

Some families absolutely love co-op and some families cannot make it work. That is okay; co-ops do not necessarily "fit" every family. However, after comparing families who sign up every semester with those who breathe a sigh of relief on the last day, I have determined a few tips that may help co-op fit your family better.



1. Make co-op subjects an integral part of your homeschooling. For example, at our co-op, my own children take creative writing, P.E., history and science (pictured at left)

. At home, my high school students read the material and do any homework in preparation for those co-op classes and, additionally, do math and Bible. However, my elementary children do only grammar, math and Bible at home, and they do co-op subjects such as creative writing and science exclusively at co-op. Similarly, if your child takes world history and biology at co-op, don't have him do U.S. history and physical science at home too. Being at co-op one day a week limits the remaining days for "book learning," so make those co-op days count! Follow the co-op subjects or curriculum, and use your time at home for other subjects not offered at co-op.

2. Relinquish some control. Understand that another parent may not teach a certain subject the way you would. If that will bother you, don't sign up for those courses. Better yet, volunteer to teach those subjects about which you feel most passionate. For example, I knew I wanted control over how my children learned to write essays, so I volunteered to teach their composition classes.

3. Make attendance a priority. Don't let anything, except illness, interfere with going to co-op. If at all possible, schedule appointments between co-op dates and plan vacations during co-op breaks.

4. Arrive early. Punctuality is noted and appreciated no matter where you go. Besides, many co-ops start off with a little fellowship time before classes begin, and that's a good opportunity for you and your children to develop friendships.

