

# Can a Micro School be a Homeschool Group and avoid some headaches?

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Definitions. The pandemic taught us: Just being at home doesn't make you a homeschooler.

**Words have meanings! Choose them carefully!**

**Homeschool Co-ops:** Gatherings of homeschool families to *voluntarily* teach each other's children in classes usually held once a week. Almost always formed as nonprofit organizations.

**Homeschool Tutorials or Hybrids:** Paid teachers/tutors teach homeschooled children in classes usually held once or twice a week. Most are nonprofit organizations with an education purpose; some formed as for-profit businesses (i.e. Classical Conversations).

**Micro schools:** The one room schoolhouse. Small group of students, frequently mixed ages and grade taught by a paid teacher. Most are 5 days a week and register as schools in their state. Can be nonprofit or for-profit; most are for-profit businesses.

## Comparison of homeschool groups and micro schools

	Homeschool Co-op or Hybrid/tutorial	Micro school
<b>Compulsory Attendance: Who is responsible?</b>	Parent is responsible for compliance. Most state require Notice of Intent (NOI) to homeschool (to avoid truancy)	School is responsible and keeps attendance. Attendance in most states is 180 days per year.
<b>Days in session</b>	Usually 1-2 days a week. Most state require parent to be "primary instructor" so co-ops limit themselves to 1 or 2 session per week	5 days per week. 180 days per year is common.
<b>(NOI)Notice of Intent to homeschool</b>	Required in most states. Some require listing of non-parental teachers	Not a homeschool so no NOI is filed
<b>Instruction</b>	Primarily parents at home 2-4 days per week. Program instructors are usually part time, frequently parents, frequently volunteers in co-ops. May be "unqualified"	Hired teachers. Usually well qualified.

<b>Curriculum</b>	What co-op teacher chooses. Hodge-podge or haphazard. Some hybrids offer fuller load of subjects.	Teacher chooses curriculum. Usually full range of subjects. Follow state requirements
<b>Cost</b>	Co-ops are cheap \$50-\$500/year/family. Hybrids more expensive \$200-\$2,000/year/child.	Can be as much or more than private school; more than homeschooling (because 5 days/wk and paid teachers)
<b>Business Structure</b>	Almost all nonprofit organizations with educational mission, volunteers, board. No owner.	Usually for-profit business with one owner (sole proprietorship). Usually single member LLC.
<b>School Status</b>	Not recognized as a school by the state or the IRS	Most register as a school to meet compulsory attendance requirements

Litmus test for: Can I call my micro school a homeschool program?

- Limit to 2 or 3 days per week
- Keep parents as primary instructor
- Parents file NOI
- Don't offer full course load
- Don't call yourself a *school*

Attorneys with Homeschool Legal Defense Association HSLDA advise homeschool groups that instructing students two days a week is quite manageable, popular, and less risk of the state classifying the program as a school. Two days a week also keeps the parent the primary educator, which is the law in many states. Going to three days a week or more seems like it's not really homeschooling because it lacks the parental involvement.

*"Just have parents file an NOI (to homeschool)!* Please, do not try to avoid regulations imposed on schools by simply having parents file an NOI and call themselves "homeschoolers." Every state has homeschooling laws that define it! Pretending to be homeschoolers could invite more regulation on homeschooling (and your micro school). Instead be proud to be a micro school!

Homeschool organizations are not free of regulations; they still have to deal with:

- Paying teachers, payroll taxes, employee status
- Paying rent. For-profit groups meeting in tax exempt property like a church or library causes [tax issues for host](#).
- Child safety, fire codes, background checks, mandatory reporting, etc.
- Daycare licensing. Visit <https://daycare.com/states.html> to know your state laws regarding daycare licensure

- Zoning. Check local zoning rules (probably a phone call)
- Insurance. Read “Insurance for Homeschool Groups” at [HomeschoolCPA.com/articles](https://www.homeschoolcpa.com/articles)

Resources for homeschool group leaders at [HomeschoolCPA.com](https://www.homeschoolcpa.com). Books, webinars, consultations.

Webinars for micro schools at Meridian Learning.

**How to Start a Micro school : Legal and Financial Foundations.** <https://www.meridian-learning.org/course-previews/how-to-start-a-microschool/>

**Teacherpreneurship: Making Accounting Less Painful for Teacherpreneurs**  
<https://www.meridian-learning.org/teacherpreneurship-101/>