

# LIGHT

## Learning Cooperative Handbook

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## Co-op Committee Members:

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The Co-op Committee is responsible for the general running of the co-op each session. Committee members work with teachers to provide appropriate classes for students, set up a schedule that benefits as many members as possible, decides how fees will be assigned and collected, and assigns duties based on overall need and the preference of the members. We welcome comments and suggestions. Please contact any of us if you have anything you would like addressed.

## LIGHT Co-op Philosophy and Mission

The LIGHT Co-op is an activity that falls under the LIGHT Homeschool Support Group and is just one of the many activities offered by our group as a way to support each family's unique homeschool plan. **Participation in the co-op requires that a family first be a member of the LIGHT Homeschool Support Group.**

Our co-op is unique from many other "homeschool co-ops", in that our main focus and goal is to offer support for the parent and not academic classes for our children. We believe when parents feel encouraged and supported, they are more equipped to provide their own children's education, without needing to rely heavily on outside classes. **Our underlying philosophy and aim is to keep parents engaged and supported.**

Our classes are focused on enrichment but can be used toward credit\* as the parent sees fit.

Our main focus for our children is fellowship and exploring new topics. \*(See p.6 in the handbook.)

We believe that the interaction between parents of all stages and walks of homeschooling is beneficial for everyone. Therefore, we strive to create a place to fellowship with other parents and access our homeschool library to find helpful resources.

**The participation of all parents is essential to the success of the Co-op.** The vast majority of our teachers are volunteers from within our families, and **each parent is required to help in some way during our weekly meeting. Parents are required to stay during co-op hours to encourage conversation and networking.**

Because our co-op incorporates the whole family, the hours of co-op are limited as to not be burdensome or "too much" for one day. The number of weeks we meet is also limited for the purpose of giving families a needed break and more free

time during the holiday months as well as being done by the end of April to give parents time to finish their school year strong.

## How It Works

The LIGHT Homeschool group offers classes in the form of a learning cooperative or “co-op” for short. A learning co-op is a group of homeschooling families that work together to teach classes for the children. The classes offered are for the purpose of enriching and complementing your homeschool and are not meant to be a substitute for the learning your children do at home. The nature of a co-op involves a commitment and contributions from each family, but the rewards received are well worth it!

### Here is how it works:

1. You, as a parent, must volunteer your time by teaching or assisting a class each session or by serving in some other way as needed. (See p.3 in the handbook.) The amount of help required will depend upon how many families participate, but we anticipate having to work only one or two periods per week. You will keep your scheduled assignments for the entire session. Assignments can/will change at the start of a new session.
2. Sign up your children for the class(es) available for their ages at registration time. You do not have to participate in all that is offered for your child’s age. You may pick and choose.
3. Non-refundable fees are due at the start of each session. Fees covers-building costs, insurance fees, copies, basic supplies, and other miscellaneous costs. Additionally, classes have individual fees to provide materials and supplies that are specific to those classes. Class fees are non-refundable.
4. The benefit of a co-op is that your children will be in terrific, enriching classes and the workload is shared among us all. Commitment to participating each week is necessary to have high quality classes and learning for our children. One parent must be on the premises the entire time his/her child(ren) are participating in the co-op. The co-op is not a “drop off” activity.

## Registration Process and Class Enrollment

Registration occurs two times per year, August and November, and families register for each session (Fall and Winter/Spring) separately. Notices of registration dates and specific information for registration will be posted to the LIGHT website.

Registration priority is given to families in the following order:

1. LIGHT Board members and Co-op Committee Members
2. Lead Teachers, Nursery Coordinators and Hospitality Coordinator
3. Co-Teachers
4. Returning Co-op Families
5. Wait List: Previous LIGHT members, who have current year membership.
6. Wait List: New families to LIGHT during current year.

Children’s ages for classes are based on the child’s age as of September 1. Classes have age restrictions and are clearly marked at registration and on the class descriptions. Exceptions will be considered by the committee.

Classes may be added (switched) within the first 3 weeks of co-op, at the discretion of the class teacher and committee, assuming there is space and supplies.

Classes may be dropped at any time. However, there are no refunds, and a student must be supervised at all times, either in a class or with a parent during all hours of the co-op.

## Description of Co-op Duties

After each registration, the Co-op Committee will assign parents to duties. Please inform the committee if you have questions or concerns about your assignment.

The duties marked with “” may be easier for those of you who have little children and babies and wish to help without having to be separated from your children.

Please let the committee know if you need to have a duty that keeps your children with you. We will try to honor your request if possible.

### Nursery Coordinator



- \*responsible for creating a plan to successfully run the nursery
- \*Delegate duties to parents who help in the nursery
- \*Create a means of communication with parents concerning needs of their babies and toddlers
- \*Answer questions and concerns from parents
- \*Operate under the direction of the Co-op Committee

### Nursery Helper



- \*Operate under the direction of the Nursery Coordinator,
- \*take care of the children in the nursery
- \*feed, diaper, comfort and entertain babies and toddlers as needed
- \*communicate to parents as needed
- \*arrive on time, weekly to ensure proper care of the children

### Teacher/Co-teacher

- \*responsible for weekly lessons for students
- \*obtain supplies and materials needed for the class, using co-op funds
- \*submit receipts for reimbursement and tracks expenditures
- \*create a class description
- \*arrive on time, weekly to ensure class success
- \*have students clean up after themselves at the end of class

### Teacher Assistant

- \*help the lead teacher of a class and teach the class in the teacher's absence
- \*arrive on time, weekly to ensure class success
- \*actively participate in the class under the direction of the teacher
- \*interact with students and help as needed
- \*depending on the age of the students, may be asked to accompany children to the restroom

### Snack Helper



- \*set-up and distribute snacks to designated class(es) at assigned times
- \*purchase or inform the committee if more snacks are needed

### Set-Up Team (arrive at 8:30am)



- \*sets up tables and chairs in assigned room(s)
- \*set up copier or other supplies, as needed

### Tear Down Team (stay until 12:30pm)



- \*tear down tables and chairs and return them to the proper place(s)
- \*put away copier or other supplies, as needed
- \*vacuum as needed and return vacuums to closet
- \*remove garbage out of trash cans in common areas, replace bags, and take trash to designated area

### Hospitality Set Up (arrive 8:45am)



- \*get coffee maker/supplies from cabinet and start coffee
- \* purchase coffee supplies for the co-op and submit receipts
- \*coordinate volunteers to bring snacks weekly

### Hospitality Tear Down (stay until about 12:15pm)



- \*clean out coffee maker and put away
- \*sweep floor if needed
- \*vacuum as needed
- \*empty trash can

### Bathroom Clean-Up (stay until about 12:15pm)



- \*Clean off sinks
- \*empty trash
- \*sweep floor if needed

## Substitute Plan

Our hope and goal is that all of our teachers, assistants, and helpers will be at co-op each week. Every member has a vital role to play for our co-op to be successful, and we all depend upon each other. Although that is our goal, there will be times when it is just not possible to be at co-op. **PLEASE DO NOT BE A "NO SHOW" ...out of courtesy, please follow the plan. Disregard for the Sub. Plan will forfeit your privilege to be a part of the co-op.**

### **If you know ahead of time:**

When you know that you are going to be absent, it will be necessary for you to find your own replacement in advance. The more notice you can give will help the co-op flow more smoothly.

### **You will need to use the Master Roster to:**

- ✓ Find another person that is available during your time period to help in your place.
- ✓ Let your substitute know what you are responsible for and what area you usually help in.
- ✓ If you are a LEAD teacher:
  - Contact your assistant to tell him/her who the substitute assistant will be.
  - If possible, call or email a committee member so we are aware of the sub.
  - Get your lesson and materials to your assistant (temporary lead teacher).
- ✓ If you are the ASSISTANT in a class:
  - Please call the lead teacher about the substitution.

### **If you do not know ahead of time:**

Unforeseen/emergency-type things can happen the morning of co-op, like a sick child or a car that won't start. When/if this happens, there may not be time for you to give others much notice of your absence. **You will need to:**

- ✓ **CALL** a commit member **ASAP** so that the co-op committee is aware of the situation.
- ✓ If possible, and you are the LEAD teacher, get your lesson to the co-op (or send with someone) so that someone can teach in your place.

**Call** the other person(s) that help in your class, so they are aware of your absence.

## Rules of Student Conduct

All students enrolled in the LIGHT Learning Cooperative are expected to behave appropriately, which includes being respectful to both parents and other students in the classroom. Inappropriate behavior (i.e. defiance, unruly disruptive behavior, etc.) will be given prompt attention.

Please remind your child(ren) to respect all adults as an authority, and to show up to class on time. No child may attend or participate in the Co-Op unless a parent/guardian or designated member in good standing accompanies the child to the Co-Op.

Misbehavior will be handled as follows:

1. On the first offense, the teacher or appropriate adult will talk to the student about his/her inappropriate behavior. This will serve as a warning to the student to change his/her behavior.
2. On the second offense, the teacher will discuss the student's behavior with the child's parent.
3. On the third offense, the child's behavior will be discussed in a meeting with the parent, the teacher, and a member from the co-op committee and/or LIGHT Leadership.
4. On the fourth offense, the child will sit out of the class for a specified time ranging from one week to the entire semester. There will be no refunds.

\*Younger students (6'ish and younger) may need more guidance in regard to inappropriate behavior. These students will be given more latitude as teachers work with them each week. However, your child's teacher will still consult you and steps will be taken to remove your child from class if your child's behavior causes serious disruptions to the classroom.

#### **LIGHT Homeschool Guidelines:**

Clothing should be neat, modest, and appropriately sized. An attendee should not be dressed in such a way as to draw attention to their body, but to respect and honor God, themselves, and others. Anyone flagrantly disregarding these criteria will be asked to leave.

Romans 14:21 -- It is a noble thing not to eat meat, or drink wine, or do anything that makes your brother stumble.

1 Corinthians 10:31-32 -- Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God's glory. Give no offense to the Jews or the Greeks or the church of God,

The LIGHT Leadership will review this dress code annually and update if needed. Instituted August 2004/Revised July 2018

#### **Suggestions for Using Classes toward Credit for Teens**

We do not offer "for credit" classes in which grades and credit are issued by the teacher, along with homework and graded assignments, tests, etc. There are plenty of other co-ops that are academic focused to meet those needs.

However, if parents use the classes offered in co-op, they could easily turn classes into earning high school credit with some additional, related work at home. Here are a few examples of how to do that:

- a.) Fine Art Combine different types of art, jewelry, design, upcycling, and crafting type classes as an elective fine art credit. If you need more hours to count it as half a credit or even a full credit, continue your child's favorite crafting, drawing, and artwork at home with this. Discussions of great works of art, studying the basic design principles, visiting art galleries or an art museum, arranging art works in your own home, studying great artists, etc. can all easily combine to receive credit. Let your child guide his or her own interests in whatever area of art (s)he finds interesting. As well, music lessons, music and/or art appreciation can be combined with these other areas for credit. Use your imagination!

b.) Science Use our Science labs to help keep you and your student on task while completing the course at home. This is a fun and great way to make earning that lab science credit easier.

c.) Health/Physical Education You can have your child participate weekly in our PE classes. If your child plays a sport, you can easily combine all the time together. As well, time spent bowling, laser tag, swimming, playing volleyball or basketball with the neighbors, walks, hiking, etc. count. Add it all up and count it as credit! You can also add some sort of health or safety to it, perhaps a first aid course or emergency preparation for your own family.

## Small Children and Nursery Information

### Nursery

Childcare in the nursery is to be used for children while parents are performing co-op duties only. If you would like your child to be in the nursery while you're not performing a co-op duty, then you need to stay in the nursery with your child. There is also a "Mommy and Me" room near the nursery to give your little ones some space to place while you visit with other moms.

### Children Accompanying Parents in Classes

The committee feels it is best for the moms who are teaching and assisting to be able to focus completely on the class they are teaching. For this reason, we ask that teachers and assisting parents not bring their little ones or babies to the classroom with them. The nursery is provided for little ones 2 and under, and older children have class options. There are several co-op duties in which having a

younger child with you is permitted/encouraged and are marked with "  " in the "Description of Co-op Duties".

### Suggestions to Help Small Children Adjust to Classes

The co-op committee understands that our little ones can sometimes be fearful of new people and new situations, and as moms, we want to comfort them, and are sometimes anxious ourselves. If you are working toward having your child stay in a class without you and both of you be comfortable with that, here are some things to consider, as you and your child work toward this goal.

Here is a list of suggestions to help your child adjust to group settings:

\*Bring your child to class **CONSTISTENTLY**.

\*Keep up good communication with your child's teacher. Ask for updates on his progress.

\*Remind him of what a "big boy" he is, and tell him how proud you are that he has his own class. \*When dropping your child off, tell him that this is his class, and that you will be back shortly, and that you know he is going to have a great time.

\*Talk to him about his class often during the week.

If your child is having trouble being without you, the teacher will try different things to help him relax and be comforted. If he cannot, and needs you, the assistant in the class will find you and let you know.

If, after carefully considering the above suggestions, you still feel uneasy about dropping off your little one, you may stay with your child in his class while he adjusts. **You are asked to follow these guidelines:**

\*Please do not "chat" with other moms who are also staying in the room with their children \*Please do not talk on a cell phone.

\*If your presence in the classroom causes an undue burden on the teacher and becomes a distraction, you may be asked to leave.

\*Please do not bring younger children/siblings that may be disruptive.

## Guidelines for Visitors and Guests

There are often questions about who can participate in Co-op events/classes and what the guidelines are for those guests and family members. To help answer those questions, we put it into a form you can easily refer to. Please direct additional questions to the Co-op Committee or LIGHT Board member.

Activity and Guests/Family Involved	Guideline
<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Visits by (extended) family or non-LIGHT member friends</b></p> <p>Examples: A member’s child(ren) not enrolled in co-op Friends, cousins, Grandma/pa, relatives Respite foster care</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extended family and non-member guests stay with the parent member at co-op.</li> <li>• If the parent has a duty that cannot accommodate the guest, the parent member needs to find a sub for his/her duty.</li> <li>• Visiting children cannot participate or “sit in” on classes.</li> <li>• Adult guests are welcome to sit in the hospitality room.</li> </ul>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Participation in co-op by children in the care of (but not the child of) a Co-op member for an extended period</b></p> <p>Examples: Babysitting situation Foster children Grandchildren</p>	<p>*Please contact the committee for consideration of enrollment, before enrolling children that you are not the parent of.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The parent(s) of the children participating must become LIGHT members.</li> <li>• The children are signed up for co-op along with the co-op member’s family.</li> <li>• If the children are in foster care, the parent member needs to confirm if the children can stay in the co-op’s care (class or nursery). If they cannot, the child(ren) need to stay with the parent member. The committee will work with the member to find a duty that can accommodate that special situation.</li> </ul>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Children in co-op classrooms but not enrolled in the class</b></p> <p>Examples: Children without a class Babies Toddlers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students may not “sit in” on classes they are not enrolled in.</li> <li>• Children, regardless of age, may not stay with a parent who is teaching or assisting in a class, unless enrolled in the class.</li> <li>• If parents want their children with them at all times while at co-op, they must fulfill a duty that will accommodate that, and the committee will work to accommodate.</li> </ul>

Children who leave a classroom during class or choose not to go to/enroll in a class

Children not in a class must be with their parent or another specified adult.

## LIGHT Co-op Frequently Asked Questions

### Can I drop my children off?

No. Our co-op is based upon the idea that we all work as a team, support each other, and contribute to the group. Our aim is to build strong relationships between families to support each other in our homeschooling. Therefore, a “drop-off” activity/co-op does not support our mission. With that in mind, an adult responsible for every child must be on the premises the entire time, and we do not assume any legal responsibility for your child. If you need to leave for an emergency or any other reason, let one of the Co-op Committee members know.

### What if I have small children that are not in classes?

The nursery is available for small children during a parent’s co-op duty. If you are not fulfilling a duty and would like your babies and little children to be in the nursery, you must be in the nursery to watch your children.

### Where do my children who are not in a class go?

Most children 5 and older will be in a classroom. However, if they are not in a class, they must be with their parent.

### What if my child does not like a class?

You may remove your child from any class that he does not like. You will not receive a refund as teachers often buy materials for the class and cannot return them. We are sorry but we have found this must be our policy.

### Can I put my child in a class after it begins?

No additions will be made after the third week of the new session. Adding a child to a class must be approved by the LIGHT Co-op Committee. You will pay full price for the class.

### How often will I have co-op duty?

The number of duty hours varies each session based on the number of families enrolled and the number of volunteers needed in the classrooms/areas. Every class must have at least one volunteer to assist the teacher.

These volunteer hours are to be fulfilled by the parent/adult responsible for the children who are in the co-op.

### What if my family only comes for one hour?

If you are only attending one hour, we will do our best to assign your duty during that hour.

### What if I am absent? Who will do my co-op duties?

Every member has a vital role in our co-op for it to be successful. If you will be absent, it is important for you to find a substitute to fulfill your co-op duties for that week. Please follow the Substitute Plan (p. of the Handbook)

### Can I post a message on the LIGHT website of Facebook asking for a substitute?

Yes. However, the best way to find a substitute is to follow the Substitute Plan and use the Master Roster to find contact information for other Co-op members. If you choose to find a sub through public forums, and no one responds, you will still have to follow the Substitute Plan. Just letting people know you need a sub and/or that you will be absent is not adequate.

Where can I locate contact information for other Co-op members? The Co-op Master Roster.

Can I teach a class?

We are always looking for new ideas and new teachers. If you have an idea and/or a desire to teach, please contact a Co-op Committee member.