

Co-operative/Community Learning

A homeschool co-op is made up of several families who meet and learn together. My personal opinion is that, as a grass-roots community endeavor, co-ops are not professional courses. Instead of being strict on learning objectives, co-ops are more casual and fun, even when structured. Similarly, any fees involved should cover costs and perhaps compensation for efforts, although co-op leaders should aim to volunteer as much as possible. Organizing co-ops should not be seen as a source of income but a service to your community.

Different types of co-op: Academic- studying a subject or topic, Clubs- exploring different hobbies and activities, Play- yes, playdates count as homeschooling!

How to start a homeschool co-op?

Purpose: What are your hobbies and interests that you can share with the community? What are your child's hobbies and interests that you can explore together and with friends?

Format: Decide whether you will lead the co-op yourself or if you want to find other families to contribute. For multiple contributors, you could have each parent cover a different topic over an agreed upon schedule. For example, parent A covers architecture for 6 weeks and parent B covers art history for 6 weeks. *Parents should choose topics that are easy and convenient for them, trying to learn a new subject just to teach it in a co-op is more difficult than sticking to what you already know and love. You can also mix different types of co-ops in one. So, parent B could have chosen a fun hobby like creative writing, it doesn't have to be another academic subject.

Planning: how many sessions will it take to cover the material? Maybe an art co-op would cover 6 different styles over 6 weeks. Or it could be ongoing like a knitting club. How long will each session be? My personal preference is a co-op that has enough time for the activity and time for socialization and free-play. This builds better bonds with your co-op mates. When and where will the co-op take place? Weekly, biweekly, monthly, at your home, in the library, at the park?

Participants: Once you have the what, when, and where, you can find the who! Who will you invite to join you? Maybe you already have some like-minded homeschool friends or maybe you want to advertise to the community at large to meet new people.

Co-op Ideas:

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| -Poetry/ Hadith Tea Time | -Crafting/ Art Journals |
| -Show and Tell (public speaking) | -Nature Walk/ Study |
| -Engineers – legos, blocks, random materials | -Math activities/ Personal Finance |
| -Yarn Club- crochet, knitting, weaving | -Study of Seerah |
| -Book Club | -Creative Writing |
| -Board Games | -Park Play/ Bike Riding |
| -Anatomy | -Nutrition |

