

Annex II

**Kid Naturalist 2023**

**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.

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

1. **Few examples for students' projects**
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Give the child some time to choose an insect in the garden (e.g. ants, spiders, beetles, butterflies, ladybirds, moths etc.) and observe its behaviour. 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.
5. Observe the animals that come to the garden (e.g. squirrels, lizards, monkeys, moose, etc.) and direct the children to observe their behaviour, eating habits, appearance, camouflaging, feeding habits etc. It is enough to observe the behavior of one such animal. Help the child to research and study about the scientific name, common names of the selected animal , the benefit and harms they cause to environment and human etc.. and record
6. 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 (eg rainy days) adds value to the environmental record.
7. **How a teacher can guide children to prepare the nature journal**
8. Assist the child to select animal/plant/or other item to be observed
9. Guide students to do pre-planning (methods use and materials needed ) and specific data to be collected and record
10. 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.
11. Direct the child to maintain notes on the observations along with the date, time.
12. Always keep a child’s safety in mind when doing observations.
13. Guide children who are not very conversant with record observation using drawings and pictures
14. 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.
15. In preparation for the journal , allow the child to present his observations freely using different mediums like diagrams, dried flower leaves, pictures etc.
16. Guide students to refer books, internet, or find information from known person to the problems raise by the student during project period.
17. Give the child maximum freedom and space to create the nature journal in a unique way, using his/her own abilities and talents.
18. Help the child to use language, grammar and letters as accurately as possible without interfering with his thoughts or expressions.
19. 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.
20. Use the format of nature journal provided by the NSF only as a guide but do not hinder the child's creativity (Annexure III).
21. National Science Foundation will organize a lecture series on kid naturalist programme in July 2023. 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).
22. **Matters to be considered in preparing the nature journal**
23. 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.
24. Appropriate colors, such as pastel watercolors, colored pencils etc. can be used in the drawings.
25. 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.
26. 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.
27. Avoid using expensive paper or stationery. Use plain paper (white or clour) for preparation of the journal.

**6.Enrolling to the programme**

Students who wish to participate in the program can register by submitting application using any of the options given below before 30th June 2023 (please use only one method to avoid duplication).

Option I

For online application follow the google link:https://forms.gle/vf3DGSFgWvSnjxhp7

Option II

Fill up the application form (Annex I) and e-mail to ajantha@nsf.gov.lk and chamarika@nsf.gov.lk, indicating “Kid Naturalist 2023” as the subject.

Option III

Post the application to reach NSF using below given address indicating "Kid Naturalist 2023" in the top left hand corner of the envelope.

Head Science Communication and Outreach Division

National Science Foundation

47/5, Maitland Place

Colombo 07

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