

# Handbook for Pockets of Peace Homeschool Co-op for Autistic Children

## Guiding Principles and Practical Information

### Introduction

Welcome to our Homeschool Co-op for Autistic Children! This handbook is designed to provide parents, educators, and students with essential information about our co-op's philosophy, structure, and day-to-day operations. Our mission is to create a supportive and enriching educational environment tailored to the unique needs of autistic children.

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to foster a community where autistic children can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. We aim to provide a flexible and individualized approach to education that respects the strengths and challenges of each child while promoting inclusivity and understanding.

### Core Values

- **Inclusivity:** We embrace the diversity of our students and believe that every child has the right to an education that meets their needs.
- **Respect:** We respect each child's unique learning style and pace, ensuring that our teaching methods are adaptable and supportive.
- **Community:** We foster a sense of community among students, parents, and educators, encouraging collaboration and mutual support.
- **Empowerment:** We empower children to become confident and independent learners by providing them with the tools and opportunities to succeed.
- **Joyful Learning:** We believe in making learning an enjoyable and engaging experience that nurtures curiosity and a love for knowledge.

### Organizational Structure

Our co-op is governed by a board of directors comprised of parents and community members who are dedicated to the success of our students. The board meets regularly to discuss policies, curriculum, and other important matters.

We also have discussions with in the co-op that focus on specific areas such as event planning, and fundraising. These committees are open to all members of the co-op, and we encourage parents to get involved.

# Enrollment and Admission

Enrollment in our co-op is open to children who are officially diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). We welcome students of all abilities and backgrounds.

## Admission Process

- Parents interested in enrolling their child must complete an application form and provide documentation of their child's diagnosis.
- Once the application is reviewed, families will be invited to attend an orientation session to learn more about our co-op.
- After the orientation, a formal interview will be conducted to assess the child's needs and determine if our co-op is the right fit.
- Accepted families will receive a welcome packet with detailed information about the co-op's policies and procedures.

## Curriculum

In the Pockets of Peace co-op will allow everyone to choose the curriculum that best suits their child's learning style and needs. We recognize that children on the autism spectrum have different needs and learning styles that are often times not found in one particular curriculum. We also recognize that individuals have varying therapy needs that must be integrated with in their curriculum.

## Core Subjects Suggestions

- Language Arts: Reading, writing, and communication skills should be taught using multisensory approaches that engage visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners.
- Mathematics: Math curriculum emphasizes hands-on learning and practical applications to help students understand and retain concepts.
- Science: Science lessons should be inquiry-based and encourage students to explore the natural world through experiments and observations.
- Social Studies: Social studies lessons should focus on understanding communities, cultures, and historical events through interactive and project-based learning.

## Specialized Programs

In addition to core subjects, we offer specialized programs that address the unique needs of autistic children. These include:

- Social Skills Training: Group outings will be scheduled to help students develop social communication and interaction skills through group activities.
- We encourage families to continue with their student's consistent therapy sessions such as speech, OT, PT, ABA and any others that are necessary for their students development.

## Co-op schedule

Our co-op operates on a flexible schedule that allows for parents to educate their children at a pace that best fits their child's learning abilities while incorporating their necessary therapies.

- Group Meeting: We will meet as a co-op group twice per month for social interaction and activities.

## Parent Involvement

Parents play a crucial role in the success of our co-op. We encourage parents to be actively involved in their child's education and the co-op community.

## Volunteer Opportunities

Parents can volunteer in various capacities, such as:

- Assisting with activities and field trips
- Participating in committees and board meetings
- Organizing and supporting fundraising events
- Sharing their skills and expertise with students through workshops and presentations

## Communication

Effective communication between parents, and the board is essential for the smooth operation of our co-op.

## Regular Updates

We provide regular updates through newsletters, emails, and our co-op website. Parents are encouraged to attend monthly meetings to stay informed about co-op activities and developments.

## Policies and Procedures

To ensure a safe and productive environment, we have established several policies and procedures that all members are expected to adhere to.

## Code of Conduct

Our code of conduct outlines the expected behavior for students, parents, and parents. It includes guidelines for respectful communication, conflict resolution, and maintaining a positive learning environment.

## Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is important for the continuity of learning. Parents are expected to notify the co-op president in advance if their child will be absent.

## Health and Safety

We prioritize the health and safety of our students. Our co-op has protocols in place for handling medical emergencies, administering medication, and maintaining a clean and safe environment.

## Conclusion

We are delighted to have you join our Homeschool Co-op for Autistic Children. Together, we can create a nurturing and enriching educational experience for our students. If you have any questions or need further information, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Thank you for being a part of our community!