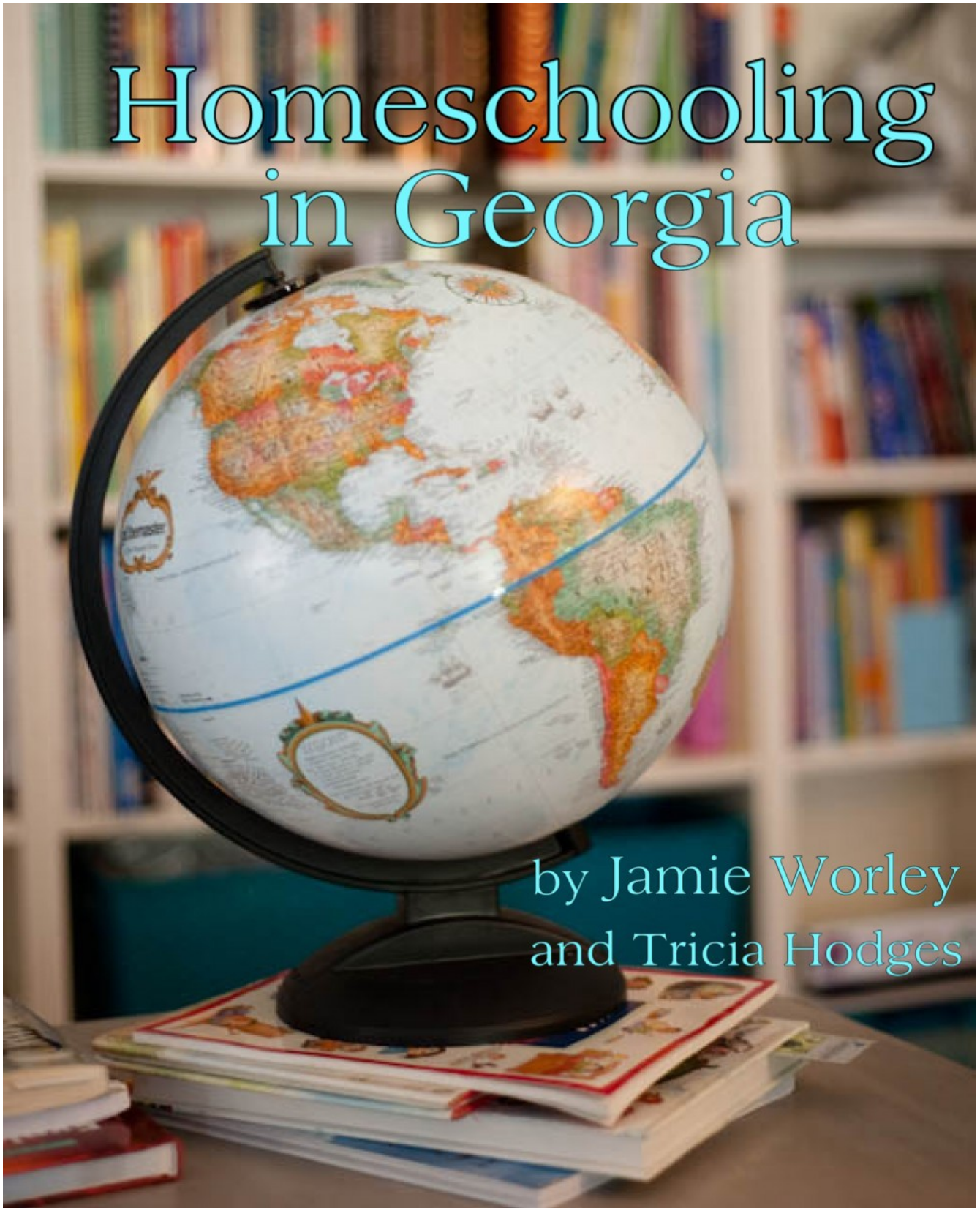


Homeschooling in Georgia

by Jamie Worley
and Tricia Hodges



Homeschooling in Georgia

I'd never even heard of homeschooling until my senior year of high school. It was far from mainstream. Clearly the homeschool movement has grown by leaps and bounds in the past couple of decades, and continues to do so. Whether you're just beginning to think about the possibility or if you are a veteran home educator, I hope having so much information compiled all in one place will be helpful to you!

HOMESCHOOL LAWS

Required Documentation:

You must submit an annual Declaration of Intent by September 1, or within 30 days after your homeschool program is established. It is highly encouraged that you do this online, but there are provisions to mail it in for families who do not have computer access. The Declaration of Intent must include the names and ages of students, the address of the homeschool, and dates for your school year. [Submit this form online here.](#)

Although the Declaration of Intent is the only form required to be turned in to the State of Georgia, you must also keep the following documentation for your records:

- Attendance (find free forms at [DonnaYoung.com](#))
- Standardized testing must be done every three years, beginning in third grade
- Annual progress report for each subject area, written by the homeschool parent

Who may teach:

Parents may teach their own children if they have a high school diploma or GED. Parents may also employ a tutor with a high school diploma or GED. No matter who does the actual teaching, it is your name on the official Declaration of Intent, and therefore, you are ultimately responsible for your child's education.

Other requirements:

The homeschool program must include instruction in reading, language arts, math, social studies, and science. The school year must include the equivalent of 180 days of 4 ½ hours of instruction.

Public School: How to withdraw or re-enroll your student:

If your child has been enrolled in a public school you must formally withdraw him/her to begin legally homeschooling. You will need to take a copy of your signed Declaration of Intent to present to the school where your child was enrolled. Be sure to ask for copies of your child's transcript for your records.

If you choose to enroll your child in public school after he/she has been homeschooled, you will need to contact the school district where you live, since county requirements may vary. In general, you will need to provide the school with a transcript of what your child has studied in homeschool, as well as provide other forms such as proof of residency, proof of birth date, and immunization records.

Driver's Licenses and Work Permits:

The most recent changes to Georgia's homeschool law made getting these much easier. Georgia requires proof of attendance for students under age 18 to obtain a driver's license; now homeschool parents need only to show the Declaration of Intent at the license office. You may take the Declaration of Intent to the local high school or school district to obtain a work permit for your student.

Graduation Requirements:

As the homeschool parent, you decide what is required to graduate a student from your homeschool. However, if you have a college-bound student, choosing to meet or exceed the State's graduation requirements will give your student an advantage.

Currently a total of 23 credit units are required, as follows:

English/Language Arts: 4 units

Math: 4 units

Science: 4 units

Social Studies: 3 units

Physical Education: ½ unit

Electives: 7 units (including recommended 2 units of foreign language)

An important note:

Homeschool laws are subject to change. This year, Georgia's laws changed for the better, but it is your responsibility as the homeschool parent to know if and/or when they change again. Stay up-to-date with current laws at HSLDA.

FIELD TRIPS AND EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

Field trips are fun, and as homeschoolers, we have more flexibility than our public school counterparts. You can take advantage of season passes for places your family likes to go often, and many museums and educational places now offer Homeschool Days at a discounted rate and with special programs.

Georgia is full of educational opportunities. This is by no means a complete list, but it should get you started!

Museums:

[Atlanta History Center](#) – living history programs, monthly homeschool days, and annual festivals

[World of Coca-Cola](#) – experience the fascinating story of the world's best-known beverage

[Fernbank Museum of Natural History](#) – featuring dinosaur exhibits and an IMAX theater

[Fernbank Science Museum](#) – several programs open to the public, plus planetarium shows

[Tellus Science Museum](#) – four main galleries, plus a planetarium and observatory

[High Museum of Art](#) – the leading art museum in Southeastern United States

[Imagine It](#) – interactive Children's Museum

[The Southern Museum](#) – Civil War and locomotive history; in Kennesaw

[Booth Western Art Museum](#) – Western and Civil War art, Presidential portraits, and more

[Dahlonega Gold Museum](#) and mines

[Georgia Sports Hall of Fame](#) – the country's largest state sports museum

[Etowah Indian Mounds](#) – this historical site protects six earthen mounds, a plaza, and village site

[Kolomoki Mounds](#) – the oldest and largest Woodland Indian site in the southeastern United States

Zoos, Aquariums, Gardens, Nature Centers, and Parks:

[Atlanta Zoo](#) – housing the nation's largest zoological collections of gorillas and orangutans, and one of four zoos in the U.S. currently housing giant pandas

[Georgia Aquarium](#) – the world's largest aquarium, featuring more animals than any other aquarium

[Tennessee Aquarium](#) – this family-friendly aquarium isn't in Georgia, but still close enough to be worth the drive; consider doing the River Gorge Explorer cruise while you're there.

[Chattahoochee Nature Center](#) – educational programs offered weekdays throughout the year

[Atlanta Botanical Gardens](#) – garden tours, discovery stations, and storytime in the Children's Garden

[Elachee Nature Science Center](#) – on the 1500-acre Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve in Gainesville

[Callaway Gardens](#) – educational programs and workshops, nature trails to hike, gardens to explore, water sports, and one of North America's largest glass-enclosed tropical butterfly conservatories

[Stone Mountain](#) – 3,200 acres of natural beauty with family friendly attractions and historical sights

[Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park](#) – a preserved Civil War battleground and hiking trails

[Georgia State Parks](#) – explore some of our 63 state parks and historic sites

Theater and Music:

[Georgia Symphony Orchestra](#) – concerts ranging from orchestral to popular to jazz to choral ensembles

[Atlanta Symphony Orchestra](#) – award-winning orchestra performing more than 200 concerts each year

[Center for Puppetry Arts](#) – live puppetry performances, hands-on workshops, and museum tours

[Georgia Shakespeare](#) – Georgia's second largest professional theater company has recently extended it's season; beginning in 2012, shows now run May through October

[Alliance Theater](#) – with a new “Theater for the Very Young” series

[Georgia Ensemble](#) – also offering theater for the young based on

**Many smaller town have a community theater so check with yours, and consider taking advantage of local school or church performances, too.

Events:

[Indian Festivals and Pow-Wow](#) – there are several major pow-wows in Georgia each year, including one at [Stone Mountain](#), one in [Rome](#); and one in [Canton](#).

[Georgia Renaissance Festival](#) (April – June) An annual event featuring knights and maidens, artisans demonstrating crafts, a jousting tournament, birds of prey shows, storytelling, and much more.

**Watch your local paper for upcoming educational events in your area.

CO-OPS, ENRICHMENT CLASSES, & SUPPORT GROUPS

Homeschool classes and groups aren't just for the kids; they offer support and opportunities for friendships for homeschooling moms, too! Both co-ops and enrichment classes are intended to enrich a

homeschool student's learning experiences.

Co-ops and Enrichment Classes:

Co-ops are a cooperative of homeschool families who join together to participate in sports or field trips, or by trading off in teaching each other's children. One parent may have a passion for teaching hands-on science, while another parent may enthusiastically teach art; the children learn in groups and the parents take turns teaching. Co-op groups vary greatly in size.

Enrichment classes are often subjects the homeschool parent may not have the knowledge (or desire!) to do at home. We have participated in enrichment classes most of our homeschooling years, partly for a change of pace from our regular routine, but also to allow my children to learn things I'd be unlikely to teach at home. Enrichment classes usually meet once a week.

Homeschool Support Groups:

We can all use some sort of support in our role as homeschool parents. While blogs can be a wonderful source of encouragement, nothing can replace real-life friends who can relate and who can hug your neck (or offer a cookie!) when the thought of another day of teaching long-division brings you to tears. Sometimes a listening ear is invaluable; consider being that listening ear for someone else if you don't currently need one yourself!

These are just a few of the many homeschool support groups in Georgia. Some are church-affiliated, but many are community-based. If you can't find one near you, consider starting one!

- [Johnson Ferry Home School Support Group](#) – for parents of preschoolers through 12th graders, to encourage each other through prayer, fellowship, and idea sharing
- [SPHERE \(Sandy Plains Home Educators Raising Excellence\)](#) – Meets once a month for a time of fellowship, support, idea-swapping and encouragement, plus field trips and other events.
- [Communities for Home Educators for Christ](#) – for homeschool families in Cobb, Paulding and surrounding counties.
- [Homeschoolers of Alpharetta](#) – a Christian organization that upholds the Christian lifestyle and beliefs, but welcomes families who do not currently share their faith.
- [Wisdom's Way - Christian Home Educators](#) – for Christian educators in Douglas County and surrounding areas.
- [Summit Homeschool Outreach \(SHOUT\)](#) – encouragement, prayer and fellowship, plus monthly field trips, encouragement meetings, and social activities for children and families.
- [CHOOSE](#) (Christian Homeschoolers Offering Ongoing Support and Encouragement) – group activities, field trips, and informational events
- [Meet-Up.com](#) – Once you've logged in, do a search for “homeschool” and see what turns up: near me, there are numerous social activities, support groups, preschool nature clubs, even homeschool teen etiquette and dance classes!
- [Artios Academies](#) – a K-12th grade program with integrated and creative instruction, by time period, to history, literature, music, theater and art.

HOMESCHOOL CONVENTIONS

The sheer number of homeschoolers. That's what impressed me most the first time I attended my state homeschool convention. Other homeschoolers, like me! Filling *an entire convention center!* That alone helped me know I was not the only one on this journey. There are other families like us – and lots of them! How encouraging!

The convention hall, packed with tables. Homeschool books, curriculum, supplies, stacked high. That's where I spent my time the first couple of years. I learned what all was available. What might work for our homeschool. I got a little overwhelmed at times. I learned to pre-plan then go with a list.

Speakers, seminars, listening to topics specific to my homeschool. The third year I found this was the best part. Why did I skip this before? Mentors, homeschool parents further down the schooling road than me. *They likely have a word just for you and your homeschool.*

Friends, homeschooling is your job. It is the path the Lord has placed you and your family on. Invest in it! Set aside the time. Be encouraged in your journey. Attend a homeschool convention!

Georgia homeschool conventions

- [Georgia Home Education Association](#)
- [Southeast Homeschool Expo](#)
- [Georgia Catholic Homeschool Conference](#)
- [Real Refreshment for Moms by Apologia](#)
- [Central Georgia Christian Home Educators](#)

More resources:

[Homeschool conventions and conferences Pinterest board](#)

WHERE TO BUY CURRICULUM & SUPPLIES

Homeschool books, curriculum, and supplies are easy enough to find these days! For basic school supplies, your nearest Walmart or Target or similar store will provide most of what you need. For curricula and books, I've always purchased most of mine online, but there are a few local stores as well. Be sure to ask about educator discounts at stores like The School Box, and even at book stores like Barnes and Noble, too; many only require that you show your Declaration of Intent to receive this discount – but keep in mind that some stores do not recognize home educators as teachers.

Local Stores:

[The Homeschool Hangout](#) – located in Alpharetta and Marietta

[The School Box](#) – several locations around Atlanta

[My Learning Tree](#) – in Valdosta

Check garage sales and watch for **used curriculum sales** through local homeschooling groups. Visit **conventions**, too! Most vendors offer a good discount for products purchased at the event.

Online Stores:

[Christian Book Distributors](#) – The largest catalog/Internet company serving the Christian marketplace. This online Christian bookstore offers a large assortment of homeschool and children's products.

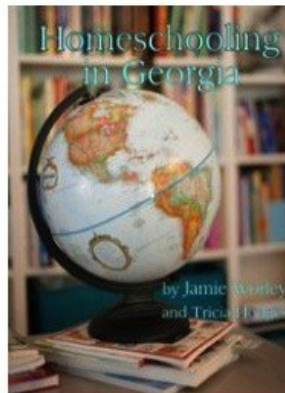
[Rainbow Resource Center](#) – Products are available to purchase online, or you can get their annual catalog for old-fashioned browsing. The Rainbow Resource catalog is like the Wish Book for homeschool parents. It's not glossy and beautiful but has every homeschool product you can think of.

[Timberdoodle](#) – One of my favorite online sites. Very helpful customer service, and many unique products. Recently they've started offering complete curriculum packages, too.

[Homeschool Classifieds](#) – Buy and sell new and used homeschool materials

Homeschooling in Georgia Pinterest Board

Jamie and Tricia have a Pinterest board full of many more Georgia homeschooling resources. They will be adding to it regularly as they come across helpful sites. Be sure to follow it here: [Homeschooling in Georgia Pinterest board](#).



About the authors:

Georgia natives Jamie Worley and Tricia Hodges have combined homeschooling experience of nearly twenty years, and both have a heart for encouraging other moms.



***Jamie** has an addiction to pretty notebooks and vintage things, and never ventures far from a steaming hot mug of tea. She shares the blessings and challenges of life as a homeschooling, homemaking mama in a blended, adoptive family at [See Jamie Blog](#).*

***Tricia** faces a daily dose of chaos with five children. She shares a mixture of free art lessons, frugal and allergy-friendly recipes and all things practical at [Hodgepodge](#). She and her husband, Steve, are also co-owners of [Curriculum Choice](#) and [Habits for a Happy Home](#).*

