

NATURE QUEST

Lesson Objectives & Correlations to Education Standards

Thank you for your interest in NatureQuest!

Children & Nature Network believes that families are critical to helping children develop a love of the outdoors. Families can be gatekeepers to Environmental Education (EE), because we know that it is not simply about learning facts; it is about building emotional connections to the natural world and to other people. The EE community has a wealth of resources and curricula. However, few are family-focused meeting the needs of parents and volunteer leaders who may have little to no EE training and background.

C&NN worked closely with educators and parents to develop a meaningful, practical and immersive environmental education curriculum designed for families, Nature Quest. Through a series of ten activities that include “Missions” and “Quests,” the curriculum combines different types of play and uses nature as a “game board” to promote whole family engagement and an understanding of environmental concepts. By layering play-based activities, inquiry and stewardship in a gaming format while moving through science concepts, Nature Quest gives children tools for self-guided exploration and learning while empowering parents with a storyline to sustain play.

Curriculum Review & Pilot

The curriculum was reviewed by the North American Association of Environmental Educators (NAAEE) and a focus group comprised of parents, informal and formal educators and piloted with fifteen Family Nature Clubs in the spring of 2018 and is being piloted August 2017 to May 2018 at ten Family Nature Clubs operating out of zoos.

Correlations

To facilitate use of the curriculum as well as a greater understanding of the learning opportunities integrated into the sequence, C&NN has indexed each activity with corresponding learning objectives and correlations to learning and academic standards. The standards were selected based on their rigor and ability to articulate the social emotional learning and academic outcomes of the curriculum.

LIFE SKILLS

How Nature Quest contributes to the development of life skills is captured in correlations to types of play and 21st Century Learning.

Types of Play

Research suggests children can experience immense amount of learning as well as physical, social and emotional benefits through play. Dramatic, imaginative, constructive and physical play

are present in Nature Quest. Types of play were classified and identified by Sociologist Mildred Parten¹ in 1932 and expanded up in 2007 by K.R. Ginsburg².

21st Century Learning Framework

Nature Quest's invitation for families to work cooperatively and creatively while thinking critically, problem solving and assuming responsibility for the care of their natural environment hones in on learning and innovation skills and literacy life and career skills outlined in 21st Century Learning. The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) [Framework for 21st Century Learning](#) defines and illustrates the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in work, life and citizenship, as well as the support systems necessary for 21st century learning outcomes.

SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, & ENVIRONMENT

Through observation, exploration and inquisition, Nature Quest invites families and youth to discover an understanding of the ecology, science and design inherent in nature. Since Nature Quest is intended to engage the entire family, age and grade level are not specified in the academic correlations.

National Science Education Standards (NSES)

Primary and secondary science standards are present in Nature Quest with emphasis on unifying concepts & process, science as inquiry and life sciences. The [National Science Education Standards](#) were established by the National Research Council.

Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)

Nature Quest embodies nature of science, science and engineering practices, and science, technology, society, and the environment classifications within NGSS. [The Next Generation Science Standards](#) are science content standards that build upon the National Science Education Standards by adding accountability for children understanding science design and engineering.

North American Association Environmental Education (NAAEE) Excellence in Environmental Education Standards

Nature Quest captures three core areas of the [NAAEE Excellence in Environmental Education Standards](#): questioning and analysis, knowledge of environmental process and systems and understanding and addressing environmental issues. The standards define components of high-quality environmental education.

Comments or Questions

The Children & Nature Network welcomes feedback related to the curriculum. Please contact C&NN Senior Vice President, Monica Lopez Magee, at monica@childrenandnature.org for questions or comments.

¹ Parten, Mildred; Newhall, S. M. (1943). "[Social Behavior of Preschool Children](#)". In Barker, Roger G.; Kounin, Jacob S.; Wright, Herbert F. *Child Behavior and Development: A Course of Representative Studies*. New York: McGraw-Hill. pp. 509–525.

²Ginsburg KR;. (2007, Jan). The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bond: Focus on Children in Poverty. American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Communications; American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health, *Pediatrics*. 2007 Jan;119(1):182-91.
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/pediatrics/129/1/e204.full.pdf>