

Building Real World Connections: JA Finance Park

Assisted by volunteers & educators, Finance Park is a life-like simulation where students have the opportunity to become an adult for the day. They are immersed in a reality-based decision-making process addressing aspects of individual family budgeting, including housing, transportation, food, utilities, healthcare, philanthropy, and banking.

A Glimpse Into Adulthood

At the start of the day, students receive a tablet with their personas for the simulation. They will receive a job, salary, credit score, and family situation. They will then calculate their Net Monthly Income (NMI) and plan their budget accordingly to fit their scenario.

Personas will vary: some students may have spouses, children, and pets while others may not. It is up to them to budget enough to take care of themselves and their families.

Job Title: Project Manager

Annual Salary: \$63,000

Age: 38

Marital Status: Married with two children: girl age 8/boy age 5

Monthly Taxes: \$1,234

Social Security: \$326

Medicare: \$79

Other: Drive 22 miles round-trip to work each day

Employment background: After graduating from high school, you joined the Navy and earned your bachelor's degree in engineering. You are fortunate that you do not have any outstanding student loans. While you were in the Navy, you worked on large-scale projects. You will need a master's degree to move up in your company or secure a new job with better pay.



Put Your Skills to the Test

After receiving their personas, students will walk around JA Finance Park learning about each business and expense category and determine if it is a need or a want.

During the simulation, students will pay bills, shop, further their education, apply for an auto loan and mortgage, and much more!

JA Finance Park Volunteer Component

Volunteers guide students through the simulation. Volunteers assist at each expense category and lead discussions with students on if that category is a need or a want. Volunteers serve as role models and share their own real-life experiences. Volunteers ultimately help bridge the gap between the simulation and what students may face in reality.



JA Finance Park Curriculum

Entry Level (Grades 7-8)

JA Finance Park Entry Level is an introduction to budgeting and personal finances for middle school students. It contains a minimum of 13 teacher-led, 45 to 50 minute lessons, before the culminating simulation. Entry Level focuses on 6 major themes that build a foundation upon which students can make intelligent lifelong financial decisions..

Curriculum Overview

INCOME:

3 required lessons focusing on planning for the future, career exploration, and taxes and income. Optional extension activities available.

SAVING, INVESTING, AND RISK MANAGEMENT:

2 required lessons focusing on short and long term saving and investing strategies and managing risk with insurance. Optional extension activities available.

DEBIT AND CREDIT:

4 required lessons focusing on finance institutions, debit and credit cards, learning to be a savvy shopper, managing credit. Optional extension activities available.

BUDGET+:

3 required lessons focusing on money management, successful budget tips and tricks, and building a responsible budget. Optional extension activities available.

SIMULATION:

Students apply what they learned in the classroom in a mobile or virtual simulation.

DEBRIEF:

Students discuss and share their experiences from the classroom and simulation.



Register for JA Finance Park at <https://www.jacolorado.org/finance-park-2/>

For more information contact financepark@jacolorado.org