

North Carolina Homeschool Policy and Participation Summary, 2025

Prepared by keturah abdullah

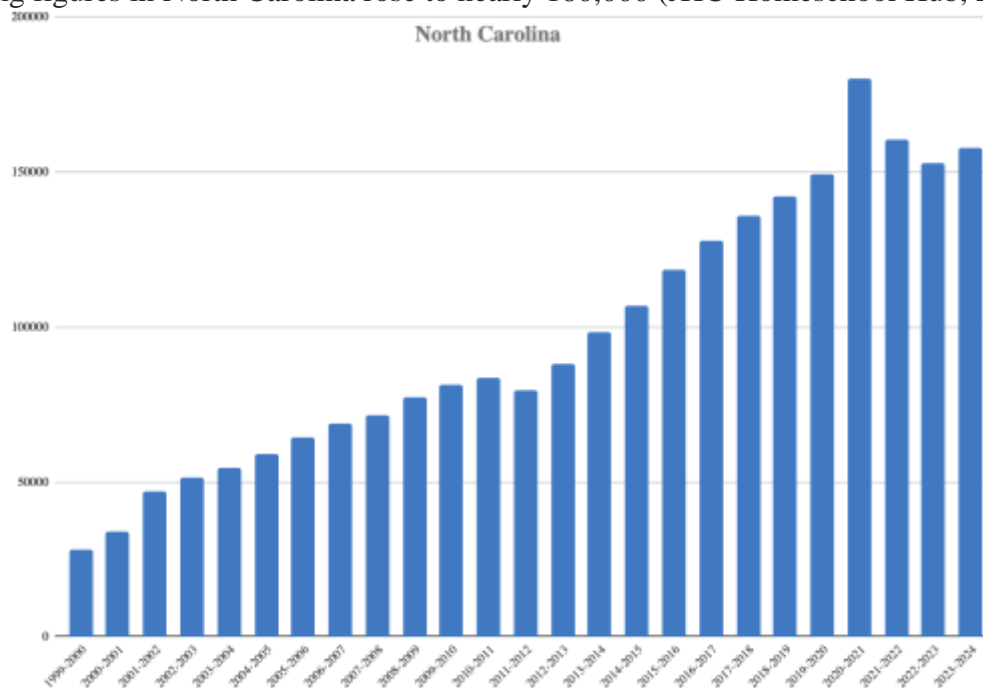
Homeschooling is a significant and growing part of North Carolina’s education landscape, with nearly 180,000 students homeschooling during the 2020–21 school year.
— JHU Homeschool Hub, 2025

Across the nation, more families are choosing to homeschool their children. According to the US Census Bureau (2021), “the global COVID-19 pandemic has sparked new interest in homeschooling and the appeal of alternative school arrangements has suddenly exploded.” While the average percentage of students being homeschooled in the United States rests around 5%, according to the [Johns Hopkins Homeschool Hub](#), North Carolina’s percentage of homeschooled students was [almost 9%](#) during the height of the COVID pandemic. This seemingly small percentage of homeschoolers is higher than North Carolina’s 2021-22 charter school enrollment of 7.3% and private school enrollment of approximately 7% (JHU Homeschool Hub, 2025).

Overview of North Carolina

North Carolina’s Data at a Glance

Since 1988, North Carolina has recognized homeschooling as a legally approved form of education for children between the ages of 7 and 16. Since then, homeschooling has become an increasingly popular option for families across the state. To illustrate, approximately 33,000 students were homeschooled in 2000, a number that grew to 83,000 by 2010. During the peak of the pandemic, homeschooling figures in North Carolina rose to nearly 180,000 (JHU Homeschool Hub, 2025).



Number of homeschooling students in North Carolina, 1999 - 2024 (JHU Homeschool Hub, 2025).

According to the [U.S. Census](#), around 5% of families in North Carolina homeschooled during

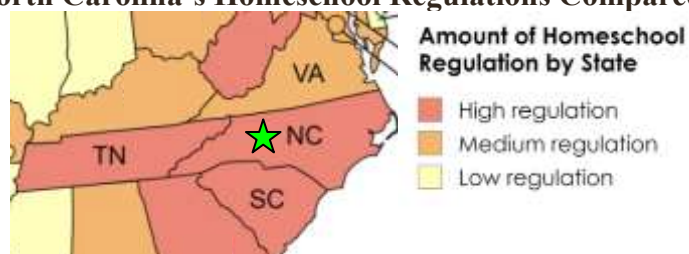
the spring of 2020, increasing to 9.4% by the fall of 2020. At the time, this was just under the national estimate of 11.1%. Based on the [U.S. Census data](#), our calculations indicate that about 7.72% of K-12 students in North Carolina were homeschooled during the 2022-23 school year, and 6.75% during the 2023-24 school year¹.

A Snapshot of Homeschooling and Homeschoolers in North Carolina

North Carolina offers homeschooling families a comprehensive [website](#) that provides access to the state's [Home School Guidebook](#). The guidebook outlines the legal requirements for homeschooling in North Carolina, as well as provides general recommendations on the homeschooling process. Examining the homeschooling guidebook more closely, we know that parents and guardians of children "who are at least age 7 but not yet 16, ensure that their children attend school... by submitting a Notice of Intent to Operate a Home School (NOI) to the North Carolina Division of Non-Public Education (DNPE)" (*Home School Guidebook*, 2019, p. 2). In addition to submitting a NOI, parents and guardians wanting to homeschool in North Carolina, must (1) hold a high school diploma or its equivalent, (2) register and operate as either a religious or non-religious school, (3) conduct schooling on a regular schedule for at least nine months each year, not counting regular holidays and breaks, (4) keep records of each student's immunizations and yearly attendance, (5) give each student a nationally standardized test every year, and (6) notify DNPE when the school is no longer in operation (*Home School Guidebook*, 2019).

Concerning *who* is homeschooling within North Carolina, there is some data that tells us information about homeschooled children and their families. We are aware that participation in homeschooling varies widely by county. In the 2022–23 school year, Wake County reported approximately 14,000 homeschooling children, the most of any county in the state. While both Wake and Mecklenburg counties have similar total populations (around 1.2 million), Wake had roughly 3,000 more homeschooling children than Mecklenburg. Although we have disaggregated data by county, we lack state-specific data disaggregated by race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, which limits our ability to analyze potential disparities or trends among different student populations. Additionally, we do not have data on dis/ability status, so we are unable to determine how many of these homeschooled students were students with disabilities or receiving special education services.

Beyond State Lines: North Carolina's Homeschool Regulations Compared to Neighboring States



North Carolina and its bordering states; South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia (JHU Homeschool Hub, 2025).

Compared to nearby states such as South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, North Carolina's regulatory policies are somewhat aligned with those of its neighbors. Like South Carolina and Tennessee, North Carolina is a *high-regulation* state, meaning that it has extensive rules and regulations for families registering for, and maintaining, homeschooling. For example, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee require families to send a letter of intent to their local district, maintain student records, and partake in some standardized testing.

¹ Due to survey changes, the data from 2020 reflects the percentage of households, while the data from following years reflects the percentage of students partaking in homeschooling (JHU Homeschool Hub, 2025).

Overall, homeschooling in North Carolina is a prominent educational choice. It's essential to gather information about homeschoolers that serves both researchers and the homeschooling community itself. For more information on homeschool research and trends, please visit The Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy's [Homeschool Hub](#).

About the Homeschool Research Lab:

The [Homeschool Research Lab](#) was founded by [Angela R. Watson](#), PhD, an assistant professor at the Johns Hopkins [School of Education](#) and a senior research fellow at the [Institute for Education Policy](#). She has researched homeschooling for nearly a decade. Dr. Watson also created the Homeschool Hub as a one-stop resource for current information on homeschooling data, regulations, and research across the United States.

Preparer Bio:

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