



MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY INSTITUTE

Dedicated to Strengthening the Family

Advantages of a Church-Based Learning Center

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A learning center is a homeschool-based educational support system. Typically, learning centers harness the power of an available church building during one or more weekdays to establish a program for homeschoolers there, enhancing their educational and extracurricular experiences. Learning centers may provide some or all of the following services: tutoring, spiritual discipleship, academic coaching, field trips, group activity experiences, and more.

This infrastructure provides resources to homeschooling families, affords them the opportunity for school choice, and empowers them to take back control of their child's education. Like traditional co-ops, learning centers are fundamentally parent-driven enterprises. Learning centers are primarily distinguished from co-ops by the fact that they are typically associated with a church.

There are some distinct advantages to establishing a learning center as opposed to a private school. These include:

- **Lessened regulatory burdens.**
Private schools are required to report attendance and other matters to state and local authorities, as well as develop a variety of school-specific policies and procedures. These requirements do not apply to learning centers. Because the homeschooled students who attend learning centers will have previously registered with their local school districts, their attendance will already be reported.
- **Less academic recordkeeping.**
Due to the homeschool nature of learning center programs, the responsibility for recordkeeping falls to the parents. This dramatically decreases the administrative responsibilities incurred by the program.

For these reasons, learning centers may be a better fit for churches and other organizations looking to support parents with an educational alternative that is easier to start and manage than a full-time, traditional private school.

Parent-Directed Learning Centers as a Ministry of the Church

Parent-Directed Learning

We recommend that learning centers incorporate the following practices to ensure parent-directed learning:

- Parents maintain records and create transcripts.
- Parents grade the students' work and have the final say in their academic report.
- Parents choose the curriculum for their students.
- Parents register students as homeschoolers to comply with compulsory attendance laws.

Ministry of the Church

We recommend that learning centers incorporate the following practices to ensure a distinctive, ministry-based approach:

- Christian discipleship is the core of the program and academics are viewed as the medium through which discipleship occurs.
- The Scriptures, prayer, and spiritual encouragement are daily occurrences within the program.
- Students are instructed in and trained in apologetics and biblical worldview.
- As with many church-based small group ministries, learning centers may split into multiple groups and expand to multiple locations as they increase in size.

Alongside private schools and co-ops, learning centers are quickly becoming a crucial educational alternative for parents seeking to remove their children from harmful influences in public schools. If you are interested in learning more, contact MFI at info@mafamilly.org or give us a call at (781)-569-0400.