



FLORIDA PUBLIC SCHOOL ALTERNATIVES

If you're considering educational options beyond traditional public schools, you're in luck—Florida offers a wide range of alternatives to meet the diverse needs of families. These options include publicly funded programs as well as private and home-based education models.

Whether you're looking for a different learning environment, greater flexibility, or specialized curriculum offerings, this comprehensive guide will help you navigate your choices. We've also included direct links to official resources from the Florida Department of Education (FDOE) to support your decision-making process.

1 CHARTER SCHOOLS

Charter schools are publicly funded, tuition-free schools that operate independently of traditional public school districts through a charter, or contract, with an approved authorizer such as a local school district or university. Open to all Florida residents, charter schools often feature specialized curricula, innovative instructional approaches, or unique educational models. They continue to be one of the fastest-growing school choice options in the state.

→ Learn more: <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/charter-schools/>

2 HOME EDUCATION (HOMESCHOOLING)

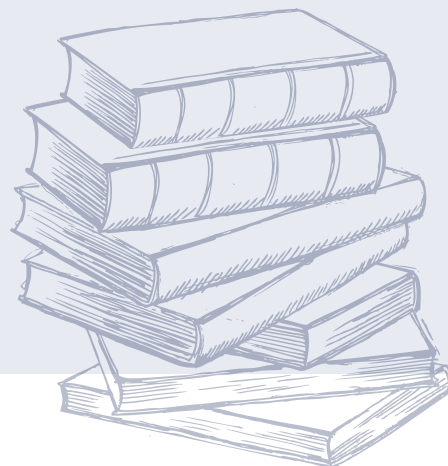
Florida law allows parents to educate their children at home. Parents must file a Letter of Intent with their local school district, conduct annual evaluations, and submit a Letter of Termination upon completion. Home-educated students are eligible for scholarships like the Family Empowerment Scholarship.

→ Parent resources: <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/other-school-choice-options/home-edu/parent-resources.shtml>

3 PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Private schools in Florida are independently operated and may offer specialized programs. Many private schools participate in scholarship programs that may help offset tuition costs.

→ Parent information: <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/private-schools/parent-info.shtml>



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4 VIRTUAL EDUCATION

Established by the Florida Legislature in 1997 as the state's first internet-based public high school, Florida Virtual School (FLVS) has grown into a fully accredited, statewide public school district. Serving students in grades K–12, FLVS offers over 190 online courses taught by certified teachers who tailor instruction to meet individual student needs. Students can enroll in courses full-time or part-time, and the program is available to residents statewide.

→ Explore FLVS: www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/virtual-edu/florida-virtual-school/

5 CONTROLLED OPEN ENROLLMENT

Florida's controlled open enrollment policy allows parents to enroll their child in any public school, within or outside their home district, that has available space. School districts and charter schools must adopt and publish enrollment plans reflecting current capacity and consider parental preference as a key factor in student placement. Priority enrollment is given to military families, foster children, students affected by custody changes, and those residing within the district.

→ Learn more: <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/other-school-choice-options/controlled-open-enrollment.shtml>

6 MAGNET SCHOOLS

Magnet schools and programs offer specialized instruction in areas such as STEM, the arts, or international studies, designed to attract students from outside standard school zones. Magnet schools deliver this focused curriculum school-wide, while magnet programs provide it to specific groups of students within a broader school setting.

→ Learn more: www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/other-school-choice-options/magnet-schools/



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SCHOLARSHIPS & FUNDING OPTIONS

Florida provides several scholarship programs to assist families in accessing alternative education options:

- **Family Empowerment Scholarship (FES):** Offers funding for private school tuition, homeschooling, and other educational expenses.
- **Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC):** Provides scholarships for low-income students to attend private schools.
- **McKay Scholarships:** Supports students with disabilities attending private schools.
- **New Worlds Scholarship:** Provides \$500 for students struggling with reading or mathematics to purchase supplemental materials and tutoring services. www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/k-12-scholarship-programs/reading/index.shtml

Additional information or to apply for scholarships: <https://www.stepupforstudents.org/>

For detailed information on eligibility and application processes, visit the Florida Department of Education's scholarship page:

- Scholarships overview: <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/index.shtml>

FINDING THE RIGHT OPTION FOR YOUR CHILD

Not sure which route you want for your child's education? The FDOE offers the **My Florida Schools** portal, a comprehensive tool to help parents explore educational options:

- Access the portal: <https://www.fldoe.org/myfloridaschools/myfloridaschools-toolkit.shtml>

Florida's commitment to school choice empowers parents to select the best educational path for their children. By exploring these options and utilizing available resources, you can find an alternative that aligns with your child's needs and your family's values.

