



Stoa Position Paper on Private Home Education

- We recognize that through the years, many meanings of homeschool have emerged.
- We recognize that maintaining any definition of homeschool will result in some students being deemed ineligible.
- We recognize that the way state and federal governments interact with homeschooling families changes with frequency.
- We recognize that developing national eligibility standards limits our ability to adopt a definition that precisely accounts for every state's policies on homeschooling.
- We recognize that Christians hold earnest yet differing convictions regarding a homeschool family's interaction with the state or federal government.

Private Homeschooling

We have adopted the term “privately homeschooled” in order to best describe the type of students and families Stoa was initially created to serve. Amidst the ever-shifting state and federal policies regarding homeschooling, Stoa leadership has sought to refine and clarify its language in order to uphold this value of private home education. Our desire is to offer a unique league for privately homeschooled students. By “privately homeschooled” we are referring to a family who educates their children at home without the assistance of direct government funding.

Why does Stoa limit its members to those who privately homeschool?

1. We have good reason to believe that when a family accepts direct government funding for home education, homeschoolers at large are at risk of government regulation.
 - a. See historical examples ([link](#))¹
 - b. See a few recent historical examples ([link](#))²
 - c. Some have already observed increased regulations for fund recipients. ([link](#))³
2. We have good reason to believe that when a family accepts direct government funding for home education, future homeschool freedoms could be in jeopardy.
 - a. Legislative initiatives that follow funding could be problematic. ([link](#))
 - b. Strength in numbers, government infringement on homeschool autonomy. ([link](#))
 - c. In the present, HSLDA shares our concern. ([link](#))

¹ See Citation 3: Lynda Friesen, “Choice in Education,” National Advocacy for Private Education, (Oct. 1993), p29.

² See *Surely, ESAs won't affect those homeschoolers not taking the money, will they?*

³ See *Is the backlash to homeschool beginning?*

3. Since we believe that increased government regulation (1) and the restriction of homeschool freedoms (2) would threaten our very ability to do that to which we feel so deeply called (home education), we humbly maintain that the wisest position for Stoa to take is to maintain our distinction as a privately homeschooled league.

A Note Specifically for California Families:

If California students are enrolled in any type of public-school program, (such as a charter school, an independent study program, or any source of education that is under the CA State Department of Education direction and/or funding), whether full-time or part-time and whether they attend at a school building or do their schooling at home, they are considered a “student of record” and not a privately educated student.

This can be seen specifically in two areas:

1) California Mandatory Attendance Law:

California has mandatory attendance laws; therefore, every school (public or private) must keep a record of attendance. “School of Record” means the school in which the child is enrolled for purposes of fulfilling the legal requirements for their mandatory attendance. If a child is enrolled (either part-time or full-time) in a public school (either traditional, charter or other) that school is considered the “school of record” for that child and therefore is responsible for their education. It also means that the school is also the entity contacted by government authorities to verify that the child is not truant. A public school will not allow for shared “educational custody”.

2) Educational Authority:

When asked the question: Can a student remain under their parent’s educational authority for their education as well as be enrolled in a charter school or some other type of California public school program?

The answer is no. In California, there is not a designation of “homeschool.” The only designations are “public” or “private.” A public school will always be given recognition over the private educator as a child’s education provider in the eyes of the state.

If a student is taking classes from a traditional public school or a charter school, then the student must be enrolled in that school. When enrolled in a public or charter school, the state has full authority over that child’s education because the parents have given the state full authority and responsibility (See *Fields v. Palmdale* 2005).

Most parents who enroll their children in public education programs are not aware that they are turning over this authority to the state. They assume they are still directing their child’s education, but legally, they are not.

Therefore, California students enrolled in a K-12 public-school charter program or any other type of state public school program fail to meet the letter of the law under numbers 1,2 and 3 of the Stoa statements regarding “Home Educated” in the Stoa Membership Eligibility requirements.

