

CONNECTICUT

- Compulsory Attendance Ages:** “Five years of age and over and under eighteen years of age . . . unless such child is a high school graduate. . . .” Parents may elect not to send a five or six year old child to school by personally appearing at the school district office and signing an option form. Connecticut General Statutes Annotated § 10-184.
- Required Days of Instruction:** Generally, 180 days. See § 10-184.
- Required Subjects:** Reading, writing, spelling, English, grammar, geography, arithmetic, United States history, and citizenship, including a study of the town, state, and federal governments. Conn. Gen. Stat. Ann. § 10-184.

Home School Statute: No specific statute, but the Department of Education has passed specific home school “procedures” which are described below.

A home school may operate if the parent “is able to show that the child is elsewhere receiving *equivalent* instruction in the studies taught in the public schools.” § 10-184. The duty of the local school board is to “cause each child [of school age] . . . to attend school in accordance with the provisions of § 10-184.” § 10-220(a).

On November 7, 1990, the Connecticut Board of Education implemented “Revised Procedures Concerning Requests from Parents to Educate Their Child at Home.” (These procedures are optional.)

1. “The State Board of Education acknowledges the right of parents to instruct their children at home as an alternative to public school attendance.”
2. Within 10 days of the start of a home instruction program, parents must file a “Notice of Intent” form with the local superintendent.
3. Among other things, this form must include “name of teacher, subjects taught, days of instruction, and the teacher’s method of assessment.”
4. “A parent, by filing a notice of intent, acknowledges full responsibility for the education of their child in accordance with the requirements of state law. Receipt of a notice of intent in no way constitutes approval by a school district of the content or effectiveness of a program of home instruction.”
5. “Any continued refusal by the parent to comply with the reasonable request of the school district for completion and filing of the notice of intent, or to participate in an annual portfolio review may cause the child to be considered truant.”

Teacher Qualifications: None.

Standardized Tests: Not required by statute or regulation. However, “an annual portfolio review will be held with the parents and school officials to determine if instruction in the required courses has been given.” (“Revised Procedures,” p. 3).

Religious Freedom Act: Conn. Gen. Stat. § 52-571b

A religious freedom act, passed with the help of HSLDA members, gives religious home schoolers another legal means to protect their right to home school. If the parents’ free exercise of religion is substantially burdened by having to comply with the homeschool law, the parents may use the religious freedom law as a defense or file suit against the state. Under this statute, the burden is on the state to prove that its requirement "in furtherance of a compelling state interest" and is the "least restrictive means" of fulfilling its interest that children be educated. This act restores the highest protection of the individual's right to freely exercise his religious beliefs taken away by the U.S. Supreme Court in its 1997 City of Boerne decision. 521 U.S. 507.