

## **The Myth of Homeschool Socialization**

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Cincinnati, OH/April 2008—For years homeschool parents have been criticized for denying their children important socialization opportunities. The complaint was that homeschool children are isolated and that they lack socialization opportunities. But that’s a myth according to homeschooling mother, Carol Topp.

Homeschooling is becoming so popular now that homeschoolers are no longer isolated. Almost everyone knows another homeschooling family in their town.

“At one point I knew of at least seven families in my neighborhood that homeschooled their children,” Mrs. Topp comments.

Opportunities for homeschool students grow as more families chose homeschooling. There are homeschool support groups, co-ops, sports leagues, music and drama organizations. Mrs. Topp’s daughters are involved in several programs for homeschool students. One program called The Providence Extension Program follows the university model of education where the students do most of their learning independently outside of the classroom. Homeschooled students attend classes twice a week and are taught by professional tutors. The program became so popular with over 120 high school students that they

outgrew the church where they held classes and had to open a second facility. Now with two locations in Cincinnati, the Providence Extension Program enrolls 150 junior and senior high school students. They have also opened a branch in Jacksonville, Florida.

Mrs. Topp has also been involved in a homeschool co-op for five years.

Homeschool co-ops offer excellent opportunities for homeschool children to interact with other children. A homeschool co-op is a gathering of homeschool families that share teaching responsibilities. Homeschool co-ops come in all sizes, but are typically five to fifty families that meet once week for academic and extra curricular classes. Mrs. Topp's co-op is typical with 40 families that meet for three hours of classes and a lunch period at a local church on Fridays. Her daughters have taken a variety of classes taught by volunteer parents such as Spanish, art, biology dissection, career exploration and personal finance.

“ I think homeschool co-ops are such a wonderful opportunity for homeschool children that I encourage parents to form a co-op in their city if one doesn't already exist.” Mrs. Topp, a Certified Public Accountant with an accounting business that serves homeschool nonprofit organizations has written a book called *Homeschool Co-ops: How to Start Them, Run Them and Not Burn Out*. (available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)/\$12.50) “I'm combining my accounting and homeschooling experience to help homeschool parents start their own homeschool co-ops.”