

The Environmental Studies Program

Definition:

“Environmental Studies”, as the name implies, is an actual living, experience for children that takes place at any cultural, historic, prehistoric, or natural site where the interaction and the interdependency of people and their environment are represented. It relies heavily on pre-program explorations and preparations, role-playing, and problem solving. “Environmental Living” is much more than this, by recreating and solving some of the environmental tasks and problems of the past, we can come to understand the present-solve some of our problems.

Introduction:

The Environmental Studies Program is a role-playing experience through which the participants simulate a historic life style. Children, by experiencing as closely as possible, the reality of another time period or culture, become more acutely aware of both elements of that environment as their own. In both environments, they can and will have to solve many problems of living. Through this experience, children become aware of and curious about the physical, natural, and historic aspects of the park site as well as their relationship to the site and its history. Ultimately, the students may discover and understand their relationship to their own environment. The emphasis of the program is on self-learning.

The Experience:

The teachers and parents are what make the ESP's work. The enthusiasm, creative interest, and pre site planning will inspire the students' interest give them the unforgettable learning experience that the Sonoma Mission ESP can provide. We know that the magnitude of planning that goes into the program can be scary, but with the help of the manual, the workshop, and staff, you will be fine!

During the ESP, schoolchildren take on the characters and activities of the past in order to “live history.” By acting like a character from the past and doing the things that character would have done, children become more acutely aware of the historic environment as well as their own. They will be able to gain a personal relationship to history. The ESP is an experience they will remember through out their lives (just ask the staff!).

The manual is divided into three sections: the first is the “Pre site Planning Section” which includes pre-site details, classroom activities, history, character and costume information. The second, “Activities and Stations” includes information on the various stations and different activities to use during the program on-site. The third, “Handout Section”, includes handouts and various forms. Please read the whole manual and become very familiar with its contents. We have tried to include everything that you need to know to plan your program. Please call us if you have any questions.