

# SPARK Homeschool Co-op 2023/2024 Member Agreement

## Our Approach

SPARK has a unique approach to learning that is relaxed and self-directed. Both children and parents take an active role in learning and building our community. We believe children (and all people) learn best through play and engaging in topics that are meaningful to them. We meet this philosophy through our group learning experiences called “Offerings”.

Offerings are classes, workshops, activities, or projects led and assisted by parents that last about an hour and can cover a wide and diverse range of subjects and interests. Each family is expected to lead one Offering of their choice per Homeschool year to share a hobby, skill, or curiosity their family has. They can reach out to other members to secure an assistant if their Offering requires support. Families may opt to recruit a hired mentor or facilitator, as our budget allows. Seasoned families typically lead offerings at the beginning of our terms and give newer families some time to observe and get the swing of things before leading an Offering themselves. Members will be reimbursed for Offering materials purchases but are asked to provide an estimate for approval beforehand. Some Offerings are targeted at certain ages, while others incorporate a range of ages learning together. SPARK activities are always optional allowing kids the choice to participate or not depending on their interests. We do ask that everyone remain respectful of the mentor or parent running the Offering by taking space away from the activities for loud play if they choose not to participate.

We are a non-profit and parent-run cooperative with a Board of Directors responsible for directing the overall policy and direction of SPARK and ensuring day-to-day operations run smoothly. The Board is made up of elected parent volunteers. In addition, the Board works cooperatively with families to coordinate and delegate specific duties to members. Parents may be asked to jump in and help facilitate activities or Offerings, organize, clean, plan, support, discuss, collaborate and care for our space, our daily tasks and each other. Families pay a membership fee and tuition which covers costs such as renting space, insurance, resources, hired mentors, and supplies.

## Member Expectations

Below is a list of specific member expectations that we ask of each family. Please go over these with each person (including children) who will be attending SPARK. This helps keep everyone engaged, accountable, respected, and included in our co-op:

1. **Actively Participate!** Give assistance as needed with daily clean-up, Offerings, special activities, and events.
2. **Lead/facilitate at least one Offering per homeschool year.** This can be a one day Offering or span multiple days, depending on the depth of subject/ project length.

**3. Participate in at least one of our four work days during the homeschool year.** The dates of the 2023/24 work days are: December 4, 2023; December 7, 2023; May 6, 2024; May 9, 2024

**4. Parent attendance is required at two family meetings during the homeschool year.** Orientation for your corresponding day(s) on September 11, 2023 OR September 14, 2023, AND April 14, 2024 for the All Family Meeting.

**5. Join and be an active member on our SPARK Member Families Facebook Group.** Most co-op communications are currently through our Facebook Member Group. Parents are expected to check the group regularly for planning, announcements, and signups.

**6. Drugs, alcohol, and smoking are not permitted at SPARK.**

**7. Inform the Board President if anyone attending SPARK in your family has ever been convicted of any abuse of a child.** Our parents work directly with children and for this reason we need to know this information ahead of time.

**8. Be considerate, inclusive and respectful.** Respect the personal space and belongings of others and practice asking for consent before we touch anyone's body or personal things. We also ask that members work together to help everyone feel included and safe.

**9. Respect our space, supplies and toys.** Follow the rules of the space we are renting and be proactive in keeping our space and equipment in good, safe condition by putting things away when finished. Talk to a board member before donating any toys/materials. We do not accept loans of toys/materials.

**10. Do not disrupt offerings/activities.** Be respectful of the learning of others by not disrupting offerings or activities while in progress.

**11. Inform children of Restricted Areas.** Children are not permitted upstairs or on private properties neighboring Imago.

**12. Report dangerous or uncomfortable behavior to a trusted adult.** If you see or experience something that makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe please tell a trusted adult or board member right away.

**13. Adults must supervise the children under their care.** We are on a property open to the public with heavily wooded areas and water elements. Caregivers must be aware of these elements and guide children accordingly. Please provide proper gear for all weather conditions for yourself and the children under your care. The kids often enjoy unsupervised, independent play with friends in the woods or out of direct sight of adults. Adults are expected to seek out the children under their care to periodically check-in and in times of need or conflict.

**14. Members are expected to work through the discomforts of conflict to help mediate conflicts involving kids in their care, and/or themselves.**

### **Conflict Resolution Process**

At SPARK, we strive to maintain a positive environment where children and parents enjoy their time together and treat each other with mutual respect and graciousness. We are a diverse group of people working together to provide a safe, respectful, and rich learning environment, but as with any diverse community conflicts will arise. Should anyone experience a disagreement or conflict within the co-op, please follow these steps toward resolution and uphold confidentiality whenever possible. Our hope is that, with practice, our children will feel equipped to use Step One of this framework in resolving conflicts amongst themselves.

1. **Have a One-on-one Discussion:** Go to the person with whom you have a conflict at a time when you can have a private conversation. Express your concerns and discuss possible solutions. Both parties can listen to each other, say how they feel and what they want to happen next to help resolve the conflict and hopefully agree upon a resolution.

2. **Ask for Board Mediation:** If the conflict is not resolved via one-on-one discussion, parties involved should reach out to a board member to ask for mediation. The board member will then schedule a meeting to mediate discussion between the two parties so that both feel heard and then find a resolution that all can agree to.

3. **Involve Entire Board:** If the conflict still has not been resolved after a board member mediates, then that board member or people involved in conflict will present the issue to the entire board for discussion amongst the board. The board will then reach out to the parties involved with suggestions from the entire board to help reach a resolution that all can agree to.

### **Attendance**

SPARK is a co-op and we do not have paid staff to take responsibility for anyone's children. Each child in attendance must have an adult there taking responsibility for their safety and provide their support. Individual families sometimes make arrangements between themselves to take responsibility for each other's kids on certain days to provide some flexibility for parents. This is accepted as long as each family continues to contribute fairly to the co-op and meets their Member Expectations.

Attendance is not compulsory, but we do encourage regular attendance. Being prompt and ready to participate in

Offerings and activities will help the day run smoothly and build community. Offerings are planned based on current enrollment so regular attendance helps leading families estimate group dynamics and material quantities. If you are not able to attend on your regular day(s), please post to the Facebook member group.

## Food Allergy Policy

Several of our members have food allergies and intolerances. To ensure the safety of all members, we ask that everyone honor the following guidelines:

- Check with an adult before sharing food
- Eat only at designated areas
- Do not leave open containers of food unattended
- Clean all surfaces, including chairs, after eating
- Wash hands and face thoroughly after eating
- Do not bring cupcakes or other food items to share for birthdays or special occasions. \* We have frequent, scheduled potlucks when sharing food is welcomed!

## Sickness Policy

We ask that you and your family not come to Spark if you feel ill or are contagious. Before you return, please have all household members be symptom-free for 24 hours, without medication, from fever, vomiting, sore throat, and diarrhea. Also, please notify Spark if you or a family member test positive for Covid.

## Schedule

Our regular hours are Mondays and Thursdays from 11:00am to 3:00pm. The daily flow is a mix of scheduled offerings and unscheduled free time where families can collaborate on projects or individuals can work independently. We all work together in the afternoon to do our clean up tasks before leaving. We sometimes have other days that we get together for special events such as a movie night, field trips, or a dance party.

### Example of Daily Schedule

11:00am: Arrival & Setup

11:30-11:45am: Yoga

12:00-1:00pm: Lunch

12:30-1:00pm: Lunch Huddle

1:00-2:00pm: Offering  
2:00-3:00pm: Free Play & Cleanup

## Weather Closures

In case of dangerous weather, the decision to close may be made the preceding day, or in the early morning. Please check the SPARK Member Facebook Group to monitor closure status.

## 2023/2024 Calendar Overview

### Fall Semester: 12 weeks

Mon, Sept. 11 & Thu, Sept. 14 – First Days of Fall Semester/Orientation  
Mon, Nov. 20 & Thu, Nov. 23 – CLOSED for Fall Break  
Mon, Dec. 4 & Thu, Dec. 7 – Last Days of Fall Semester

### Winter/Spring Semester: 17 weeks

Mon, Jan. 8 & Thu, Jan 11 – First Days of Winter/Spring Semester  
Mon, April 1 & Thu, April 4 – CLOSED for Spring Break  
Mon, May 6 & Thu, May 9 – Last Days of Winter/Spring Semester

## Enrollment, Tuition & Fees

**We have a \$25 Family Membership Fee per school year due once your enrollment is accepted.** This non-refundable, non-transferable fee is per family and holds your spot for the current school year. You will receive an email with your Total Due and payment options. We charge tuition for children age 3+ by September 1st, 2023. Younger siblings are always welcome at no additional charge.

SPARK has a daily enrollment cap so enrollment is first come, until we are full. Returning families are eligible for a discount. SPARK also offers a sibling discount and free tuition for every sibling after the 3rd child. Below are the tuition options with discounts:

### MON OR THUR FALL SEMESTER: 12 WEEKS

First Child: New Family	1 Day/Week	\$65
Additional Child: New Family	1 Day/Week	\$55

First Child: Returning Family	1 Day/Week	\$55
Additional Child: Returning Family	1 Day/Week	\$45

**MON OR THUR WINTER/SPRING SEMESTER: 17 WEEKS**

First Child: New Family	1 Day/Week	\$85
Additional Child: New Family	1 Day/Week	\$75
First Child: Returning Family	1 Day/Week	\$75
Additional Child: Returning Family	1 Day/Week	\$65

**Refunds:** Our family membership fee and tuition is non-refundable. We require that new members visit at least once before enrolling to ensure SPARK is a good fit for their family. This visit can occur during our semester, at an Open House, or at a summer Play Date.

**Financial Hardship:** If you are experiencing financial hardship, please apply for financial aid on your enrollment form. We are also able to set up monthly payment plans for tuition payments. SPARK uses money from fundraising to provide financial assistance to families in need.

All families are encouraged to help SPARK raise money for our assistance funds. In addition to direct donations, please choose SPARK as your organization to donate to with Kroger Community Rewards accounts.

**Prorated Fees:** Membership Fee and Tuition are sometimes prorated if you start in the middle of the school year. Please contact us to discuss.

**[SPARK Homeschool Co-op 2023/2024 Member Agreement](#)**

I have read, understand and agree to the SPARK Homeschool Co-op Member ByLaws. I agree to be responsible for the needs and safety of the children in my charge while attending SPARK Homeschool Co-op. I understand that SPARK Board of Directors reserve the right to deny participation to any child or family. I agree that by signing this agreement and submitting my non-refundable, non-transferrable Family Membership Fee, I establish my family's membership in the SPARK Homeschool Co-op.

By signing this document I am stating I have read, understand, and agree to the SPARK Homeschool Co-op 2023/2024 Member Agreement for myself, my family, any children in my charge, and any other caregivers for my child(ren). I agree to fulfill my member responsibilities to the best of my ability. I understand that if my family does not abide by the items on this Member Agreement, then it is grounds for denial of renewal for the following year or, in extreme cases, removal from the group during the year.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_