

# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT & NATURE



## Program Reflection Questionnaire

Intentional integration of youth development and nature engagement practices and principles deepens positive youth development and children and nature outcomes. This tool is designed for nature-based and youth-serving organizations to assess where their programs situate on the continuum of integration of youth development and nature engagement practices. Organizations may reflect on each of the practices below and rate the frequency that best describes their program implementation.

*There is no right or wrong answer; just answer in whatever way is accurate for your program on a scale of 1-5, where 1 = never and 5 = always.*

### PRACTICE

NEVER

RARELY

SOMETIMES

FREQUENTLY

ALWAYS

#### Personal and Leadership Development - nurturing a deeper understanding of self, greater confidence, social skills, decision-making, and adaptability in youth

Provide opportunities for reflection and self expression	1	2	3	4	5
Balance structure with independent time	1	2	3	4	5
Encourage student voice, choice, leadership, and responsibility*	1	2	3	4	5
Share leadership with program participants (planning and making decisions)	1	2	3	4	5
Engage youth repeatedly along an age continuum	1	2	3	4	5
Offer employment for youth	1	2	3	4	5

#### Nature Appreciation & Utilization - building an environmental ethos, appreciation for nature, and a culture of environmental stewardship in youth

Take place outdoors	1	2	3	4	5
Offer exposure to different types of nature experiences <i>(nearby nature, immersive nature, natural elements)</i>	1	2	3	4	5
Provide opportunities for youth to experience the awe and wonder of nature	1	2	3	4	5
Nurture exploration of the outdoors	1	2	3	4	5
Incorporate environmental care and service	1	2	3	4	5



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## PRACTICE

NEVER RARELY SOMETIMES FREQUENTLY ALWAYS

### Agency - developing self-efficacy, resilience, and a social justice orientation in youth

Provide opportunities for youth to experience challenge or failure in a safe and supportive space	1	2	3	4	5
Establish group agreements and norms at the outset of a program, ideally in partnership with students*	1	2	3	4	5
Encourage students to push beyond their comfort zones, and scaffold these challenges*	1	2	3	4	5
Link program components to equity and social justice	1	2	3	4	5
Provide opportunities for youth to explore issues of justice in the community	1	2	3	4	5

### Connection to Place & Community - facilitating sense of belonging & place in youth as well as a connection to current events that affect their communities

Reflect the history, heritage and traditions of the local community	1	2	3	4	5
Facilitated by trusted partners from the community or individuals who reflect the social makeup of the participants	1	2	3	4	5
Use local, natural features as context	1	2	3	4	5
Involve current events and local community issues	1	2	3	4	5
Encourage and make space for students to share stories and ideas about themselves and their life experiences*	1	2	3	4	5

**NOTE: Practices occurring at less frequency within your program present opportunities for growth.**

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Grow Outside Reflection Tool](#) - a tool designed for organizations to reflect on and informally assess program capacity to support social and emotional learning (SEL).  
\*Adapted from the [Grow Outside Reflection Tool](#)
- [Youth Program Quality Assessment](#) - a tool to assess the quality of learning environments and to identify staff training needs for out-of-school time organizations.

- [Practitioner Guide to Assessing Connection to Nature](#) - a guide for practitioners, organizations, researchers, and others to measure connections to nature.

*This Reflection Questionnaire was developed with guidance from community-based organizations in Atlanta and Grand Rapids, based on a literature review conducted by Search Institute.*

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