



Kid Naturalist 2024

Guidelines for teachers

1. Objective of the programme

As a result of the exam-oriented education system, the trend of sending children to private classes is increasing and the time for children to engage in outdoor activities and to interact with the natural environment is greatly reducing. In addition, children's dependence on television, computers, mobile phones and high-tech tools has further reduced their engagement with the environment they live. As a result, children are practically unable to recognize at least a herbal plant, a few small animals, birds found in their garden or school grounds. Therefore, it is very important to train children to interact with nature and become responsible citizens who appreciate their living environment, love, and respect it. Therefore, this Kid Naturalist Programme is organized annually by the National Science Foundation which is under purview of the Ministry of Education for children from grade one to six in all government registered schools in the country.

2. How children could participate the programme

The basic concept of this programme is for a child to observe and record a selected environmental phenomena/living organism/plant in their living environment or around the school for a period of 6 weeks. They need to record their observations and prepare a “nature journal” based on the observations. A period of 8 weeks is given for this whole activity.

Note: The use of pets, and animals that rare in houses, flower plants etc. as observation items in this exercise is strongly discouraged, as it will not meet the objectives of this study.

3. Few examples for students' projects

- 1.Children can observe birds that visit their garden. Choose only one species and study their behavior, their foraging habits (e.g. foraging on the ground, hunting and eating plant material, etc.), the way their body is shaped to find food (e.g. beak, foot, neck, etc.), their gregarious behavior (living in a flock, pair, or solitary etc.) can be observed and reported. Also guide the child to find out the benefits or harms of these animals to the environment, special adaptations and behaviors unique to them.
- 2.Guide child to identify some medicinal plants in garden or surrounding areas. Then allow them to record the environment in which they grow, its nature, whether it is a tree, plant bush or a vine, the way flowers/fruits are produced, the special features that can be used to identify the plant, whether it can be used as a food item etc.. If it is a small plant, dry and paste the whole plant or if it a large plan use parts of the plant to prepare herbarium sheet. Help the child to get more information (scientific name, common names) about it from books, from an adult or from reliable websites on the internet. Guide your student to find medicinal value, food value, special features and benefits to human and animal and write them in journal.
- 3.Give the child some time to choose an insect in the garden (e.g. ants, spiders, beetles, butterflies, ladybirds, moths etc.) and observe its behavior. To make close observation train students to use a hand lens. Let them observe how they are naturally adapted to protect themselves from enemies (camouflage), color patterns, body shape etc. how they prepare their living habitats, their food habits etc.. Give guidance for students to find out the benefits or harms they do to environment or people.
- 4.Encourage children to observe the animals that visit the garden, such as squirrels, lizards, monkeys, or moose. Guide them in observing behavior, eating habits, appearance, and camouflaging techniques. Focus on one animal for detailed study. Assist the child in researching the scientific name, common names, and the environmental impact (both positive and negative) of the chosen animal. Record their findings.

5. Direct the child to study the clouds pattern in the sky during the day. Guide the child to record changes over time before or after a rain. Use the internet or other information sources to educate the child about cloud shapes and related information. Monitoring at times other than those used on special days (e.g. rainy days) adds value to the environmental record. Please note if it is rainy season observing sky may affect the project and will not produce materials for preparation of nature journal

4. How a teacher can guide children to prepare the nature journal

1. Assist the child to select animal/plant/or other item to be observed
2. Guide students to do pre-planning (methods use and materials needed) and specific data to be collected and record
3. Set a time schedule for observation (e.g. 6 am, 4 pm). In special cases, direct student to do observation at additional times as well.
4. Direct the child to maintain notes on the observations along with the date and time.
5. Always keep a child's safety in mind when doing observations.
6. Guide children who find difficulties in writing to use drawings and pictures more to express their observations.
7. Direct student to start collecting relevant materials (dried flowers, leaves, seeds, bird feathers, etc.) during first six weeks and guide the child to organize them to create an attractive journal.
8. In preparation for the journal, allow the child to present his observations freely using different mediums like diagrams, dried flower leaves, pictures etc.
9. Guide students to refer books, internet, or find information from known person to the problems encountered during the project period.
10. Give the child maximum freedom and space to create the nature journal in a unique way, using his/her own abilities and talents.
11. Help the child to use language, grammar and wordings as accurately as possible without interfering with his thoughts or expressions.
12. Use photographs only where necessary. Always give priority to the child's creativity. Do not use images taken from other sources like magazines, books, internet etc. to prepare the journal.

13. Use the format of nature journal provided by the NSF only as a guide but do not hinder the child's creativity (Annexure III).
14. National Science Foundation will organize a lecture series on kid naturalist programme in July 2024. Further information about this can be obtained by connecting to the official YouTube channel and official Facebook page of the National Science Foundation (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWziS21LQ1L9xSDUZAKD5dw>).

5. Matters to be considered in preparing the nature journal

1. Use the format given by the NSF as a basic guideline in preparation of the Nature Journal
2. The nature journal should be prepared in the child's handwriting and computer typed journal is not accepted for evaluation. If child cannot write very well, the expression can be done with pictures.
3. Appropriate colors, such as pastel watercolors, colored pencils etc. can be used in the drawings.
4. Avoid directing children to use highly technical, scientific terms or language used by adults in reporting. Let the children write the journal using their own words.
5. Add the pages of the nature journal as indicated in the instruction sheet. Loose papers or irregularly collected papers will not be considered as a journal during evaluation.
6. Avoid using expensive paper or stationery. Use plain paper (white or color) for preparation of the journal.

6. Enrolling to the programme

Students who wish to participate in the program can register by submitting application using the google form before 15th July 2024.

The QR code for the google form :



7.Submission of the Nature

Journal

The application form can be downloaded following link.

from the NSF official website using the

[https://www.nsf.gov.lk/images/2024/Kid Naturalist SIN.pdf](https://www.nsf.gov.lk/images/2024/Kid_Naturalist_SIN.pdf)

The duly completed application with the assertion of the principal should be forwarded to the following address.

Director General
National Science Foundation
47/5, Maitland Place
Colombo 07

Note:

Deadline for the submission of nature journals: 31st August 2024

The submitted nature journals can be collected from NSF premises from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm on public working days within two months after announcement of the winners of competition at the official website of NSF (www.nsf.gov.lk).

For more information please contact:

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