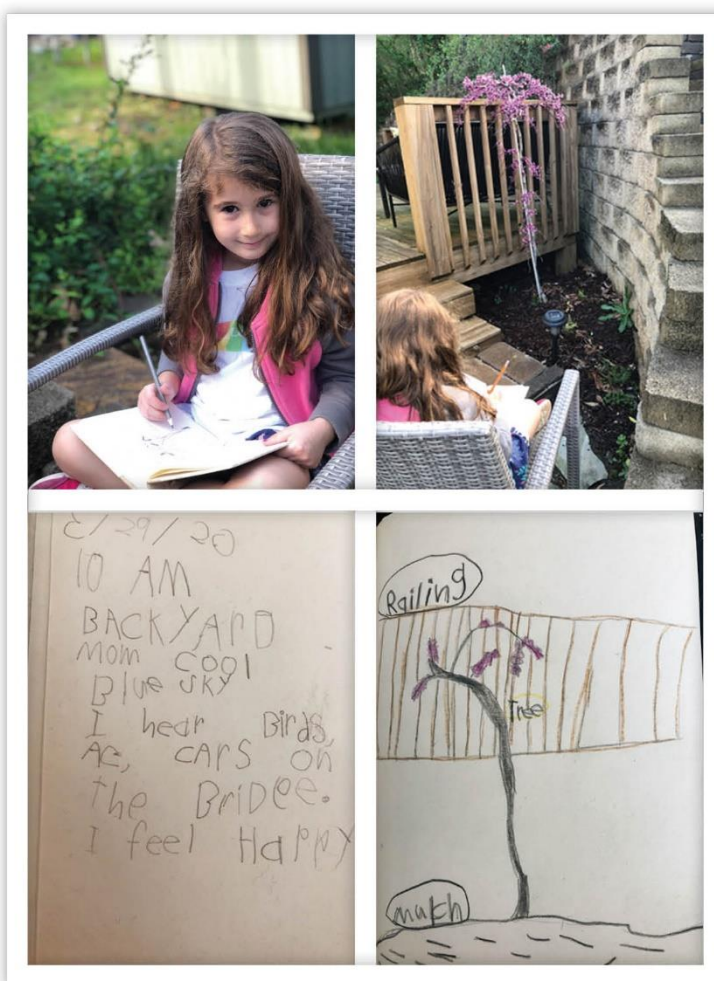




~ WEEKDAY WONDERS GUIDE TO ~ NATURE JOURNALING

Nature journaling is a wonderful way for children (and adults!) to slow down, focus, and develop a closer relationship with the natural world. It helps sharpen observational skills by noticing small details, as well as looking for patterns or changes over longer time periods. You can journal in the same spot every day (especially if you are trying to stay close to home!), but it can also be nice to visit new places and use your journal to help learn about them. Nature journaling doesn't require trips to scenic spots, however. It helps us notice and appreciate the natural world that surrounds us, especially in our backyard.

This is an activity that is appropriate for any age group. Younger children may need some help, but older children and teens can follow some simple prompts or be left to create their own journal. The most important thing is to provide the time to reflect and the freedom to create.



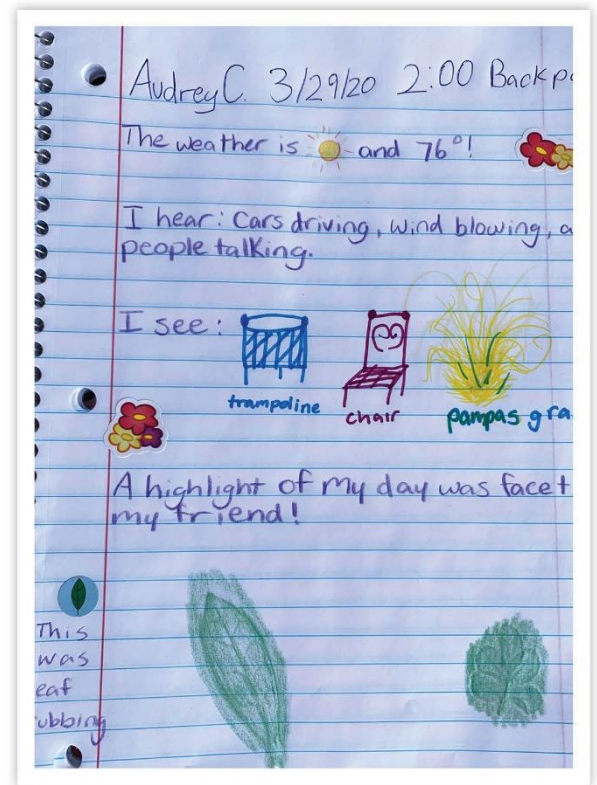
Sara, age 5, nature journals in her yard.

Every time you journal:

- Write the date, time of day, location, and who is with you.
- Write down the current weather.
- Write down three sounds, under the heading, "I Hear..."
- Finish the sentence "I Feel..."
- Write down a highlight of the day.

If you need more inspiration:

- Look at the ground. Find three contrasting leaf shapes from ground plants or fallen leaves. Draw these three, or do leaf rubbings.
- Draw three objects you see at eye-level.
- Draw a small landscape of the scene you see in front of you.
- Stamp art: Dip leaves, acorns, flowers, or rocks into paint and stamp them into your journal.
- Do you see any signs of wildlife around you, even if you can't see an animal? Write down what signs you see.
- Find a poem you like, and copy it into your journal.
- You can add things you found to your journal as well. Maybe it's a pressed flower, leaf, or bark. Maybe it's a photo you've just taken.



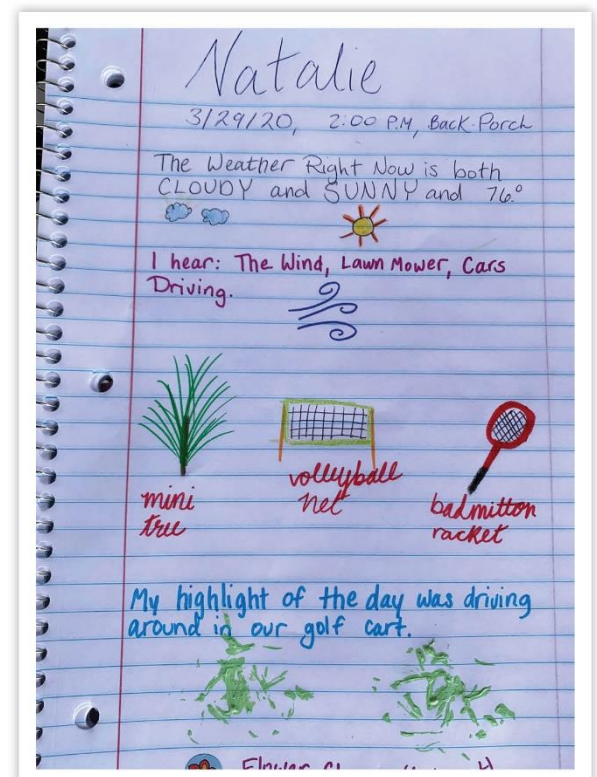
Audrey and Natalie, both age 11, show how young scientists can have different perspectives while in the same location.

You can also bring:

- Magnifying glass
- Binoculars
- Field guides – insects, birds, flowers, trees
- Tape or glue
- Your favorite art products (crayons, pastels, tempera paint, watercolors)

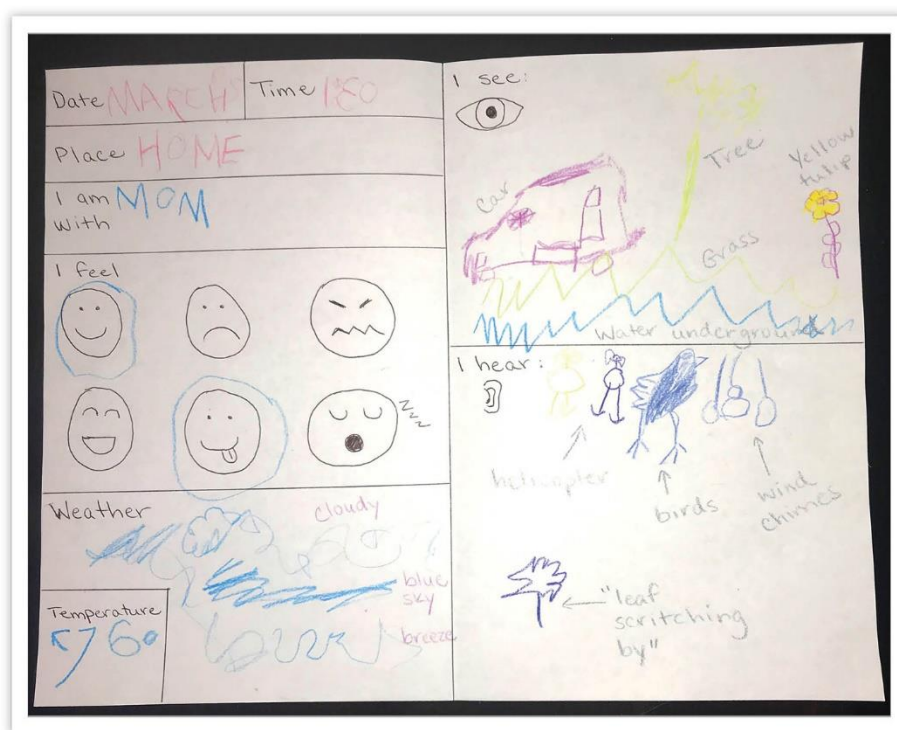
If anything special happens along the way, stop what you're drawing to sketch what may vanish. Make notes about what you see!

We will also give you additional prompts for your journal that relates to the question we're exploring each day at the Tennessee Aquarium.



Additional nature journaling resources:

- <https://www.howwemontessori.com/how-we-montessori/2018/05/nature-journal.html>
- <https://expeditionaryart.com/blog/2018/04/nature-journaling-with-kids/>
- Books by Clare Walker Leslie (we recommend The Nature Connection for journaling prompts or The Curious Nature Guide to help explore what you see!)
- Need help identifying something you've seen? Try the app Seek (kid-safe) or iNaturalist if you're ready for a higher level <https://www.inaturalist.org>
- Explore birds with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology: <https://ebird.org/home>



Megan, age 5 and in pre-kindergarten, used a simple template written by an adult to help guide her nature journaling.



Content developed by the Tennessee Aquarium Education Department.