



Home Schooling in Iowa

The Home School Assistance Program (HSAP) is one of five legal options under Iowa law in which a family may home school. A school district which elects to provide an HSAP must provide an Iowa licensed teacher to supervise the enrolled families. The teacher must have sixteen (16) supervising contacts with the enrolled family throughout the school year. Eight (8) of the contacts must be face-to-face, with the remaining eight (8) contacts being a phone, e-mail, or other contact. An HSAP may provide other optional services, but all HSAP's must provide the required certified teacher supervision of home schooled families.

Homeschool Iowa has a good chart to compare the home school choices in our state:

<https://homeschooliowa.org/start-homeschooling/know-the-law-rules/>

Why Families Choose to Home School

Linda Dobson, in her book, *The First Year of Homeschooling Your Child*, states the following:

What is it about the act of home schooling that draws people from every political, philosophical, economic, ethnic, religious, and demographic quarter?

- *They recognize a need in their children's lives – be it physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual – and homeschooling fills it.*
- *They recognize a need in their family life – time to be together to share what they value, be it physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual – and home schooling fills it.*

Families choose to home school for a variety of reasons. One might be a proactive home schooler (one who loves the idea and it fits with his lifestyle), a reluctant home schooler (all other options have been eliminated), or a temporary home schooler (home schooling for a trial period). Knowing the reasons behind your decision to home school will help determine your philosophy and goals, and enable you to make home schooling work for your individual family.

Common Approaches to Home Schooling

When deciding on an approach to home schooling, a parent needs to consider the needs of the students, the lifestyle the family desires, and the learning styles of both parent and child.

Common approaches to home schooling generally fall into one of the following categories:

Traditional Approach: a more structured, textbook approach; closely parallels subjects taught at public/private schools; school-at-home.

Unit Study Approach: study of a topic includes aspects of basic academic subjects (math, reading, writing); more hands-on, and uses libraries and community resources rather than textbooks.

Interest-Initiated or Unschooling Approach: student's interest directs areas of study/learning; parents support and facilitate the student's learning with "real-life" experiences.

Eclectic Approach: combines traditional, unit study, and unschooling; parent will use anything that encourages enthusiasm for learning and meeting the student's needs.

Other viewpoints influencing home schooling include:

Classical Approach: highly structured educational style; based on method called "The Trivium," developed by Dorothy Sayers; a three- part process of training a child's mind; emphasizing ancient disciplines and classics.

Moore Formula Approach: embraces readiness principle for all tasks; researched by Raymond and Dorothy Moore; uses the student's interests and a balance of study, work, and community service.

Charlotte Mason Approach: uses intellectually nourishing "living books" and narration (a child's telling in his own words – written or orally); developed by British educator Charlotte Mason in the early 1900's; makes time for nature observation, art and music appreciation, and hospitality.

Choosing Curriculum

Choosing the appropriate curriculum for your child(ren) will be dependent primarily on the approach you choose. There are many sources available to help you choose the curriculum that fits your family's needs. Books, catalogues, and the internet are all useful in finding curriculum. Your supervising teacher and the MPHSAP resource librarian can help you to get started. Start simple and don't be intimidated by the number of choices available to home schoolers. Trial and error and a sense of adventure in your home school journey will help you discover what works best for you and your children.

How Mid-Prairie Home School Assistance Program (MPHSAP) Works and What MPHSAP Offers

Our mission is to provide support, resources, and assistance to parents as primary teachers in their endeavor to achieve quality home education.

We work to provide this through a number of means, including:

- Supervising teachers who work with parents to meet the needs of their students.
- A resource library with a large variety of materials.
- Field trips, activities and classes for the families and students to choose from.
- Optional standardized academic assessment.
- High school diploma option.

These are all spelled out in more detail in our introductory letter.

District Services

Services from the Mid-Prairie School District and Grant Wood Area Education Agency (GWAEA) are available to MPHSAP students. GWAEA library services and on-line educational resources are available, as well as vision and hearing testing, post-secondary enrollment options, and dual-enrollment in district classes or extracurricular activities.

Enrollment Information

To enroll in the MPHSAP, you must fill out the enrollment form and submit a current immunization record or exemption form. If you are outside of the Mid-Prairie School District, you must also apply for open enrollment to opt out of your resident district. (See below.)

Open Enrollment

Application for open enrollment is available to anyone who does not reside in the Mid-Prairie School District but who wishes to enroll in the MPHSAP. An open enrollment application must be filled out and a copy sent to both the family's resident district and to the Mid-Prairie District offices. Forms are available through the MPHSAP office, on our website, or from your resident district offices.

Deadlines for open enrollment application are as follows:

The completed form must be filed with both the resident and receiving districts by March 1st preceding the school year for which open enrollment is desired. Exceptions to this deadline:

- 1.) Families wishing to enroll kindergarten students must file forms with the receiving district before September 1st of the school year of enrollment in kindergarten.
- 2.) The "good cause" category for filing after the March 1st deadline relates to a change in the student's residence.

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment is an option for all home schooling families. Dual enrollment allows access to Mid-Prairie School District classes and extracurricular activities, Grant Wood AEA services, and HSAP Library usage. Anyone who is enrolled in the MPHSAP can indicate the dual enrollment option when filling out the MPHSAP Enrollment Form and CPI form.

Questions?

We are here to help. You can email hsap@mphawks.org for more information or contact our director, Rachel Kerns at rkerns@mphawks.org. Our Home School Education Center is open Monday – Friday during the school year. You can call 319-683-2280 to reach us!