THE HOMESCHOOL HABITAT PRESENTS

The New Homeschooler's Starter Kit

Everything you need to get started — SC law, curriculum options, Upstate community resources, and a simple schedule to build from.

8
PAGES

60+
UPSTATE SC GROUPS

$0
MINIMUM TO START

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WELCOME TO THE HOMESCHOOL HABITAT

You're already doing it right, just by doing it

This kit is for you — whether you pulled your child out of school last week, are planning ahead for next year, or are somewhere in the messy, exciting middle of figuring it all out.

A note from us.

We started homeschooling the same way most families do — overwhelmed by options, unsure of the law, and secretly wondering if we were making the right call. If that's where you are right now, welcome. You're in exactly the right place.

What we've learned — and what this kit is designed to show you — is that you don't need a perfect plan. You don't need the most expensive curriculum or a meticulously organized school room. You need information, community, and the confidence to trust yourself.

The Upstate South Carolina homeschool community is one of the most active and welcoming in the Southeast. There are 60+ co-ops, groups, clubs, and programs across Greenville, Spartanburg, Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens counties — representing every worldview, every budget, and every approach to education.

This Starter Kit walks you through the essentials: what the law actually requires in South Carolina, how to think about curriculum without feeling pressured to buy everything at once, how to build a simple daily rhythm, and how to find your community in the Upstate.

You've got this. And we've got you.

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THREE THINGS TO KNOW RIGHT NOW

SC law is clear.
South Carolina has three legal pathways. None require you to be a certified teacher.

Young kids need less
Ages 4-6 need just 20 minutes of focused learning. The rest is play, life, and reading aloud.

Community is close.
60+ groups serve Upstate SC—secular, faith-based, and everything in between.

SOUTH CAROLINA HOMESCHOOL LAW

What the law actually requires —and what it doesn't.

South Carolina is one of the most homeschool-friendly states in the country. The law gives you three distinct options — called optionss — and you only need to follow one of them. You do not need to be a certified teacher under any option.

OPTION 1 — SC CODE 59-65-40

SCHOOL DISTRICT APPROVAL

You notify your local school district and operate under their supervision. The district may require an annual review of your child's progress.

Requirements:

- Parent must have a high school diploma or GED
- Child must receive instruction in required subjects
- Keep attendance records — 180 school days per year
- Annual assessment — portfolio, standardized test, or professional evaluation all qualify

Best for: Families wanting a simple, low-cost option comfortable with some district oversight.

OPTION 2 — SC CODE 59-65-45

APPROVED ASSOCIATION (SCAIHS)

You join a state-approved homeschool association that provides oversight, accountability, and community support. The association — not your school district — supervises your homeschool.

Requirements:

- Join an approved association (SCAIHS, or others)
- Association membership fees — typically $65–$125 per year
- Parent must have a high school diploma or GED
- 180 days of instruction per year
- Annual assessment through the association

Best for: Families who want independence from the school district plus built-in community and support.

OPTION 3 — SC CODE 59-65-47

INDEPENDENT / THIRD OPTION

The most independent option — no district approval, association required. You operate completely on your own and are responsible for your own recordkeeping(or requirements of your association).

Requirements:

- Parent must have a highschool diploma/ged
- Maintain a portfolio of your child's work
- 180 days of instruction per year
- Teach required subjects: reading, writing, math, science, social studies
- No annual external assessment required

Best for: Families wanting maximum flexibility and independence with minimal oversight.

REQUIRED SUBJECTS IN ALL OPTIONS
READING
MATHEMATICS
SCIENCE
SOCIAL STUDIES

THAT'S THE COMPLETE LIST. YOU CHOOSE HOW, WHEN, AND WITH WHAT MATERIALS.

IMPORTANT: THIS IS A GENERAL OVERVIEW FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES — NOT LEGAL ADVICE. HOMESCHOOL LAW CAN CHANGE. ALWAYS VERIFY REQUIREMENTS DIRECTLY WITH SCAIHS.ORG, SCHEA.ORG, OR YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT BEFORE MAKING LEGAL DECISIONS.

CURRICULUM GUIDE

Finding curriculum that fits your family.

Neither secular nor faith-based is better — they're different. Both are presented honestly. Start with one or two subjects, not a full boxed set.

BEFORE YOU BUY ANYTHING:

Homeschooling is not school at home. Young children need 20 minutes of focused learning per day — not 6 hours. Play, conversations, nature, cooking, and reading aloud all count as education. Curriculum is a tool, not a mandate. Use as much or as little as serves your child.

RECOMMENDED DAILY FOCUSED LEARNING TIME (1-ON-1 INSTRUCTION)

20 min/day	45 min/day	60 min/day	90 min/day	2-4 hrs/day
Ages 4-6	Ages 7-8	Ages 9-10	Ages 11-12	Ages 13+

SECULAR CURRICULUM

Time4Learning ~$375/yr
All subjects · K–12 · Independent learners
Moving Beyond the Page ~$860–$1,015/yr
Gifted & advanced learners · K–8
Oak Meadow ~$550–$750/yr
Waldorf-inspired · creative learners · K–12
Core Knowledge FREE — digital
Knowledge-rich · great history & arts · K–8
Khan Academy FREE — digital
Math & science spine · all grades · all families
CK-12 FREE — digital
Customizable textbooks · middle & high STEM

FAITH-BASED CURRICULUM

Simply Charlotte Mason ~$225–$500/yr
Gentle · nature-rich · literature-based · all ages
The Good and the Beautiful ~$225/yr
Literature-rich · beautiful design · great value
BJU Press ~$1,200/yr
Rigorous · complete · SC-based publisher
Abeka ~$685–$1,670/yr
Traditional · structured · K–12 (buy used to save)
Classical Conversations ~$720+/yr
Community built-in weekly campus
Easy Peasy All-in-One Free–$125/yr
Complete free Christian curriculum online · K–12

SAVE MONEY ON CURRICULUM

- Buy used first — Facebook Marketplace, eBay, Homeschool Classifieds (50–80% off)
- Start with one subject at a time — math and reading only for the first semester
- Free resources first: Khan Academy + your public library covers most of K-8
- Abeka and BJU Press hold value well — sell what doesn't work and recoup your investment

DAILY SCHEDULE TEMPLATE

A rhythm that works — not a schedule that stresses.

Most homeschool families find a consistent morning rhythm and leave afternoons open for life, interests, and community.

The goal is rhythm, not rigidity.

A homeschool day that starts at the same time, has a predictable flow, and ends clearly is worth more than any curriculum you buy. Children thrive on rhythm. So do parents.
The templates below are organized by age. Each reflects the recommended daily focused learning time — and builds in real life, outdoor time, and breathing room.

AGES 4–8 · EARLY ELEMENTARY

8:00–8:30	Morning routine — breakfast, get dressed, a little outdoor time if possible
8:30–9:00	Read-aloud together — your single most important 30 minutes every day
9:00–9:20	Math — focused, one-on-one — 20 minutes is the maximum for this age
9:20–9:40	Language arts — phonics, reading practice, or letter writing
9:40–10:00	Outside time — free play, nature walk, or yard exploration
10:00–11:30	Free play, Legos, art, building, imaginative play — this IS learning
11:30–12:00	Help make lunch — real-life math, chemistry, and conversation
1:00–2:30	Rest, audiobooks, quiet creative time
2:30 onward	Errands, activities, co-op days, library, playdates, or just more play

AGES 9–12 · UPPER ELEMENTARY

8:00–8:30	Morning routine — breakfast, chores, set intentions for the day
8:30–9:00	Read-aloud or independent reading — still the best 30 minutes you'll spend
9:00–9:45	Math — focused, independent or together depending on the day
9:45–10:30	Language arts — writing, grammar, or spelling
10:30–11:00	Outside break — non-negotiable, every single day
11:00–11:45	Science, history, or interest project — rotate by day or week
11:45–12:00	Narration or reading journal — tell back what was learned
1:00–2:00	Independent project — interest-driven, self-directed work
2:00 onward	Co-op, activities, chores, errands, or free time

5 THINGS THAT MAKE A HOMESCHOOL DAY WORK

1. Start at the same time every day — rhythm matters more than the schedule.
2. Do math and reading first — everything else is a bonus.
3. Go outside every single day — minimum 20 minutes, more is always better.
4. End school time clearly — say 'school is done' and mean it.
5. Give yourself a deschooling period — 1 month per year in school before finding your rhythm.

You are allowed to have a bad day. Every school does.

UPSTATE SC COMMUNITY GUIDE

Your people are out here. Here's where to find them.

60+ groups and co-ops serve Greenville, Spartanburg, Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens counties. This is a curated starting point. Full directory at homeschoolhabitats.com/community.

START FREE — ZERO COST COMMUNITY

Life Homeschool Co-op Easley · INCLUSIVE	Park days and field trips. Zero cost, zero commitment. The perfect first step.
Friends of The Coop Greer · INCLUSIVE	Free Facebook community with clubs, adventures, and casual events.
Upstate Enrichment Excursions Spartanburg · INCLUSIVE	Free field trips and group outings organized across the Upstate.
Greer Area Homeschool Adventures Greer · INCLUSIVE	Free meetups and field trips. Join and show up when it works.
East Side Co-op Liberty · FAITH-BASED	Free faith-based enrichment co-op. Parent-led, no tuition.
Upstate Forest School & Outdoor Community Greenville · INCLUSIVE	Free Facebook group connecting families around outdoor and nature learning.

ACADEMIC CO-OPS — WEEKLY STRUCTURED CLASSES

Esprit GVL Greenville · INCLUSIVE · ~$900+/yr	Well-regarded inclusive academic co-op welcoming all worldviews.
Upstate Homeschool Co-Op Greenville · FAITH-BASED · ~$750+/yr	Long-established faith-based academic co-op. Strong community.
Crestview Christian Homeschool Greer · FAITH-BASED · ~$650+/yr	Wide range of academic courses. Statement of faith required.
Classical Conversations Multiple sites · FAITH-BASED · ~$1,000+/yr	Community built into the curriculum. Multiple Upstate campuses.
HOPE Homeschool Co-op Simpsonville · FAITH-BASED · ~$10+/mo	Very affordable faith-based academic co-op. Great entry point.
CHOICE Homeschool Group Anderson · FAITH-BASED · ~$100+/yr	Long-standing Anderson County faith-based academic co-op.

ENRICHMENT, NATURE & SPECIALTY

Meadowlark Collective Travelers Rest · INCLUSIVE · ~$850+/yr	Nature-inspired, Charlotte Mason-influenced. Welcoming to all worldviews.
Stellar Homeschool Co-op Simpsonville · INCLUSIVE · ~$800+/yr	Inclusive enrichment co-op. Strong community in southern Greenville County.
Roots and Wings Greenville · SECULAR · ~$200+/mo	Established secular forest school rooted in child-led outdoor exploration.
Valley Forest School Travelers Rest · SECULAR · ~$200+/mo	Secular nature school near Paris Mountain. Beautiful outdoor environment.
The Academy of Arts Taylors · FAITH-BASED · ~$475+/yr	Faith-based performing and visual arts enrichment co-op.
Motive School of Movement Greenville · SECULAR · ~$100+/mo	Parkour, ninja warrior & aerial. Dedicated homeschool classes Tue/Thu/Fri.

FREE & LOW-COST EDUCATIONAL VENUES IN UPSTATE SC

SC State Parks
Annual pass ~$99/vehicle. Paris Mountain & Table Rock are Upstate gems.

Conestee Nature Preserve
FREE. 20+ miles of trails in Greenville. Perfect for nature study.

Roper Mountain Science Center
Discounted homeschool days. Planetarium, trails, live animals.

Upcountry History Museum
Smithsonian affiliate. ~$8 on Homeschool Days. 300 years of SC history.

Greenville Zoo
~$8 Homeschool Days. Free Tell Me About It Tuesdays Sept–May.

Upstate SC Public Libraries
FREE. STEM kits, museum passes, Hoopla, Libby, homeschool programs.

World of Energy — Seneca
FREE. Duke Energy nuclear museum on Lake Keowee. Wed–Fri 10am–4pm.

BMW Zentrum Museum — Greer
FREE. Only US BMW plant. Museum and factory tours. Book in advance.

TOP RESOURCES

Free tools worth bookmarking

Organized by category. Everything marked FREE costs nothing.

FREE CURRICULUM

Khan Academy — khanacademy.org [FREE]
Math through college, science, history. The best free option available.

Ambleside Online — amblesideonline.org [FREE]
Complete Charlotte Mason curriculum K through high school.

Easy Peasy — allinonehomeschool.com [FREE]
Complete Christian curriculum for K–12 online.

CK-12 — ck12.org [FREE]
Customizable textbooks. Great for middle and high school STEM.

Librivox — librivox.org [FREE]
Free audiobooks — every classic in any curriculum available here.

Project Gutenberg — gutenberg.org [FREE]
Free ebooks. Thousands of classics and public domain texts.

FREE YOUTUBE EDUCATION

Crash Course
History, science, economics for middle/high school. Thorough and engaging.

SciShow Kids
Science topics for younger learners. Secular, well-produced.

TED-Ed
Short animated lessons on almost every subject. Great for older students.

National Geographic
Nature, science, geography. High production value. All ages.

Numberock
Math songs for K–5. Kids genuinely enjoy these.

Homeschool Pop
Core subjects for elementary. Quick, clear, and completely free.

SC LEGAL RESOURCES

SCAIHS.org
Largest SC accountability org. All worldviews. Annual review, community, support.

SCHEA.org
SC Home Educators Association. Statewide advocacy and legal information.

HSLDA.org
Home School Legal Defense Association. Legal support nationally.

ed.sc.gov
Official SC Dept of Education. Verify current SC requirements here.

CURRICULUM RESEARCH

cathyduffyreviews.com
The most trusted independent curriculum review site.

rainbowresource.com
Large retailer with detailed curriculum descriptions and comparison tools.

PHILOSOPHY BOOKS WORTH READING

Wild + Free — Ainsley Arment
Nature, wonder, and the case for a childhood full of freedom.

Free to Learn — Peter Gray
Research-backed: play is how children learn best.

The Well-Trained Mind — Susan Wise Bauer
The definitive guide to classical homeschooling.

Home Grown — Ben Hewitt
An honest account of raising unschooled children on a homestead.

The Read-Aloud Handbook — Jim Trelease
The definitive case for reading aloud at every age.

YOU'RE READY

YOUR NEXT 5 STEPS.

You have everything you need to start.
Here's what to do in the next 7 days.

01

Choose your Homeschool option.

Review page 3 and pick option 1, 2, or 3. Then take the one required action for that pathway. That's it.

02

Start with one or two subjects only.

Math and reading first. Don't buy everything at once. Give yourself 6 weeks before adding more.

03

Find one free community touchpoint.

Join one Facebook group from page 6. Just lurk for a week. See if it feels right before committing to anything.

04

Build a simple morning rhythm.

Same start time, read-aloud, core subjects, outside time. That's a complete homeschool day for any age under 10.

05

Visit thehomeschoolhabitat.com.

Read the community page, browse the curriculum guide, and sign up for the Field Notes newsletter.