

Guidelines for Home Study in Vermont



2002

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**Vermont Department of Education
Home Study & Independent Schools
(802) 828-3352**

STATE OF VERMONT

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Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to homeschooling! This booklet contains the information you will need in order to prepare and submit an enrollment notice for homeschooling. All the necessary forms are enclosed. Please read over the information carefully before preparing your enrollment notice. Be sure you submit all the required information.

After receiving your enrollment notice, which includes a minimum course of study and assessment information, we review your material for completion. You will be contacted by letter within 14 **business** days of our receiving your materials, to let you know the status of your enrollment. You may be able to enroll your child immediately or you might be asked to submit additional information to complete your enrollment.

We have included copies of the Vermont statutes governing homestudy along with Section 1121 of the law, which outlines Vermont's compulsory attendance. This section states that if your child is between the ages of 6 and 16 **you must have your child enrolled in a public school, independent school, or homestudy program for each school year.**

Unless you are notified that your homestudy enrollment notice is complete or 45 days have elapsed since your enrollment notice was received by the Department of Education and a hearing has not been called your child will not be considered enrolled in homestudy. It is important to keep this in mind if you are removing your child from a public or independent school during the school year. Children not enrolled in a public school, independent school or homestudy program during the school year could be considered truant.

As you read over this material and prepare your enrollment notice and minimum course of study, please call the home study office if you have any questions. We can be reached at the Department of Education at (802) 828-3352.

Sincerely,

Home Study Program

HOMESTUDY STATUTE

Section 1, 16 V.S.A. 11 (21) is added to read:

- (21) "Homestudy Program" means an educational program offered through homestudy which provides a minimum course of study and which is offered to not more than
- (a) children residing in that home, and
 - (b) children not residing in that home who either are two or fewer in number or who are from one family.

Section 166b HOMESTUDY PROGRAM

(A) **Enrollment Notice -**

A homestudy program shall send a written enrollment notice to the Commissioner whenever it intends to enroll a child. Enrollments at homestudy programs shall expire on July 1. If a homestudy program intends to re-enroll a child for the following school year, a new notice under this section is required and may be submitted at any time after March 1. The Commissioner shall accept and review enrollment notices upon receiving them. A notice under this subsection shall include the following:

- 1) the name and age of the child
- 2) the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the parents or guardians of the child
- 3) for each child enrolled during the preceding year, any assessment of progress required under sub-section (d)
- 4) for each child not previously enrolled in a Vermont public school or Vermont homestudy program, independent professional evidence on whether the child is handicapped. A comprehensive evaluation to establish eligibilities for special education is not required, but may be ordered by a hearing officer after a hearing under this section
- 5) for each child being enrolled for the current year, a detailed outline or narrative which describes the content to be provided in each subject area of the minimum course of study, including any special services or adaptations to be made to accommodate any handicapping condition in accordance with applicable state and federal law. Methods and materials to be used may be included but are not required.
- 6) the school district in which the homestudy program is located
- 7) the names, addresses, telephone numbers, and signatures of the persons who will provide the instruction
- 8) the signature of all custodial parents or guardians.

(B) **Notice to homestudy programs**

Within 14 business days of receiving an enrollment notice, the commissioner or designee shall send the homestudy program a written acknowledgment of receipt. The acknowledgment shall include a determination:

- 1) either that the enrollment notice is complete and no further information is needed, or specifically identifying information required under subsection (a) which is missing. If information is missing, the homestudy program shall provide the additional information in writing within 14 days; and
- 2) either that the child may be enrolled immediately or that the child may be enrolled 45 days after the enrollment notice was received. At any time before the child may be enrolled, the Commissioner may order that a hearing be held. After notice of such a hearing is received, the child shall not be enrolled until after an order has been issued by the hearing officer to that effect.

(C) Enrollment reports

Each homestudy program shall notify the Commissioner within seven days of the day that any student ceases to be enrolled in the program. Within ten days of receiving any enrollment report, the Commissioner shall notify the appropriate superintendent of schools.

(D) Progress assessment

Each homestudy program shall assess annually the progress of each of its students. Progress shall be assessed in each area of the minimum course of study by one or more of the following:

- 1) a certified Vermont teacher
- 2) a teacher from an approved Vermont private school
- 3) a teacher advisory service report from a publisher of a commercial curriculum together with a portfolio of the student's work
- 4) a report prepared by the parents or the student's instructor together with a portfolio of the student's work
- 5) the complete results of a standardized achievement test administered by a qualified person
- 6) the complete results of a standardized achievement test administered by an approved Vermont school, at the option of the school or school district.

(E) Hearings before enrollment

If the Commissioner has information that creates a significant doubt about whether a homestudy program can or will provide a minimum course of study for a student who has not yet enrolled, the Commissioner may call a hearing. At the hearing, the homestudy program shall establish that it has complied with this section and will provide the student with a minimum course of study.

(F) Hearings after enrollment

If the Commissioner has information that reasonably could be expected to justify an order of termination under this section, he or she may call a hearing. At the hearing, the Commissioner shall establish one or more of the following:

- 1) the homestudy program has substantially failed to comply with the requirements of this section
- 2) the homestudy program has substantially failed to provide a student with the minimum course of study
- 3) the homestudy program will not provide a student with the minimum course of study

(G) Notice and procedure

Notice of any hearing shall include a brief summary of the material facts and shall be sent to each parent/guardian and each instructor of the student or students involved known to the Commissioner. The hearing shall occur within 30 days of the day that notice is given or sent. If a notice concerns a child not yet enrolled in a homestudy program, enrollment shall not occur until an order has been issued after the hearing.

The hearing shall be conducted by an impartial hearing officer appointed by the Commissioner from a list approved by the State Board. At the request of the child's parent or guardian, the hearing officer shall conduct the hearing at a location in the vicinity of the homestudy program.

(H) Order following hearing

After hearing evidence, the hearing officer shall enter an order within ten working days. If the child is not enrolled, the order shall provide that the child be enrolled or that enrollment be disallowed. If the child is enrolled, the order shall provide that enrollment be continued or that the enrollment be terminated. An order shall take effect immediately. Unless the hearing officer provides for a shorter period, an order disallowing or terminating enrollment shall extend until the end of the following school year, as defined in this title. If the order is to disallow or terminate the enrollment, a copy shall be given to the appropriate superintendent of schools, who shall take appropriate action to ensure that the child is enrolled in a school as required by this title. Following a hearing, the Commissioner may petition the hearing officer to reopen the case only if there has been a material change in circumstances.

(I) As used in this section, "**minimum course of study**" is defined in Section 906. The educational content provided shall be adapted in each area of study throughout the school year to the age and ability of each child and adapted to any handicapping condition of the child. Nothing in this section requires that a homestudy program follow the program or methods used by the public schools.

(J) After the filing of the enrollment notice or at a hearing, if the homestudy program is unable to comply with specific requirements due to deep religious conviction shared by an organized group, the commissioner may waive such requirements if he or she determines that the educational purposes of this section are being or will be substantially met. - Amended 1969, Adj. Sess., No. 298.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

Section 1121 - Attendance by children of school age required.

A person having the control of a child between the ages of six and sixteen shall cause the child to attend an approved public school, an approved recognized independent school or a homestudy program for the full number of days for which that school is held, unless the child:

- 1) is mentally or physically unable to attend; or
- 2) has completed the tenth grade; or
- 3) is excused by the superintendent or a majority of the school directors as provided in this chapter.
- 4) is enrolled in and attending a post-secondary schools, as defined in subdivision 176(b)(1) of this title, which is approved or accredited in Vermont or another state.

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH EDUCATION

Section 131. Definitions

For the purposes of this subchapter:

"Comprehensive health education" means a systematic and extensive elementary and secondary educational program designed to provide a variety of learning experiences based upon knowledge of the human organism as it functions within its environment. The term includes, but is not limited to, a study of:

1. Body structure and function, including the physical, psychosocial and psychological basis of human development, sexuality and reproduction;
2. Community health to include environmental health, pollution, public health and world health;
3. Safety including first aid, disaster prevention and accident prevention;
4. Diseases such as HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases, as well as other communicable diseases, and the prevention of disease;
5. Family health and mental health, including instruction which promotes the development of responsible personal behavior involving decision making about sexual activity including abstinence; skills which strengthen existing family ties involving communication, cooperation, and interaction between parents and students; and instruction to aid in the establishment of strong family life in the future, thereby contributing to the enrichment of the community;
6. Personal health habits including dental health;
7. Consumer health including health careers, health costs and utilizing health services;
8. Human growth and development, including understanding the physical, emotional and social elements of individual development and interpersonal relationships including instruction in parenting methods and styles. This shall include information regarding the possible outcomes of premature sexual activity, contraceptives, adolescent pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, and abortion;
9. Drugs including education about alcohol, caffeine, nicotine and prescribed drugs; and
10. Nutrition. -- Amended 1987, Adj. Sess., No.270.

NO. 119 AN ACT RELATING TO USE OF PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES BY HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. POLICY REPORT

- (a) It is the policy of the State of Vermont to encourage and facilitate the integration of homestudy students into the public schools by enabling their enrollment in academic courses, participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and use of public school facilities.
- (b) In furtherance of that policy, the state board of education shall after a collaborative study process involving representatives of homestudy students, the Vermont Principal's Association, the Vermont Superintendent's Association, the Vermont School Board's Association, the Vermont National Education Association, the Vermont Independent Schools Association, representatives of the public and the chairs of the Senate and House Education Committees or their designees, report to the House and Senate Committees on Education by December 1, 1998 on the following:
 - (1) The advisability of developing statewide policies regarding homestudy students enrollment in public school courses, participation in public school co-curricular and extracurricular activities and the use of public school facilities.
 - (2) Laws, policies, and resources in other states regarding enrollment in participation in and use of public school courses, activities and facilities.
 - (3) The cost of continuing to include homestudy students in the count of average daily membership for enrollment in public school courses and of also including participation in public school co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
 - (4) Identification of any significant distinctions between integration of homestudy students into K-8 and 9-12 public education activities.
 - (5) Appropriate procedures and timelines for school districts to consider regarding a homestudy student's notification to the public school of intent to enroll in courses, participate in activities or use facilities.
 - (6) How the policies of the Vermont Principals' Association could encourage homestudy student participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.
 - (7) The issues associated with admitting homestudy students to courses, activities and facilities on the same basis as enrolled students and recommendations on how to address the issues.
 - (8) Recommendations on how the state board of education can ensure that school boards adopt and implement policies which integrate students into their courses, activities and facilities.

- (c) On or before March 15, 1999, the state board of education, after collaboration with the groups and people listed in subsection(b) of this section, shall adopt rules establishing parameters and minimum standards for school board policies to be adopted under 16 V.S.A. §563(24). The purpose of the policies shall be to ensure that homestudy students are able to enroll in courses of study, participate in extracurricular and co-curricular activities and use school facilities.

Sec. 2 16 V.S.A. §563(24) is added to read:

- (24) Shall adopt a policy which in accordance with rules adopted by the state board of education, will integrate homestudy students into its schools through enrollment in courses, participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities and use of facilities.

Sec. 3 EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on passage, however, school board are required to adopt policies under Sec. 2 of this act by July 1, 1999.

Approved: April 27, 1998

STATE BOARD RULES FOR INTEGRATION OF HOMESTUDY STUDENTS

Approved by the Vermont State Board of Education 6/15/99

4400 Integration of Homestudy Students

4401 Statutory Authority: Section 1(c) of Act 119 of 1998; 16 V.S.A. §563(24)

4402 Definitions

“Facilities” means the portions of a school building and grounds used by students for classes, study and co-curricular or extracurricular activities

“Homestudy student” means a student enrolled in a registered homestudy program pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §166b

“Integrated course” means a course covering two or more subjects that are taught in a unified manner by one teacher or team where the subjects cannot be separated into discrete sections for purposes of student attendance.

4403 Part-time Enrollment of Homestudy Students in Public School Academic Programs

4403.1 A homestudy student shall be eligible to enroll as a part-time student in a school operated by his or her district of residence or, if the district does not operate a school, in a public school for which his or her district of residence is required to pay tuition.

4403.2 Each school board shall adopt, by July 1, 1999, policies and procedures to ensure that homestudy students who request part-time enrollment in academic courses or programs are accepted into those courses or programs, and are furnished with required learning materials, on the same basis as full-time students.

4403.3 Policies and procedures adopted under this rule shall:

- (a) upon inquiry by a home student or parent, require the provision by the district of the student’s resident of information concerning the availability of part-time enrollment in the school. Such information shall include procedures, including registration deadlines, that homestudy students must follow to enroll on a part-time basis in the schools operated by the homestudy student’s district of residence. In the event the district of residence does not operate a school in the grades appropriate to the inquiring student, the student or parents shall be given information on how to contact neighboring school districts that accept tuition students from the district of residence.
- (b) apply the same enrollment procedures and deadlines to homestudy students that apply to full-time students.

- (c) specify any enrollment capacity limits that the school board will apply to particular academic courses or grade levels. Capacity limits shall apply equally to homestudy and full-time students.
- (d) establish criteria to determine whether homestudy students are eligible to enroll in integrated courses and courses that are available only to students who fulfill prerequisites. Criteria applied to courses with prerequisites shall be applied equally to homestudy and full-time students. Reasonable indications that academic criteria have been met, including results from achievement tests or other indications of adequate preparation, may be required of homestudy students, so long as those students are required to meet the same prerequisite standards as full-time students.
- (e) establish informal and expeditious processes to appeal denials of request for part-time enrollment to administrators and/of the school board.

4404 Participation of Homestudy Students in Public School Co-curricular and Extracurricular Activities

4404.1 A homestudy student shall be eligible to participate in or, when selection to participate in an activity is made on a competitive basis, to try out for, one or more co-curricular or extracurricular activities at a school operated by his or her district of resident or, if the district does not operate a school, at a public school for which his or her district is required to pay tuition. This rule is not intended to confer a right upon any student to participate in any activity. Although a home student need not enroll in academic programs to participate in activities under this rule, he or she must show compliance with insurance, physical examination, age, transfer and other requirements of the Vermont Principals' Association on the same basis as enrolled students.

4404.2 Each school board shall adopt, by July 1, 1999, policies and procedures to ensure that homestudy students who wish to participate in co-curricular or extracurricular activities are accepted into those activities without first being required to enroll as part-time students at the sponsoring school.

4404.3 Policies and procedures adopted under this rule shall:

- (a) upon inquiry by a homestudy student or parent, require the provision by the district of the student's residence of information concerning the eligibility of homestudy students to participate in co-curricular or extracurricular activities. Such information shall include procedures, including registration deadlines, that homestudy students must follow to participate in activities at schools operated by the homestudy student's district of residence. In the event the district of residence does not operate a school in the grades appropriate to the inquiring student, the student or parents shall be given information on how to contact neighboring school districts that accept tuition students from the district of residence.
- (b) apply the same activity registration deadlines to homestudy students that apply for full-time students.

- (c) apply the same academic eligibility requirements to homestudy students that apply to full-time students. Policies may require the parents of homestudy students to provide assurances that the school's academic eligibility standards are being met. Such assurances may be required at the same intervals during the year as is required of full-time students. A homestudy parent's assurance that the student meets the district's academic standards, provided at the intervals required by the school, shall be sufficient to satisfy academic eligibility requirements.
- (d) establish priorities and criteria for admitting students to particular activities. When space is limited in a particular activity, preference may be given to enrolled students as long as the reporting requirement in §4404.4 of these rules is met. Procedures for admitting homestudy students to activities with limited spaces may include lotteries, first-come first-served waiting lists and performance-based criteria for participation on sports teams or in activities.
- (e) Policies adopted in compliance with this rule shall establish informal and expeditious procedures to appeal denials of requests to participate in activities to administrators and/or the school board.

4404.4 When a homestudy student's request to participate in an activity is denied on the grounds that space is not available and that preference is given to full-time students, the school shall, within 30 days of the denial, notify the Homestudy Consultant at the Department of Education on a form provided by the Department.

4405 Use of School Facilities by Homestudy Students

4405.1 A homestudy student may use facilities at a school operated by his or her district of residence or, if the district does not operate a school, at a public school for which his or her district is required to pay tuition.

4405.2 Each school board shall adopt, by July 1, 1999, policies and procedures to ensure that homestudy students are allowed to use school facilities on the same basis as full-time students.

4405.3 Policies and procedures adopted under this rule shall:

- (a) apply to homestudy students the same criteria, procedures and deadlines for requesting the use of school facilities as are applied to full-time students.
- (b) upon inquiry by a homestudy student or parent, require the provision by the district of the student's residence of information concerning the use of school facilities operated by the district. In the event the district does not operate a school in the grades appropriate to the inquiring student, the student or parents shall be given information on how to contact neighboring school districts which accept tuition students from the district of residence.
- (c) provide for the establishment of criteria to determine whether sufficient space is available to comply with specific requests for facilities use. Criteria may also be developed to establish fees, to be applied equally to homestudy and full-time students, for security, janitorial or other services not normally available at the time of the requested use.

Subsection 9200.3.1 is added to read:

9200.3.1 A student enrolled as a homestudy student pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §166b who is not a part-time student enrolled in academic programs, but who participates in one or more co-curricular or extracurricular activities at a public school, shall be counted as .03 of a full-time equivalent student for each activity in which he or she participates. For purposes of this provision, the reporting period shall be from beginning of the 41st day of a school year to the end of the 40th day of the following school year.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES GIVE GENERAL AND SPECIFIC INFORMATION CONCERNING THE HOMESTUDY LAW; FILLING OUT FORMS A, B, C, D and E; PREPARING YOUR MINIMUM COURSE OF STUDY; ASSESSMENT; AND SPECIAL EDUCATION.

GENERAL INFORMATION

During the 2001-2002 school year, over 2,100 Vermont children received their education in a homestudy program. Parents or guardians who decide to educate their children at home assume a great responsibility. In effect they are responsible for writing a curriculum, finding learning materials, providing resources, presenting instruction, adapting the lessons to each child's age and ability, reviewing and correcting each child's work and ensuring that each child's progress is assessed in each subject area at the end of the year. All this, combined with the everyday tasks of good parenting, presents a formidable challenge, which can be successfully met only by dedicated, concerned parents, willing and able to devote the time and effort necessary to make homeschooling work well.

As you consider schooling your children at home, you should be aware of these important facts:

1. **Enrollment in school is required for children between the ages of 6-16.** Specifically, the child must be enrolled by his/her 6th birthday. Enrollment may be ended at the child's 16th birthday. Parents may choose to enroll a child before his/her 6th birthday or after the 16th birthday but are not legally required to do so.
2. **Your child(ren) must remain enrolled** in a public school or approved or recognized independent school until you receive a letter from the Commissioner of Education notifying you that the enrollment for homestudy is complete or 45 days have elapsed since your enrollment notice was received by the Department of Education unless the Commissioner has called a hearing.
3. **All homestudy notices expire July 1st** of each year. You may re-enroll for the next school year any time **after March 1st** of each year.
4. Children enrolled in homestudy may take part in classes and activities at their public schools. Please see page 6 for information on Act 119.
5. Acceptance of your child's achievement level (such as grade level or academic standing) will be at the discretion of:
 - the local school, if your child decides to return, and
 - colleges and universities.

Although you are not required to keep records, we encourage you to keep copies of your curriculum, samples of student work and assessment results.

6. High school students enrolled in a homestudy program do **not** receive a high school diploma unless they purchase a correspondence program that provides a diploma. Upon returning to high school, students might not receive credit for courses undertaken at home and may need to repeat courses. Once again, this is at the discretion of the school.

7. Children receiving special education services at public schools may forfeit those services when they enter a homestudy program. Please see the section on children with disabilities beginning on page 22.

If your child is receiving special education services, it is helpful if you include a copy of the current IEP and the most recent comprehensive evaluation report in your homestudy enrollment notice. Your minimum course of study must be adapted to the student's disability in each area of study throughout the school year.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION- Enrollment Notice

Form A -- Cover Sheet

1. The cover sheet provides spaces to list the names and ages of all the children you are enrolling.
2. Both parents or guardians must sign the cover sheet. NOTE: If the parents are divorced, but share legal rights and responsibilities for the child's education, both signatures are required.
3. You are advised to keep copies of **all** the information that you submit to the Department of Education, including the cover sheet.

Form B -- Identified screening by an independent professional

1. By Vermont law (16 VSA Section 166b(4)), **each child not previously enrolled in a Vermont public school or Vermont homestudy program must be screened to determine whether the child has a disability that would affect the child's learning.** This requirement pertains to all children who are eligible to enroll in Vermont's homestudy program no matter what age. This section of the law specifies that a comprehensive evaluation is **not** required to establish eligibility for special education, however some type of screening is necessary.
2. If you choose to use Form B, it may be completed by a health care professional, who may be your family doctor, or an educational professional specifically trained to identify the presence of disabilities. The Special Education Administrator in your area can help you locate an appropriate professional to screen your child(ren). The homestudy program coordinator does have some resources to direct you in fulfilling this requirement. Form B **cannot** be completed by the parents or guardians.
3. You may have a health care or educational professional specifically trained to identify the presence of disabilities submit a report or letter which includes the information required on Form B.
4. If your child went to a preschool screening in your geographic area in anticipation of entering kindergarten, you may submit that screening.
5. If your child has attended a Vermont public school, submit a copy of a report card or achievement test results. This will verify that your child has been screened for disabilities, which is routinely done in public schools. The child's grade level and the school's name must be clearly indicated on the copy submitted. A report card, achievement test results, or screening information from another state or independent (private) school may fulfill this requirement as well.
6. If we have questions about the information contained in the screening, we may contact you or the professional who screened the child.

Form C -- Homestudy/Public/Independent School Course Notification Form

1. Fill out the homestudy/public/independent school course notification form if your child is taking a course at a public or independent school. Some homeschoolers do take one, two, or more courses at the local public or independent school and complete the remainder of their minimum course of study in the homestudy program.
2. Act 119 provides for the participation of homeschoolers in public school academic, co-curricular and extracurricular programs. However, it still remains the decision of an independent school whether to invite homeschoolers into their program offerings.
3. A school official from the public or independent school will need to sign this form.

Form D -- Consent for Release of Information

1. If you wish to be included on a mailing list that will be released to organizations and individuals interested in contacting homeschoolers, you will need to sign Form D and submit it **annually**.
2. It is **not** possible to choose which organizations will receive your name and address.
3. If you wish to revoke your consent to be included on a mailing list, please notify us in writing. A decision to withdraw your consent will not necessarily remove your name from mailing lists already released to individuals, groups or organizations.

Form E -- Homestudy Instructor(s)

1. Fill out the homestudy instructor(s) form if your children are having people other than the parents provide ongoing instruction in the areas outlined in your minimum course of study. For example, use this form if you hire a tutor for math, if your child takes music lessons all year, if your child's physical education program takes place at a fitness center, etc.
2. If your child receives special education services at the school, from a private agency, or from a special education tutor, use this form.
3. Use Form C for **courses** taken at a public or independent school.

MINIMUM COURSE OF STUDY

Vermont law requires that you submit a minimum course of study for **each** child you wish to homeschool. This curriculum must include the six areas outlined in the law. *(Please note that within those six areas math is listed under Basic Communication Skills and Health is listed under Physical Education.)* It should be adapted to the age and ability of your child including any special services and adaptations to be made to accommodate any disability the child may have. The minimum course of study must be written in a detailed outline and/or narrative form which adequately describes the topics and content to be studied and/or the skills to be attained in each subject area. (See the sample curricula on pages 37-48 in the resource book.)

The minimum course of study as outlined in 16 V.S.A. Section 906, means learning experiences in the following fields:

1. **BASIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS** including reading, writing, and the use of numbers.
(Examples: reading, language arts, composition skills, mathematics, grammar, and spelling, etc.)
2. **CITIZENSHIP, HISTORY & GOVERNMENT** in Vermont and the United States.
(Examples: history, social studies, government, geography)
3. **PHYSICAL EDUCATION & COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH EDUCATION** including the effects of tobacco, alcoholic drinks, and drugs on the human system and on society.
(Examples: physical education, biking, hiking, sports, gymnastics, health education, etc. - please refer to page 5 for examples of the areas that may be included in Comprehensive Health Education)
4. **ENGLISH, AMERICAN & OTHER LITERATURE**
(Examples: fiction, non-fiction, poetry, biography, or authors/titles to be read, or skills to be attained)
5. **THE NATURAL SCIENCES**
(Examples: processes, biology topics, life science topics, physical science topics, chemistry topics, earth and space science topics, or environmental science topics)
6. **THE FINE ARTS**
(Examples: visual arts, music, drama, dance, painting, pottery, crafts, music lessons, performing arts events, etc.)

HOME STUDY END-OF-THE-YEAR PROGRESS ASSESSMENTS

For options 1 & 2: A licensed Vermont teacher
 A teacher from an approved Vermont independent school

It is preferred that the licensed Vermont teacher or approved Vermont independent school teacher **not** be the parents or guardians of the student being assessed. Please include the teacher's license number or the name and address of the approved independent school, if this option is used.

An example of the process for a teacher assessment is as follows:

The parents or guardians contract with a teacher at the parent's or guardian's expense, to schedule a time to meet. The teacher needs to be shown the curriculum you submitted to the Department of Education when you enrolled your child(ren) in homestudy. Be sure to provide the materials used, lists of field trips taken, lists of books read, projects worked on, etc., along with samples of your child(ren)'s work from throughout the year in each of the required minimum course of study areas. The teacher will speak with you and your child(ren) about what was accomplished during the year. He/she may request that your child(ren) read, write, perform some math problems, or take part in testing.

After completing the review, the teacher writes a letter to the Department of Education that includes information about how the assessment was done and states his/her opinion on the progress that the child has made in the homestudy program in each area of the minimum course of study. This letter is given to the parents, who, in turn, submit it to the Department of Education.

Sample Letter:

Homestudy Program Coordinator
Department of Education
120 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620

Dear Homestudy Program Coordinator:

This is to confirm that (child's name) was assessed in each of the required minimum course of study areas. After reading over his/her curriculum, I examined samples of language arts/English and math work, read a variety of written assignments (stories, letters, reports, etc.), and saw some year-long projects that (child's name) has been working on. (Child's name) read to me and explained her/his science project(s). I was also shown some art work and pictures of a social studies play put on during the year. He/she read a short story to me. I am satisfied that the topics outlined in the curriculum have been adequately covered and that (child's name) is progressing nicely.

Signature
License # or name of approved independent school

For option 3: A teacher advisory service report from a publisher of commercial curricula together with a portfolio of the student's work

If you utilized a correspondence program, mailed your child's work to a program, and your child received a grade report, then you may submit this report to satisfy part of your end-of-the-year assessment. Please note, submitting only a report or report card from an advisory service or a correspondence school is **NOT** sufficient for this category. You **MUST** also include portfolio *copies* of the student's work. If you send the original portfolio, it will be kept on file at the Department of Education in your child's permanent homestudy record. Please make sure your assessment covers all six areas in the minimum course of study.

For option 4: A report prepared by the parents/guardians or the student's instructor(s) together with a portfolio of the student's work

**ALL SAMPLES OF THE CHILD(REN)'S WORK MUST INCLUDE
THE CHILD(REN)'S NAME AND THE DATE.**

A PARENT/GUARDIAN REPORT MUST ACCOMPANY THE PORTFOLIO.

**IT IS NOT THE PRACTICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO RETURN PORTFOLIOS.
*PLEASE SEND COPIES ONLY***

In preparing a portfolio for submission to the Department of Education, we suggest that you collect samples of your child(ren)'s work throughout the year. Speak with your child(ren) about the attributes of quality work, for example, neatness, completeness, originality, etc. Ask your child(ren) to assist in deciding what is to be included in the portfolio. Also, retain programs from special events attended, lists of books read, photos of projects made, etc.

The second step to portfolio assembly is to read through the curriculum you submitted to the Department of Education and sort through all the samples that were collected throughout the school year. For each area of the minimum course of study listed in your curriculum, carefully choose a few samples, which will clearly represent what was covered. The samples should illustrate the progression of knowledge in the particular area being addressed. The samples do need to be organized by subject and date for each child. A portfolio, which is well-organized and arranged, usually is no thicker than 1 to 1 ½ inches. If you send the original portfolio, it will be kept on file at the Department of Education in your child(ren)'s permanent homestudy record.

When the student's portfolio is assembled, review it in an objective manner. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Do the samples match the curriculum submitted?
2. Would I be able to tell what was covered throughout the school year?
3. Is it evident how progress was made in each area of the curriculum?

The following list contains some specific suggestions for each subject area.

Basic Communication Skills:

At least three to six samples showing improvement over the year in each topic area such as penmanship, spelling, language arts, composition, research skills, math, etc. Reports or creative writing assignments from September, December, February, and May can show improvements in many areas. His/her penmanship could improve along with the sentence structure, vocabulary, and composition skills. At least ten to twelve math papers on various topics illustrating the progress the child has made should be submitted.

Citizenship, History, and Government:

Send a few examples from each area studied. If the report you sent as an example for language arts was a report on George Washington, and you were studying U.S. History, then the report is a good example for this category as well. It would be helpful if you would identify samples which address more than one subject area. Field trips reports, pictures of projects, and lists of books that were read are all good portfolio examples.

Physical Education and Comprehensive Health:

Physical education and comprehensive health education are difficult areas to document. Remember, however, that a portfolio comes with a written report in which you can specifically outline what activities were undertaken in these two areas. If you have collected samples of pertinent work, include this information. Also, certificates from physical education lessons or a course(s) taken can also be submitted as samples. Photographs and videos can also be included.

English, American, and other Literature:

Book reports and a list of books read are acceptable.

The Natural Sciences:

If you have examples of written work in the science discipline area(s) or tests that were administered, submit work samples and a copy of the tests administered with the student's results. If you do not, then you will need to outline in the report what experiments were conducted, a list the field trips taken, and a list the pertinent books read. Photographs of completed projects may be submitted as samples. Brochures from science museums visited can be included to describe the nature of a field trip.

The Fine Arts:

The fine arts area is another difficult area to document. You are advised not to submit samples of artwork that you wish to keep. Photographs and concert/play programs along with the parent's report will work as documentation.

For option 5 & 6: The complete results of a standardized achievement test administered by a qualified person.

The complete results of a standardized test(s) administered by an approved Vermont school, at the option of the school or school district. Amended 1989. No 118.

Note: If you wish to have your child tested at a public school, you should contact the school as soon as possible for information on testing availability and dates.

A standardized achievement test can be ordered from some of the vendors listed in the Resource Guide, which is available through the Department of Education. Each achievement test publisher requires specific qualifications for the test administrator. When you order a test, inquire about the tester qualifications. You are advised to order tests in January or February to have ample time to receive the test(s), administer them, and receive the results back from the publisher. The test results will need to be submitted with your homestudy re-enrollment notice.

If you plan to use a standardized achievement test, you will need to carefully check the subject areas covered in the test. Many tests cover only language arts and mathematics, while others may also cover science and social studies. The assessment must address **all** the required minimum course of study areas. You will need to choose one of the other methods of assessing your child(ren)'s progress if some areas of the minimum course of study are not covered by the achievement test.

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Each homestudy enrollment must include a detailed outline or narrative that describes the content of the curriculum to be provided to the child. The curriculum should be age and ability appropriate and the description must include any special services or adaptations to be made to accommodate any disability that the child may have. Although you are not required to use the same methods or programs as the public schools, you must adapt your program to the student's disability.

If your child has been identified as in need of special education through a comprehensive evaluation done by the school or a private source, (if you are not involved with a public school), or through the identified screening by an independent professional (Form B), information about the child's disability must be included with the homestudy enrollment. Additionally, you must describe in your curriculum how you will adapt the minimum course of study in each subject area to your child's disability and describe any special services and/or supports that the child will receive.

Following are the State Board of Education special education regulations regarding students enrolled in homestudy. While homeschoolers are no longer entitled to special education services, the public school, in their discretion, may provide special education to homeschoolers in the same manner as they would to students in independent schools (see rules 2368.1.5 and 2368.1.6, below). If your child has a disability and you would like him/her to be considered for a services plan and special education services at your local public school, please contact the school as soon as possible. Please note, if your child is enrolled in a course(s) at the public school and adequate progress in the course would be dependent upon the child receiving the special education services outlined in the child's IEP that was in place when the child was enrolled in school, then the child most likely will be provided those services. Your child may also be eligible for 504 accommodations if he/she is partially enrolled in public school. Finally, public schools are required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA) to offer a comprehensive evaluation at least every three years for your child.

As in any partnership, when working with the public school, items such as scheduling, follow-through, and teaching techniques must reflect the needs of the partners. However the public schools are under no obligation to adjust their schedules to meet the needs of an individual homeschooling student. Successful partnerships are formed around communication, flexibility and sharing of responsibility. Keeping the child as the focus of discussion should be helpful in achieving the best results.

Once again, necessary adaptations as well as special services or accommodations should be included in the description of the minimum course of study (curriculum). If you will be using services offered by the public school, list those services in your minimum course of study. Have the school fill out Form C or Form E, whichever is appropriate, and include that form with your enrollment. If private services are used or a tutor is hired, Form E must be filled out and submitted with your enrollment. We have a special education coordinator on staff in the homestudy office who helps parents adapt homestudy programs for students with disabilities. Please call Julie Kuk at 828-5113 if you would like assistance.

2368.2 Homestudy Placements

- (a) Students who have been determined to be eligible to receive special education and related services and who are enrolled with the State Department of Education in programs of homeschooling, pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §166b, may receive services pursuant to a services plan to the same extent as children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in independent schools. Representatives of homestudy students with disabilities shall be consulted with respect to child-find, child-count, special education evaluations, and provision of services in the same way as are representatives of independent schools.
- (b) Until July 1, 2002, a homestudy student shall be eligible to receive special education services pursuant to an IEP if, he or she:
 - (i) Received special education services pursuant to an IEP during the 2000-2001 school year; and
 - (ii) Enrolled with the State Department of Education in a program of homestudy pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 166(b) during the 2000-2001 school year.

2368.1.5 Services Determined

- (a) Prior to making any decision that affects services for independent school children with disabilities, a school district shall consult with representatives of independent schools where resident children attend with respect to—
 - (1) Which children will receive services;
 - (2) What, how and where services will be provided; and
 - (3) How the provided services will be evaluated.
- (b) The consultation shall give appropriate representatives of the independent schools referenced in subsection (a), above a genuine opportunity to express their views about how services will be provided, where and to whom.
- (c) The school district shall make the final decisions with respect to the services to be provided to eligible children placed in independent schools by their parents.

2368.1.6 Services Plan

If services are to be provided by a school district to a child enrolled unilaterally by his or her parent in an independent school, the school district shall develop a services plan that describes the specific special education and related services to be provided. With respect to the services to be provided, the services plan must be developed, reviewed and revised consistent with the requirements for IEPs in Rules 2363 – 2363.10.

PARENTAL RESOURCES

If you have not spoken with your Supervisory Union's Special Education Administrator to resolve a concern, that is highly recommended. The name of that person may be obtained through the school district's central office or from the Department at (802) 828-5114.

Vermont Disability Law Project's Area Office Locations:

Counties: Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle:
264 North Winooski Ave, P.O. Box 1367, Burlington, VT 05402
tel: 802-863-5620 or 1-800-747-5022;
FAX: 602-863-7152

Counties: Washington, Orange, Lamoille:
7 Court Street, P.O. Box 606, Montpelier, VT 05601
802-223-6377; 1-800-789-4195
FAX: 802-223-7281

Counties: Rutland and Bennington
57 North Main Street, Rutland, VT 05701
802-775-0021; 1-800-769-7459
FAX: 802-775-0022

Counties: Windsor and Windham
56 Main Street, Suite 301, Springfield, VT 05156
802-885-5181; 1-800-769-9164
FAX: 802-885-5754

Vermont Parent Information Center
Chace Mill, Suite A7, 1 Mill Street
Burlington, VT 05401
802-658-5315 Voice or TDD or 1-800-639-7170

Vermont Department of Education, Special Education Unit, 120 State Street, Montpelier, VT 05620,
telephone: (802) 828-5114

For questions regarding students in the care and custody of the State of Vermont, please call the Vermont Educational Surrogate Parent Program, (802) 828-5108.

APPENDIX I

PARENTS' RIGHTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1977 and Vermont Department of Education's Special Education Regulations, parents have specific rights concerning their participation in the special education process. This document describes those rights.

Click on the link below to view or download the current version of this document as a PDF file:

http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/pdfdoc/pgm_spед/pubs/parents_rights_09_01_05.pdf

APPENDIX II

FORMS CHECKLIST

- Form A:** Cover Sheet
- Form B:** Identified Screening by an Independent Professional
- Form C:** Homestudy/Public/Independent School Course Notification Form
- Form D:** Consent for Release of Information
- Form E:** Homestudy Instructor(s)

FORM A
VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COVER SHEET FOR HOMESTUDY ENROLLMENT

SCHOOL YEAR: _____

TYPE OF ENROLLMENT: NEW _____
RE-ENROLLMENT _____

CHILD(REN) TO BE ENROLLED:

NAME : _____ / AGE _____ / DOB _____
optional
NAME : _____ / AGE _____ / DOB _____
optional
NAME : _____ / AGE _____ / DOB _____
optional
NAME : _____ / AGE _____ / DOB _____
optional

PARENTS OR GUARDIANS MUST SIGN THIS FORM (NOTE: both parents/guardians must sign, including those who are divorced but share the legal care and custody of the child(ren)):

NAME _____ NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____ MAILING ADDRESS _____

_____ including zip)

_____ (including zip)

PHONE (H) _____ (W) _____ PHONE (H) _____ (W) _____

E-MAIL: _____ E-MAIL: _____

TOWN OF RESIDENCE OF CHILD(REN) : _____

SIGNATURE _____ SIGNATURE _____

PERSON(S) WHO WILL PROVIDE THE INSTRUCTION:

NAME : _____ ADDRESS : _____

SIGNATURE : _____ PHONE _____

PUBLIC SCHOOL YOUR CHILD WOULD HAVE ATTENDED _____

PLEASE CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOXES LISTED BELOW:

I have included the following:

- ☐ Form A (Enrollment Notice)
- ☐ A school report card, Form B, **or** other information to verify that my child does or does not have a disability. (New enrollments only)
- ☐ An assessment of progress made in last year's homestudy program. See Page 4 of the Homestudy Guidelines booklet. (Re-enrollments only)
- ☐ A curriculum covering the 6 areas required by statute. See Page 19 of the Homestudy booklet.
- ☐ Form C if my child is taking some courses at a public or private school.
- ☐ Form D if I want to put my name on a list of homeschoolers, given out to those who request it.
- ☐ Form E if my child has homestudy instructors other than us, the parents.

----- For Office Use Only -----

SCH: _____ PS#: _____ NR: _____ #SC: _____ EOYA: _____

FORM B

**VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
HOMESTUDY PROGRAM**

INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL EVIDENCE REPORTING FORM

TO BE FILLED OUT & SIGNED BY AN EDUCATION OR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL

Child's Name _____ **Age** _____

Parents' Names _____

Address _____ **Phone** _____

1. Describe the screening method used to determine whether or not this child has a handicapping condition or is in need of further evaluation to determine whether or not there is a handicapping condition that would interfere with his/her ability to learn. Please be specific.

Date seen _____

- II. Did the results of the screening process indicate that the child has a handicapping condition that would interfere with his/her ability to learn?

- III. In your opinion, is there a need for further evaluation to determine whether or not this child has a handicapping condition that would interfere with his/her ability to learn? If yes, what are your specific recommendations?

_____ Yes _____ No

Name _____ Position/Title _____

Address _____ Degree _____

_____ Telephone _____

Signature _____ Date _____

COURSES TAKEN IN PUBLIC/INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

As more and more people are homeschooling, some parents are making arrangements at their local public school for their children to take one or more courses while homeschooling. If you are planning to homeschool and have your child take a course at a public or independent school, please state in your minimum course of study which areas will be covered at the school. Also have the school fill out this form and submit it with your minimum course of study.

_____ will be taking the following
(Child's name)

courses at _____ for the
(Name of school)

school year _____.

Courses: _____

Signed: _____

Position: _____

Date: _____

FORM D

**CONSENT FOR RELEASE
OF INFORMATION**

I _____ hereby authorize the Vermont Department of Education to include my name and address on mailing lists that are given to the public upon request. I understand that if I agree to have my name included, that my name will be released to any individual, group or organization that requests a list of names of homeschoolers.

I understand that I am not required to give my consent and this decision is voluntary on my part. I also understand that once my name is given pursuant to this consent form, a decision to withdraw my consent will not necessarily remove my name from mailing lists already released to individuals, groups, or organizations.

This consent is valid for the period from this date until **December 31, 2003**

Date

Signature

Address

HOMESCHOOLING INSTRUCTOR(S)

Some parents are making arrangements to have others instruct or supplement the instruction provided to their child(ren), during his/her homeschooling. If you homeschool and plan to have any ongoing instruction in the area outlined in your curriculum provided by another person(s) other than yourself, the homestudy statute requires that you please complete the information requested below. This form needs to accompany the minimum course of study you send to the Department when you enroll your child(ren) in homeschooling.

NOTE: If your child(ren) is homeschooling and is also taking courses in a public/independent school, you will report this information on Form C, not Form E.

_____ will be receiving instruction from the following persons:
(child's name)

1. Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Instruction
provided: _____

Instructor's
signature: _____

2. Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Instruction
provided: _____

Instructor's
signature: _____

MINIMUM COURSE OF STUDY (CURRICULUM)

(You may use separate pages or another way of describing the curriculum if you wish.)

Please describe the content or skills to be covered in each of the following areas:

1. BASIC COMMUNICATION SKILLS including reading, writing and the use of numbers

Describe what will be covered in such areas as reading, language arts, grammar, spelling, etc.

Describe what will be covered in math.

2. CITIZENSHIP, HISTORY & GOVERNMENT in Vermont and the United States

Describe what will be covered in such areas as history, social studies, government, geography, etc.

3. **PHYSICAL EDUCATION & COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH EDUCATION** including the effects of tobacco, alcoholic drinks, and drugs on the human system and on society
Describe what will be covered for physical education in such areas as biking, hiking, sports, gymnastics, dance lessons, etc.

Describe what will be covered for health in such areas as body structure and function, community health, safety, diseases, family health and mental health, personal health habits, consumer health, human growth and development, drugs, and nutrition.

4. **ENGLISH, AMERICAN & OTHER LITERATURE**
Describe what will be covered in literature by listing the types of

literature to be read, such as fiction, non-fiction, poetry, biography; or the authors/titles to be read; or the skills to be attained.

5. THE NATURAL SCIENCES

Describe what will be covered in such areas as biology, life science, physical science, chemistry, earth science, space science, environmental science, etc.

6. THE FINE ARTS

Describe what will be covered in such areas as visual arts, music, drama, dance, painting, pottery, crafts, music lessons, performing arts events, etc.