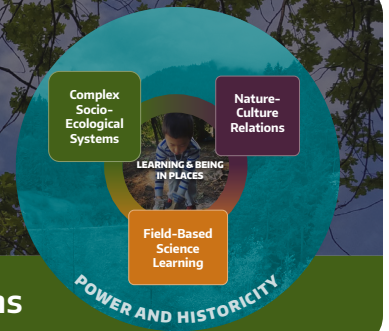




Family Science Learning Engagement



LE 5.A What “Should We” Do? Exploring your family’s daily decisions

Activity Purpose

Use this activity to learn about what “Should We” questions are and explore your family’s decision making. People make decisions all day long—some big and some small—many of which we almost forget to notice. Your family will engage in reflection about the decisions you make and how they intersect with space and time. You can use the activity sheet provided for this activity to keep track of your brainstorm, or you can use blank sheets of paper.

Activity Overview

This is a two-part activity.

- **5.A.1:** Collect data on your family’s daily decisions. Write down all the things you and your family make decisions about during one day, or do this over multiple days.
- **5.A.2:** Explore how the place you live and the structures of our systems in society shape the decisions you can make.
- **Extension activity ideas:** Identify one of your daily decisions that is strongly shaped by place or societal structures, for example, whether your town’s waste department supports composting. Call a family member or friend and explore if, and how, their daily decision is also shaped by place and societal structure. Explore differences.



What can you do to support learning?

- Compare and contrast different decisions you and your family have made to uncover different knowledge, goals, and values involved in making decisions.
- Consider times when you’ve answered the same “Should we” question in a different way. Explore why that happened. Some examples: deciding what produce you buy at the grocery store and how the seasons make different fruits and vegetables available or deciding to drive, take public transportation or walk.
- This is an opportunity to share your family’s histories and values. You might also explore a familial or cultural practice or decision you make in the same way as previous generations in your family.

Connecting with other families

- » Call other family members and ask them about a big decision they made and why they made it. You could also ask another family or friends to complete the daily decision log, then compare and contrast your lists.

CONNECT TO OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Learning Engagement 5.B: Making Nature-Culture Connections
- Learning Engagement 6.A: Modeling a Neighborhood “Should We” Question



LEARNING IN PLACES FRAMEWORKS TO CONSIDER

- Socio-Ecological Histories of Place
- Socio-Ecological Deliberation & Decision Making
- Asking Powerful Questions in Field-Based Science

Science Practices Emphasized

- Asking Questions
- Developing and Using Models
- Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information

Key Ideas

“Should We” Questions

Asking “what should we do” and then making a decision is something that all people do everyday. Deciding what to do involves utilizing knowledge, clarifying values and goals, and exploring potential impacts. Socio-ecological “should we” questions (1) explore relationships between humans and the natural world, (2) explore multiple possibilities and how each decision impacts families, communities, and the natural world, and (3) encourages us to make more ethical and accountable decisions within the natural and social world. “Should We” questions ask us to think about scales of time, including seasons, and processes of change. “Should We” questions require deliberation and action even with uncertainty.

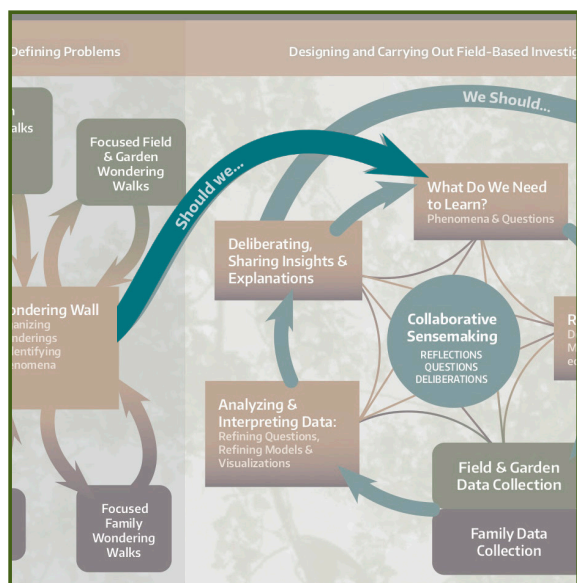


Disciplinary Core Ideas

Human communities have always made socio-ecological decisions that are shaped by values and cultural practices. From choices about what to eat, to where to live and how to get around, to what homes to build with which materials, among others. These choices reflect how human communities construct their relations (everyday, institutional, legal, etc.) with the natural world.

“Scientists use models...to represent their current understanding of a system (or parts of a system) under study, to aid in the development of questions and explanations, and to communicate ideas to others...” (National Research Council, 2012, p. 57).

YOUR PLACE IN THE
SEASONAL STORYLINE





What “Should We” Do?

Exploring your family’s daily decisions.

In this activity, your family will reflect on all the daily decisions you make, especially ones you might not think about very much. This activity is intended to help your family explore how we are interconnected and how our decisions may have impacts on or be impacted by others. Use the sheet below or make your own chart with the following four dimensions. Log as many decisions as you can across your day. You can just log the decisions and then reflect on the questions at the end of the day.

Daily Decision Log

What was the decision?	Why was the decision made? What was the goal or purpose?	Who or what was impacted by the decision?	Who was involved in making the decision?



LE # 5.A1

Daily Decision Log

What was the decision?	Why was the decision made? What was the goal or purpose?	Who or what was impacted by the decision?	Who was involved in making the decision?





What “Should We” Do?

How do places and structures impact our family decisions?

Places and structures shape our decisions in all kinds of ways but are sometimes hidden or not part of our thinking. This activity is intended to help you think about this more as a family. Choose a big decision or daily decisions and work through them. You might consider how the seasons impact your decision, whether you live in an urban, suburban, or rural place, or what regional ecosystem you live in. You also can consider how your societal structures impact your decisions and may also intersect with the place you live in. For example, does your city or town support mass recycling or composting, do you have access to public transportation? These dimensions may help some possible decisions easier for you as a family or make some decisions harder or even seem impossible.

Daily Decision	How does this place shape this daily decision?	How do societal structures shape this decision?