

## IOWA

**Compulsory Attendance Ages:** Age 6 as of September 15 and less than 16. If a child turns 16 on or after Sept. 15 while enrolled (might include dual-enrolled) in a public or accredited private school, he is of compulsory attendance age until the end of the school year. Iowa Code Ann. § 299.1A.

**Required Days of Instruction:** 148 days, with 37 days each “school quarter” (see section 6 below).

**Required Subjects:** None, but see *Standardized Tests* section below.

**Home School Statute:** Iowa Code Ann. § 299A.1–299A.10; Iowa Admin. Code §§ 281-31.1 to -31.9.

1. Parents must annually submit a “Competent Private Instruction” form (2 copies) to the school board secretary by Sept. 15 (’07-’08 Dep. of Ed. CPI handbook p. 3) or within 14 calendar days after removing the child from school. The form asks for the name and age of the child, the number of days of instruction, texts used, the name and address of the instructor, and an “outline of course of study” (meaning subjects covered, lesson plans, and time spent on the areas of study--there is no mandated minimum). It also requires evidence of vaccinations (or medical or religious exemption) for children being home schooled for the first time.
2. For children age 8 or older (as of September 15). Parents must either: (a) provide instruction by or under the supervision of an Iowa licensed teacher; or (b) provide instruction which results in the student making “adequate progress.”
  - a. **Licensed Teacher.** Families meet with their chosen teacher twice per 45 days of instruction (Reg 31.3(2)a), but do not submit an assessment to officials. One of these meetings may be conducted via telephone; one must be face to face. The teacher acts as a consultant to the family. A parent with a teaching license may be the supervising teacher for their own home school.
  - b. **Annual Assessment.** Families who do not choose a licensed teacher must annually submit a standardized test or portfolio review.
3. For children age 7 (as of September 15). Parents must either use a licensed teacher or submit a baseline assessment to allow measuring of progress in subsequent years. Proof of adequate progress is not required this year (’07-’08 Dept. of Ed. CPI Handbook p.6, 9).
4. For children age 6 (as of September 15). Parents are not required to use a licensed teacher or submit any type of assessment (’07-’08 Dept. of Ed. CPI Handbook p.6, 9).
5. If a child has been “identified” as requiring special education, parents must obtain approval from the special education director of the local AEA. Iowa Code Ann. § 299A.9.

6. “School quarter” is not defined. In an HSLDA case, *State v. Trucke*, 410 N.W.2d 242 (Iowa 1987), the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that the prosecutor violated the family’s right to due process when he charged them with truancy after only 30 days had passed in the school year. The Court reasoned that since children were only required to be schooled 120 days annually (at that time), the Truckes still had ample time-- 220 days, excluding weekends and holidays-- to comply with the statute. Since the family was charged before it was possible for them to have violated the law, the conviction was reversed. The law was subsequently amended to require 37 days of attendance each “school quarter”.

7. Confidentiality. All homeschool information and records that officials hold are confidential to the same extent as the records of public school students. § 299A.11, § 22.7.1

**Teacher Qualifications:** None.

**Standardized Tests:** Families without a supervising teacher must assess their children by May 1 and submit the results to the school district and the Dept. of Education by June 30. There are three options.

1. **Standardized test.** Any nationally-standardized achievement test. Tests may be administered by a school district or a non-public, non-accredited school. If by a non-public, non-accredited school, the parent may administer the test if the “terms or protocol of the test publisher” are satisfied. Iowa Admin. Code § 281-31.4 (2)(c). A child must score at or above the 30th percentile in *each* subtest area (reading, math, and language arts and, starting in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, science and social studies) AND either (a) score at or above grade level for the child’s age or (b) show 6 months progress.
2. **Portfolio.** An Iowa licensed teacher may write an assessment after reviewing the child’s portfolio.
3. **Accredited Correspondence School.** A report card or other assessment from an accredited correspondence school (Abeka Academy, Lighthouse Christian Academy, Alpha Omega Academy, and many others).
4. **Inadequate progress.** If adequate progress is not shown, the family may submit another assessment before the next school year begins. If adequate progress is not shown, the child must be enrolled in school unless the Dept. of Education approves a remediation program. Iowa Code Ann. 299A.6.

NOTE. Membership in HSLDA is not available with respect to:

*Children enrolled in a virtual charter school, public on-line school, or public school independent study program.* Enrollment in these secular programs is enrollment in a public school, giving it authority to impose state assessments, approval of curriculum, and supervision by a certified teacher.

*Children enrolled in a public school “Home School Assistance Program” (HSAP).* Although the law refers to an HSAP as “private instruction”, a public school HSAP is in fact a public school program for which the school receives 60% of the normal per-pupil funding per student, creating a strong financial incentive to pressure families to join such programs.

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