"Earth as Homeschool" – Kula Honua in Hawai'i

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the application process?
Kula Honua (Earth School) programs are open to legally homeschooled children ages 7-10, with a potential younger group ages 4-6. We recommend deciding on homeschooling as a first principle, then looking at Earth School's nature-based education programs as supplementary, to add a sense of community support and focused, project-based learning with professional educators, to the homeschooling program you choose for your child. As a next step, we suggest spending as much time as possible on our website, reading articles and watching videos, finding out everything you can about Something Good in the World, to be sure this is the right educational environment for your child and your family.

Please read through all the FAQs and then give us a call or send us an email if you have more questions. After that, set up a free visit for you and your child(ren), to see the Earth as Homeschool programs in action. If mutually agreed by the Educational Program Director and the family, a full one-day visit may be recommended to be sure that Earth School is a good fit for everyone involved. If Earth School is already under way for the year, the Director may recommend a one-week visit for the child. There is a suggested donation of $30-40 per day for visits. Because the enrollment fee is non-refundable, we want to be sure everyone is completely happy before registering for Earth School. In some cases, there can be a one-month trial period before full tuition would be required.

When do programs take place?
For the 2026/2027 school year, nature-based education programs for ages 7-10 are taking place two days per week, Mondays and Wednesdays, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., from September through April. For the potential younger program, this would also take place two days per week, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Earth School may follow the Ka'ū School District calendar generally for school closings, holidays and vacations.

Can my child just attend 1 day a week, rather than 2?
This is not recommended. Earth as Homeschool is a throughout experience, and children generally prefer to be involved in all aspects of the year's activities. It is certainly possible to take days off whenever needed, and often homeschooling parents will take weeks off for family travel or other homeschooling activities. However, there is no reduction in tuition for days or weeks missed.

Where do programs take place?
Earth as Homeschool farm-based education programs take place at varied locations in the Na'alehu area. Because the program includes many field trips and hikes, we are not always in the same place throughout the day. The home base for Kula Honua is on an organic backyard fruit farm, and the indoor space is an 850 square foot yurt, with an attached bathroom. If a second program is introduced, there would be an additional indoor space in our Envira Pod Mobile Educational trailer.

What ages do you accommodate?
Earth School programs are created according to need, so while at the moment our programs are set up for ages 7-10, we have often had programs for younger and older ages, because a group of

families got together and requested these. Let us know what you are looking for, and we can let you know if we can accommodate that wish in the coming year.

Do parents stay or is this a "drop-off" program?
Parents only need to stay on site for the first visit. After that, we recommend leaving children to get to know Earth School on their own. We don't think of it as a "drop-off" program though, because families are so involved in homeschooling. We want families to feel they are a part of the Earth School community too. So we invite parents and siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins and grandparents, to volunteer as much as possible, helping out as a teacher's assistant, or in the gardens, or with field trips or events. If a parent has a special skill to share, or a professional expertise that is relevant to our studies, we welcome them to lead volunteer workshops with our students.

What does the tuition cover?
Everything we do every day at Earth School is covered! That includes art, music, dance, theatre, academic subjects, farming, hiking, and so much more. From time to time, there may be an extra fee for a special visiting educator or a field trip. However, all children can attend these extra events free of charge if the cost presents a major financial hardship for the family. Students may be asked to bring their own materials and supplies for some projects.

How do you calculate the tuition?
The Earth School tuition is kept as low as possible, to try to accommodate families of all kinds. We calculate tuition at $10 per hour, per child, per day. The tuition payment can be made in one lump sum at the start of the school year, or in two separate payments for each semester, or monthly payments. If a family

joins in to Earth School partway through the session, tuition may be pro-rated.

Is there any financial aid?
Limited, partial scholarships are available, based on how much is in the scholarship fund at the beginning of the school year. Scholarships are given on a first-come, first-served basis. If extra scholarship money comes in during the course of the year, families who have applied for assistance will be contacted. Limited work scholarships may also be available if a parent has a professional skill that Earth School is in need of. Note: Venture Upward will cover the costs of Earth School programs up to a certain amount.

How do I apply for a scholarship?
Partial scholarships are available according to genuine need. In order to apply for a scholarship, parents must submit a letter, specifying their financial need. Although every effort will be made to meet each family's needs, SGITW cannot guarantee that the full amount requested will be available to all those who apply.

Do parents have to volunteer?
No. Assistance is always welcome, whether helping out with garden projects or grant research or family events. But no one is required to volunteer.

What if my child doesn't want to participate in a particular activity?
Children are not required to participate in every activity, but the spirit of Earth School is generally one of everyone pitching in and giving it a try. Our agreement with the children is that they will try everything, even for 15 minutes, before deciding they don't want to participate. If possible, alternative activities may be

given, or a child may use the time to complete other projects, draw, read, write, etc.

What is a "typical day" like?

There is no typical day at Earth School! Because we are nature-based, our activities often depend on the season and the weather. Also, our immersion learning process is often child-directed, so we have the flexibility to stay engaged within a thematic unit for weeks if we choose to. However, we do have certain activities we try to include each day, and each week. For example, most days start with "farm chores," which may include (depending on the season) taking care of the chickens, weeding, watering, mulching, composting, etc. We often engage in "Mindfulness" breathing, "Brain Gym" stretches, and singing class songs. Kula Honua practices 'oli and hula. All of these activities get our energy and focus ready for learning fun. Most days include art, crafts, movement and music, and these will often be integrated with the thematic unit of study we are in (lump-learning), or will relate to the season. In addition to snacks, lunch and free playtimes (outdoors always if possible), there is academic curriculum work, related to whatever thematic unit we might be immersed in at the time. We often take field trips to local museums, parks, libraries, and farms, depending on what we are studying. For all trips, parents and siblings are welcome to join in.

What is your educational approach?

Earth School uses the Golden Education Template (GET) method. Visit our website to see a video and read articles about this international school model and approach to learning. Our approach is always place-based, so Kula Honua is focused on living and learning in Hawai'i.

What academic subjects are included?
The Earth School (GET) approach is nature-based, arts-integrated, hands-on, whole body, sensory, experiential learning. So in every subject, this is how children engage, whether it's Science, English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Geography, Health, Art, Music, Theatre, or any other area. We provide an environment within which learning can happen, rather than teaching from the top down.

Do I include Earth School in my reports to my school district?
You are welcome to list the farm-based education program known as "Earth School" for Homeschoolers, which is run by Something Good in the World, as one of your resources, as supplementary programs for homeschoolers. Earth School is not a "school," it is a "school of thought" and our programs are only supplementary; therefore it does not take the place of schooling.

What should my child do on days when s/he is not at Earth School?
That's completely up to you! We send out emails and photos on a regular basis to let parents know what we have been studying, reading, learning about, and these reports include suggested activities for use at home. We also recommend books to read or movies to watch, museums to visit, any kinds of activities that we feel would supplement what the children are learning at Earth School. There is no requirement to do any of these things.

Is there homework?
Yes, for older children, First Grade ages and up, there are weekly assignments to follow up and expand on what we are learning in class. These can include personal essays, reports, creative writing, or artistic projects. Children can spend as much time as

they wish to complete these. Parents can assist children, or work can be done independently.

Do you accept children with learning differences?
Earth as Homeschool is a small group in a small setting. Although we can at times accommodate a child with mild learning differences, Something Good in the World does not have the professional staff to assist a child with major learning or behavioral differences. Additionally, we do not have the resources to support a child who requires extensive one-on-one attention. Given the nature of our learning environment, a student's internal motivation and ability to focus are important for her/his success in our educational programs.

How do you practice Conflict Resolution?
Teachers always work to help children reach a better conclusion. As needed, we hold "class meetings" to discuss issues that come up that children are not able to work out on their own. (ref. Teaching Children to Care) The class meeting allows all of the children to offer reasonable solutions to an issue. In some cases, the "student council" (elected monthly by older students) may be invited to help the class decide on how to resolve an issue. There are no "time outs," but we do offer children the option of a "walk and talk" outdoors with an adult, or taking a break to sit in a quiet area of the Children's Peaceful Garden (Ka Mala Maluhia).

What is your policy for medical emergencies?
All of our staff members are trained in CPR and First Aid. Our policy in a serious medical emergency is to call 911, and then to contact parents.

How do I set up a visit to Earth School?
We recommend that parents spend as much time as possible on our website, reading articles about our educational approach, and watching videos about our programs, to get a full picture of what Something Good in the World and Earth School are all about. Children often enjoy watching our videos too, to see what the environment looks like. If you are still interested after researching our website, and if you have any further questions, please get in touch by email or phone: somethinggooditw@aol.com or 914-217-9249.

Mahalo! ☺