

Tennessee Homeschool Policy and Participation Summary, 2025

Prepared by keturah abdullah

Tennessee experienced a significant increase in homeschooling during the peak of the COVID pandemic and a significant decrease in the following year.

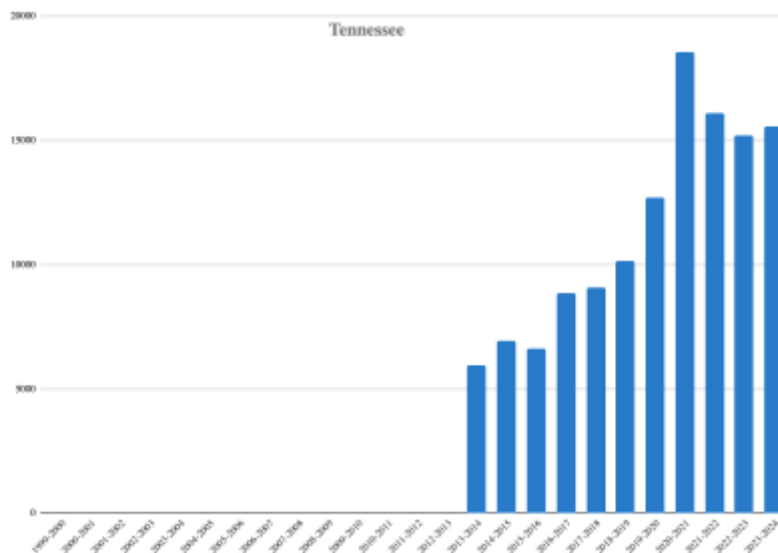
— JHU Homeschool Hub, 2025

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](#), Tennessee's percentage of homeschooled students was approximately 13% during the height of the COVID pandemic. During the 2021-22 school year, 1.4% of Tennessee's K-12 students participated in homeschooling, while private and charter school attendance remained nearly unchanged at 9.1% and 3.9%, respectively (JHU Homeschool Hub, 2025).

Overview of Tennessee

Tennessee's Data at a Glance

Since 1985, Tennessee has recognized homeschooling as a legally approved form of education for children aged 6 to 17. Tennessee began tracking homeschool data in 2013. Since then, homeschooling has gradually increased, peaking during the pandemic and slightly declining in the post-pandemic years.



Number of homeschooling students in Tennessee, 2013 - 2024 (JHU Homeschool Hub, 2025).

[U.S. Census estimates](#) indicate that around 5.4% of Tennessee families homeschooled in the spring of 2020, and increased to 13.2% by the fall of 2020. These percentages are similar to the national averages at the time, which were 5.4% and 11.1%, respectively. Based on [U.S. Census data](#), our calculations indicate that about 9.02% of K-12 students in Tennessee were homeschooled during the 2022-23 school year, and 10.75% during the 2023-24 school year¹.

A Snapshot of Homeschooling and Homeschoolers in Tennessee

Tennessee provides homeschooling families with a [homeschool webpage](#) through the Tennessee Department of Education. This website provides families with information about the two legally recognized ways parents and/or legal guardians may choose to homeschool their children: independent homeschooling or enrollment in an approved church-related non-public school, as defined by [Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-50-801](#). Suppose parents and guardians register as an independent home education program. In that case, this means that they are the teacher of record and are responsible for ensuring that the educational requirements are maintained and met under Tennessee's law, including submitting a letter of intent and participation in the TCAP assessment in grades 5, 7, and 9. If parents and guardians register through an approved church-related non-public school, they fall under the supervision of the school's director. They must adhere to the regulations of the school in question. With this option, families do not have to submit a letter of intent. On their homeschooling website, Tennessee also outlines a third schooling option beyond these two, which is enrollment through an accredited online school, specifically a Category III non-public school accredited by the Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE). Through this option, families do not have to submit a letter of intent.

Concerning *who* is homeschooling in Tennessee, some data provides information about homeschooled children and their families. We are aware that homeschooling practices vary significantly by county. For example, during the 2022-23 school year, Bradley and Maury counties had nearly similar populations, with Bradley being slightly more populous; however, Maury County reported approximately 250 homeschoolers, while Bradley County reported 0. 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 dis/abilities or receiving special education services.

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).

Beyond State Lines: Tennessee’s Homeschool Regulations Compared to Neighboring States



Tennessee and some bordering states; Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina (JHU Homeschool Hub, 2025).

Compared to nearby states like Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, Tennessee’s regulatory policies are generally aligned with those of its neighbors. Each of these states is a *high-regulation* state, meaning that it has extensive rules and regulations for families registering for and maintaining homeschooling. For example, each of these states requires families to send notice to their local district, alerting them to a child’s participation in a home education program.

While homeschooling in Tennessee peaked during the pandemic and has since slightly declined, it remains a vital educational choice for families. 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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