



Grow Your
NATURAL
Learner

Module One

Workbook:

The Art and Science of Natural Learning

This workbook accompanies Module One of the Grow Your Natural Learner Course. Use it as you progress through the module videos to support your learning and take notes to refer back to on your journey.

Section One: Defining Natural Learning

Natural learning is:

- Trusting your child's natural timeline and rhythm of learning.
- Believing that they are capable learners.
- Instinctual in that we follow our children's needs vs the needs or pressures of society.
- Knowing that your child needs very little interference.
- Understanding that your role in their learning experience is one of guidance, connection, and trust vs force, repetition, and expectations.

Define natural learning for yourself in a way that best suits your family's environment?

Embracing natural learning often means looking at the understanding of concepts in a completely new light. What does natural learning look/feel like when you think about the following areas of learning and development?

Literacy - Reading, Writing, and Communication

Math, Science, and Technology

Life Skills and Problem Solving

Section Two: Developmental Research

Most important research takeaways in natural learning:

- When a topic is of interest, we are more likely to absorb the information and are more readily able to access it effectively later on when the information is needed
- When children develop a skill (like reading) naturally on their own timeline, they are more likely to enjoy and use the skill in everyday life than their peers who were forced into learning too early
- Children who learn a skill "late" show NO disadvantage to their peers who learned earlier
- Curiosity-driven learning builds confidence, problem solving skills, and creativity - all of which are some of the most sought-after skills in today's workforce

The most important thing to keep in mind is your vision for the future. Don't let the task or skill at hand become more important than long-term benefits of the natural learning process.

Focus on that future vision. What do you want your child to believe and feel about learning long into their adulthood?

Choose one of the linked research articles in the module to read through to get a deeper picture. What did you learn from this article? How does it help you feel more confident in your understanding of how the natural learning process supports your learner?

Section Three: Natural Phases of Development

Remember that "norms" are purely defined by a majority of children reaching a defined milestone by a certain age, not what is right or wrong.

Our job as parents/teachers in natural learning is to define where our children are and meet them there, not forcing them to meet the defined "norms" of the world.

These developmental phases are based off of research in child development, an understanding of the various domains of growth, and averages in neuro-typical development. I recommend focusing on the working skills vs the age range to best support your child.

Reference the next page with the chart of phases of natural development to answer the following questions about your child(ren).

Which phase of development is my child currently in?

What evidence do I have through observing their play and behavior that makes me confident this is the current phase of development they are in?

What skills is my child primarily working on mastering right now?

I can offer support for my child in this phase of development by...

Section Three: Natural Phases of Development

Phase/Age Range	Working Skills	How to Support
<p>0-2 Infancy/Toddler</p>	<p>Led by mostly physical stages of development such as sitting up, crawling, walking, climbing, etc.</p> <p>Lots of gross motor exploration through things like stacking objects, putting/placing, pouring, dumping, etc.</p> <p>Sensory exploration is big in this stage as well.</p>	<p>Support through offering various physical levels of exploration and opportunities to play with a variety of objects and loose parts that give them the chance to work in their phase of development.</p> <p>Offer safe sensory opportunities for exploration.</p>
<p>3-5 Preschool/Early Years</p>	<p>Beginning to develop interests that can be harnessed for learning experiences, while still being driven by gross and fine motor phases, such as lining things up, stacking, sorting, dumping, etc.</p> <p>Literacy awareness begins to shift as they become aware of symbols in their environment having meaning.</p>	<p>Support through a mostly play-based, child-led learning environment. Provide opportunities for short interest-focused learning with lots of flexibility.</p> <p>This is a prime time to be reading aloud, offering more book selection, writing practice opportunities, etc. And plenty of discussion-based learning in real life situations!</p>
<p>7-10 Elementary Years/Pre-Teen</p>	<p>This is the average age of reading and writing independence, and a lot of brain power is spent on developing these skills.</p> <p>Emotional and social growth is huge here as well, as children make sense of who they are as individuals in the big world around. Interests drive most meaningful learning experiences.</p>	<p>These are your biggest years as a “guide” in the learning journey. Focus on building foundational learning skills that will allow your child to take charge of their learning journey. Follow their interests and learn alongside them. Continue to provide opportunities in the environment for self-exploration and literacy growth.</p> <p>Give ample opportunity for discussions about emotional and social growth and situations to help your child develop a healthy growth mindset.</p>
<p>11+ Teenage Years/Early Adulthood</p>	<p>Inter-personal skills, friendships, and social learning is a big motivator for our older children. Most meaningful learning is self-directed and independent. A lot depends on the foundations that have been laid in prior years.</p>	<p>Continue to provide support and resources for your self-directed learner, while guiding and supporting them towards the steps that they need to take as they blossom into high years/adulthood. Intrinsic motivation to achieve their goals will continue to play a huge factor.</p> <p>If natural learning hasn’t been a focus until now, there may be some work that needs to be done to build a new foundation of trusting themselves and being able to identify their true interests and ideas.</p>

Section Four: Trusting Your Child's Capability

Unlearning and trusting are the hardest parts of beginning and navigating the natural learning journey. If we make rash decisions based on fear in those moments of wavering, we risk cracking that foundation of trust with our children.

When you feel that fear creeping in, stop and observe your child to best remind yourself of the reasons for your deep beliefs and trust.

Write a statement for yourself that you can refer back to when you're feeling that fear or lack of faith in your child OR yourself. What would you want yourself to hear in that moment?

If there are any other adults or parties that are responsible for caring for/educating your child, it's helpful to be on the same page if at all possible. Sharing information and having open communication is great, but you also must release yourself of responsibility for their choices. Focus on the connection, trust, and foundation that you are creating in your environment for your child and feel confident that it is enough.

Who else in your child's life has a hand in their care and education?

How can you communicate with that person in a more open way and encourage them to provide a natural learning foundation for your child?

FINAL THOUGHTS

This blank space is for you to put any other notes or revelations that you have from Module One.