

# 5 Things to Know About Homeschooling Your Child in Chicagoland

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## Know your child

If your child has never gone to school, spend some time paying attention to how they play and figure things out. This gives you good insight as to how they think and learn so you can deliver their critical skills in ways they will best absorb them. Homeschool advocates note that children who have been in a classroom will need a period of “deschooling”—time outside of the school environment where they are left alone to do what they want and truly break the classroom mindset. How long this takes will partially depend on the child, and partially how long they were in a classroom. When they really understand that they are not returning to school and the novelty of being home wears off, they often seek out learning. Children who immediately seek out traditional “schoolwork” when removed from the classroom might be struggling to find ways to show their strengths in their “new” environment because they may not know any other way.

## Know what you want for your child

Ask yourself why you want to homeschool. How will you be serving your child by changing their education environment? What are your true goals for your child’s life? Why? Are they realistic? Do they honor who your child is? How will your family dynamic change? Having these answers very clear in your mind will drive many of your decisions about educating your child at home.

## Know the law

Illinois is a relatively lenient state for homeschool regulation. There is no minimum number of days for attendance and no required annual or periodic testing of homeschooled children. There is no predefined type of curriculum or number of hours per day required. The IL State Board of Education website (see: <http://heatherhas.info/ilhslaw>) says that parents are required to teach the following “branches of education” in the English language: language arts; mathematics; biological and physical sciences; social sciences; fine arts; and physical development and health.

## Know that there are overwhelming amounts of resources for homeschoolers in Chicagoland

Whether you are looking for academic coursework, enrichment instruction, field trips, open gym, sports teams, fine arts, instrumental band, or social outings—there is truly no end to what the area offers. Additionally, the museums in Chicago offer free days that are often during the week.

## Know that there are lots of homeschoolers

And therefore, you are bound to connect with a few of them! But it also means that someone will have probably done what you’re considering and/or have the information for resources you seek. They might have a knowing ear to listen, too. The community is large, and a wealth of support.

*Before health & wellness coaching, I earned a Master’s in Education with additional graduate credits in Special Education, was a public school teacher and currently homeschool. I’m happy to talk to you about our journey both in and out of schools with our biological, adoptive and former foster children both neurotypical and special needs. E-mail me: [heather@heatherdegeorge.com](mailto:heather@heatherdegeorge.com)*

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