

There are many good reasons to join a homeschool co-op. You may want to spend time with families with a similar education philosophy, find friends for yourself and your children, expand your child's educational opportunities, or just 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 [Academy Days Co-op](#) since 2006.

1. A homeschool co-op maximizes your limited time and gives you a break from teaching every subject. If certain subjects are already 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 our variety of classes, we offer history, creative writing and science each semester. So if you don't want to correct essays or dissect a frog on your kitchen counter, a co-op may be for you!

3. Your student can take classes in subjects you may never even have thought of, taught by experts in those fields. Classes at Academy Days change from semester to semester and cover a broad range of subjects. Since beginning in 2006, we have offered popular courses in photography, web site design, psychology, drawing, nutrition, marine biology, and Latin -- taught by a portrait photographer, a computer programmer, a licensed psychologist, a renowned community artist, a nurse, a marine biologist and a foreign language teacher! Who knows what new courses we'll offer next year?

4. Students benefit from learning from someone else for a change and from adapting to other teaching styles besides yours. However, you are still the primary teacher of your own children, 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. For example, at co-op you have access to computers or science lab equipment that normally would be too expensive for one family to afford. For some classes, everyone in the class purchases books and materials in bulk to receive discounts or save on shipping.

6. Some subjects are best taught in group settings, such as public speaking, drama, and P.E. At a co-op your child will have access to an audience for performances and oral reports, or to lab partners for science experiments and projects. While elementary children learn those childhood favorites like Red Rover and Dodge Ball, and junior high and high school students play kickball and ultimate frisbee, they all learn teamwork and good sportsmanship.

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 struggling to find the time (or

inclination) for science or creative writing.

8. Co-ops provide a healthy competition. Knowing students must share with others in the class often 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 ideas.

10. A homeschool co-op provides opportunities for friendships and socialization for your children. Since some high school homeschoolers, in particular, sometimes feel they are missing the high school experience, a co-op may fill in the social gaps for your child.

11. Character growth is developed because children learn how to share, interact with peers, be a friend, and take instruction from other adults. Unlike a school, our co-op classes cross grade and age barriers, so students learn to relate and interact with others of all ages, not just their peer group. They learn all this with you nearby, but not necessarily with them every moment, giving them some independence in a safe, Christian environment.

12. A homeschool co-op provides a fun break from home that the entire family can look forward to each week. How many extracurricular activities can you say that about?!

Whether you join a co-op for social, educational or other reasons, the experiences are sure to benefit your entire family. Search the Internet for a homeschool co-op near you, or go to <http://www.academydays.com> to find out more about Academy Days Co-op in Millbrook, Alabama.



About the Author:

Carren W. Joye is the author of *Homeschooling More Than One Child: A Practical Guide for Families* (ISBN 0-595-34259-0), *Alabama State History*

Curriculum for grades K-9, and *A Stay-at-Home Mom's Complete Guide to Playgroups*

(ISBN 0-595-14684-8). A homeschooling mom of four children, she has founded four successful playgroups, a homeschool support group, homeschool covering, and homeschool co-op. For more information on her books and state history curriculum, visit her web site at

www.carrenjoye.com