

Synergy Homeschool Cooperative

Member's Handbook

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Welcome Message

Dear Synergy Homeschool Cooperative families,

We are excited to share in the knowledge and unique gifts of our homeschool community! In order to ensure the success of this parental participation co-op, we want to make sure that everyone's expectations are clear. Please read through this short handbook – we think it is important, or we would not have created it.

By registering and attending Co-op sessions, you are agreeing to abide by the policies below. We anticipate that all participants will be considerate of others, and these policies are intended to achieve that end. At the discretion of the Co-op leadership, violations of the policies may, in some instances, result in prohibiting particular students or families from participating. Policies may change in the future, as the needs and desires of Co-op participants change, but ample notice will be provided to all participants of such changes.

Finally, this is an open co-op. Persons of any faith and no faith are equally welcome. To ensure that all feel welcome, course content and group activities will not be scripturally based.

Welcome, and please don't hesitate to let us know how we can make this experience better for your family!

*Kathryn Muratore and Amy Lindsay-Murphy
Co-op Leaders*

Purpose of the Co-op (in no particular order)

- Provide enrichment to homeschoolers
- Share in the strengths and diversity of the Greater Fresno homeschool community
- Include all ages (yes, that means babies, too!) so that all who want to participate, can participate
- Learn!
- Have fun!
- Include all religious and non-religious persuasions

General organization and Registration/Enrollment Policies

1. Synergy Homeschool Cooperative (“the Co-op”) is a parental participation co-op. It is expected that registered families will fully participate in all meetings they attend. Our participation policy is detailed in the next section of this handbook (see [Attendance and Parental Participation Policy](#)).
2. The Co-op leadership facilitates overall organization and meeting logistics. In most other respects, the Co-op has a bottom-up structure. Both the Co-op leadership and its members rely on the general membership for new ideas and constructive criticism.
3. Co-op meetings will be held on Wednesdays, starting at 10am.
 - At this time, an experimental expansion is underway. The expansion group may meet on a different day and time.
4. The weekly meetings may consist of classes or other activities, such as field trips or game days (for board games). In particular, classes will be offered every-other week, and other activities will be scheduled for the intervening weeks.
5. Four (4) membership levels are available to Registered families:
 - **Basic-level memberships:**
 - **Basic (“Activities Only”):** Families will typically attend all Activity Meetings (on alternate weeks). Families may not attend Class Meetings without upgrading their membership level. *This is a bi-monthly membership.*

- **Inactive Basic (“Inactive”):** Families will typically not attend any meetings, but have the option of resuming attendance during the remainder of the academic year.
- **Enrolled memberships:**
 - **Enrolled (“Classes Only”):** Families are expected to attend all Class Meetings (every 2 weeks). Families may also opt-in to Activity Meetings on a case-by-case basis. *This is a bi-monthly membership.*
 - **Enrolled Plus (“Weekly”):** Families are expected to attend all Class Meetings occurring every 2 weeks and all Activity Meetings occurring on the alternate weeks (allowing an absence, if needed, of course).

6. Class Meetings:

Applies to: Enrolled memberships only

- Three or four learning stations will be offered during each month, and participants will be enrolled in all stations offered during the current month. The opportunity for additional stations will depend on student interest as well as instructor availability. Naturally, a student’s level of participation at each station is dependent upon their interest; flexibility to accommodate the interests and aptitudes of students as individuals is a core value of this Co-op.
- **Student Groups:** Parents will assign their own children to a group upon arrival at the meeting. Parents should not assign/re-assign other students who are not their own children to groups, unless specifically requested to do so.
- When possible, meetings for classes will take place in participants’ homes or in free public spaces, such as library meeting rooms and public parks. Addresses and schedules will be shared approximately one week in advance of the first meeting of a session. Hosting a meeting in your home is *not* a requirement of membership. Additionally, there is absolutely no expectation that hosts provide refreshments, in order to keep the burden to the host at a minimum.

7. **Class Registration:**

Applies to: Enrolled memberships only

- Families must register for classes each month they wish to attend. Registration announcements with station topic descriptions will be made approximately one month in advance, and posted on our website ("[Classes](#)" page). Families must register at least two weeks prior to the first Class Meeting of the month.
- We do allow rolling enrollment. For attendance at Class Meetings, registration must be completed at least two weeks prior to the next Class Meeting.

8. **Activity Sign-Ups:**

- For the following membership levels:

Basic "Activities Only"

Enrolled Plus "Weekly"

Families will be expected to attend, so meetings will be planned with that attendance level in mind. Nonetheless, each family should sign-up for individual Activity Meetings on our website calendar, to ensure the Organizer has an accurate headcount and expectation.

- For the other membership levels, specifically:

Inactive Basic "Inactive"

Enrolled "Classes Only"

Families may sign-up for individual Activity Meetings on our website calendar.

- Sign-ups can be cancelled by a family through the event on the website calendar.
- Typically, participation in Activity Meetings can begin immediately after registration fees are paid, regardless of membership level. (The exception is when a field trip requires an advance headcount for the vendor.)

9. Absolutely no students will be admitted at the door of the meeting without being formally enrolled/signed-up as outlined above. This policy is a logistical necessity.

10.Fees:

- There is an **annual** registration fee for website and mailing list administration costs. All members must pay this fee in order to participate.

Current annual Registration fees:

- \$8.50/family
- There will be a flat fee charged **monthly** for class materials and activities, and fees may be pro-rated for partial months. Enrollment is contingent on advanced payment. The monthly fee applies to Enrolled membership levels.

Current monthly Class Meeting fees:

- \$3.50/student, ages 4 and up
- \$1.75/toddler, ages 2-3
- No charge for babies, ages 0-1
- Main Class Instructors will receive an automatic discount towards their monthly Class Meeting fees

Current Instructor discount:

- \$3.50 for each month taught
- Particular Activity Meetings may incur a separate fee. We will typically plan at least one free Activity Meeting per month, and any fees will be announced in advance.

11.Communication:

- Key communications from leadership and parent volunteers to other Co-op members will be done via e-mail, including Weekly Updates, invoicing, registration and sign-up confirmations, etc...
- Families should register/sign-up only if they are able to fully participate in meetings. Changes in attendance or membership level should be *communicated clearly* with the Co-op leadership *as soon as possible*. Be aware that other families may be on the waiting list, enrollment numbers guide several administrative decisions (number of courses, meeting locations, etc...), activities are planned with certain minimum or maximum attendance expectations, and instructors prepare materials based on particular expectations about the group of enrolled students.

Attendance and Parental Participation Policy

A co-op relies on the participation of its members in order to operate. Therefore, at least one parent from each family is expected to participate during the meeting in order for their children to attend.

All jobs for parental participation are listed here:

- Main Class Instructor*
- Station Leaders and Assistants*
- Activities/Field trip organizer*
- Nursery Mom (or Dad), as required
- Host

The jobs marked with an asterisk (Instructor, Station Leaders, and Activities Organizer), are requirements for membership (depending on membership level). The frequency and duration of each job assignment will be proportional to the number of families enrolled. It is important that the opportunity to perform these core functions are spread equitably among members.

Main Class Instructors and Activity Meeting Organizers are tentatively assigned via the website forum. Changes can be made with adequate notice through comments on the forum, or by contacting the Co-op leadership.

All other jobs will first be filled by volunteers who sign up in advance (through the website). If jobs are remaining that have not been filled, Co-op leadership will assign them to members who have not yet volunteered.

Any members who are at a Class Meeting and are not already participating as an Instructor, Station Leader, or Nursery Parent must assist other students and parents at stations as needed.

The Nursery and Host duties are never a requirement for membership in the Co-op.

By default, the instructors will assume that all enrolled students will be in attendance. In the case of illness, emergencies, or another unavoidable absence, parents are expected to notify the leadership in advance if they can not attend a meeting so that job assignments can be fulfilled and instructors can be better

prepared. Repeatedly showing up late, missing meetings without advance notice, or otherwise failing to satisfy job requirements may result in disenrollment of one's children from the Co-op session.

We all rely on each other so that our children can learn and have fun!

Sick Policy

Please be aware that infectious illnesses can present a serious health risk to some attendees of the Co-op, particularly infants. Any attendees who show signs of such illnesses are encouraged to use their judgment and stay home. If the health of the group is being compromised, infected children will be asked to leave.

Typical signs of infectious illness include:

- Fever within the last 24 hours
- Uncontrolled coughing or wheezing
- Persistent crying or lethargy
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- Rash, especially when accompanied by one or more of the above symptoms

Discipline Policy

All parenting styles shall be respected, and, simultaneously, a welcoming learning environment must be maintained. Therefore, there will be a 3-step discipline system in place at the Co-op. Unacceptable behavior is at the discretion of the Parent-in-charge (Instructor, Station Leaders, *etc...*).

1. If students are disruptive at a station or exhibiting aggressive behavior while playing with other children, the Parent-in-charge has a duty to gently correct the behavior.
2. If the anti-social behavior continues, the child's parent will be asked to intervene.
3. If the behavior still continues or recurs, the child will be removed from the situation (*i.e.*, told to play separately from the other students) so that the rest of the students can continue without further disruption.