



Christian Home Educators Association of California

Support • Advocacy • Community

Finding a Homeschool Group

By Mary Schofield, CHEA of California

With so many home school groups available, finding one that is right for your family will take some research. Home School leaders throughout the state proposed the following questions for newcomers trying to find a group. Remember that whatever kind of group you are looking for, your group will be only as good as you and the other members make it.

1. **Is the group a support group or a PSP (Private School Satellite Program)?**

A *PSP* is a private school which files one affidavit on behalf of all its member families and enrolls each family in the school.

A *support group* expects that each family will take care of its own affidavit by either filing its own, by joining a PSP, or choosing not to file at all.

A *special interest group* is a group that focuses on just one educational area, for example, a sports league or debate team.

2. **What are the requirements for membership?**

- Time commitment (must you host meetings, organize activities, etc?)
- Spiritual commitment (is there a statement of faith; if so, must you sign it?)
- Educational commitment (must you teach a particular way or use a particular curriculum?)
- Financial commitment (How much are dues, tuition, and other fees?)

3. **Is there a particular philosophy espoused by the group?**

Denominational, educational, etc.?

4. **How is the group run?**

- *Is there a single leader or a board? If there is a board, are board members elected or appointed?
- * Is it operated as an income-producing business, or as a community co-op? If a business, what services do you receive for your payment? If a co-op, what responsibilities will you have as a member?
- *How are the members involved in decisions?

5. **What are the fathers' roles in the group?**

Are the dads involved? If they are welcome at events, what percent of attendees are fathers?

6. **Is the group leader a member of CHEA's Support Network?**

You'll want to make sure the group has access to up-to-date legal and legislative information, as well as events happening around the state.

7. **Does the group have written information available?**

Statement of faith, statement of purpose, by-laws, sample newsletter, brochure, application, etc.

8. **What are the ages of the children who attend the group's activities?**

For example, if there are 10-15 field trips planned each year, how many are geared to teens and how many to early elementary grades?

9. **What are the routine activities scheduled?**

Many groups offer exciting yearly events like science fairs, spelling bees, etc. But it is at the regular on-going activities that you will likely form lasting friendships. Common activities are park days, field trips, parent meetings, group classes, etc. Ask about the days and times these activities take place.

10. **Are there group classes for children? Is attendance at such classes mandatory?**

If you are interested in participating in group classes, ask who the teachers are, whether the teachers are Christians, what the class topics are, what materials are used in teaching, what the parents' involvement in children's classes is, and what the cost is.

11. **Are there classes or meetings for parents? Is attendance at such meetings mandatory?**

If mandatory, how often must you attend and what happens if you are absent? Who are the speakers and what are the topics? What are the schedule and costs?

12. **Does the group require copies of school records or pupil records from its member families?**

Most support groups don't; most PSPs do. Check with CHEA's manual, *The California Homeschool Manual*, to see what's required by law. Make sure a *PSP* requires these, but also feel free to ask why they require any additional items. Make sure a support group has experienced leaders who can help you if you have questions with records.

13. **For a PSP, also ask:**

- Is there a school-wide course of study, or do families submit their own?
- How are high school credits awarded and what is required for graduation from high school?
- Is standardized testing required, and if so, what ages must be tested?
- Are there extra fees for activities, testing, registration, etc.?