



1. Why must I register my child as a homeschooler in Nevada and what exactly does that mean?

If we were set up as an accredited school, we would need to implement a prescribed curriculum and/or have our children participate in the standardized state tests each year. Since both of those requirements go against our educational philosophy and that of self-directed learning, we are a learning center for homeschoolers. Having children registered as homeschoolers means that they are free to let their natural inclinations and curiosities guide their learning without the stress of having to master a set curriculum in order to pass a state test.

According to the [Nevada Homeschool Network](#), homeschooling is, “independent, private, self-funded education provided to a child that is parent-directed.” This means that you, as the parent or guardian, are assuming full responsibility for your child’s education and we (Bloom Academy) are just a tool or strategy that you’ve chosen to incorporate during your child’s homeschooling journey.

2. How do I register my child as a homeschooler in Nevada?

Thanks to Elissa Wahl, a co-writer of the Nevada Homeschooling Laws, it is a very easy process to register as a homeschooler. There are two items that must be mailed to our Superintendent in order to register.

1. Notice of Intent (NOI): This is the formal document that informs the school district that you, as the parent or guardian, are assuming full responsibility for your child’s education. This one-pager is very simple to complete and must be done when the child reaches the age at which attendance at a public school becomes mandatory, which in Nevada is age 7 (reference [NRS 392.040](#)) or no later than 10 days after the child has been formally withdrawn from enrollment in public school.
2. Educational Plan of Instruction: This is a general outline of what you intend to teach your child over the course of his or her education for the year you are submitting your NOI. The plan must include instruction and goals for English (reading, composition, writing), Math, Science, and Social Studies (history, geography, economics, government) To make things even *easier*, it is recommended that you simply **check out the [World Book Course of Study](#) and just print out the curriculum page that correlates to whichever grade level your child would currently be in. That alone can be your Educational Plan of Instruction!** (Go ahead and read those last 2 sentences again because it really is that easy.) The Educational Plan cannot be judged and the only way these documents will get kicked back to you is if they do not meet the legal guidelines.

Once you've completed these documents, you mail them to the Superintendent/School District (remember to get a receipt as proof of mailing) and wait to receive a written acknowledgement from the school district in about 1-2 weeks! The mailing address for the Clark County School District is:

Homeschool Office
4204 Channel 10 Drive
Building "C"
Las Vegas, NV 89119

You do not need to submit these documents every year. The only time you would need to refile is if the name or address of the parent/child changes or the child is re-entering homeschooling after being enrolled in another school.

We are more than happy to help you with this process and we highly suggest you visit the Nevada Homeschool Network website as it is full with helpful information including a step-by-step guide on registering your child as homeschooler and some sample Educational Plans.

3. What do the terms “unschooling” and “deschooling” mean?

“Unschooling” is a term that was first coined by John Holt to mean *learning and teaching that does not resemble school learning and teaching*. Basically, not sending your child to school or trying to recreate a school-like environment at home. It is a complete rejection of the concepts of conventional school. It is learning through experience, exposure, observation and activities that are guided by each child's own curiosities and inclinations, rather than by a predetermined curriculum. “Unschooling” is the belief that your child will learn what they need to when they are ready and it will require no tricks or coercion from you or any other adult in your child's life.

You can read a really awesome article on the foundations of unschooling [here](#).

“Deschooling” is a term used to describe *the transition process from conventional school to unschooling*. It is a process that we had to go through ourselves, as we had grown up and taught in conventional schools. It is a process that you and your child will also go through. It is the process of removing the limitations and expectations that had been imposed on your child while in conventional school. THIS PROCESS TAKES TIME. How quickly you and your child are able to move through the deschooling process will be unique to you. This will be the first time that your child has been given the freedom and responsibility to determine the use of their time and it may be the first time that you are risking going against the societal norm and trusting your child to do what feels right to them. We know, it seems terrifying. But you'll be alright and so will they. We will be with you every step of the way; providing as many resources and supportive hugs as you need. One of our favorite articles that touches on the deschooling process for children can be read [here](#).

If you're more into podcasts, check out www.deschoolyourself.com.

4. Since Bloom Academy doesn't implement a curriculum, how will my child learn the things they need in order to succeed?

One of our most favorite quotes that touches on this topic is:

"If children started school at six months old and their teachers gave them walking lessons, within a single generation people would come to believe that humans couldn't learn to walk without going to school." - Geoff Graham

Like Geoff Graham brings to light, when children learn how to walk, there is no teacher or classes or assessment. There is no external motivation involved either; no gold star for taking a step and no clip moved to red if the child isn't feeling inspired to try in a particular moment. There is no pressure for them to do it right the first time. A child learns to walk when *they* feel it is necessary and because they wish to participate in the world around them. A child learns to walk *at their own pace* while their parent or guardian is there to support, encourage, and help them, not judge them. A child learns to walk by *observing* how others do it, by *trying* but not quite getting it (over and over again) and they keep trying because it is a goal that they have set for themselves; it is something they really want so their motivation to keep trying is unwavering.

With self-directed learning and just like walking or talking, we believe that those core "academic" skills, such as reading and arithmetic, can be gained implicitly through observation, conversation, experience, exposure, and your child's innate desire to achieve goals that they have set for themselves. That's where we come in! Our role, as the staff at Bloom Academy, is to provide a learning environment that maximizes your child's ability to pursue their interests and see where their curiosity takes them. We think it is also important to touch on the fact that there are many skills needed in order to be successful in life; skills like problem-solving, critical thinking, adaptability, initiative and drive, communication skills... just to name a few. Since we are not restricted by a rigid schedule or curriculum, your child will have unlimited opportunities to develop those skills that will truly help them achieve a happy and meaningful life. They will learn how to navigate through emotions such as stress and frustration in a safe and supportive environment and that, alone, is a skill that will continue to serve them as they grow. We should also note that if your child tells us that they would like some one-on-one help with learning a particular content area, then we are more than happy to sit and work with them. The important part of that sentence, though, is *if your child tells us*.

5. What if my child is the only one who doesn't know how to read?

We know that this is easier said than done but DO NOT PANIC if your child is at the age where they "should" be reading but they haven't expressed any interest in learning how. All this means is that they haven't found a purpose to learn...yet; reading isn't something they feel is relevant to their life at this time and that is totally fine. When your child decides that they want or need to learn how to read for whatever reason, then not only will they learn it quickly (because they've been greatly exposed to written and spoken words) but they will also learn it happily (because they were able to decide when it was time to learn it) and will retain better (because it is something that they are now interested in learning). When that time comes, and it will, we will be there with open arms ready to assist your child (if they'd like) on their new reading endeavor!

6. Do we need to purchase a curriculum to teach our child when they are not at Bloom Academy?

Absolutely not! Bloom Academy was created to serve as an *alternative* to conventional school, not a supplement. We believe that whatever your child is doing and learning while at our center is all that they need to be doing and learning. In fact, forcing them to master a predetermined curriculum when they are not with us may give your child the false impression that when they are with us, they are not learning. It may also cause unnecessary stress and anxiety towards learning and their abilities which is never any fun, either.

7. What about college?

This is one of the most common questions we get and before we dive in, we feel it is important to note that while college is absolutely achievable for homeschoolers, it is not always *necessary* for every child; depending on the path your child wishes to follow. There are many careers that do not require a college degree such as a small business owner, a computer programmer, a pharmacy technician, a dental hygienist, a loan officer, a makeup artist, a writer, and many more. College is a wonderful path, but it isn't the right path for everyone.

That being said, homeschoolers/unschoolers have just as good a chance of getting into a four-year college as children who have gone the conventional route of schooling. Colleges often embrace unschoolers because they truly want to be there and are motivated, interested in learning, and are equipped with the skills necessary to succeed. There are different ways homeschoolers/unschoolers can get there:

- a. Entrance Exams: Although there are many colleges that do not require taking the SAT or ACT (such as University of Chicago and New York University), many homeschoolers/unschoolers take the entrance exams and do quite well. Our staff is happy to help your child study for those entrance exams should they choose that route.
- b. Portfolios/Narrative Transcripts: Oftentimes, portfolios or narrative transcripts are enough to get homeschoolers/unschoolers interviews that ultimately lead to admissions. Since your child will have spent their school-age years doing meaningful tasks and participating in hands-on experiences, creating an impressive portfolio or narrative transcript will be easy and our staff is happy to assist with this process, as well.
- c. Community College to University: Many homeschoolers/unschoolers will apply to community college in their teen years (as early as 15) and take classes. Then, they are able to transfer over to a university.

Peter Gray (one of our favorite advocates of play-based learning) and Gina Riley conducted a study on unschoolers and homeschoolers going to college. You can read about the study and the results [here](#).

8. What if we decide that this type of learning doesn't work for us? Can we enroll our child in a private or public school?

Of course you can! We understand that some children may prefer the type of learning environment that conventional schools offer, so should you choose to withdraw your child from Bloom Academy, enrollment in a public or private school is completely feasible but there are a few things you need to be aware of.

Private Schools: Each private school has its own way of determining eligibility for admission so you should contact that particular school to find out what their process is.

Public Schools: The enrollment process varies depending on when you are wishing to enroll your child.

- Enrollment for public elementary school is usually at the “age-appropriate” level however placement tests may be used to help determine the grade-level that would be the best fit for your child, depending on their abilities. This important note comes straight from the Nevada Homeschool Network (NHN): *“A child who did not attend a public or private Kindergarten or First Grade in this state (non-notified homeschooling), but are citizens of Nevada, **may** be required by the school district to take a developmental screening test to determine “readiness” for Kindergarten, First, or Second grade upon enrollment (NRS 392.040 Section 4-6). However, since the statute specifically refers to a child whose parent submitted a “waiver from enrollment before the compulsory attendance age of 7” to the local school district, and the parent is seeking to enroll the child in a public school at age 7, it is unclear whether the “non-notified” homeschooled child is required by law to be assessed (An NOI to Homeschool is to be submitted when the child turns age 7 or is withdrawn from a public school between the ages of 5 and 18). NHN recommends consultation with an attorney if the parent is unwilling to have their child assessed for readiness by the public school but wishes to enroll the child in the age-appropriate grade; 1st grade for 6 year old, 2nd grade for 7 year old. It is our understanding that children age 8 and above are placed into their age-appropriate grade level upon enrollment in a public school. Again, seek legal counsel if you are not sure of your parental rights to determine grade placement in cooperation with the public school.”*
- Enrollment for public middle school is also typically determined by age but regulations calling for completion of some required courses prior to moving on to high school may require additional evaluation of your child’s completed coursework and/or other evaluation prior to determining which grade level your child should be placed in.
- Enrollment in a public high school at the beginning of 9th grade typically includes a placement exam to determine the appropriate placement level of various 9th grade classes (like English or math). According to the NHN, there are now some classes required of 8th grade public school students that must be completed in order to move on to 9th grade. If you are planning on enrolling your kiddo in public high school, NHN recommends contacting the public school while your kiddo is 12 or 13 so that you can begin preparing to meet the requirements.
- Enrollment in a public high school in the middle of 9th grade or later may include a placement test and/or an evaluation of the courses already completed by your child during their time

homeschooling. This is where it gets a bit tricky because the school can claim that your child doesn't have the amount of credits necessary to graduate which means that your child would either have to work overtime to complete the necessary credits. There are other ways around this and we'd be happy to meet with you to discuss further.

A more thorough response to this question can be found on the [Nevada Homeschool Network's FAQ page](#).

9. What if my child decides that he/she wants to just ___ all day?

As we mentioned before, deschooling is a process that takes a lot of time, patience, and deep breaths. This answer can vary depending on what seemingly-scary verb we put in the blank. If it's play, then we'll tell you that we don't view that as "just" play. Echoing the studies and beliefs of psychologist, Peter Gray, and as stated in our core principles, we believe that children should have unlimited opportunities to play. When children are given unstructured and unlimited time to play, they are tapping into their creativity (a helpful life skill) while also developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. Free play is crucial for healthy brain development and, unfortunately, it is something that is stripped of children at way too young of an age.

Maybe your fear isn't that your child will play all day- maybe it's that they'll sit on their phones and mindlessly scroll through social media or YouTube? We can address that too. We believe that technology, when used appropriately, is a wonderful and enriching tool. Our world is becoming more and more technologically advanced and being tech-savvy is a skill that is being valued and even required in many careers. We also believe that kids need and deserve more responsibility and should be given opportunities to learn how to self-regulate when it comes to technology. With our partnership philosophy and our goal of aiding in the creation of self-disciplined children, the staff and children of Bloom Academy will decide how to handle technology as a community. We want to make sure that the children are making the most informed decision possible so we will explain the research surrounding the overuse of technology as well as our perspectives, concerns, etc. From there, we will work to create our own policy for technology use at the center. Should concern arise from children, staff, or parents regarding our collaboratively developed technology policy that has been decided upon, we will address it and revise as necessary while keeping the end-goal in mind: instilling a sense of autonomy so that the children may learn to self-regulate and view technology as a resource, not a necessity. We are aware that a portion of our children will be coming from an environment where they have not felt the freedom of being able to make their own decisions in regards to how they choose to spend their time. Due to this, we acknowledge and embrace the time it will take for a child to adjust to this type of environment and the temptation children will have to spend the majority of their time in any one activity, including technology. Should the children at Bloom Academy wish to implement a technology policy in which there are no time limitations, it is important to remember that it'll take time for them to adjust to this newly-found freedom and the most important thing we, as the supportive adults in their lives, can do is understand and trust this process.

While visiting a learning center on the east coast that did not implement a limit on technology use, we asked a group of kids if they saw others struggle with the lack of restrictions and total technological freedom. One girl made a comparison that we thought was hilarious and absolutely spot-on. She compared this type of freedom

to the freedom found when turning 21. She said that when people turn 21, they go out and drink way too much; not necessarily because they *want* to, but because they *can*. It's the knowing that you're now allowed to do something that you never used to be able to and so you run with that freedom. This can usually last for a while. Over time, though, that temptation usually fades. Drinking loses its glamour and you slowly adjust to this new reality and learn to self-regulate. Another analogy could be ending a diet or fast; you've been limited to what you can put in your body and now that the limits have been lifted, you may feel the need to binge eat burritos and donuts because you *can*. But, again, that abuse of freedom will typically fade as it becomes part of your norm.

So if your child comes to Bloom Academy and the kids decide not to set a limit on the amount of time they can spend using technology, the first thing we want our parents to do is to avoid being anxious and to be patient as they navigate through this new freedom.

“One of the best things you can do is express confidence in your child’s ability to regulate her own technology use and offer to help. As a consultant, you don’t need to pass judgment; you get to inform and make recommendations.”- The Self-Driven Child

Do not assume that your child will spend a majority of their day playing video games or watching YouTube. If this is their first time being given this type of freedom, understand that it is a process and it may take days, weeks, or even months for them to learn to self-regulate. To help model self-regulation, we encourage parents to do what we, as the staff at Bloom Academy, will do which is model responsible use of technology, seek to understand why technology is important to the child, provide alternative activities, including to get outside, and inform and make suggestions on how the child can self-regulate.

Now, let's think about the worst case scenario: after months of freedom, a child is still spending 100% of their time at Bloom in front of a screen and is choosing to not participate in any activities or workshops. There are a few strategies we would try:

1. Understand why they are using technology so much by having a conversation. Perhaps they are using it because they don't know how else to spend their time. If that's the issue, then it's a matter of learning more about the child and then creating opportunities to engage them in something new. Because we are a self-directed learning center, the kids who attend will not only be exposed to the interests of the people teaching workshops, but they will also be exposed to the interests of their peers. Due to our small size, we're able to really get to know the children and provide new experiences that are specifically aligned to them. Something will eventually click. But perhaps they are using it because they are genuinely engaged. That's their passion. In this case, a different conversation needs to be had. What are they using technology for? How can we create different or new opportunities for them to utilize their passion of technology that will encourage them to further develop their skills and knowledge? We choose to see their engagement with technology as a vital skill and resource, rather than as something negative and scary that needs to be changed.
2. Collaborate on a solution. We will begin by acknowledging that technology is important to them and that we want to support their use of it but we are also concerned that they are missing out on other things

such as socializing with friends or exploring something new. We'll share the research that supports our concerns and then offer to create a solution with the child.

"If they are a part of the decision making around technology use, they will gain practice thinking critically about the need to self-regulate, and will be much more apt to stick to the agreement. If you unilaterally clamp down, your child is apt to rebel."- The Self-Driven Child

If a child's use of technology is excessive and there is cause for concern, then we will meet with the child and their family to discuss possible solutions that may include consulting a psychologist or counselor. We acknowledge that there is such a thing as "too much" and will do everything we can do to maintain a mentally and emotionally-safe learning environment. Our philosophy in regards to technology is supported by the book, *The Self-Driven Child*, which we highly recommend to anyone wanting to understand the science behind the importance of giving your children freedom to make their own decisions. We reference it often when explaining self-directed education and how we will approach various situations and it is a wonderful resource for people, parents in particular, new to this philosophy.

10. How will I know if my child is on grade-level?

We know how much schools push the importance of children being "on grade-level." We know that this push causes tons of stress on parents, teachers, and especially the children. Whether or not a child is on grade-level is the determinant of their grades, level of instruction, and, oftentimes, whether or not they will progress to the next grade. We know that being on grade-level is so ingrained in our educational system that it is hard to understand what learning looks like if we don't have this standard to hold our kids to; how can we possibly know if they are where they are "supposed" to be?

To tackle this, we think it is important to briefly touch on why being on "grade-level" is so crucial while in school. Kids need to be on grade-level in reading, writing, math, etc. because there are certain standards that *must* be taught each year that the child will be tested on and if a child hasn't mastered the concepts of their grade, then they will surely struggle and fall behind as they move forward and their lack of understanding will show on their test scores. Basically, the pressure to be on grade-level reflects the needs and agenda of the schools, not the children.

At Bloom, we don't believe in "grade-level" and we don't pressure our children to learn any skill until they express interest. As stated above, we believe that children will learn what they need to when they feel they are ready; when *they* feel motivated to do so. We feel that if you force children to learn things before they express interest or before they are intellectually and developmentally ready, there is not only a risk of making learning a devastating experience for the child but also of robbing them of an opportunity to connect with their learning. Not to mention the damage that the stress may cause on their emotional, mental, and/or physical state. One of our favorite books, *The Hurried Child*, touches on the importance of children being able to learn at their own pace when the author, David Elkind, discusses his observations of a group of first-graders who were put through an intense reading program as kindergarteners. As he is listening to them read and asking them questions, he states,

"It almost seemed that reading had been foisted upon them, at great cost in time and effort, without their having any real understanding of the value of what they were learning."

At Bloom, we won't use grades, assessments, or "grade-level" to determine whether or not children are making growth because growth for one child will look completely different from the growth of another. How will we know if your child is growing? The same way you will! By asking them questions and listening to them excitedly share things they are learning as well as observing and asking to participate in their learning. We'll offer opportunities for your children to reflect on their own growth through conversations and optional goal-setting.

At the end of the day, we must ask ourselves which scenario we prefer- that our children be able to perform at "grade-level" but may lack the understanding and connection of what they are doing or that our children be able to perform wherever they are at naturally, in that moment and have a deep, meaningful connection.

11. I don't want my child to fail. (Not a question, but a common fear expressed to us and something we felt was worth addressing.)

Neither do we. In fact, we don't want them to fail so *much* that we created a learning center that is fully committed to the overall happiness and wellbeing of your child. It's called Bloom Academy. We know what it's like in conventional school and we can tell you with absolutely certainty that there are children graduating high school with A's or B's and Honor Roll and a list of clubs they've participated in and yet they will enter the next stage of their life, whether it be the workforce or college or society in general, feeling lost and disconnected from themselves, others, and their world. You want your child to be successful, we get it. We want that for them, too. In terms of being successful, we think it depends on what your definition of "successful" is.

If it means having a career that they are passionate about, then your child will definitely be setting his or herself up for success because they have had their entire school-age time to pursue their own interests and, therefore, will have a better idea as to what it is they want to pursue as an adult. They've also been able to learn in an environment free of the restraints of a rigid schedule or curriculum so they have had time to develop skills such as time management, self-regulation, critical thinking, inquiry, and problem-solving. They have also been learning in a collaborative environment so they have learned how to share space with others as well as how to collaborate, communicate, and compromise.

If success is defined as living happy, fulfilling lives then your child is also setting his or herself up for that because they are learning in an environment where they are free to explore and connect with themselves and their environment in a genuine way. They have had time to learn how to handle stressful or unexpected situations and how to navigate through their emotions. They have spent their time doing things that bring them joy and have not had their confidence or love of learning impacted by curriculum, assessments, or grades.

We promise you that we want your child to succeed.

We promise you that we want your child to develop a happy and healthy mindset.

We promise that we want your child to be fully equipped with the skills necessary to live a meaningful life.

We promise to celebrate and nurture the natural curiosity of your child.

We promise that we will do everything we can to provide your child with experiences and opportunities that will embrace their true, authentic self.

And we will be here to support you and your family every step of the way. We promise that, too!