



# NSF Kid Naturalist Programme 2022

## Guidelines for Parents and Teachers

### 1. Why nurture a kid to be nature lovers?

It is identified as a growing problem in the world that children are spending more and more time away from the natural world that surrounds them. Over the past years, complex diseases like obesity, diabetics and psychological problems which are associated with sedentary lifestyle have been increasing among children, giving warning to the health sector to take immediate measures. The research done in this subject is increasingly pointing out that learning and playing in a natural setting has several developmental, educational, and health benefits. Experts are finding that children who play and learn in nature are healthier, happier, and smarter than children stay indoors glued to their computers, TVs or smart phones. The current pandemic situation is also contributing drastically to restrict children to their homes and online education creating a more stressful environment for children. Therefore, it is very important to get them engaged in some activities that have a positive effect on emotional well-being and make them happy, increase their capacity, academic performance, and creativity etc. Thus, it is responsibility of the teachers and parents to get them out of these enforced restrictions and move them outdoor considering all health regulations to mingle with nature and look at their surroundings with loving, scientific eye with critical and logical analysis. Accordingly, the National Science Foundation (NSF) under the State Ministry of Skill Development, Vocational Education, Research, and Innovation is organizing a programme named “Kid naturalist” for students of Grade 01-06 with the assistance of Primary and Science Sections of the Ministry of Education to promote students to be a part of the nature they live in.

## 2. How can a teacher or a parent guide their kids to explore nature?

If you are a teacher who teaches in a school that has space and natural environment, allow your students to observe few minutes of their surroundings and select one object for them to do regular observations and guide them to keep records and maintain a nature journal.

You also can guide them to observe something that attracts their interest in their home environment. With the assistance of their parents, guide them to do the observations regularly and to keep records. You can evaluate their work in school, discuss what they observed, problems they faced, guide them to resolve any matter arise, etc.

If you are a parent, living in a house surrounded by a garden or village, where your kids can walk around, give them time and freedom to explore it on their own while giving you guidance and protection.

A few ideas to select are indicated below:

1. Guide kids to find medicinal plants in their surroundings. Ask them to make a small herbal garden / a few potted plants etc. Ask them to find their medicinal value, which parts are used for medicinal purposes. Whether they are used for other purposes such as food items, fertilizer, pest repellent etc. If they are edible give them an opportunity to taste them and smell them. You can encourage them to have their own herbal garden in a corner of your home garden and keep adding more plants. Even after this program ended it will add meaning to their life.
2. Observe birds visiting your garden, select one species and record their behavior, foraging habits (e.g. ground feeder etc.), food pattern, living as flock, pair or in solitude. Draw pictures using pastel, water colour etc. record its movements with time of the day. Do observations daily within a period of four weeks (minimum).
3. Take time to observe the insects (bugs, beetles, butterflies, ants, millipeds etc.) in your garden with your child, and get closer and observe with a magnifying glass. Observe the color of the insect and research how they protect themselves (do they sting?), and how they work together to build a home (an ant hill is a great example of an insect colony).

Observe how they react in danger, colour patterns in their bodies to hide or camouflage. Keep a record of one species, draw pictures of the insect and observe its nesting etc. or observe a few in the garden and compare differences.

4. Observe the animals coming to your garden e.g., squirrels, lizards, monkeys, mongoose etc. and observe their foraging habits, their appearance, how they look for food etc. (Please do not use pet animals such as cats, dogs etc. for your observations)
5. Ask your kid to observe the sky with time and observe the cloud patterns, colour of the sky etc. occurs during the daytime, before and after rain etc.
6. Use the format to prepare the report given as guidance but do not restrict your child coming up with his/ her own format ([Annex III](#))

### **3. What kid has to do and how you can support**

1. Assist kid to identify some object to be observed and set regular time for observation (e.g., 6 am morning, 4 pm evening)
2. Ask kid to record observations using words, drawings etc. with date and time the observation made. You also can mention the weather at the time of the observation.
3. Allow kid to write his/her own observations using his/her own words, narratives, drawings, pictures, pressed & dried flowers, leaves etc.
4. Allow kids to be innovative, use artistic skills to create nature journal.
5. Ask the kid to write the questions coming to his mind and assist him/her to find answers through books, internet, asking elders etc.
6. Do not use pictures taken from books, internet or other sources and typed texts in the journal
7. Give a free hand to a kid as much as possible to prepare his/her own journal
8. Assist child to use correct language, grammar, lettering as much as possible while not interfering his thoughts or expressions
9. The whole project period is six weeks. **The kids must do the observations every day, at a regular time for a period of four weeks (minimum) . The last 02 weeks of the project is allocated to prepare the journal.**
10. During the first four weeks of the project period a kid can start gathering relevant materials (dry flowers, leaves, seeds, feathers etc. that can be used to create an

attractive journal. The latter two weeks can be used to write and finalized journal and submit to the NSF

11. Use the format given as guidance but do not restrict your child coming up with his/ her own format

**Note:** Plant a tree to mark the 1<sup>st</sup> step of your journey to be a scientist. It is mandatory to involve the kid in this activity to be eligible for the kid naturalist competition. Student is supposed to fill the given form relevant to this activity and submit along with the nature journal (Annex-IV: "Plant a tree ").

### Things to avoid

1. Do not type set the journal, prepare a handwritten, handmade journal. If the kid cannot write very well, ask him/her to draw.
2. Do not ask kids to use highly technical, scientific terms or language that is used by adults in reporting.
3. Try to avoid using photographs as much as possible. Use few photographs taken during observations, only if it is extremely necessary
4. Bind the journal properly as indicated in the instruction sheet. Loose papers or loosely gathered papers are not considered for evaluation
5. Avoid using expensive papers or stationary items. Use A4 papers (white or colour) as required and decorative items that can be found at home with no/less cost.

## **4. Criteria for application**

1. Age limit: Be in Grades 01-06
2. Observations can be started from the fourth week of February 2022
3. Use the given format only as a reference guide. Always encourage your child to come up with his/her own format for the journal
4. Use A4 papers 1-side
5. Number of pages of the journal should be in range of 10-20 pages
6. One student can submit one project only
7. Use staple, spiral bindings to gather pages to give good finishing to the journal.

8. The project should be a student's own activity. Any unnecessary influence and contribution of adult is detected; the NSF has sole authority to reject the application.
9. All the projects should be submitted with the certification of the class teacher through the school principal.
10. The final decision of the competition will be the decision of the Panel of Judges. No grievances or appeal will be entertained once the winners are announced.
11. The best performers of the programme will be rewarded at a national award ceremony organized by the NSF considering the prevailing health and security situation in the country at the time.
12. Fill in the application form and send it as mentioned below

## 5. Participating in the programme

The student wishes to participate in the programme can register to the programme by submitting their application using any option given below before 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 according (Please **use only one option for application** to avoid duplication

### Option I

By using the google form - <https://forms.gle/Kqu5s1XtnYjAVUmn8>

### Option II:

Fill the application given as Annex-1 and e-mailing to [ajantha@nsf.gov.lk](mailto:ajantha@nsf.gov.lk) & [chamarika@nsf.gov.lk](mailto:chamarika@nsf.gov.lk) indicating "Kid Naturalist 2022" as the subject

### Option III

Fill the application given as Annex-1 and send it as a WhatsApp message to 0706652225 (Ms Ajantha) / 0706652226 (Ms Chamarika).

### Option IV

Fill in the application given as Annex-1 and post it to,

Head  
Science Communication and Outreach Division  
National Science Foundation  
47/5, Maitland Place,  
Colombo 7

Please indicate "Kid Naturalist 2022" in the top left-hand corner of the envelop.

## 6. Submission of the journal

The completed journal should be submitted on or before 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2022 as per the given guideline to following address indicating “Kid Naturalist 2022- Journal” on left hand corner of the envelop.

Head

Science Communication and Outreach Division

National Science Foundation

47/5, Maitland Place,

Colombo 7

*Note:* Pls send softcopy of the journal (scan copy) to [ajantha@nsf.gov.lk](mailto:ajantha@nsf.gov.lk) & [chamarika@nsf.gov.lk](mailto:chamarika@nsf.gov.lk) Indicating “**Kid Naturalist 2022 - Journal**” as the subject

If you need to contact, please call NSF during public working days from 8.30am to 4.00pm.