

Kids Day How-To

The Garden Club of Kentucky, Inc.

1. **Club Support-** work within your club to identify members interested in working with children ages 6-12. Confirm that those members will be available for prep time as well as the day of. Taking notes at the start of this process will help you as you proceed.
2. **Secure Location-** make sure that your location is easily accessible and has plenty of parking, restrooms, and a water source; i.e., parks, extension offices, arboretums, schools, libraries, etc.
3. **Partner with community organizations** that work with children: YMCA, Boy/Girl Scouts, 4-H, Day Care/Day Camps, Summer Programs. Make sure they send chaperones (1 per 10 children) that will stay with them throughout the day. This is of utmost importance!
4. **Theme for the day-** Make sure that this is geared towards children ages 6-12. Suggestions are not limited to the following: Pollinators (Bees, Butterflies, Bats), Recycling, Birds, Insects, Plants and Trees, Seeds and Weeds (Invasives), Nature and Environment (choose one and incorporate a few others as well). Add Educational stations with informational flyers (Keep it short and simple).
5. **Determine your date** (check with other organizations about their schedules) and your hours. We begin registration at 9:30 for local children (those coming in from the YMCA or Summer programs are pre-registered). From 10-11 a.m. we begin the first activity at the local library. At 11:15 we walk to the GCKY headquarters in Paris for lunch (free for all attendees). The afternoon activities are from 12:30-3:00 with volunteers staying for cleanup (let them know this in advance, not the day of).
6. **DESIGNATE Craft Leader** (VERY important)- they will create crafts for appropriate ages, prepare crafts ahead of time and have them pre-packaged, plan on no more than 10 activities (allowing a minimum of 3 hours with kids).

7. **Volunteers-** Crafts- prep ahead, Food- lunch or snacks(hot dogs, chips, cookies and drink), Activity Tables- 2 per activity, Clean-up- crafts, trash, tables, chairs, etc.
8. **Set Up/ Clean Up-** Tables and chairs, food station, wash hands station. Allow 2-3 hours to set-up all activities before start time (we set up the day before with tables and chairs in the Arboretum).
9. **Secure Donations-** Expect to spend between \$200-\$500 or more for this day. Contact local banks, insurance companies and businesses for help with water, bags, publicity(flyers, radio, newspapers), craft supplies, food, baggies and a port-a-potty if there are no restrooms on site.
10. **Determine whether you will host outdoors** (preferable) or indoors (backup). If outdoors be sure that shade or a shelter is available. We host ours in July in the arboretum. We have a church fellowship hall as our backup in case of bad weather.
11. **Children-** Ages 6-12 works best for all involved (but younger children may attend with a family). Use age-appropriate activities, must be accompanied by a parent or guardian (cannot be 'dropped off'), groups (YMCA, Day Care, Summer Camps, etc.) with chaperones (1 for each 10 children). Allow unstructured time (we have a scavenger hunt on site when children finish eating).
12. **Activities-** the sky is the limit! Be creative and have fun! We have done the following: Scavenger Hunt, tee shirts (each child receives a free shirt), Smokey Bear and/or Woodsey Owl, wood painting, mask (butterfly, bees), build-a-bug, plant-in-a-cup, bark rubbing, goose feather bookmark, turtle craft, dragonfly on a stick, terrariums, worms, card making, etc.
13. **Educational Component** – Tie these into your other activities. Composting, Vermiculture (Worms), Hydroponics, Life Cycles, Horticulture (seeds, transplants, sprouts), Bees, Recycling, Pollinators. Be creative here. Have short informational flyer to put in their bags.
14. **Schedule-** keep a schedule handy for any 'late arrivals' that gives more info possibly with a map of the site. List your club name, contact info (think any emergencies) etc.
15. **Certificates of Participation-** see sample* Each child receives a certificate at the completion of the day.

16. **Evaluation-** Take the time to go over what worked and what didn't work as soon as possible while it is fresh on your minds. A few minutes spent here will be invaluable for the next time.
17. **Photograph** all phases of Kids Day from the beginning to the last hour. This documentation can be used for publicity, awards and a record of the event for your club's scrapbook. A Smart Phone is all you need to capture these magical moments with children.
18. **Misc.-** We suggest that you try to plan a year in advance. Believe me it is very helpful to have all of your chicks in a row. We give each child a brown paper bag with handles (think recycle), a bottle of water and make sure water is available all day (think donations). As they arrive before the first activity, give them stickers, crayons or markers and a work area to put their names and stickers on the bags. As they go to each activity table, they will take that item with them in the bag. Have informational flyers available at the Education tables. We have also added word search, hide and seek pictures, coloring pages, etc. to their bags.

The following 'How To' is designed to aid garden clubs in preparing and hosting a Kids Day in their respective communities. It was developed after The Garden Club of Kentucky, Inc. hosted Kids Day at the Arboretum in Paris, Ky. We have fine-tuned this program to fit in a variety of settings with our state clubs. Please feel free to add (or subtract) any of these suggestions as you see fit. We change the activities and themes each year in the event that we are seeing some of the same children each year. We have served more than 150 children in the arboretum and have delighted in hearing their laughter and squeals as they enjoy a day outside. You and your clubs will be able to adapt these ideas to fit into your own communities.

We look forward to hearing from you as you journey down this path with children. If we can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact us.

Have fun in the garden!
Joanna Kirby
Kids Day at the Arboretum, Chair
Kirbys50@hotmail.com