

education otherwise



Support & information network for
Home education - an alternative to school

Education Otherwise (EO) was formed by a small group of parents in 1977 and has evolved into a large self-help organisation which offers support and information to members. Our extensive network of members (2,500 in 1999) includes those families, groups and individuals who are practising home-education as an alternative to school, those who are considering the possibility of home-education, and those who support the principle of home-education. Our work is carried out by a nation-wide team of dedicated, experienced members who volunteer their services free to support other members and promote home-education.

EO is not committed to any 'one right way', nor do we have an attitude of 'them versus us'; our aim is to help parents choose the most appropriate form of education for each individual child, the decision being founded on informed choice and full consideration for the wishes and feelings of the child. Since, however, too few people are even aware of their right to home-educate, EO aims to raise public awareness of the fact that, in the UK:

Education is legally compulsory

School is not compulsory

It's your choice.

Parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that their children receive an effective education. Although this is usually delegated to schools, parents have the right to exercise this responsibility directly, by providing an education based at home and in the community. Now an **increasing number** of parents choose home-education, education 'otherwise' than at school, for a variety of reasons and with very impressive results. **Case law** has established that a variety of different approaches to education (not necessarily like the school approach) can satisfy the legal requirement for an 'efficient' (etc) education. In fact, **research** into home education has reached the conclusion that we should not be asking 'is home education a viable option?', but instead 'why is home education so highly successful, both socially and academically?' Information about many aspects of home-education, including such research discoveries, is available from Education Otherwise.

The right and responsibility of parents is clearly established in the 1996 Education Act in Sections 7 and 9 (similar provisions are contained in the Education (Northern Ireland) Act 1947 and the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, Sections 30 and 28(1)) which state that:

- * the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

- * in exercising or performing all their respective powers and duties under the Education Acts, the Secretary of State, local education authorities and the funding authorities shall have regard to the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents, so far as that is compatible with the provision of efficient instruction and training and the avoidance of unreasonable public expenditure.

Any family can home-educate:

You do not need to have any formal qualifications, or be a teacher, to educate your child at home - qualities like patience, enthusiasm and flexibility are valuable. You do not need to 'know everything' - a more important skill is to learn how to learn and think, and how to find out information. Your whole family can become more resourceful and learn many new things alongside each other!

You do not have to follow the National Curriculum - unless you wish. It can be a helpful guideline although many parents follow a child's interests & basic literacy/numeracy skills. Such freedom and adaptability can work wonders for a child's self-motivation.

You do not need to have a structured timetable - unless you wish. Learning happens any time, anywhere, in many ways. You do not have to 're-create' a school, or anything like it, at home. Research confirms that an autonomous education with a flexible timetable/curriculum is invariably highly successful in achieving its aims.

You do not need to be rich - many low income families home-educate successfully since we live in an 'information' rich society, with many resources and educational opportunities available at little or no cost. You can spend as much or as little as you choose.

Your child's social life can develop in a way not always possible in a school environment. Having the time and freedom to join a variety of different clubs, special interest societies etc., with people of *all* ages, can prove very enriching. Research has shown that a home-educated child often has greater social skills and maturity.

Your child can still work for any desired formal qualifications; the variety of ways to study GCSE's, GNVQ's, NVQ's, A'levels etc. (eg. home or employment-based, college or evening classes, open learning, by correspondence etc.) can be an advantage - less stress, more time, and the freedom to spread courses over several years.

You can home-educate a child with special needs - the extra care and attention that you are able to offer at home is a great benefit and can make all the difference, as it can for all children.

MEMBERSHIP of EDUCATION OTHERWISE

offers the following benefits:

Education Otherwise has been supporting home education now for 21 years, and has established positive links with most Local Education Authorities, many of whom now refer families to EO if school is not working. Our well-established reputation and experience, and our extensive network of members all over the country, can give EO members confidence that they will have access to the very best support available. With home-education both parents and children benefit greatly from the friendship and understanding of other home-educating families.

MEMBERS OF EO RECEIVE:

Free copy of School Is Not Compulsory 'the essential introduction to home based education' - normally £4.50 see publications leaflet.

Area Co-ordinator Support - over 70 volunteers nationwide can:

- * offer support / practical information on home-education.
- * give access to experienced help and guide you through the process and procedures of deregistration and subsequent interactions with the Local Education Authority if required.
- * refer you to specialists within EO if necessary, eg. special needs, dyslexia, school phobia, legal.
- * give details of local social / educational get-togethers with EO families, arranged in many areas.

Contact List - offers access to our extensive and ever-growing network of members - a vital link to the support and information exchange so essential to home educating families.

Newsletter - a bi-monthly national newsletter (many areas also have a local newsletter) guarantees a regular link with EO and all our members, acting as a forum for communication and discussion, a source of support, inspiration, ideas and resource information, and of course keeping everyone informed of important information concerning home education, such as changes in legislation, research updates, and details of:

Local Get-togethers - in many areas and **National Gatherings** - Camps, Workshops, Conferences, Meetings (3 decision-making meetings a year are held around the country, usually combined with informal gatherings for members).

Free Entry - to an increasing number of places including National Railway Museum, York; English Heritage/ Historic Scotland Sites; Science Museum; Natural History Museum; Victoria and Albert Museum; Museum of London; and Kew Gardens, London.

Reduced prices - for EO Publications and Information Leaflets.

Family Membership Card - useful to negotiate reductions/school discounts on a variety of resources, educational visits etc.

Free 12-page basic information booklet - summarising briefly the most important issues relating to home-education.

MEMBERSHIP of our support and information network costs only £15 each year.

The benefits are incalculable.



EO is a charitable organisation: All our work is carried out by volunteers who give their time free to help families by offering as much support and information as possible. As a charity, we are funded only by membership subscriptions, sale of publications and information leaflets, & donations from members & non-members.

If you feel that EO has helped your family in any way, or if you simply want to support our aims, we sincerely hope you will help us to continue and develop our work by ordering our publications, any leaflets from the EO Information Leaflet Series (there is an Introductory Set for £3), by becoming an EO member (£15 a year) and/or by sending a donation (any amount is greatly appreciated).

Thank you.

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Please tick if you require any of the following:

-Please send me an **EO Membership Application Form**.
(I enclose a stamped SAE)
-Please send me an **EO Publications Leaflet** with details of publications and the full EO Information Leaflet Series.
(I enclose a stamped SAE)
-Please send **Introductory Set** from the **EO Information Leaflet Series** : 'Legal Aspects of Home-education', 'Deregistration & Contact with LEAs', 'Choosing Your Approach', 'Home-education Research'. (**N.B.** If you already have an EO Publications Leaflet, please order Introductory Set directly from that order form instead of this.)
(I enclose a cheque for **£3.00** and A5 (9"x6") or A4 SAE)
-I enclose a **donation** of £..... to support the work of EO.
-Please send a **covenant form** (this increases the value to EO of your subscription or donation) (I enclose a stamped SAE)

Cheques payable to Education Otherwise Association Ltd.

Send with this order form to:

CENTRAL ADDRESS: PO Box 7420, London N9 9SG

Frequent Responses to Home-education and Education Otherwise

Families who have only recently discovered Education Otherwise and home-education, after difficulties in school, often say:

"If only we had known about home-education before - we could have avoided all those months / years of anxieties in school - we would have chosen home-education right from the beginning"

You can imagine our frustration and distress every time we hear about such unnecessary, prolonged suffering, and the relief and reward we feel when these families say:

"Home-education is the light at the end of a long dark tunnel"

So, we work hard to raise public awareness that home-education is a positive and highly effective alternative to school.

Families all over the country share the view that:

"We cannot imagine a more rewarding and fulfilling experience than home-educating our children" "A wonderful lifestyle"

Many parents choose to remain EO members for years, long after their children have grown up, in appreciation and loyalty to EO.

"Education Otherwise has enabled us to meet such a variety of like-minded people - we have EO friends all over the country"

We look forward to welcoming you as members.

If you have finished with this leaflet please pass it on to any other people or places where it may help to inform other families.

This leaflet was produced in November 2000
Please check current prices if it is more than 6 months old.

Education Otherwise is a membership organisation which provides support and information for families whose children are being educated outside school, and for those who wish to uphold the freedom of families to take proper responsibility for the education of their children.

Our principal aims are to:

- * encourage learning outside the school system

- * re-affirm that parents have the primary responsibility for their children's education and that they have the right to exercise this responsibility by educating them out of school.

- * establish the primary right of children to have full consideration given to their wishes and feelings about their education.

EDUCATION OTHERWISE

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