

The Homeschool Socialization Problem Solved

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Cincinnati, OH/April 2008—Homeschool parents are frequently criticized for denying their children important socialization opportunities. The complaint is that homeschool children are isolated and lack proper socialization. In reality that's not a problem according to homeschooling mother, Carol Topp.

Homeschooling has become so popular that homeschoolers are no longer isolated. Almost everyone knows another homeschooling family in their town. Studies show that homeschooled children “are involved in more social activities, whether by design or being with the parent in various situations, than the average middle school-aged child.”¹ That finding is accurate according to Mrs. Topp's experience. “My daughters are involved in several activities including a weekly homeschool co-op that offers an excellent opportunities for them to make friends and interact with other children and adults.”

Mrs. Topp and her daughters have been involved in a homeschool co-op for five years. 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 at a local church on Fridays. Her daughters have taken a variety of

classes taught by volunteer parents such as Spanish, art, biology dissection, art history, drama, career exploration and personal finance.

“I think homeschool co-ops are a wonderful opportunity for homeschooled children. I encourage parents to form a co-op in their city if one doesn’t already exist.” Mrs. Topp, a CPA with an accounting business that serves homeschool nonprofits has written a book called *Homeschool Co-ops: How to Start Them, Run Them and Not Burn Out*. (available at Amazon.com/\$12.50).

The advantages of homeschool co-ops include group learning, learning from other adults, encouragement to continue homeschooling, friendships and fun for the students. Co-ops provide opportunities for group learning that is difficult to create in a home setting such as a drama production or choir. Co-ops can also teach subjects that are beyond the experience of a single parent. “I never took a foreign language in high school, so I needed help when my daughters wanted to learn Spanish. Fortunately a mother at our homeschool co-op was a Spanish major in college and agreed to teach a high school Spanish class,” Mrs. Topp explains. She goes on to say that she had no desire to dissect frogs on her kitchen table, but another homeschool mother with a nursing background was happy to teach biology dissection.

Mrs. Topp's book *Homeschool Co-ops: How to Start Them, Run Them and Not Burn Out* is available at Amazon.com or the book's website HomeschoolCo-ops.com.

1. "Socialization Practices of Christian Home School Educators in the State of Virginia," a study of ten Virginia home school families, performed by Dr. Kathie Carwile, appeared in the Home School Researcher, Vol. 7, No. 1, December 1991.