



LINE UPON LINE LEARNING

Homeschool Co-op Class Ideas

PLUS

WHY JOIN A CO-OP

HOW TO CHOOSE CLASSES

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What Is a Co-op?

A co-op is also called a “co-operative.” In a true “co-operative,” all the participants pitch in to help teach, organize, set up and clean, or watch other children. Co-ops can meet in someone’s home, in a public place, or in a private building such as a church building or rented community center.

Keep in mind that with a public or private location, the cost of the co-op will rise. Many private locations that rent to small groups require group insurance, monthly or weekly rent, and/or personal background checks. A public location, such as a library, may also have fees or special rules for room use.

Homeschool groups that are called “co-ops” can vary widely. Some groups meet regularly in homes, with formal plans for a year to work through a curriculum together. The group could even rotate homes each week or month. Other home-based groups may function more casually, like a weekly play group. Some homeschool groups focus on a variety of ages, while others are more specific, by offering only elementary or high school.

In addition, some homeschool groups are called “co-ops” but don’t quite function as one. Teachers may be parents who are paid to teach a class. Other groups may bring in outside professionals (such as art or dance teachers, chemistry teachers, etc.) in order to meet the needs of the students.

In some cases, homeschool groups function as a sort of “micro-school” or drop-off program, in which parents leave children for a day or a few hours. In these cases, parents may be part of the teaching “staff,” but those who are not must pay extra fees and/or provide service hours for the group.

The less involvement the parents have in the group, the higher the cost. Obviously, there are lots of fees required when teachers are paid. Likewise, the legal requirements for a drop-off or micro-school program could be prohibitive for many homeschooling families.

In this e-book, the focus is on homeschool co-ops that require parental involvement.



Why Join a Co-op?

When I first decided to homeschool, my mother, a public school teacher for decades, asked me a question I believe most homeschooling parents are faced with eventually: What about socialization?

I admit it is hard to find time for play dates for elementary-aged children, especially compared to the preschool days! At the elementary age, many of my children's friends go to public school and do not return home until after 3:30 p.m., so they are not available. My children and their homeschool friends are also busy with school work most mornings, so homeschool friend "play-dates" don't always work as well.

Joining a co-op adds another dimension to our homeschool week. There are so many benefits. Here are some descriptions of the many benefits of homeschool co-ops, including and beyond the socialization question.

Socialization and **environment.** Some families choose to homeschool in order to avoid a *negative* social experience in a public or private school, such as bullying, crudeness, or dangerous situations.

Instead, at a homeschool co-op, you are usually present and familiar with the children and families you and your children are associating with. This can help you guide relationships in a positive direction. You will feel comfortable knowing that all involved in the co-op are likewise working towards building caring relationships, preventing bullying, etc.

When we attend a co-op regularly and see the same people every week, we have the chance to make friends and enjoy companionship with others.

Group work. Homeschool children can participate in group projects in co-op classes and share what they are learning with each other in project fairs and show-and-tell. Some classes, such as choir, group sports, or multi-player games are impossible to implement in a single household of siblings. Co-ops offer an environment for co-operative learning and play.

Expertise and **variety.** You do your best throughout the week to make learning interesting. Hearing another parent present information in a new and unique way gives children a new perspective. Seeing things

from a new perspective is a key to learning. Attending a co-op helps you give that gift of diversity to your children.

Likewise, there are probably several subjects you may not be familiar with. I don't really like doing science experiments, and higher-level science and math scare me. A homeschool co-op class by a math or science-minded parent allows my kids to benefit from their expertise. On the other hand, let me jump into teaching your kids writing or early phonics!

Support system. Many parents feel challenged and a bit overwhelmed when they first start to homeschool their children. It can certainly be a huge undertaking; there's no denying that. However, it can also be one of the most rewarding things that you can do for your kids.

That said, gathering with other homeschoolers is a huge blessing. At co-op, I can discuss general homeschooling issues I am facing and get advice. Other parents may have ideas for the best teaching methods and suggestions for curricula. We can also compare curricula and have a buy/sell homeschool day.

A break. It is not just your children who need a change of scenery: You do too! Participating in a co-op may help you fend off (dare I say it?) potential boredom.

Co-op classes release the pressure off of you! Hopefully, there are enough parents involved that you can get break from teaching, even if it's just for a short time. Your kids can learn, and you are not teaching! And your kids can make messes somewhere other than your own home. (Remember, that in most co-ops, however, all parents pitch in to help clean up at the end of the day!)

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST

A school experience. A family friend once wondered how my homeschool kids would learn to sit quietly in a classroom or line up with peers without a school experience. Truly, that made me laugh. That type of school experience is ot what I'm talking about.

By *school experience*, I mean that your children will have the joy of holiday parties, "recess" with friends, and a chance to pack a backpack and make a lunch.

My oldest declared he wanted to go to school because he wanted to ride a bus. (When he finally had a chance, he said it was rather boring.) Now, my youngest loves to tell me she is "ready for school" when she wears her backpack and pretends the van is a school bus. You'd be surprised at what kids think they are missing out on. Talk up their co-op "school" experience.

You may be interested in a "school experience" for the older kids. In a more academic co-op, your high schoolers may have a chance to learn the benefits of taking notes, studying for a test, meeting a deadline, and other skills for life beyond a homeschool classroom.

Note: Some of the links in this document are affiliate links

Why Teach at a Co-op?

As mentioned, a true homeschool co-op requires co-operation from all involved. If you are hesitating, here are some further considerations.

WHY WOULD YOU TEACH?

You want to be a part of a co-op. To be part of a co-op, you have to do something. That is the meaning of a co-op. Consider one of the main advantages of meeting at a co-op: Instead of homeschooling and supervising children all day, you can have a break during the time you are *not* teaching.

Here are examples from my life. At my first co-op, when my oldest was five years old, I co-taught a “Junior club” class. This meant that every three or four weeks, it was my turn to lead a class activity for the children in lower elementary school. In exchange, my son had a science class and an around-the-world cultures class from other parents. I did not teach every week or all day. While my children were in their classes, I was able to get some alone time.

The following year, I lead a creative writing class for elementary-aged children, and my son had a science class and “life skills” class. Instead of spending all day homeschooling, I was able to teach a class I was passionate about, my son could attend other classes, and I got a break while they were in class.

You have expertise or a hobby you want to share with others. Sometimes there is something you truly love doing. I suspect that for most people, leading a creative writing class would not be on that list. However, there is probably something you enjoy that you could teach, such as a hobby you do in your own time? I hope this e-book will help you think outside of the box.

You want to earn a little bit of money.

As mentioned, most co-ops don’t charge money. However, one co-op we attended charged a fee for music lessons and beginning dance. My children really wanted to take those classes. (It is convenient not to have to make another drive to a class like this at a *different* time in the week.) To pay for my children’s own classes, I decided to offer my own paid class. I taught a middle school-level writing class, which required some time to plan lessons, grade papers, etc. I did not feel guilty charging a fee because others at the co-op did, too. Some co-ops might have different policies.

WHAT IF I CAN’T TEACH?

I don’t know anything. Stop being hard on yourself! If you can homeschool your own children, you can add in a few more in a group setting. Homeschooling does not need to be perfect to be successful.

I have little kids/a baby. Volunteer to be a leader for the littlest group! When one of my children was still nursing, I was the nursery supervisor all day. This allowed me to be with my baby while the parents of toddlers taught a class.

I’m scared to teach. New things are always a little bit scary, just as I bet homeschooling was when you first started. If teaching a group is new for you, talk to other homeschool teachers for their tips. Remember that these kids are just like your own kids.

It costs too much to teach. Supply fees should be covered evenly in any co-op. In a co-op, all homeschoolers work together.

What Could Be Taught at a Homeschool Co-op?

There are a few concepts to consider when determining what you want to teach.

What can you teach? The purpose of this ebook is to give you ideas! I hope you can see yourself teaching one of the courses mentioned in this e-book, or that it jump-starts your own thoughts.

What can other parents teach? This is a question for you to ask other potential teachers. If there is already a picture story time, you probably don't need another one.

What do your children need? I'll address this again later, but consider your purpose for joining a co-op: educational experiences or simply fun. Answering that will help you decide which classes you will want to teach. I began teaching a hands-on American History class because my child needed to learn it at this time and I wanted to make the topic fun. That class met both purposes: my child was learning American History *and* it was a fun, hands-on experience.

The next few sections discuss various class ideas, beginning with playful class ideas for preschoolers and ending with more formal class ideas for high school. Keep in mind that if I suggest a class for middle school, but you feel it would work for high school, you have that freedom to use the ideas as you see fit! This is meant to be a starting point for your own decisions!

**Alone, we can do so little;
together, we can do so much.**

— HELEN KELLER



PLAY SCHOOL

Preschool Co-op Classes

There is something delightful about watching kids play, and the pace at which preschoolers learn always astounds me. That said, young children require lots of energy. Here are some co-op ideas for the youngest children and for adults that have the energy to keep up with them.

EXPLORATION

Sensory Play. Use a water table, play-dough, a basket of rice or beans, and/or kinetic sand for hands-on play. For example, practice pouring water or sorting beans or buttons.

Get the Wiggles Out. Bring balls, hula hoops, and more for organized or unorganized play.

Imagination Play. Use costumes, play food, dolls, blocks, cars, trucks, and so forth for general, fun imagination time.

Preschool Songs. Teach fun traditional preschool songs, such as the Farmer in the Dell, the Hokey-Pokey, and London Bridge.

Show and Tell. Give the children a chance to show their special objects and share good news. By planning in advance, kids can bring in their favorite item in a certain category.

Outside Play. Let kids explore and play outside.



EARLY EDUCATION IDEAS

While preschool-age children should mainly learn through play, here are some ideas to help kids learn early academic concepts or further develop motor skills.

Music Exploration. Sing songs and play with hand instruments like drums, cymbals, and triangles to instill a love of music.

Story Time Activities. Select a theme and find books, projects, and songs that correlate.

Arts and Crafts. Do simple crafts together and enjoy learning about patterns, colors, and so forth.

Explore STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math). Do weekly preschool-level activities and explorations together, or build with LEGO bricks or blocks.

Learn the Alphabet. Do various amusing activities or crafts for each letter of the alphabet throughout the year. See my [alphabet of activities](#) blog post.

Basic Spanish (no reading required). Use [Salsa Spanish](#) (free on George Public Broadcasting) to introduce basic vocabulary. At the weekly co-op, play games together that coordinate with the videos.

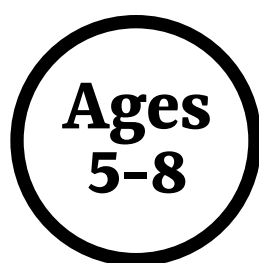
Basic ASL (no reading required). Teach young children basic signs to help them communicate. Kids do a great job of picking up languages, and ASL is fun. Use [Signing Time](#) to include fun ASL songs.

Preschool Club. Have a different parent lead this class each week. In our class, a different would lead the class with activities of his or her choosing. Parents would take a turn every three or four weeks.

For more ideas on how to encourage learning through play, check out the e-book [Learn With Play](#), which I contributed to.

Play is the work of the child.

— MARIA MONTESSORI



LEARNING IS FUN

Early Education Co-op Classes

Co-op classes for ages 5-8 can be a lot of fun! Children are now at an age at which they can handle more difficult concepts yet they still thrive on learning through play.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Phonics Fun. Use [Logic of English Foundations](#), a hands-on phonics-based reading and spelling program, to teach basic phonics. (There are other phonics-based early reading programs with games and activities, too. This one is my favorite.)

Speech. Give kids a chance to practice talking in front of each other, such as by doing show-and-tell or preparing simple speeches. Consider memorizing and reciting scriptures, nursery rhymes, or poems.

Picture Book Storytime. Read picture books during story time, discuss them afterwards, and incorporate related crafts and activities.

Introduction to Poetry. Read poetry and help children try to write their own poems. (See my [picture book poetry units](#) for activity ideas.)

SOCIAL STUDIES

Our Community. Teach about the local community by learning about specific community helpers and workers. If possible, take field trips to the fire station or have a guest visitor talk about their job. Write thank you letters to local workers and incorporate imaginary play, acting out what the helpers do.

U.S. States and Symbols. Teach about the states and national symbols by focusing on big cities and landmarks. Find them on the map and study the animals and habitats common to the area.

U.S. Presidents and Historic Figures. Teach about the U.S. presidents or other historical figures throughout history by reading picture books and adding coloring pages. Make a timeline.

World Geography. Read [Me on the Map](#) and teach about the parts of the world: states, countries, continents, and oceans.



STEAM

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ART, AND MATH

Picture Book STEAM Challenge. Use picture books to explore design concepts in science, technology, engineering, and math. Add a creative artistic challenge each week, such as recreating a bird's nest, famous landmark, or Christmas Tree.

Hands-on Math Lab. Learn math with hands-on games and activities. (This can be done at various levels according to children's ability.)

LEGO Challenge. Practice building with LEGOS with kid-appropriate challenges, such as "Build a House" or "Build a Dragon."

Nature Club. Explore bugs and plants by taking magnifying glasses outside to a field or stream. Learn what is near you, grow a plant, or explore how vegetables grow. Create art with your collected nature items!

LANGUAGES

Salsa Spanish 1. The free [Salsa Spanish videos](http://georgiapublicbroadcasting.org) (available at georgiapublicbroadcasting.org) are entirely in Spanish but very kid-friendly. They introduce vocabulary and sentences to help get kids actually speaking in Spanish. The first series is geared to K-2 grade.

Salsa Spanish 2. For students who have already finished the Salsa Spanish 1 videos, continue their early Spanish education with [Salsa Spanish 2](#). These more difficult videos and the lesson plans are geared for older elementary school children.

Intro to ASL. Teach American Sign Language using [Signing Time Sentences](#) or another signing program as a base.

Other languages if you have willing teachers!

ELECTIVES

Unit Studies. Use a curriculum like [Five in a Row](#) for cross-curricular activities.

Junior Club. Each week, assign a different parent to lead the class in an activity or game of his or her choosing.

Fine Arts:

- Arts and Crafts
- Drama club/theater
- Music appreciation
- Private music classes

Physical Education:

- Beginning dance
- Organized sports class



**Educating the mind without
educating the heart is no
education at all.**

— ARISTOTLE



NEW PERSPECTIVES

Elementary Co-op Classes

By the time a child is well into elementary school, they will have reading skills that allow them to participate in more educational classes. That said, kids at this age still love to play. Can you trick your kids into learning with play-based and hands-on fun courses?

An advantage of doing classes at a co-op is that you and your child can learn new perspectives on topics they've learned about before. You will see new perspectives as you teach others' children. Your children will see new perspectives as they learn from other parents.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Creative Writing Class. Read upper-elementary picture books or use the book [No More "I'm Done!"](#) for creative writing prompts that encourage children to find their own voices.

Creative Writing with LEGOs. Use a story opener as a prompt. Then, encourage students to illustrate the ending using LEGO bricks. At home, children can then write their unique endings. Take photos of the LEGO creations, and compile the stories with photos into a book for each child.

Writing about Reading. Teach the structure of great stories. Respond, compare and contrast, and imitate great literature.

Elementary Writing. Use a favorite curriculum to teach writing skills appropriate for upper elementary school. I like [WriteShop](#) and [IEW](#) (Institute of Excellence in Writing), which provide two almost opposite approaches to writing. (IEW is more formal, and WriteShop is more exploratory.)

Poetry Appreciation. Read and appreciate good poetry and have your students write poems. Consider using [The Child's Introduction to Poetry](#) as a guide.

Book club. Select a novel to discuss each week or month.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Hands-On American History. Teach American history from Exploration to the Civil War. Families can read selected picture books at home. Then, in class, you can lead the children in historical group games and activities. This is a fun way to teach American history. For specific ideas, visit my [Hands-on American History series](#) on my blog.

World Geography. Teach the geography of countries. You could focus on cultures and communities or focus on the natural geography of mountains, rivers, and habits.

U.S. States. Learn the geography of states, or focus on various landmarks and histories of the states.

World History. Follow any history curriculum and do the big projects that you normally wouldn't do at home, such as mummifying a chicken (yep, I tried that!).

Career and Community Exploration. Invite guests that will share about their career, such as what they do and what they studied. The more children know, the more they can determine what they like.

Basic Economics. Teach about supply and demand. Determine the differences between consumers, suppliers, and those in the service industry.

Civics. Teach about the different levels of government and basic social issues such as voting.

History with American Girls. Teach American History with popular stories about historical girls. Students are encouraged to bring their own American Girl doll to class!



STEM

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH

Elementary-Level Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, or Physics. Find a favorite science curriculum and do the experiments in a group rather than one-on-one with a student.

STEM Challenge. Teach about various concepts in science, technology, engineering, and math and then provide a hands-on challenge. For example, learn about aerodynamics and then make paper airplanes that meet certain rules. Or, learn about the physics related to golfing and make a table-sized golf course. Emphasize the engineering cycle throughout, which requires design, testing, and improvement.

Hands-on Math Lab 2. As mentioned under the previous section, find age-appropriate math activities and games, this time focusing on multiplication and division, etc.

Nature Club. Focus on items of interest, such as the plants, birds, and mammals in your area. Encourage students to keep a nature journal.

Introduction to Computer Programming. Use the free program [Scratch](#) to teach basic programming.

Robotics. Use basic programmable robots to help children learn what programming means.

LANGUAGES

Language Dabble. Teach how to say basic words in a variety of languages in order to give an overview of how such languages sound. Teach counting, greetings, favorite songs, etc.

Beginning or conversational modern languages (any). Find a curriculum you enjoy to help you teach this. If you or someone else is proficient in a language, consider teaching a conversational class, that encourages students to speak as much as possible. After students are more familiar with a language, play games and do activities in the learned language.

Introduction to ASL. American Sign Language is a fun language to learn in person. Consider using [Signing Time Sentences](#) to teach this class.

FINE ARTS

Drama Club/Theater. Let children write and/or act in short plays and present them to the rest of the co-op.

Introduction to Cooking or Sewing/Knitting/Quilting. Teach students skills in home economic classes.

Art Exploration. Teach children how to draw, paint, and create in an art class.

Beginning/Continuing Dance.

Music:

- Elementary Choir
- Recorder
- Composers in history
- Private Lessons

ELECTIVES

Gameschooling. Play board games, card games, and other games. Many games may have an educational component.

Miscellaneous Unit Studies. Focus on a specific theme and incorporate writing, science, reading, and art activities.

Chess Club. Teach the classic game and practice during class each week.

Physical Education

- Beginning dance
- Organized sports or gym class
-

Fun Club. Assign a different family or parent each week to lead the class in an activity or game of his/her choosing.



**I have never let my schooling
interfere with my education.**

— MARK TWAIN

OPTIONS

What should co-op be about?

Is co-op for fun or for learning?

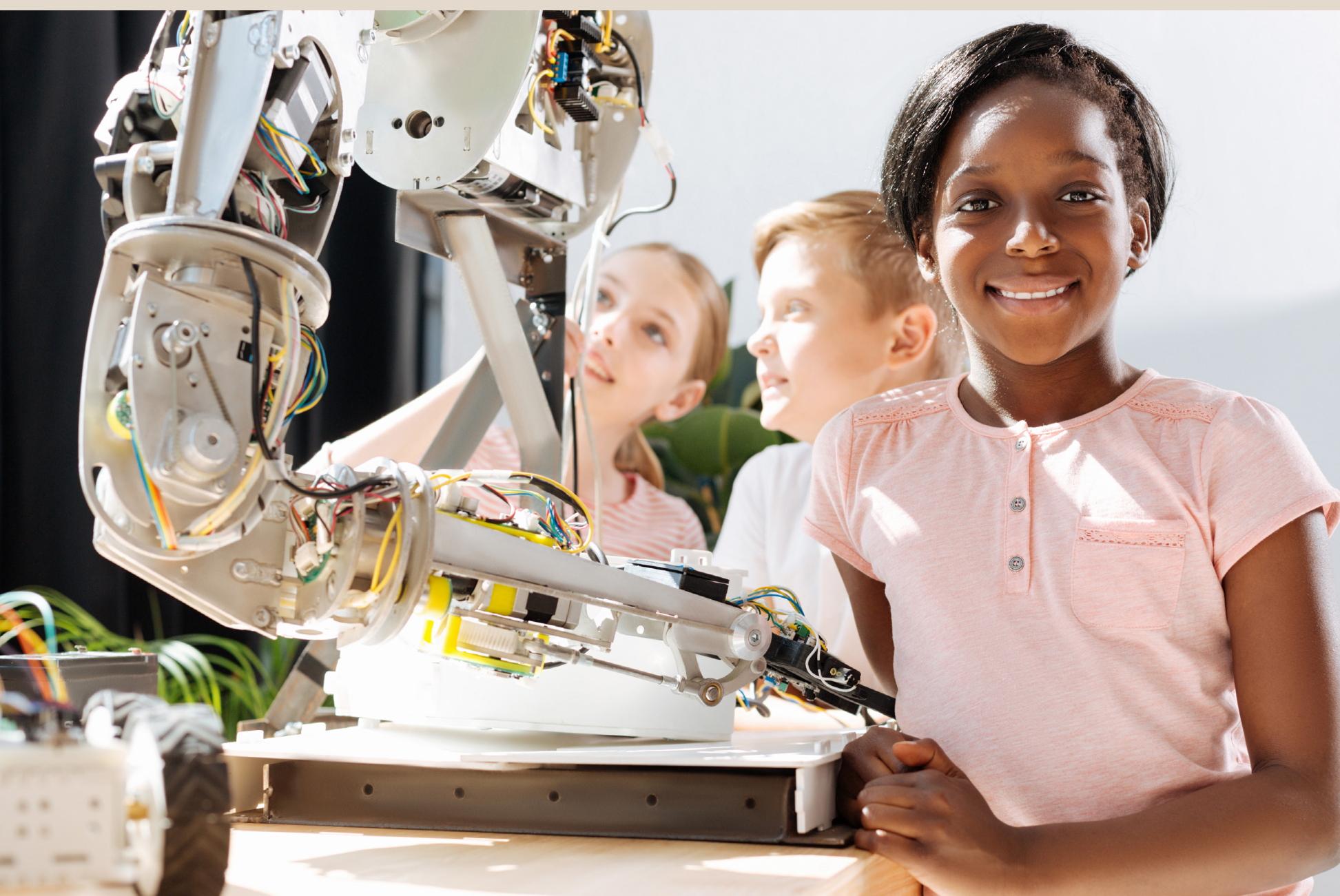
You've already considered the fact that play equals learning for the youngest children. As children get older, this may still be true.

Some parents start to get serious about academics once a child is in upper elementary school. I know I did! Instead of low-key games and lessons, we moved on to a list of subjects that we wanted to finish everyday.

Other parents recognize that after a week of structured academics, their children need more fun, playtime. They take a day "off" from the regular schedule.

Co-op can fill either role. Some classes could simply be for fun, while others can be more academic. The great thing about homeschooling is the ability to customize your days and your curricula to meet the needs of your children.

I tend to use co-op more as the fun-day "break" from our more academic schedule for my elementary and middle school children. That said, I love that my kids can get some educational classes. They may not even know they are actually learning because co-op is so much fun.





LET'S THINK SERIOUSLY
OR
LET'S EXPLORE

Middle School Co-op Classes

Middle school is a time of change, and I'm not just talking about puberty. For some families, middle school is the time to start thinking about college prep classes in high school. Other families consider middle school the perfect time for their children to explore a variety of subjects to see what they enjoy.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Middle School Writing. Review proper sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics, as well as the basics of writing a paragraph. Teach students to write analytically, summarize, and begin short research papers.

Middle School Literature. Focus on comprehension and recognize key features of well done fiction, such as foreshadowing, theme, and text evidence.

Spelling and Vocabulary Booster Club. Re-emphasize some basic spelling rules and expand vocabulary by learning Greek and Latin root words.

Speech. Help children practice talking in front of other people with basic speeches about favorite things, family, and self. Consider also having students memorize famous passages, poems, or scriptures for recitation.

Creative Writing. Encourage students in structure and plot and work towards writing stories or even writing a novel throughout the year.

Middle School Book Club. Select a book to read and discuss informally each month.

What curricula?

For formal middle school writing instruction, I really like [IEW](#) (Institute of Excellence in Writing) because it focuses on both the structure of writing and sentence styles. It is rigorous for middle school and very effective.



SOCIAL STUDIES

World Geography. Focus on countries and cultures or geographic and topographic landforms. Or, combine both concepts.

American History or **World History.** Teach either a general overview of history or focus on a specific era of interest. (Ancient Times, Middle Ages, the Civil War, Modern Europe, etc.)

Introduction to the U.S. Constitution. Help children understand civic matters by learning about the constitution.

Career Exploration. Teach students about various options available for future study and/or careers.

Introduction to Psychology. Introduce psychological research, conditioning, defense mechanisms, developmental psychology, and mental illnesses.

LANGUAGES

Language Dabble. As previously mentioned, teach how to say basic words in a variety of languages in order to give an overview of how each language sounds. Teach counting, greetings, and songs.

ASL 1 and **ASL 2.** American Sign Language is a fun language to practice in person. Teach using a free online training program such as [StartASL](#).

Beginning or Conversational Language (any modern language). If a language teacher is available, middle school would be a good time to begin serious study of vocabulary and grammar of a modern language.

Greek and Latin Roots. Teach Greek and Latin roots to help students improve vocabulary and comprehension.

STEM

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATH

Introduction to Game Programming.

Look into using [Minecraft](#), [Scratch](#), [Roblox](#), [code.org](#), etc.

Robotics. Use the [LEGO EV3 MindStorms technology](#) to teach robotics principles and put them into practice.

Crime Scene Science. Look for books by Pam Walker and Elaine Wolf for great ideas for fun forensic science lessons.

Middle School Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Geology, Physics. The [Focus on Science](#) classes from Real Science-4-Kids provide semester-long middle school-level courses with labs. Students can study at home and do the labs at co-op.

Middle School Math or Math Tutoring. Classes can be formed around a specific curriculum or math topic. One-on-one tutoring can also be provided as a class.

Engineering. Teach concepts of civil, electrical, and mechanical engineering with various labs or activities.

Web Development. Teach students web development (html/css). This class could even design the co-op's website.

Architecture. Research and study examples of building design and the progress of architecture through history. If possible, take a tour of local neighborhoods to see samples of the architecture students are learning about.

FINE ARTS

Art History. Teach about art throughout history. Consider using the Khan Academy course free [art history course](#).

Advanced Art. Explore more advanced art techniques and projects. Advanced Art classes may need more time than most other classes. (For example, this class might need two consecutive hours rather than one.)

Sewing or Knitting. Teach students how to develop or improve sewing or knitting skills.

Photography. Teach students how to use a DSLR camera and to compose a photograph.

Teen Choir and/or Private Music Lessons

ELECTIVES

Miscellaneous Unit Studies. Focus on a specific theme and incorporate writing, science, reading, and art activities.

Logic. Teach good reasoning, encourage open-minded thinking, practice logic puzzles, and discuss logical fallacies.

Chess Club. Teach the classic game and practice during class each week.

Bible Study. Encourage students to study, memorize verses, and uplift one another.

Debate. Students learn to create factual/logical, ethical, and emotional arguments to persuade others in the club that their "side" is correct.

Health and Nutrition. Teach about the human body to learn how to stay fit and healthy, including nutritional science.

Cooking Around the World. Introduce recipes from around the world.

**The important thing is
not to stop questioning.
Curiosity has its
own reason for existing.**

— ALBERT EINSTEIN



COLLEGE PREP

High School Co-op Classes

After middle school, I personally find co-op classes most useful if they are college or career preparatory. There is just so much that overwhelms me about teaching high school!

Some kids still won't know what they want to pursue in the future, so it is helpful to offer them a variety of class options. Again, it depends on what parents are able to teach! Think outside the box.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

World Literature. Focus on classics from history, starting with the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and Homer and moving on to *Canterbury Tales*, *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Les Misérables*. Consider using [Learning Language Arts through Literature \(LLATL\): World Literature](#).

British Literature. Study novels and poetry from Britain through the ages with [LLATL: British Literature](#).

American Literature. Teach novels, short stories, and poetry from some of America's best writers, including Twain, Emerson, Hemingway, and Steinbeck. Consider using [LLATL: American Literature](#).

Shakespeare. Shakespeare is meant to be heard or watched. Consider studying with No Fear Shakespeare!

Grammar and Composition. Teach students to polish their writing and grammar.

Essay Writing. Teach your students to write college-ready essays, including research essays, personal essays, and critical essays.

Creative Writing. Spend the co-op year helping your students write their own creative novels. Look for [NaNoWriMo](#) (National Novel Writing Month) or [One-Year Adventure Novel](#) for lesson ideas.

Build Your Vocabulary. Teach learning skills to expand vocabulary. Consider using SAT/ACT prep activity books or any other vocabulary text (I remember *30 Days to a More Active Vocabulary*).

Greek and Latin Roots. Teach Greek and Latin roots to help students improve vocabulary and comprehension.

Public Speaking. Help children practice talking in front of other people. Study historical speeches and memorize passages.

SOCIAL STUDIES

World Geography and/or **Anthropology**. Focus on countries and cultures as well as geographic and topographic landforms. How do cultures develop around physical geography?

World History. Teach a general overview of history (from ancient to modern) to help students understand the world in context.

American History. Teach about our nation and how it has adapted throughout history.

American Civics and Government. Help children understand civic matters by learning about the constitution and applying what they have learned to local civics. Encourage students to attend local debates and civic meetings and report on them, and study current events in the context of government and civics issues.

Psychology. Teach about psychological research, conditioning, defense mechanisms, developmental psychology, and mental illnesses. Do labs with the homeschool group to test hypotheses for extra fun.

Career Exploration. Teach students about various career options in society.

Introduction to Business. Teach about the American economic system, forms of business organization, small business ownership, human resources, marketing, and management.

Economics. Teach how a society provides for its needs amid scarcity by looking at basic needs locally and globally.





MATH

Geology or **Algebra** review or tutoring. Tutor a single student or a small group, or provide weekly instruction to a larger gathering.

Personal Finance. Teach students how to make a budget and be a responsible consumer. Teach other ways to manage money by exploring different banking and investments options, such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, IRAs, 401Ks, etc.

Accounting. Teach the basic elements and concepts of the double-entry accounting systems. Include teaching knowledge of the accounting cycle, entering transactions in journals, posting to ledgers, compiling end-of-period worksheets, adjusting and payroll systems, and writing communication examples.

LANGUAGES

Latin. Teach Latin. Many of the words in the English language are derived from Latin words. Learning basic Latin words and their meanings helps students develop better vocabulary.

High School ASL 1 and ASL 2. American Sign Language is a fun language to practice in person. Teach using a free online training program such as [StartASL](#).

High School Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced Language (any modern language). If a language teacher is available, teach the vocabulary and grammar at a high school level.

Greek and Latin Roots. Teach Greek and Latin roots to help students improve vocabulary and comprehension.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ENGINEERING

High School Biology, Chemistry, and/or Physics lab. Lead a homeschool science lab each week. Doing labs with other homeschool students is much more efficient financially and time-wise. Many online science stores sell materials for science labs, such as animals for dissection and high-quality microscopes.

Earth Science and/or Astronomy. Study the earth through geology and study space through astronomy.

Human Anatomy. Teach specifics of human anatomy beyond what is learned in high school biology.

Environmental Science. Teach about biomes, the Earth and its resources, human impact on ecosystems, and how living organisms adapt to their environments.

Forensic Science. Teach students how to think like a detective by exploring what the clues reveal about the criminal. (Look for books by Elaine Wood and Pam Walker on this subject.)

Health and Nutrition. Teach about the human body to learn how to stay fit and healthy.

Robotics. Use LEGO MindStorm technology to teach the basics.

Computer programming. Teach a specific program such as SQL programming or web programming (HTML/CSS). Consider putting students in charge of the co-op webpage.

Architecture. Research and study examples of building design and the progress of architecture through history. If possible, take a tour of local neighborhoods to see samples of the architecture students are learning about.

Engineering. Give students experience in solving problems by applying the design process.

See more ideas in the Middle School section.

FINE ARTS

Art History. Teach about art throughout history. Consider using Khan Academy's course free [art history course](#).

Music History. Teach about amazing music throughout history.

Teen Art, Advanced Art. Explore more advanced art techniques and projects. Advanced Art classes may need more time than most other classes. (For example, this class might need two consecutive hours rather than one.)

Sewing or Knitting. Teach how to develop or improve sewing or knitting skills.

Teen Choir or Private Music Lessons.

Theater workshop. Put on a play for co-op families. Or, encourage exploration of theater concepts using improvisation and theater games.

Photography. Teach students how to use a DSLR camera and how to compose a good photograph.

ELECTIVES IDEAS

ACT/SAT Prep. Help your students get ready for the ACT or SAT by reviewing concepts on tests and learning test-taking strategies.

Bible Study. Encourage students to study, memorize verses, and uplift one another.

Critical Thinking. Discuss what critical thinking is and what blocks our own critical thinking. Teach the nature of argument and the application of these principles in advertising.

Chess Club. Teach the classic game and practice during class each week.

Debate. Teach students to think on their feet after they've researched, written, and practiced different debate formats using factual/logical, ethical, and emotional arguments for persuasion.

Journalism. Throughout the year, have students write, report, and produce a newsletter or yearbook throughout the year for the rest of the co-op. This may be difficult with just one class a week, so at-home assignments would be essential.

How to Cook or Cooking Around the World. Teach students basic cooking skills and/or introduce recipes from around the world.

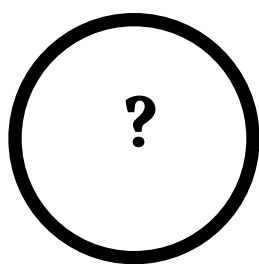
Home Ec. Learn the basics of living on your own (other than cooking), such as sewing on a button, basic home maintenance, shopping on a budget, laundry, etc.

Auto Mechanics. Learn how to take care of a car with hands-on practice.



**There is nothing better in
life than commitment to
personal development and
lifelong learning.**

— LAILAH GIFTY AKITA



OUTSIDE THE BOX

Unique Co-op Classes

I have been amazed at the variety of courses that I've seen offered at my local co-ops or heard of other homeschoolers putting together. I am serious when I say to think outside of the box! Below I've listed some of the courses. I don't have descriptions for some of these, but they are mostly self-explanatory.

History of the Horse. Explore horse-keeping and the history of various types of horses.

From Sheep to Wool. Explore how the sheared wool become fabric, using antique tools to card and thread the material.

Homesteading. Teach self-sufficiency by covering subsistence gardening, canning, animal care, etc.

Private Pilot Ground School. Help your students prepare for flying lessons with the ground school course.

Rockets and Drones. Teach how rockets and drones work and experiment with them.

Movie Making or Stop Motion Photography. Teach about the brainstorming, storyboarding, filming, and editing processes for these hobbies.

Podcasting. Make a group podcast on a subject of interest to your group. Consider book reviews, history, interviews, etc.

Babysitting. Teach older children the basics of child care and how to stay safe while caring for children. Include lessons on basic first aid.

Child Development. Teach the stages of children's development then let students develop lesson plans, snacks, etc. for the youngest children at your co-op.

Hair Styling. Teach students how to make a do.

Note-Taking and Study skills

Time Management

Yoga

Tae Kwon Do or Karate

Handwriting or Calligraphy

Your Hobby. What off-the-wall hobby do you have? Set it up as a class for kids!

How Does a Co-op Decide Which Classes to Offer?

The first part of co-ordinating a co-op is determining what type of set-up you'd like. Note that I am not a legal professional, and while I've been a part of co-op of various types of co-ops for several years, I have not been the one to fund and legally set up one. I cannot help you do so, and you will need to seek help elsewhere.

As for the classes, the first step is to determine what parents might be able and willing to teach. This helps you get an idea of what type of classes the co-op might be able to offer.

Small groups can brainstorm together. Write down potential classes on small sticky notes or index cards. You may want to use different colors for each age range. Once you've made a list of potential classes are listed, the group can sort them into interest categories. Move around the note cards and prioritize. Then, with a consensus, you can place the most popular classes into time slots depending on when and where the co-op will meet.

Larger groups will need to plan for the future with more structure. I suggest teachers write up proposals for their classes that state what age groups their classes are for and what parents and students can expect from each class. Teachers should also add which high school courses require homeschool.

Once the co-op has a list of classes that teachers are willing to teach, parents can fill out a survey listing classes indicating which classes for their children they are most interested in. Votes can be tallied and a group of parents can determine which ones are most in demand.

Sometimes, parents are interested in classes for which there is no teacher. This would be a good time to consider looking outside the group for an experienced teacher to join the co-op. However, as I mentioned before, offering outside teachers does shift the group away from being a true cooperative.



No matter how you determine which classes your co-op will offer, there are a few points to keep in mind.

- **Pay attention to how many classes each teacher is asked to teach.** Maybe some teachers offer very popular classes. Parents/teachers may not be able to teach classes all day long.
- If necessary, **remember to include classes for a variety of ages.** If the co-op has children of a variety of ages, there should be a place for them each hour. Where will the youngest be, and who will be in charge of them?
- **Consider class minimums.** Would a teacher be willing to teach or lead a course with just five students? What about three students? Co-op size can determine class size. Even if your location provides space, if there are too many courses offered, class sizes may be too small to sustain over a year.
- **Discuss responsibility with the teachers.** If teachers or their families are sick, who will take over a class? Where would students go in the case of teacher absence? Do class participants have a responsibility to be present? What if only one student is present?
- **Determine the length of a term.** Will these classes run every week all year? Do you plan on changing courses each semester?

Co-ordinating classes at a homeschool co-op is not always easy when a group becomes large. However, the satisfaction of joining in with like-minded homeschoolers is well worth the effort.

Happy homeschooling!

LINE UPON LINE LEARNING

Hi! I Am Rebecca Reid

I am currently a homeschooling mother of three: a son born in 2007, a daughter born in 2012, and a second daughter born in 2015.

I love creating games and hands-on activities for my kids, especially activities with an emphasis on great books. My first goal in founding Line upon Line Learning is to provide encouragement to other homeschool families.

The tagline for Line upon Line Learning is “Enjoy life-long learning, one day at a time.” I provide ideas and suggestions for new homeschoolers, thoughts on education in general, hands-on learning ideas, and printables or games for the home-educating or classroom teacher to enjoy.

I have a degree in English and teaching experience as a writing tutor and as an elementary-level teacher at local homeschool co-ops, where I have taught language arts, Spanish, history, and STEM.

I never intended to homeschool before my son was of school age, so when I started out on my homeschool journey, it felt a little overwhelming. I hope my stories, research, suggestions, and products assist others as they begin the journey, too.

Take homeschooling one day at a time, line upon line, and ENJOY.

