



Alternatives to Public Schools

Some parents wish to consider home schooling for their child with special needs, or a setting other than that offered by their local public school. This document attempts to provide resources that might help with that decision. In no way do we recommend or endorse this alternative, nor do we offer the following as being all-inclusive of every possible in-home schooling option, charter school, non-public school or private school in Orange County.

To legally home school your child, there are several options to consider (see U.S. Dept. of Ed/California regulations at <https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/non-public-education/regulation-map/california.html>):

- 1) Enroll your children in a private school that offers a satellite program (PSP). A PSP is a private school which has filed an affidavit with the state. When you sign up, you become a teacher (of your own children) in that school. Your name and address do not appear on the affidavit, but the PSP is required to keep a listing of each teacher and his/her qualifications. The administrator will remind you to turn in the required records and course of study, and there may be other requirements, which will be at the discretion of the director of this private school.
- 2) Parents may also enroll a child in a public charter school that offers independent study. These California charter schools allow enrollment to students living either in the county in which the charter school is located or in any contiguous county. Computer access to curriculum is common; state testing is required.
- 3) Access a public school home-based or independent study programs which requires enrollment in public school and use of the public school curriculum. If this option is selected, then the child is considered a public school student and subject to the rules and policies of the public school, including participation in state testing.
- 4) Parents may submit annually the Private School Affidavit. Under this provision, a child being taught by "persons capable of teaching" is exempt from compulsory public school attendance, is not enrolled in a

public school, and does not have access to state curriculum, materials or testing.

The term Charter School can be confusing because sometimes it denotes a school that supports home schooling and sometimes it is a school with a particular focus that is part of a public school district. A complete listing of charter schools that are part of the Orange County Department of Education can be found here:

<https://ocde.us/glcp/CharterSchools/Pages/Charter-Schools-Directory.aspx>. A similar listing of charter schools in Orange County can be found at <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ds/si/cs/ap1/countyresults.aspx?id=30>.

A nonpublic nonsectarian school (NPS) is a specialized private school that provides services to public school students with disabilities. California Department of Education provides a complete listing of these schools listed by county at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/SchoolDirectory/nonpublic-nonsectarian-schools/4/1/25>.

There are numerous private schools in Orange County. They are not required to serve children with special needs, however, a few specifically serve children having a particular diagnosis or learning profile; they generally meet the requirements of an NPS listed above so that they accept both private students and students funded by the child's school district. This website provides locations of Orange County private schools: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/SchoolDirectory/active-or-pending-schools/2/2/1/500>.

When considering your options and/or visiting specific school sites, we encourage you to think about the following questions:

1. Does this school have the capacity to support someone with an IEP?
2. Does this school have a Special Education Department, or staff dedicated to helping students with special needs?
3. What teaching credentials do the teachers have?
4. What specialists are included in the staff (such as speech, occupational, physical therapists or behavior specialists)?
5. Is additional individualized tutoring available?
6. How many educational hours is the student to complete each school day?
7. What will my role be as the parent?
8. Is the student required to complete standardized testing?
9. Is the school accredited by WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges)? Or by any other accrediting agency?
10. What is the school calendar?

11. What opportunities are there for socialization with other students?
12. Are their planned field trips for students?
13. Is any transportation provided?
14. When could my student enroll and begin classes?
15. What documentation is necessary to enroll?
16. Is there tuition or other fees associated with being enrolled?
17. Is the cost of internet covered by the school?
18. Is a computer provided for home use?

Additional Resources:

Schooling at Home/CDE: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ps/homeschool.asp>

California Homeschool Network:

<https://www.californiahomeschool.net/homeschooling-resources/psp/>

Charter Schools in Orange County with WASC Accreditation:

<https://directory.acswasc.org/new/>

Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK): <https://taskca.org/>