



Kid's Aquarium Contest

Promoting responsible pet care...
one child, one aquarium at a time™

FAQ's

Set Up, Preparation, Judging and Pick Up

Set up:

Q. Where is the contest held?

A. At AMERICA'S FAMILY PET EXPO! April 20, 21, 22, 2012. OC Fair & Event Center, 88 Fair Drive, Costa Mesa, CA 92626

Q. What time do we set up the aquariums?

A. Thursday, April 19th 12:00pm – 8:00pm & Friday, April 20th 8:00am – 10:00am

Q. Where should we park?

A. On set-up and teardown days you may unload adjacent to **Building #12**, where the contest will take place.

Q. How much is admission?

A. There is no charge for admission on set-up day. Each contestant will receive a wristband good for FREE admission to AMERICA'S FAMILY PET EXPO on all three days with a paying adult. You may purchase discount passes online at www.PetExpoOC.org and save \$2.00!

Q. What should we bring along for set up?

A. For set up you will need your aquarium design accessories and of course, your fish! It is also great to bring supplies such as tape, scissors and markers/crayons for last minute touch-ups. Your aquarium and donated aquarium supplies will be ready for you when you arrive. It would be great to bring a wagon to transport your supplies into and out of the building for set up and tear down. Also, if you have a one step stool – that would be good to reach into the tank. It would be best to bring your fish bagged or in a bucket to carry the fish to and from the show.

Q. I'm a parent, what do I need to do when I get there?

A. Your most important responsibility is to enjoy watching your child experience new pet ownership and responsibility! Aquarium keeping professionals will be on hand to educate and assist your child. The professional team will assist with filling the aquarium with water, preparing the environment with appropriate chemicals, installing the filtration system and heaters. It is our priority to make this a positive experience for your child!

Q. What if my child's entire classroom wants to participate?

A. The experience offered through WPA's Kid's Aquarium Contest is great for children! We would be honored to assist your child's teacher and classmates to participate in this year's exciting event. Contact Gwen Powell via email gwen@wpamail.org or phone 800-999-7295.

Preparation:

Q. Is it OK if we use toys as tank decorations?

A. Yes. Always test your toys/decorations in water to be sure they don't float. As an example, Legos are a very popular decorating tool for the kids but they require weight to keep them in place. (P.S. The judges don't like floating toys in the aquarium). To glue them to something heavy to weigh them down, use Silicone Sealant which is safe to use around fish.

Q. If you use rocks do we have to do anything special with them?

A. Yes. Whether it is from the backyard or purchased at a pet store, there are a few steps you need to take before placing rocks in your fish habitat:

- Wash all your rocks in a solution of bleach and water and use a scrub brush to remove all dirt and other unwanted material. Be sure to rinse the rocks until you no longer smell the bleach. (One cup of bleach in five gallons of water will do the trick.)
- Check for calcium by simply pouring vinegar over the rocks and see if it foams. If it does, your rocks have calcium - Don't use them.

Q. The gravel we purchased says PREWASHED. Should we wash it again?

- A. Yes. Although most store bought gravel and sand are labeled as PREWASHED, we recommend you take the time to wash the gravel thoroughly with fresh water to eliminate clouding in the aquarium.

Q. Are there any items we SHOULD NOT put in the tank?

- A. Yes, metal objects. Do not use metal toys or decorations in your design. Metals can actually kill the fish.

Q. Do you suggest a good way to plan for the contest?

- A. Yes, Taking the time to plan for the contest is a great way to stretch your child's **creativity** and develop **responsibility**. Build a diagram of the design, take a field trip to your local pet store and discovering ideas online, are all great ways to get your child invested in the contest.

Q. Do you have any fun theme suggestions?

- A. This contest is an ideal opportunity for your child to let his/her imagination soar! The aquarium design should reflect your child's personality, hobbies and dreams. Ask them the question, "What would you like to live in if you were a fish?" Perhaps an enchanted forest, outer space, a dark cave, a farmyard, a fire station... their imagination is the limit!

Q. How would you explain the "Natural" Category?

- A. The name says it all! Any aquarium in this category should mimic nature. Examples include a natural lake bottom, stream or river. Although we encourage natural objects, we have had contestants add pollution to make an inventive statement.

Q. How would you explain the "Creative" Category?

- A. Aquariums in this category are a stretch of your child's imagination. A creative aquarium can include dinosaurs, holiday snowmen, mirrors or even city sky lights. Handmade decorations will be judged in this category.

Q. How would you explain the "Themed" Category?

- A. Anything store bought as a decorator set such as a movie set, Disney package or not hand crafted.

Q. What kind of fish should we choose?

- A. The best way to make a confident decision is to talk to a fish expert at your local pet store. They will guide you in selecting appropriate species to create a friendly fish neighborhood in your new habitat.

Judging:

Q. How are the age groups separated?

- A. Group I – ages 5, 6, 7 & 8 C. Group II – ages 9, 10, 11 & 12 D. Group III – ages 13, 14, 15 & 16

Q. How do the judges distribute awards?

- A. Judges award a first, second and third place winner, for each age group and also for the Natural, Creative and Themed Categories. One aquarium within the Natural, Creative and Themed categories will be awarded the Sponsor Sweepstakes Award and People's Choice Award. All children will be honored with a participation ribbon and the rewards of responsible pet ownership.

Pick up:

Q. What should we bring along for aquarium pick-up?

- A. **On Sunday, April 22nd between 6:00pm – 8:00pm** you may remove your aquarium. When you arrive, there will be several professionals onsite to assist you. We suggest removing the fish and a portion or all of the water from the aquarium before transporting the habitat home. The water in the aquarium will already be prepared with the appropriate chemicals so it is ideal to keep the water by bringing a clean container that you can transport the water in. A large bucket works the best. The tanks are cumbersome and heavy so a children's wagon is an IDEAL way to transport the aquarium and supplies to your vehicle. We also suggest bringing a container for your fish. This may include a tight sealed plastic container or plastic bag with a closure.

Q. We already have several fish habitats in our home; do you have a suggestion if we want to donate our aquarium?

- A. Yes. There are several rewarding options for you. Some of our aquatic friends have donated their works of art to their school classroom, retirement homes and even area hospitals. If you need assistance finding a great home for your aquarium, don't hesitate to contact us.



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