto:msievers@hclibrary.us) or by phone at 908-788-1434.