

Jane Addams Environmental Education Emphasis for our K-8 Program

Exploring issues helps young learners make important links between conceptual understanding, what is happening in their community, and their own responsibility for environmental quality. But at the same time young learners are only beginning to synthesize their knowledge into the kind of complex understanding that is essential to examining environmental issues. Basic guidelines for examining environmental issues at this level are to keep it simple, keep it local, and make close links with what students are observing and learning about the local environment.

In the fifth through eighth grades, learners begin to develop skills in abstract thinking and continue to develop creative thinking skills—and along with these, the ability to understand the interplay of environmental and human social systems in greater depth. Environmental education can foster this development by focusing on investigation of local environmental systems, problems, and issues. As learners become actively engaged in deciding for themselves what is right and wrong, educators can use environmental problems to help learners explore their own responsibilities and ethics.

The following table suggests ways in which learners at different grade levels can explore and understand the local environment.

Grades K-4	Grades 5-8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify basic types of habitats. Create a short list of plants and animals found in each.</li> <li>• Trace the source of their drinking water and where it goes after it is used.</li> <li>• Recognize resident animal species, migrants, and those that pass through on migratory routes.</li> <li>• Describe aspects of the environment that change on a daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly basis.</li> <li>• Record weather observations such as precipitation, temperature, or cloud cover.</li> <li>• Identify food crops that are grown or processed locally.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classify local ecosystems. Create food webs to show, or describe their function in terms of the interaction of specific plant and animal species.</li> <li>• Describe how drinking water and wastewater are treated.</li> <li>• Map migratory routes of birds, butterflies, and other animals that pass through the area. Identify their local habitat needs.</li> <li>• Identify species that are locally threatened, endangered, or declining in population. Describe their habitat needs.</li> <li>• Identify sources of electricity used in the community.</li> <li>• Describe the area’s climate and identify factors that contribute to it.</li> <li>• Create a map for the local area that shows where food that is consumed locally comes from.</li> </ul>

Summary taken from the Excellence in Environmental Education: Guidelines for Learning (Pre K-12).  
North American Association for Environmental Education

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### Initial 3-Year Plan toward Developing our Environmental Science Focus:

#### Year One:

- Science Specialist supports science instruction K-8
  - Map the Environmental Studies emphasis in the District-issued science units and standards
  - Partner with librarian to increase on-site resources
  - Provide support and resources for staff and community
  - Develop 6<sup>th</sup> grade Environmental Studies elective
  - Science Fair
- Initiate and develop partnerships with the science community and the greater Jane Addams community
  - Thornton Creek Homewaters Project
  - NOAA
  - IslandWood
  - Pacific Marine Research Vessel
  - Seattle Tilth
  - Audubon Society
  - PTA-lead community projects which foster our school-home connection
- Research and develop planning grants to sustain the program

#### Year Two:

- Increase integration of environmental studies through the disciplines and at all grade levels
  - Math and Science Career Day
  - Extended Day programs with math and science emphasis
- Strengthen partnerships and implement grant opportunities

#### Year Three:

- Multi-year and multi-grade partnerships
- Evaluate progress and develop next steps

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The following table lists the District’s Science Units by grade level. While Environmental Education is a synthesis of all disciplines, the titles in bold italics include concepts which lend themselves to further environmental education opportunities.

Kindergarten	1 <sup>st</sup> grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> grade
Fabric	Balls & Ramps	<b><i>Liquids: unique and common properties</i></b>
Wood	<b><i>Weather: sun, air &amp; water work together to give us our weather</i></b>	<b><i>Soils: components, decomposition &amp; composting</i></b>
<b><i>Animals 2 x 2: living things have certain characteristics</i></b>	<b><i>Organisms: diversity, basic needs, and life cycles</i></b>	Balancing and Weighing

3 <sup>rd</sup> grade	4 <sup>th</sup> grade	5 <sup>th</sup> grade
Sound	Circuits & Pathways	Microworlds
<b><i>Rocks and Minerals: rocks have different properties that reflect the way they were formed &amp; the minerals from which they are made</i></b>	<b><i>Ecosystems: studies interrelationships between organisms and explores the causes and effects of pollution</i></b>	<b><i>Land and Water: relationship between nature &amp; human activity in erosion</i></b>
<b><i>Plant Growth &amp; Development: Interdependent relationships within pollination</i></b>	Food Chemistry	Models & Designs

6 <sup>th</sup> grade	7 <sup>th</sup> grade	8 <sup>th</sup> grade
Truth about Science	Energy, Machines, & Motion	Earth in Science
Magnets & Motors	<b><i>Catastrophic Events: understanding components &amp; patterns of Earth's systems</i></b>	Properties of Matter
<b><i>Solutions and Pollutions: exploration of the causes of and remedies for groundwater pollution</i></b>	Human Body Systems	<b><i>Science and Life Issues: "Ecology and Evolution": how environment influences the lifestyles and living standards of people just as people influence the environment</i></b>
<b><i>Diversity of Life: exploration of the universal properties of life on planet Earth</i></b>		