



BLUE FLAG

2011 EDITION

**ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION ACTIVITIES BOOK**

**FOUNDATION FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**



The Blue Flag is a programme from the Foundation for Environmental Education

The Blue Flag Programme is sponsored internationally by:



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<http://www.coronasavethebeach.org>



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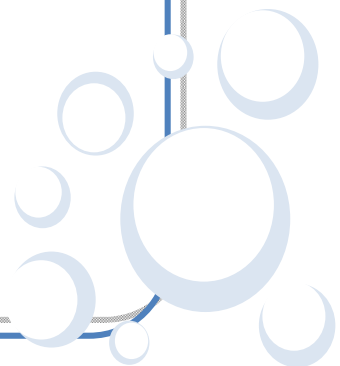
<http://www.shipmate.nl>

Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) is an international organisation that has been promoting environmental education for sustainable development since 1981. FEE is an umbrella organisation with member organisations in around 60 countries around the world. (www.fee-international.org)

FEE is active in environmental education mainly through five programmes:

- Blue Flag (www.blueflag.org)
- Eco-Schools (www.eco-schools.org)
- Young Reporters for the Environment (www.youngreporters.org)
- Learning about Forests (www.leaf-international.org)
- Green Key (www.green-key.org)

Through formal school education, training of staff, and awareness raising, FEE's programmes involve people of all ages and nationalities.



WELCOME TO THE FIRST BLUE FLAG ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ACTIVITY GUIDE

Why this brochure?

This brochure has been created for two main purposes: to help beach and marina managers to organise environmental education activities which fit with their goals and capacities; and to share good ideas throughout the Blue Flag network.

What kind of Environmental Education?

Environmental Education offers a broad framework that encompasses a number of different ideas and approaches to learning in, for or about the environment, in pursuit of sustainable development. The purpose of this guide is not to debate the different definitions, but to encourage a shared acceptance of the diversity of learning approaches. This introduction, therefore, offers a brief description of environmental education approaches and offers a simple classification to help users to navigate their way through the different activities and worksheets.

One way of understanding environmental education is to see it as education that engages learners with nature, encourages them to ask questions about the environment, and engage with environmental change. This means that environmental education is not just concerned with spreading messages about the environment, but it also provides opportunities to enhance learner understandings, question environmental problems and take action for environmental change in pursuit of a sustainable development.

Therefore, the classification we offer is tentative and open to change.

- Information-seeking or enquiry:

Learners are encouraged to ask questions about the environment and gather information or materials. This might be through surveys, counting, collecting, or measuring different parts of the beach, for example.

- Awareness-raising:

Awareness-raising is an educational activity focused on raising a learner's awareness about environmental problems, in the HOPE that they will do something as a response. An example might be an information campaign.

- Action-oriented:

Action-oriented learning is an approach based on environmental change and improvement. The learners take action on a particular environmental problem and try out one or more solutions with the aim of achieving a better environment for all. A typical example is a litter pick.

- Contact with nature / experiential / exploratory

Experiential approaches to environmental education are often based outside, in the particular environment in question, and seek to inspire learners to care for the environment by encouraging contact with nature and exploration, usually around a particular theme, such as 'the sea shore'.

How is this brochure organised?

As you will see, the different categories overlap and are not mutually-exclusive, hence a learning sequence might actually address all four types of environmental education activity in pursuit of a sustainable development.

The same tagging system is used throughout the document, each activity answering the same questions: target group, theme, method, communication, tips, etc.

The activity sheets are organised by theme: *Biodiversity, Marine World, Marina, Special Events, and Waste*. It must be noted that although a specific "Marina" category has been included, the activities under other categories may easily be adapted for a marina.

Where to find this brochure?

You can download this brochure (fully or by theme) on the Blue Flag international website:
www.blueflag.org

School Visit

Workshops on Beach Safety & Natural Environment

Target group: Primary School Children

Type: Awareness Raising

Duration: 1 hour

Country: England

BIODIVERSITY

- **METHOD:** *The aim of the activity is to educate primary school children (in mid Cornwall) on all aspects of beach safety. As well as beach safety the programme is also used to promote an understanding of environmental issues across the beach.*

The programme runs yearly and is carried out by the Beach Safety Officer, during the summer term. The Beach Safety Officer along with the RNLI Lifeguards and Supervisors visit local schools in the mid Cornwall area and give a 30 minutes talk on beach safety issues such as the meaning of the different flags, the dangers of getting cut off by the tide, rip currents and how to recognise them, types of waves and their dangers and the job of the RNLI lifeguards.

Apart from beach safety the sessions also cover some areas of environmental education, looking at what wildlife can be found in and around the beach and coastal area e.g. living in the rock pools. There is also a discussion about hazards of dropped litter and how this can affect the wildlife, with message to the children being put your litter in the bin either at the beach or at home.

If a school wishes to hold the session at a beach this is easily arranged.

- **MATERIAL:** *Support material such as flyers and worksheets.*
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *RNLI Lifeguards, Local Authority, local schools.*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *Information is advertised on the information boards and is advertised o schools in the mid Cornwall area.*

Secondary School Biodiversity Action

Target group: Children and specialist groups

Type: Awareness Raising

Duration: Continuous

Country: England

BIODIVERSITY

- **METHOD:** *The aim of the initiative is to increase biodiversity and to create new wildlife habitats for environmental and educational purposes.*

Currently North Tyneside Council is working with Norham Community Technology College who have a thriving Environment Group, called the Environflippin'mental – EFM – Group which looks at and addresses a variety of environmental issues. There are over 100 students involved in the EFM Group and they have a dedicated committee which meet every term in school. The group have developed a school Sustainability Policy therefore it felt appropriate that a Biodiversity Action Plan would be produced to complement the Policy.

Information is distributed to parents and the community via the school newsletter and is displayed in the School's Eco Schools notice board and website. There is consultation with the local Friends of the Earth Group and they have links with Rising Sun Country Park.

- **MATERIAL:**
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *North Tyneside Council, Rising Sun Country Park, Norham Community Technology College, Friends of the Earth.*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *School website, newsletter and Eco Schools website.*

Games

(Getting to know the sea world / the farm)

Target group: Children / Teachers

Type: Exploratory/Awareness Raising

Duration: 2 hours

Country: Greece

- **METHOD:** As fun-making activities help children learn easier and faster, games is the most appropriate tool to help children learn, appreciate, respect, adopt and protect what triggers their esteem and interest. Getting learners to know the natural world around us, you prepare them to fight against any factor constituting a threat for the environment. You help them to become responsible future citizens as they learn in a playful atmosphere what they should do in order to protect what is part of the natural world around us.

With the help of a teacher, start with a presentation of the species of the sea world, by using both pictures and information about them. Design on a piece of cloth frame depicting the sea world by painting pictures of sea flora and sea fauna on it. Make cards with a description of these species on each. Invite the children to pick up one of the cards each and after reading its content (where there should be information about a particular species of the sea world) ask the child to match the content of the card he/she holds with the picture of the species shown on the cloth frame. Ask the children to step on the picture of the species described on their card. Then ask each of them to play the role of this particular species of the sea flora or the sea fauna he/she identifies himself/herself with to introduce himself/herself, to speak about the threats he/she faces and make an appeal to the people to protect him/her.

Alternatively: Instead of using on your cards species of the sea world you can use animals of the animal farm.



- **MATERIAL:** A piece of cloth, paints, paint brushes, cards, pens.
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Local handcraft shop can give you the paint for free or with a discount.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Advertise on the information board, at schools.
- **TIPS:** Ask a teacher to help you with this activity.

Getting to know a National Park / Bird watching

Target group: Children / Adults

Type: Information Seeking

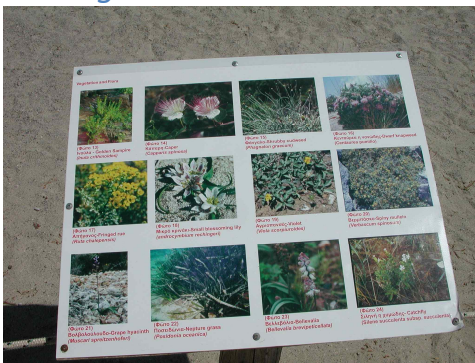
Duration: 2 hours

Country: Greece

- **METHOD:** Organize a lecture about the importance of the biodiversity (to be given by a specialist) to the public. The lecture will be accompanied by a presentation of slides with the flora and fauna of the area. A special emphasis should be given to the need for the protection of the environment. A generation of a discussion between the specialist and the public, afterwards, would be very effective towards the overall aim to protect the environment.

Alternatively:

You may organize a picture exhibition on the beach with explanation notes about each species of flora or fauna met in the area and invite the visitors to respect them and protect them, as they constitute part of the natural riches of each country. Sets of binoculars available on the beach which might possibly constitute part of the nearby national park will offer the opportunity to the visitors to enjoy bird-watching.



- **MATERIAL:** Cardboard paper with photos and explanations about the species presented on the posters can serve as successful information boards about these species for the visitors.
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Local photo shops can give you nice photos to exhibit. Specialists can prepare the texts with explanations about the species to be presented. Local stationery shops can provide you with the necessary materials for free or with a good discount on them. Local carpenters may help in the construction of these posters for free.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Advertise on the information board, at schools. In case of a Photo Competition advertise on the Information Board, local press, local TV Channels, at schools.
- **TIPS:** You may organise a Photo Competition for the pictures to be used, so as these would be very nice to use. The idea of a prize would be quite challenging for those who love taking photographs.

Trails

Target group: Children / Adults

Type: Exploratory/Awareness Raising

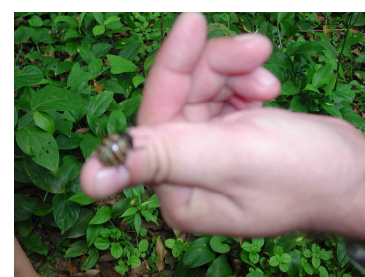
Duration: 3 hours

Country: Greece

- **METHOD:** Organize trails for adults or children to raise awareness about the need to respect and protect the environment. When people come closer to the natural riches appreciate them greatly and they are expected to feel the need to respect and protect what they admire.

A nature guide will give detailed information about the different species of flora and fauna met in the natural park. Extra information about the threats the ecosystem faces will enrich the visitors' knowledge about the natural habitat they are visiting and will increase their concerns about the impact these threats might have on the environment.

If the trail is organised for children, prepare worksheets to be filled in during the guided tour. The worksheets should have pictures of the various species. Depending on the children's age, the pictures could be either in black and white for the very little ones to paint them with colours, matching them with the original colours of the respective species they meet on the way, or they could be in colour with space by the side to be filled in by the elder children with the information the nature guide will give about each of the species met on the way.



- **MATERIAL:** Possibly, a leaflet with the flora and the fauna of the habitat would be quite informative for the visitors to take with them after the trail has been finished. If the trail is organised for children prepare suitable worksheets to be filled in during the guided tour.
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Nature guides of a Natural Park.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Advertise on the information board.
- **TIPS:** With the help of a teacher and the nature guide prepare the appropriate worksheets for the children to use in the guided tour.

Nature Trail

Target group: Everybody

Type: Exploratory / Awareness raising

Duration: 1-2 hours

Country: Ireland

• **METHOD:**

- The trail starts at the Blue Flag on Curracloe Beach where two guides are situated next to a clearly marked sign.
- The two guides take the group around a trail that is marked out with stops. The trail is altered to the visitor needs with each tour (age group, previous knowledge etc).
- The Nature Trail begins with a short health and safety talk and distribution of material, 'A Guide to Nature at Curracloe', which has a lot of information and is generally given to adults, and 'Curracloe Crazy Nature Trail', which is kind of scavenger hunt for the children as they get point for the different species on the card that they spot.
- Then the group is moved along the main walkway onto beach alongside the sand dunes, here the various flora and fauna along the pathway and in the sand dunes are pointed out by the tour guides.
- From here the tour moves onto the beach where the flora and fauna in the water and on the beach are discussed. As we move back up through the sand dunes the tour guides point out other areas along the coast which may be of interest to the visitors. Visitor are encouraged to ask questions at any point along the Nature Trail and if a visitor would like more information on any point on the trial the tour guides will provide as much detail as necessary. The Nature Trial ends where it started and the guides give a quick recap.



- **MATERIAL:** High Vis Jackets, 'Curracloe Crazy Nature Trail' leaflet for children, 'A Guide to Nature at Curracloe' leaflet for adults, Costs of materials unknown as they were produced years ago
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** An Taisce, Coastcare groups, Schools, Local Nature Reserve (Raven Nature Reserve)
- **COMMUNICATION:** Newspaper, Website, Blue Flag Notice board, Sign next to Blue Flag on Curracloe Strand
- **TIPS:** Currently it is only being run during the months of July and August, if possible if it was run during month of June also school group could attend, also there would be more fauna in bloom in June than in late August

'Curracloe Crazy' Nature Trail

Follow the trail and spot as many of these plants and animals as you can. How many points can you score? Answer the questions and claim a prize!

Remember:

- > Always stay on the paths.
- > Take any litter home.
- > Leave plants and animals for everyone to enjoy.

10
points



Marram Grass

- ❖ Marram grass has roots up to 5 metres long!
- ❖ These long roots help to hold the sand dunes together.
- ❖ What do the roots of a plant do?

Razor Shell

- ❖ The Irish name, Scian Mhara, means 'sea-knife'. Can you think why?



20
points

30
points



Cinnabar Caterpillar/Moth

- ❖ Look for these 'tiger tails' on the poisonous Ragwort plant.
- ❖ Why do you think these animals are such bright colours?

70
points

Common Seal

- ❖ There are 2 types of seal in Irish waters. The common seal and the grey seal.
- ❖ Seals can dive underwater to hunt for up to 45 minutes!
- ❖ How do you think they can do that?



100
points!!

Common Lizard

- ❖ Look for lizards sun-bathing (basking).
- ❖ Why do lizards need to lie in the sun?



How many points did you score? Wow! You are a 'top spotter'!
Could you answer the questions? Please return this sheet to the guide.

Sea Safari

Target group: Children / Local community

Type: Exploratory

Duration: from 3 hours

Country: Ireland

- **METHOD:** Children from a local Green-School enjoyed a 'Sea Safari'; scouring the seashore of Port Beach at low tide finding and identifying treasures such as a mermaid's purse, common crabs, jellyfish and razor fish. This was followed by a celebration to raise the blue flag at Port Beach (Ireland). The children were treated to lunch, a special recycling workshop as well as speeches from community members and vice chair of Louth County Council.



- **MATERIAL:** None required, discussion based talk
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Schools, Beach Development Committee, Louth County Council (Litter Wardens/EAO/Cllrs), An Taisce (Green Schools/Spring Clean)
- **COMMUNICATION:** Closed event arranged with local schoolchildren who are working on the Water theme of Green-Schools. Local community members and councillors were also invited to the raising of the Blue Flag.
- **TIPS:** This activity could be made available to more schools.

Shell Collection

Target group: Children from 5 to 12 years old

Type: Information seeking

Duration: from 2 hours to half a day

Country: Spain

BIODIVERSITY

- **METHOD:** First, cards with the different species are distributed and the environmental educator explains the different kinds of shells that might be found at the beach, where and how they live. Then children are divided into groups and sent to look for the different kinds of shells. Finally each group exhibit their collection and every children visits other's collection and tries to identify the shells with the help of the educator.



- **MATERIAL:** Cards with the drawings and names of shells. It would also be interesting to have buckets or other items to collect shells.
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Environmental educators, either voluntary or hired.
- **COMMUNICATION:** The activity might be posted at tourist office or environmental education centres.
- **TIPS:** Some kind of registration is needed to organise groups by age and number of kids.

Sustainable use and enjoyment of our estuaries

Target group: All residents, visitors and users of the estuaries

Type: Awareness Raising

Duration: Continuous

Country: Ireland

- **METHOD:** *The project aims to promote environmental awareness and the sustainable enjoyment and recreational use of the estuaries (in the South Devon) to local communities*

This will be achieved through communication about the estuaries, their wildlife and ecology, their sensitivities and management, in a way that creates understanding about them and allows the making of informed decisions about how communities may use and enjoy them.

Under the initiative there are 5 main separate projects, they are: Environmental Slipway Signage; Site Interpretation Boards; Seagrass Meadows Awareness; South Devon AONB Coastal Wildlife Book and 'Make the Most of Your Coast' schools and education elements.

Environmental Slipway Signage

It is designed to encourage responsible use and enjoyment of the estuaries by boat users. To achieve this series of boards are to be erected at public slipways containing both sustainable general guidance information and detailed local information.

Site Interpretation Boards

For a number of popular viewpoints such which would interpret the view of what people see when they look across the water; but highlighting key but hidden aspects within the same view, such as depicting the topography of the seabed and the waters above with their wildlife communities together with a level of information about some of the local management and conservation issues and how visitors might play their part.

Seagrass meadows

An awareness raising initiative is being put together in partnership with MarLin and University of Plymouth about the plight and need for the conservation of these highly important and biologically rich and diverse communities. It will interpret their global importance, for wildlife and commercial fishing where they are, how to enjoy them and what to do if you cross them.

Sustainable use and enjoyment of our estuaries

South Devon AONB Coastal Wildlife Book

Collation of local underwater photographs by local divers, together with good topside landscape location photographs, into a book both as a way of raising awareness and reminding ourselves of the sheer diversity of colour, form and frequent 'bizarreness' of our local marine wildlife, communities and seascapes. It will also help celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's designation and show why our coast is proposed to be so highly designated.

'Make the Most of Your Coast'

The programme is designed to encourage and facilitate teachers to be confident in leading school parties on beach visits. There will be guidance on the suitability of local beaches for targeted or wider curricular visits, local 'beach teachers' who can help, a chest of interpreted resources and a web-based signposting of suggested curriculum-linked web-based teaching resources. The programme also offers support to teachers on any questions or queries they may have.



- **MATERIAL:**
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Local Authority, Salcombe-Kingsbridge Estuary Conservation Forum, Schools, Green-Blue project of the Royal Yachting Association, MarLIN and University of Plymouth.
- **COMMUNICATION:** Advertise on the information boards, A4 posters and leaflets.

Exploring the diversity of trees (example of Bodrum region, Turkey)

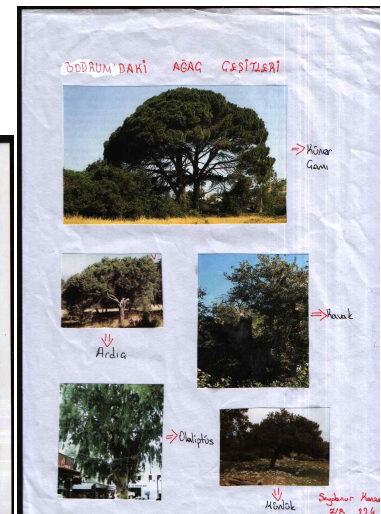
Target group: Primary school groups

Type: Action oriented

Duration: from 2 hours

Country: Turkey

- **METHOD:** Starting with telling what we know about the variety of trees in our forests-Bodrum region.
 - Let everyone say something about the trees and listening if they have any story related with the trees and forests.
 - Preparing some questions to ask in the visit of Provincial Directorate of Forestry
 - Searching some books before going to forest
 - Linking the trees to the beach is important (explaining the link between both)
 - Learning the methods of planting
 - Fixing all the materials for planting (seeds, pickaxes, shovels, etc.)



- **MATERIAL:** Books related with the trees, seeds, pickaxes and shovels
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Everyone in the school (students, teachers, managerial staff, etc.), Provincial Directorate of Forestry, Municipality
- **COMMUNICATION:** All the areas related with the school
- **TIPS:** Must be done frequently with different ages as an alternative environmental education method.

Aquarium

Target group: Kids, teens and adults

Type: Action Oriented

Duration: continuous

Country: Denmark

- **METHOD:** *It is a very easy activity and only needs a fish tank at the interpretation centre. The guides at the interpretation centre can build the aquarium and encourage the children to go fishing and deliver then their catch to the aquarium. Bugs and plants are also welcome.*

It is a good idea to combine this activity with other fishing activities so the children catch their own fish and bugs. A bell ring may tell the guests, that it is feeding time for the fish, and the children will be allowed to feed the animals, while the guide tells about their feeding habits and predators.

- **MATERIAL:** *There are many different models of aquaria. Blue Flag recommends the one which is used at the Blue Flag interpretation centre in Sonderborg, where it is possible for the children to touch the fish and plants. If you wish to see a drawing of the Sonderborg's aquarium, please email to bf@friluftsraadet.dk.*
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *Aquarium clubs, they may sponsor an oxygen pump. Local fishers may contribute to the aquarium with bigger fish and molluscs. Contact the authorities and ask for permission to make use of citizens in the social services penalty program to help building the aquarium.*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *A list of all the activities taking place at the post should be posted on a visible place on the door. Wind poles must be placed outside the interpretation centre, showing that Blue Flag activities are offered. Information about the fish tank/touch pool on the homepages of Blue Flag and the interpretation centre.*
- **TIPS:** *Remember to rub detergent on the inside of the aquarium's glass walls to keep it from blurring. The aquarium must have an oxygen pump and cooling system- you can find both elements running on batteries or sun cells. The aquarium could be made of acrylics instead of glass.*

Making an information board

Target group: Kids

Type: Action Oriented

Duration: A couple of hours

Country: Denmark

- **METHOD:** *The goal is to develop graphic materials (posters, wall sheets) with information about nature or other ideas for other children on how to use nature when the interpretation centre is closed: making sand sculptures, digging holes on the beach etc. The children must have access to the local centre to pick up materials they need (paper, scissors, glue, etc.) to make the posters. It is important that their parents are there. The posters are delivered at the interpretation centre, where the staff will take care of posting them in visible spots: on the interpretation centre's external walls, in the parking lot, the sweet shop and the toilet building.*
- **MATERIAL:** *Paper for wall sheets, glue, scissors, pencils, things from the beach, buttons, laminator etc.*
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** *None.*
- **COMMUNICATION:** *This has been thought as a general activity all summer long. It could take place in a corner of the station a "workshop area" where all the necessary information and materials can be found on the one condition that the children hand in a work sheet or a poster.*
- **TIPS:** *Make a poster of cardboard with information about the open workshop. Many people drop by the Blue flag station but do not necessarily know about all the activities. Keep on exchanging wall papers and posters frequently.*

Rock Pool Ramble

Target group: Families, general public

Type: Exploratory

Duration: two days

Country: England

BIODIVERSITY

- **METHOD:** The 'Rock Pool Ramble' was a two day event which was organised by Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk's Community Development Team in collaboration with the BBC's CBeebies Breathing Spaces

The idea behind the events was to encourage both local and visiting families to explore the wildlife living in the rock pools beneath the red and white striped cliffs. It's hoped that by bringing the underwater to life people will gain a greater understanding of the sort of wildlife/creatures live along our coasts and in doing so encourage people to respect and maintain the precious ecosystem on their doorstep.

The 'Ramble' starts with a scavenger hunt while waiting for the tide to retreat, enabling people to look at what has been washed up on the beach. Explaining to people what happens if rubbish is thrown on the beach and how it can harm wildlife. When the tide goes out, we explore the rock pools and discover what sort of creatures live there. Experts are on hand to inform people/children what the creatures are, what sort of environment they like to live in and how we can help ensure that we protect their environment.

Over the course of the two days approximately 150 people attended the 'rock pool ramble' with organisations such as Natural England, Green Quay and the BBC all taking part.

- **MATERIAL:**
- **POTENTIAL PARTNERS:** Local authority, BBC Breathing Places, Natural England, Green Quay.
- **COMMUNICATION:** The local news ran with the story and did a follow up article on the events and its success. A press release was distributed to 25 different print and radio news desks. A handout was also produced and was distributed to all those who attended the ramble. Posters were also put up around the beach front.
- **TIPS:** Wear sensible clothing and children should always be accompanied by an adult.

The first version of this brochure has been produced by a Blue Flag working group composed of Blue Flag National Operators, Environmental Education experts and the International Blue Flag Coordination.

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