

# 10 Reasons *Why*

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Education Savings Account (ESA) programs are at the forefront of education freedom. Since Arizona launched the first ESA program in 2011, the movement has grown considerably. As of 2025, 18 states now have active ESA programs, including: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Hampshire, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, West Virginia, and Wyoming. ESA programs typically enable parents to receive a portion of state per pupil funding for educational services and products for their children. For example, in Arizona's Empowerment Scholarship Account program, students may use scholarship funds for a variety of educational purposes, including private school tuition, textbooks, curriculum, private tutors, therapists, online programs, and other educational goods and services.

Although ESAs have provided meaningful educational freedom for thousands of families across the country, some in the Christian homeschool community have raised concerns with ESAs. To be sure, because ESAs are publicly funded, states necessarily impose restrictions and requirements on scholarship recipients. However, ESAs are not for everyone. Each family must evaluate their educational options based on their own needs and circumstances. That is the beauty of school choice.

At the end of the day, ESAs are part of a larger education freedom ecosystem, of which homeschooling is part of. The growth and success of ESA programs across the country further strengthens a public policy environment that values school choice and protects parental rights and freedom to direct the education of their children. A robust school choice environment—of which ESAs are a critical and growing component—helps protect the rights of parents to homeschool their children in accordance with their Christian worldview.

What follows are ten reasons why Christian homeschooling families should support ESAs—even if they would not personally use them.

## 1. ESAs Promote a Culture of School Choice

The growth and success of ESA programs within a state and across the country promotes a culture of school choice, which in turn protects all school choice options, including homeschooling. Supporting ESAs strengthens the broader education freedom movement that resists one-size-fits-all public education and affirms the diversity of learning needs and environments.

Moreover, embracing ESAs means embracing a culture where options are celebrated, not restricted. Christian homeschool families have long blazed the trail of educational independence. By supporting ESAs, they uphold that freedom for all families, even those whose circumstances prevent them from homeschooling. Expanding educational access doesn't erode homeschool rights—it reinforces the argument that education should be tailored to the child, not to a government system.

A thriving and robust school choice culture—with open enrollment, charter schools, online schools, private schools, tax credit scholarships, and ESAs—will inevitably help protect the freedom of Christian homeschooling families to educate their children in accordance with their Christian worldview.

## **2. ESAs Protect Parental Rights in the Public Square**

At the heart of homeschooling is the principle that parents are the primary decision makers in their children's education. At the heart of Christian homeschooling is the biblical teaching that parents have a God-given responsibility to direct the education and upbringing of their children. Similarly, ESA programs are rooted in the principle that parents should decide what kind of education works best for their child. Each family is different and each child is different. Loving parents are best positioned to make these decisions for their children, not the government.

By supporting ESAs, homeschooling families are actually helping to reinforce the policy environment that values and safeguards parental authority. ESAs further reinforce in the law the idea that parents—not bureaucrats—should direct their children's learning. Every ESA statute that protects educational autonomy contributes to a legal culture in which homeschooling can continue to thrive free from government interference.

## **3. ESAs Create a Broad Grassroots Movement in Support of Education Freedom**

School choice options, including homeschooling, are largely established in state statute. This means school choice options are potentially at risk with each state election. A new composition of state legislators, if a majority are anti-school choice, could mean the repeal or restriction of school choice options, including homeschooling. To protect all school choice options it is important to have a broad grassroots movement of parents willing to reach out to their legislators and go down to the state capitol in support of education freedom.

The expansion of ESA programs can mobilize thousands of parents to advocate for school choice and parental rights, creating a powerful and growing base of grassroots support. Arizona's ESA program has grown from around 12,000 students in 2022 (prior to universal) to over 85,000 as of July 2025. These new advocates are potential allies in the fight for educational freedom, and their voices amplify the message homeschoolers have long championed: education should be flexible, parent-directed, and responsive to children's unique needs.

Instead of seeing ESA families as separate or in competition, homeschoolers should recognize them as part of the same movement. When ESA families push back against governmental overreach or fight for more choices in their states, they're often defending the same freedoms homeschoolers rely on. The more unified the parental rights coalition, the more powerful the resistance to the one-size-fits-all government only approach to education.

## **4. ESAs Are Especially Helpful for Students with Disabilities**

Homeschoolers know that every child learns differently, and for families with children with learning or developmental disabilities, the right resources can be life-changing. ESA funds allow parents to access therapies, private tutors, adaptive technologies, and specialized programs that many families could never afford out-of-pocket. Arizona's program has already served thousands of children with disabilities, helping them reach their potential in ways traditional systems could not.

Even families committed to homeschooling sometimes find themselves unable to meet the needs of children with unique learning challenges. The ESA program doesn't diminish the role of parents—it expands their options. Homeschoolers should support a policy that gives all families, especially those with children who require additional support, the resources and flexibility to succeed.

## **5. ESAs Provide Education Access for Families That Can't Homeschool**

While homeschooling works for some families, it is simply not feasible for others due to financial, personal, or logistical barriers. Families with two working parents, single-parent homes, or those facing personal challenges may want an alternative to public school, yet lack the means to afford private school. ESAs fill this gap, allowing these families to access customized education—without being forced to accept ideologies or curricula that conflict with their values and religious beliefs.

Homeschoolers should empathize with these families. Many homeschoolers chose to homeschool because of the educational and/or worldview shortcomings in public schools. Families who can't homeschool deserve a similar way out. Supporting ESAs ensures that families whose worldview does not align with the public system, but who can't homeschool, can access educational environments that build up rather than tear down their child's faith.

## **6. ESAs Have Not Undermined Homeschool Freedoms**

A common concern among homeschoolers is that state funds for ESAs will lead to state control of traditional homeschoolers. However, Arizona's decade-plus of experience with ESAs shows this fear is unfounded. States rightly distinguish between ESA students and traditional homeschool students who do not receive an ESA scholarship. Arizona's law clearly separates homeschool students from ESA students and prohibits any government supervision of homeschools (A.R.S. §§ 15-802(G)(1)-(2), 15-2404(A)). In fact, homeschool freedoms have expanded in Arizona since the ESA program was created (HB 2389 [2017]; HB 2536 [2018]).

The idea that ESAs are a "Trojan horse" for regulation of homeschoolers doesn't align with Arizona's experience. Arizona homeschoolers continue to enjoy broad educational autonomy, even as ESA participation has grown. When properly structured, ESA laws can exist side-by-side with robust homeschool protections—without one encroaching on the other.

## **7. ESAs Fuel Educational Innovation and Affordability**

With the influx of ESA participants, educational entrepreneurs have responded by launching tutoring services, micro schools, hybrid academies, and therapies that serve a wider range of students—including homeschoolers. This competitive, free-market environment has lowered costs, increased options, and sparked innovation in areas long neglected by traditional education.

Homeschool families directly benefit from this explosion in services. Whether or not they use ESA funds, they now have access to a broader marketplace of educational solutions—from part-time enrichment programs to faith-based cottage schools to online academies. Supporting ESAs is one way homeschoolers can help keep this entrepreneurial momentum alive, driving down costs and increasing access.

## **8. ESAs Create Economic Opportunities for Homeschooling Parents through Educational Services**

The growth of ESA programs has opened the door for homeschooling parents to participate in the educational marketplace—not just as consumers, but as providers. Many homeschool parents already possess the skills, experience, and passion to teach, tutor, or design curriculum. ESA programs allow these parents to turn their knowledge into small businesses by offering educational services such as tutoring, specialized classes, or

enrichment programs. In states like Arizona, parents have created cottage schools, co-ops, and micro schools that are eligible for ESA funds—earning income while helping other families educate their children.

For families that homeschool on a single income or tight budget, this opportunity can be especially meaningful. Becoming an ESA-approved vendor allows homeschool parents to monetize their expertise while maintaining flexible schedules and their own home education routines. It promotes a culture of educational entrepreneurship where homeschool families aren't just beneficiaries of school choice—they're leaders in shaping what that choice looks like. Supporting ESAs empowers parents not only as educators of their own children but as contributors to a dynamic, community-driven educational ecosystem.

## **9. ESAs Increase Pressure on Public Schools to Improve**

When families have the freedom to leave, public schools must adapt, improve, or lose enrollment. ESAs give families negotiating power and incentivize public schools to address parent concerns—whether about curriculum content, safety, or academic performance. For homeschoolers, who have already opted out, this accountability might seem irrelevant, but it contributes to a healthier education system overall.

Additionally, many homeschoolers have friends, family, or community members still in the public school system. Supporting ESAs provides those families a way to push back, find alternatives, or demand better treatment. Homeschoolers can support ESAs not just for themselves, but as a way to amplify parental voices and push public education toward more responsiveness and quality.

## **10. Supporting ESAs is Consistent with the Homeschool Ethos of Educational Freedom**

Homeschooling is rooted in the belief that parents should direct their children's education. Supporting ESAs reinforces this ethos at a broader level, extending the principle of educational freedom to more families. Even if many homeschooling families choose not to participate in ESA programs, respecting others' freedom to choose supports the shared value of autonomy in education.

Opposing ESAs because of personal preference contradicts the very principles homeschoolers have long advocated. Freedom means allowing others to choose a different path—even if it's not your own. And even if a homeschooling family chooses to try an ESA program and finds that it does work for them, they can always leave the program and return back to traditional homeschooling. Supporting ESAs doesn't weaken homeschooling—it fortifies the educational freedom movement and ensures that more families can access the best education for their children.

## **Conclusion**

In a time when parental rights and educational freedom are increasingly under scrutiny, Christian homeschooling families have the opportunity to help strengthen the broader school choice movement, of which they benefit. Education Savings Accounts (ESAs) are not a threat to homeschooling—they can safeguard the rights of all parents to direct their children's education in accordance with their values and convictions. Even for those who never intend to use ESA funds, supporting these programs reinforces the legal and cultural framework

that protects homeschooling freedoms, fuels educational innovation, and helps countless families seeking alternatives to a one-size-fits-all system. By standing in solidarity with other school choice advocates, Christian homeschoolers can help ensure the right to educate one's children in accordance with biblical principles remains strong for years to come.



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