



FEC Group Leader QuickStart Guide

Dear Future Family Education Center Leader,

Thank you for your desire to lead the establishment of an American Heritage Family Education Center in your community. Yours is the “good ground” where many children will receive the blessings of American Heritage School from wherever they live—not just for the fortunate few who live close enough to our Utah campuses. The need for a viable and sustainable alternative to public education is growing throughout the world and for diverse reasons. Only together can we provide this alternative.

Each Family Education Center is unique, and our support will honor and leverage your diversity, inspiration, interests, and gifts. Our partnership with you combines the principles of local self-government with the strength of 50+ years of excellent scholarship rooted in faith, family, and liberty. Our combined efforts will “[bring] forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.” This *is* the vision of AHS Worldwide and the mission of American Heritage School.

We will support each Family Education Center Leader with ongoing training, curriculum, software, accreditation, and many other resources to implement the best practices of school operations and administration that we’ve developed over 50+ years as a faith-based, independent, K–12 school. Family Education Center Groups will come in all shapes and sizes. Most Groups will function like common cooperatives—small, parent-led groups. Others will take on a form that resembles a micro-school or small academy with some paid staff, a rented or donated facility, and a more regular in-person class schedule. Some of these Groups will ultimately grow to resemble our current brick-and-mortar campuses as a sister-school of our flagship campus in American Fork. This will happen as surely as it happened for American Heritage School—now producing “100 fold” since its humble beginnings as a small chapel school in Pleasant Grove, Utah.

We’re with you and inspired by your willingness to partner with us in this glorious vision.

All together now!

Peter Knecht, *AHS Worldwide Director*



INTRODUCTION

What is the difference between a Family Education Center Branch and Group?

An FEC Group is the smallest and most proximal organization of families using AHS Worldwide curriculum who want to provide in-person (or virtual) gatherings. An FEC Group has a Group Leader who determines focus, size, purpose, frequency, duration, and facilities for gatherings (often a home, or rotation of homes). FEC Groups come in all shapes and sizes and operate within a high level of autonomy and local self-government.

As FEC Groups grow in number, many Groups will want to combine with other Groups for larger celebrations, events, and learning experiences. When this happens, we call this an FEC Branch. In other words, an FEC Branch supports more than one FEC Group combining occasionally for curricular and/or non-curricular extension events (ideas below). As FEC Branches grow to support more Groups, AHS Worldwide will hire a Branch Director to support FEC Group Leaders with event planning, facility coordination, and Group collaboration. This FEC Branch Director will almost always be an existing parent participating in one of the respective FEC Groups.

What are the requirements of a Family Education Center Group?

As mentioned above, FEC Groups will operate with a high degree of autonomy. There are only three requirements of an *American Heritage* FEC Group.

1. The Group operates with at least one designated leader.
2. The Group leader completes the FEC Group Leader training course and attends the quarterly Group Leader training.
3. All Group families participating are enrolled with AHS Worldwide (i.e., Family School, LiftEd, StudentConnect, etc.).

BUILDING AN AHS FAMILY EDUCATION CENTER

If you're creating an FEC Group, you are the Group Leader, initially. Group leadership can rotate among other parents, similar to the terms for a Board of Directors. Each of the following steps will give you helpful understanding for how to go from zero to open and are discussed in more depth during the FEC Group Leader Training Course and the FEC Group Leader Handbook. The purpose of this QuickStart Guide is to give you a high-level overview and to help you decide if creating an FEC Group is the right step for you, your family, and the families who will participate in your Group.



Step 1: Create Your Vision

As the Group Leader, your first and most important job is to define your vision. You will be the keeper of that vision while leading your FEC Group. Take time to ponder and reflect on what is your clear and unique vision for your Group. Consider the following questions.

- What will be our core values and guiding principles?
- How will our FEC Group uniquely serve the children and families in your community?
- What are the end goals of our Group (social, educational, custodial, etc.)?
- How often do we want to gather (daily, weekly, bi-monthly, monthly)?
- Will we gather in-person or virtually or both?
- What is the minimum and maximum size of our Group?
- Will we gather around Family School or LiftEd or a combination of both?

Step 2: Identify Families

Next begin promoting your FEC Group to current and potential new members of AHS Worldwide in your community. To support you in these efforts, and with your help, AHS Worldwide staff will organize and attend an FEC Kickoff event in your community (see FEC Kickoff Event Guide). Some families will not need this contact to join your Group, but many others will need to feel the support and credibility of AHS to take this step.

Eventually, you will identify and select your families based on a shared vision, similar needs, and common interests. Families who are not selected to participate in your Group may form their own. This is wonderful, as they will help your Group organize a local FEC Branch for less regular activities and events that children can participate in with greater numbers.

Step 3: Organize

FEC Group Leaders will counsel with the other parents in their Group to decide the specifics related to their regular gatherings. Questions you will consider include:

1. How often you we gather?
2. What will be the parent requirements for supporting instruction, activities, etc.?
3. What will be the specific curricular scope and sequence?
4. Will gatherings be in-person, virtual, or both?
5. What will be the cost (if any)?

FEC Groups can be tailored to meet child(ren)'s specific needs and interests outside of the curricular experiences facilitated by AHS Worldwide resources. The following are just a few ideas of activities or



courses a Group may elect to do beyond the extension activities and discussions provided in the FEC Mentor's Guide and Celebrations Guides (more below).

- Regular "Celebrations"
- Field trips, literature circles, science labs, etc.
- Physical education; Athletics
- Fine arts classes
- Monthly book discussion
- Writing bootcamp
- Sports day
- Cooking class
- Spanish course
- Nature outings
- Service Club

Step Two: Organize

The next step is to select your core group of families. First, use the LiftEd or Family School Member Map tools to identify other families in your area. Connect with them and inquire as to their interest in participating in an FEC Group and alignment with your vision and plans. With just two or three other families, you can adequately begin gathering for extension Celebrations, mentored discussions, and other activities. These families will be the nucleus of your group.

Once you find your core group of families, it will be helpful to discuss how you want to divide the group responsibilities. Some roles you may want to consider in your Family Education Group are:

- Group Leader
 - Shares and maintains vision.
 - Defines and protects policies (see step five).
 - Interviews and onboards new families.
 - Manages paperwork (ex. parent/student agreements, insurance acknowledgements, etc.).
- Activity Leader (or Support)
 - Helps plan and execute activities.
 - Oversees group activities.
- Treasurer
 - Manages expenses.
 - Organize fundraisers.

Step Three: Find a Location

Once you've found your core group of families and have a better idea of what your maximum participation will be, it is time to look for a location. FEC Groups can meet anywhere that best facilitates the purposes, size, and frequency of Group gatherings. Since parents accept all liability for FEC Group activities, you don't need approval from AHS Worldwide or the local FEC Branch to proceed. Consider all your options, which may include:



- Home(s)
- Park
- Library
- Dance studio
- Community center
- Rentable church
- HOA clubhouse
- Museum
- Vet/social hall
- Boys and girls club
- LDS Church buildings
(when approved)

Many public facilities (like libraries) have available space during school day hours. Begin by contacting facilities near you and start gathering rental estimates. As you grow, you may need to secure a larger facility that accommodates your Group.

Insurance/Liability

If your FEC Group decides to rent a facility, you may elect (or be required) to obtain insurance coverage. The following is a selective list of different types of insurance to consider.

- **Commercial Liability Insurance**
 - This provides protection from lawsuits involving major damage to the property. This would cover incidents like fire, flood, etc.
- **General Liability Insurance**
 - This provides protection from lawsuits involving bodily injury such as “slips and falls” and damage to physical property. It covers liability claims resulting from bodily injury or property damage arising from our home school activities.
- **Accidental Medical Coverage**
 - This provides coverage if a child hurts himself while at an FEC Group activity. However, most parents have health insurance for their children and opt out of this coverage. If this is your Group’s decision, we strongly encourage parents to acknowledge in writing that they will cover their children’s medical expenses.

Finding Insurance

Acquiring insurance coverage is very easy. All you need to do is search for “insurance brokerages” online and find ones with strong reviews. Contact a few to compare rates and coverage before deciding. For more assistance in securing a policy, reach out to [HSLDA \(Home School Legal Defense\)](#).

Step Four: Expenses/Revenue

Family Education Groups must use their own discretion in how they want to set up and manage their finances. For example, some groups will elect to use Venmo while others may want to set up a separate business and bank account. The Group Leader may manage the expenses or assign this responsibility to another parent (Treasurer).



Plan thoroughly each year to accurately estimate your total costs for activities, facilities rental, insurance, potential deductibles, and other materials and supplies. Use this estimate and distribute the costs as you determine is right for each family and student. If costs exceed tuition during the year, be as proactive as possible with your communication to families. Fundraisers are a great way to engage your families and the community to keep additional costs as low as possible.

Step Five: Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures are one of the most (if not the most) important keys to your FEC Group's success. These guidelines establish the governing rules and procedures for parents and students participating and will set clear expectations.

Before adding new members to your Group, we encourage Group Leaders to clearly communicate all policies and procedures through a signed Participation Agreement upon acceptance. Policies and procedures may include:

- Vision Statement
- Statement of Educational Philosophy
- Organization and Governance
- Honor Code
- Dress Code
- Classroom Governance
- Non-Classroom Governance
- Discipline
- Tuition and Fees
- Schedule
- Academic Policy and Expectations
- Day-to-Day Operations
- Use of Media, Entertainment, and Computers
- Parent Communication
- Parent Service to the School
- Building, Facility, and Equipment Use
- Fundraising
- Political Versus Patriotic Activity
- Child Abuse and Neglect Policy
- Unlawful Harassment Policy
- Student Travel, Field Trips

For help drafting your policies and procedures and a parent/student agreement, you can refer to the American Heritage School [Parent Handbook](#) for helpful language and ideas. Each Group's Participation Agreement would be specific to their needs, objectives, and unique circumstances and offerings.