

# Home School Organization Definitions

To ensure consistency of terms, HEART of Texas utilizes the Organization Definitions set forth by the Texas Home School Coalition when determining a home school organization's status as a Local Support Group, Home School Club, Email Network, Co-Op, Play Group, Resource Center, or College-Style School.

**Definition of Support (Webster 1828)** The act or operation of upholding or sustaining; that which keeps one from falling; that which maintains life; the maintenance or sustaining of any thing without suffering it to fail, decline or languish; as the support of health, spirits, strength or courage.

## **Definition of Group**

Webster 3rd New International 1976: a social unit comprising individuals in continuous contact through intercommunication and shared participation in activities toward some commonly accepted end; A relatively small number of persons associated formally or informally for a common end or drawn together through an affinity of view or interests.

## **Local Support Group**

A Support Group (SG) is an association of volunteers organized and operated by independent homeschoolers for the purpose of assisting and encouraging each other as well as those pursuing the choice of homeschooling for the education of their children.

The Support Group is driven by some form of leadership, depending upon group consensus. Group policies, practices and procedures may or may not be written in the form of by-laws, depending upon the size, structure and functions of the group.

The Support Group holds regular meetings, whether they are park days or other types. They are not a business. Therefore, it does not exist to produce goods or services for sale to those outside their group as a regular practice (i.e. magazine subscriptions, books, classes, I.D. cards, testing services, and advertising services). Single-event fundraising is an exception.

A Support Group is not operated by a for-profit business, nor is it operated by or affiliated with a government agency, public or private school, or curriculum supplier/company. A Support Group does not function as a substitute for the parent-teacher role or responsibility in any of the subject areas assigned by law (reading, grammar, math, spelling, and a course in good citizenship). In other words, a Support Group stops being a Support Group when it attempts to be a school.

## **Homeschool Club or Sports Association**

A Homeschool Club or Association is a group that is run by homeschoolers and/or caters specifically to homeschoolers as it relates to a specific subject.

Homeschool Clubs or Associations are similar to SGs in that they support homeschooling families, they meet regularly and they are comprised of homeschoolers. The difference is that a Homeschool Club or Association focuses on a specific area of study, exploration or recreation while a SG is geared more toward all aspects of homeschooling. Sporting organizations would fall into the category of Homeschool Club or Association as would any other group whose focus is on one area in particular (i.e. Chess Club, Astronomy Club, 4-H, or Boy Scout troop).

There may be similar clubs operating within a Support Group. These clubs may be listed separately under the category of Homeschool Club or Association if they are open to all homeschoolers and not limited only to members of that particular group.

### **Homeschool E-Mail Network**

A Homeschool E-mail Network is an internet-based group run by an individual or group that is geared specifically for homeschool families. A Homeschool E-mail Network is not itself a for-profit business nor run by a for-profit business. An E-mail Network may be established by an individual or group for the benefit of other homeschoolers utilizing a particular curriculum, resource, method of teaching, philosophy or that share some other commonality.

When an e-mail loop or newsletter is offered to all homeschoolers, whether in a particular geographical area or statewide, it is considered a Homeschool E-mail Network.

Support Groups may offer an e-mail loop or newsletter to their members, but this would be considered a benefit of membership in that particular SG and not an E-mail Network.

### **Homeschool Co-Op**

#### **May Become a HEART of Texas Support Group Partner**

A Homeschool Co-op is a group of private homeschooling families that facilitate group academic or extra-curricular teaching.

A homeschool co-op should be a supplement to the family homeschool and not a replacement for parent-led teaching of core subjects in the home, especially for the primary grades. A homeschool co-op is not a business and is a collaboration of effort between homeschooling families to enjoy a group experience rather than the product of one individual's industry. Size, frequency of meeting, cost, subject matter, and choice of instructor all combine to influence the group's nature as either a co-op or something more like a private school.

### **Homeschool Play Group**

#### **May Become a HEART of Texas Support Group Partner**

A Homeschool Play Group is a group that meets regularly at a park or other designated place with the purpose of providing an opportunity for homeschoolers to be encouraged and edified and to fellowship with one another. If a park day is only open to the

members of a specific SG or other group, then it would be a benefit of membership in that group, but not categorized as a Homeschool Play Group for this list

**Homeschool Resource Center and a University Model School  
May Become a HEART of Texas Homeschool Organization Partner**

Homeschool Resource Centers and University Model Schools (a registered trademark) are considered Texas Homeschool Organizations; however, both function as a for-profit business and as such, will not qualify for free listing on the HEART of Texas website as a support organization, but will be included in our database. These organizations may, however, Partner with HEART of Texas and we will also consider offering mutual links to and from our site. We include Partner listings on our site for free and a listing in our newsletter (please note that these are not ads). Ads may be purchased at our Partner Rate.

**Homeschool Resource Center  
May Become a HEART of Texas Homeschool Organization Partner**

A Homeschool Resource Center is a privately funded organization which offers services exclusively to the homeschool community. These services may include book and teaching material loans, equipment rentals, acting as a clearinghouse for private in-home tutorial services, space rentals and counseling. Unlike SG's these organizations may be run by non-homeschooling individuals and/or be focused on distributing products and services to the homeschool community at large. A Homeschool Resource Center may operate as either a for-profit business or a non-profit corporation.

A Homeschool Resource Center is supportive of parent-led education and functions as separate "executors" of the parent's educational goals. Should an organization, through its leadership or programs, prescribe rather than simply support the parent's educational goals, it is functioning more as a school than a resource center.

**Special Needs Support Group  
May Become a HEART of Texas Support Group Partner**

A Special Needs Support Group (SNSG) is an association of volunteers organized and operated by independent home schoolers for the purpose of assisting and encouraging each other as they pursue the choice of home educating their children who have special needs. Special Needs is defined as any physical, medical, mental, emotional, or behavioral condition causing a child to have difficulty functioning in the ways that the world would deem "normal." The SNSG functions the same as the previously defined Local Support Group.

HEART of Texas works very hard to update our database on locating special needs support groups in North Texas. We know there are many families home schooling loved ones with special needs!!

If you would be interested in helping us with our "virtual" Special Needs Support Group, please contact us. We are hoping to provide a safe place where families can visit with other families in the region who homeschool special needs children.

## **College-Style Schools, Group Class Communities, or Enrichment Classes May Become a HEART of Texas Homeschool Organization Partner**

These schools, which are similar to a co-op in structure, are also very closely related to private schools; although, they are designed to encourage more parental involvement than a traditional private school. Most meet two or three times a week, have a rigid schedule, are typically age and grade segregated with a standardized grading system, most or all of the teachers are paid and selected through an application process, they often have paid staff but some are volunteer operated, and they also offer many school type programs like student council and graduation.

The primary difference between these types of organizations and a co-op is whether the teachers are paid or are volunteers (charging only for materials).

Another difference may be that the program determines the success or failure of the student, including whether or not they receive credit for the class. Sometimes these programs prepare student transcripts and issue diplomas. Whereas, in a co-op, the parents determine the success or failure of the student and whether or not the student receives credit for the class. The parent is also responsible for preparing the students transcript, determining the requirements for graduation and issuing a diploma.

This is not to say that these types of Programs are not homeschooling, since homeschool parents decide what mix of “classes at home” and “classes through other organizations or programs” they wish to utilize. The distinction is only made here for the purpose of determining the type of promotional activities can be utilized through HEART of Texas.