

Homeschoolers have many good reasons to join a homeschool co-op. You may want to spend time with families with a similar education philosophy, to find friends for yourself and your children, to expand your child's educational opportunities, or just to have fun with other homeschoolers. Whatever your reason for thinking about joining a co-op, a homeschool co-op has many advantages for both parents and children.

Here are 12 great benefits, based on feedback from families who have participated in our co-op these last few years.

1. A homeschool co-op maximizes your limited time and gives you a break from teaching every subject. If certain subjects are already being taught at co-op, you can spend your time at home teaching your child other subjects.



2. At a co-op you can draw on the expertise of other people to teach subjects you may dislike or be weak in. Among a variety of classes, our co-op offers history, creative writing (*pictured left*

) and science each semester. So if you don't want to correct essays or dissect a frog on your kitchen counter, this co-op is for you!

3. Your student can take classes in subjects you may never even have thought of, taught by experts or parents passionate about those fields. In just the last few years, our co-op has offered popular courses in digital photography, web site design, psychology, drawing, nutrition, marine biology, creative writing, and Latin -- taught by a portrait photographer, a computer programmer, a licensed psychologist, a renowned community artist, a nurse, a marine biologist, a published author, and a foreign language teacher! Who knows what new courses we'll offer next year?

4. Students benefit by learning from someone else for a change, adapting to other teaching styles besides yours, and getting a little exposure to the "classroom" experience. A co-op offers the opportunity for your child to sit under another's authority and be part of a classroom. Yet you are still the primary teacher of your children at co-op, so you still

maintain control over your child's education. It's the best of homeschool and the best of private school!

5. A co-op can make homeschooling affordable because families share expenses.

Members have access to computers or science lab equipment that normally would be too expensive for one family to afford, or everyone purchases books and materials in bulk to receive discounts or save on shipping. In addition, at our co-op, fees pay only for supplies, not salaries.



6. Some subjects are best taught in group settings, such as public speaking, drama, and P.E. At a co-op your homeschooler will have access to an audience for performances and oral reports, or to lab partners for science experiments (*pictured left*). In P.E., elementary children learn those childhood favorites like Red Rover and Dodge Ball, while junior high and high school students play kickball and ultimate frisbee.

7. Co-ops provide accountability, so families are more likely to stay on track. This is really important for high school students trying to earn credits or families trying to find the time, or inclination, for science or creative writing.

8. Co-ops provide a healthy competition. Positive peer pressure from other students often helps their attitudes toward their assignments, and knowing students must share with others in the class provides the necessary motivation to do their best.

9. A co-op offers encouragement, support and guidance from other homeschooling parents and their families. Many parents are so relieved to find another parent going through the same issue or to talk with a parent who has already gone through a similar situation successfully. At co-op, you can spend your break time learning from others' experiences and sharing your own.



<http://www.homeschool.com> is a website that provides information about homeschooling. It includes a directory of homeschooling resources, a forum for parents to discuss their experiences, and a blog with articles on various topics related to homeschooling. The website is a valuable resource for parents who are considering homeschooling or are already homeschooling their children.