

# Homeschooling Your Struggling Learner

Increasing numbers of families who have children with special needs are turning to home education as a place to meet their unique educational requirements. A healthy, supportive home is the ideal environment in which to educate special needs children. A caring parent can monitor children 24/7, alter schedules to meet medication needs, alter meals to meet nutritional needs, and schedule instruction at the times when the student is best able to learn. While this specialized care and instruction is quite possible, it is also difficult. Parents report positive results when they are willing to seek support and make extraordinary sacrifices to create an environment where education can work for the struggling learner. Here are three recommended steps for home educating special needs children:

1. Do your homework before you begin. Home School Legal Defense Association has excellent articles at [hslida.org](http://hslida.org). Just type "special needs" in the site search box and/or go their page for [struggling learners](#). There are many resources in bookstores and on the web. Our [book list](#) contains three outstanding books on the subject. One rule of thumb: read before you spend money. Local bookstores will let you examine items thoroughly. When you are ready to buy check our [discounts page](#) for savings.

2. Get Help. Several types of support will increase your chances of success. In an age where "experts" are required for everything, education and social service authorities often question the ability of parents to adequately meet the needs of their struggling learner. It is best to get legal protection when you home educate. [Home School Legal Defense Association](#) will defend your family if you are challenged for home educating your struggling learner. The cost is around \$115 year and a discount is available with your [SMHEA membership](#). They also have a team of consultants who assist families with special needs students and publish a newsletter. Join a [support group](#) where you can develop a circle of friends who will be able to provide help and encouragement. You may also want to join [NAATHAN](#), a national network of homeschooling families with special needs children.

3. Become a student of your student. Keep detailed records of your child and his needs. Begin a journal where you record your child's medical needs, nutritional needs, learning styles and struggles. Keep track of your child's sleep and activity schedules and patterns. Record your efforts to help meet those needs. This information will help you to find help and develop solutions to the challenges you face. It will also document your efforts in the event you are ever challenged by educational, legal, or social service authorities.

Homeschooling a struggling learner is a challenge, but following these three steps will get you started on a path that can lead to educational success. If your current educational situation is not working out, or you want to investigate an option that can provide maximum flexibility, safety and care, home education may be the solution for you.