

Guide Seven **Finding communities and support**

Introduction

Perhaps one of the most common misconceptions and assumptions about home education is that there will be a lack of social stimulation for the child and a certain amount of isolation for the parent. Yet, in the age of the internet and the reign of social media, nothing could be further from the truth. You may grow familiar with the teeth-gnashing annoyance of having to field this question from well-meaning friends and family when you first make the decision to home-educate.

Across the country there are whole tribes of home educating families who club together for mutual support, shared experiences and just some plain old social interaction – that one thing that some fear might be woefully lacking from a home education!

Here to give you some guidance, EdPlace has opened its address book to give you a heads up on how to begin finding your own community. It's true that home educating your child full time can be lonely at times, it can be overwhelming and sometimes tiring – just like any area of parenting. And yet when the times are tough, within your community you'll find a whole army of supporters and champions at your back, all you need do is reach out.



Chapter 1:

Finding homeschooling groups

Homeschooling groups are gatherings of home educating families, usually from one location or area. Just like our children, each group might be as different from one another as chalk and cheese! Some might offer regular learning and group teaching options, others might provide a meet and greet and a social occasion but all provide mutual support and an opportunity to share resources, plans and expertise.

The groups can often provide a fantastic opportunity to gain support and assistance with teaching topics or areas with which you're less familiar or confident. Group members, coming from a shared philosophy and passion, sometimes forge friendships that go on to last a lifetime.

The national home education charity, Education Otherwise, offers a pretty comprehensive directory of local groups broken down into regions across the UK. Ed Yourself also offers a list of groups for you to browse, and HE UK offers plenty of insight on how to find gatherings and groups near you.

The key takeaway here is that, no matter how alone you might feel in your decision, you are actually surrounded by other local families who feel the same way you do and are going through the same things you are. So reach out and join in with your community of home education champions as much or as little as you like.



Chapter 2:

Finding homeschooling communities

As well as joining local groups and meeting nearby friends and peers who're treading the same path as you, you can further boost your home education social circle via the internet. There are a wealth of communities, groups and forums packed full of parents and educators just like you. You can find support, information, anecdotes and advice without even having to get out of your pajamas!

Forums

Check out forums such as A Little Bit of Structure, the Mumsnet HE forum and the Netmums page for homeschooling for message boards specifically for and about all things home education. These are brilliant forums for asking questions you might have been too afraid to ask and for networking with home educators across the country and, indeed, from around the world.

Facebook Groups

Facebook gets its fair share of negative press, and yet it can also be one of the most powerful tools for change and support we have in the modern age.

The **Home Education UK** Facebook Forum is a supportive closed group of home educating parents with almost 10,500 members from across the UK. Meanwhile the Home Education UK group holds over 32,000 members in a private group and Homeschooling UK describes its 21,000-member community as friendly and welcoming.

For a more formal support community you could also try the Home Education and your Local Authority group for advice and support on communicating and dealing with local authorities.



Chapter 3:

Other Resources

Other excellent places to look for some solidarity and inspiration include Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest. A quick search for homeschooling leads to all sorts of gems, such as The World Is Their Classroom and you could lose days exploring the posts and pins under #homeschool, #homeeducation and #homeeducationuk.

Back in the real world, in your search for more groups, ideas and activities, it's well worth checking out your local library and community notice boards for news of local interest groups such as book groups, drama clubs, sports teams and history societies.



Why ed place?

EdPlace is here to be your homeschooling partner! We're fully comprehensive from Year 1 all the way up to GCSE in English, maths and science. Our activities, assessments and revision materials are used and trusted by many homeschooling parents. Progress reports provide visibility to your child's development - we want to see them flourish, that's what we're here for afterall!

We're here to help your child soar to success! Our mission is to create invincible learners by building a foundation on inspiration, knowledge and confidence, all with a sprinkle of EdPlace magic.



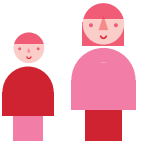
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