Welcome Chaperones! Thank you for choosing to spend time with your child’s class at the Museum. Your role as chaperone is essential to ensuring that your group has a positive experience. To help you get started, this guide asks questions about exhibits in the main building — the Nature Exploration Center (NEC) — that are related to students’ curricula. You also can help students find answers to their OWN questions by reading exhibit labels and talking with Museum staff. Remember: students must stay with chaperones at all times.

**Second Floor**

**Go to the Mountains to the Sea gallery**

*In the Piedmont area, find the panel labeled “From Forest to Field and Back Again.” The early settlers cleared the original forests to create farmland. Later, they abandoned the farms, and the plants and animals started re-establishing themselves in a process called succession.*

1. The first year after abandonment, herbs were the predominant plants. Why?

2. Why did it take broomsedge and asters two to five years to outcompete the early colonizers?

3. How did broomsedge and asters outcompete the early herbaceous plants?

4. Five to 50 years after the area was abandoned, pine trees, red cedar and other species dominated. Later, hardwoods replaced these species. How did the hardwoods reach the canopy?

5. Name three clues that show a natural area was once a farm.

**Third Floor**

**Go to the Tropical Connections gallery**

*Find the exhibit called “The Role of People.” Go to the panel labeled Overpopulation. Overpopulation can be a result of unchecked population growth.*

6. How would you define overpopulation?

7. What problems can overpopulation cause for
   A. Humans?
   B. Earth’s ecology?

   Look at the graph of Mexico’s population growth rate.

8. How did Mexico reduce its growth rate during the latest decades?

**Stay in the Tropical Connections gallery**

*Find the Biodiversity display. You can find the information you need on the central pillar of the exhibit.*

9. What does biodiversity mean? Biodiversity can arise when species interact with each other, when species become isolated from one another, or when species become extinct.

10. Find an example of biodiversity that may have arisen because animal species have interacted with plant species.

11. How can the extinction of species increase biodiversity?

12. Does this mean that we shouldn’t worry about life forms becoming extinct because of human activities?

For more information on planning your visit, please visit the Museum’s website: naturalsciences.org.