

Forest Preschool Inclusion Assistant Job Description

About Us

North Branch Nature Center's mission is Connecting People with the Natural World. We envision a world where people of all ages learn, teach, and play together in nature, supporting healthy, resilient communities and ecosystems. More than 17,000 people visit North Branch Nature Center (NBNC) annually to be immersed in the natural world through environmental education, natural history, and community science programs. Our 28-acre preserve of forest and fields is nestled in a gentle bend of the North Branch of the Winooski River, just two miles from downtown Montpelier, Vermont, and is also popular as a year-round place to walk, ski, swim, or simply to do nothing beside the river. We are committed to making our natural areas, our organization, and our entire community a more inclusive and equitable place.

About Forest Preschool

Forest Preschool is guided by the idea that children need nature and learn with a sense of wonder and enthusiasm when they spend ample time in natural spaces. At Forest Preschool, children spend the majority of the school day learning and playing outside in rain, shine, or snow, except in extreme weather conditions. Our nature immersion program uses the landscape to support the development of the whole child using a combination of inquiry-based, play-based, emergent, and place-based learning. We empower children to be active in their own learning process by supporting each child's unique sense of wonder and paying careful attention to personal interest. At NBNC, we encourage respect and gentle caring for nature, ourselves, and one another.

The Position

The Forest Preschool (FPS) Inclusion Assistant works one-on-one to support the behavioral, academic, social, and emotional needs of an identified FPS student and to support their inclusion and positive participation in child-centered play and learning with nature. The FPS Inclusion Assistant promotes best practices in inclusive and adaptive education in a nature-based setting. The FPS Inclusion Assistant is responsible for a regular teaching schedule during the hours this student is in attendance plus some additional hours for planning and team collaboration, providing ongoing student support throughout the school

year, and working collaboratively with the FPS teaching team to support student safety and student behavior. The FPS Inclusion Assistant helps nurture student growth, and supports the FPS Director in family communication, FPS special events, and FPS files and documentation.

Responsibilities include:

- Support one student's participation in FPS lessons and activities through a three-day per week teaching schedule. Much of this teaching and learning occurs outside in all of Vermont's weather conditions. Support all aspects of whole-child development and promote a nature- and play-based approach to learning.
- Develop a positive rapport with identified student, and nurture other FPS staff and students' relationships with this student and their family through communication and collaboration.
- Provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment for identified student. Provide modifications to FPS activities as needed.
- Document student support or accommodations provided.
- Support student through transitions including dressing for outdoor play, meals, rest, and during drop-off and pick-up times.
- Communicate and collaborate with all other FPS staff.
- At times, attend Forest Preschool Team meetings, NBNC Education Team meetings and NBNC staff meetings.
- Adhere to all NBNC safety protocols, and support safe risk management in an outdoor setting.
- Uphold NBNC's commitment to promote justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Qualifications

- A passion for NBNC's mission of *Connecting People with the Natural World*.
- Experience in early childhood education, special education, behavioral intervention, or high support needs. 2-3 years of experience is preferred.
- Experience identifying and meeting individual needs and supporting children in a group or one-on-one setting.
- Experience with autism spectrum disorders, neurodiversity, and other special behavioral or social-emotional needs.
- Strong classroom and behavior management skills.
- A positive and encouraging attitude towards all students' abilities, autonomy, and inclusion.

- Awareness of or training in trauma-informed teaching practices and/or social and emotional learning practices.
- Experience communicating with parents and caregivers.
- Experience leading and teaching students aged 3 to 6 in an outdoor nature-based program in all types of weather preferred but not required.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and a commitment to high professional ethical standards.
- Hiring will be contingent upon completion of Mandated Reporter Training, Vermont Preschool Orientation Training, and a clear background check.
- Hiring will be contingent upon First Aid and CPR certifications.

Position Details

Compensation and Benefits: \$21/hr hourly wage for 24 hours per week. Benefits package includes paid time off, paid sick time, paid personal days, paid holidays, a SIMPLE IRA retirement plan, dental and vision insurance plan access, flexible spending and dependent care accounts, short-term and long-term disability insurance, life insurance, and NBNC program fee waivers, gear stipend, and pro deals.

Job schedule and status: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, 8:30am - 4:30pm, running late August 2026 to mid-June 2026. This is a school year part-time, non-exempt, position. This temporary position is contingent on the ongoing enrollment and specialized needs of an identified FPS student.

Reports to: FPS Director.

Supervises: no supervisory duties

Anticipated start date: August 24th. Position will remain open until filled. To apply please send a letter of interest, resume and contact information for three references to:

Jenna Plouffe
Forest Preschool Director
jenna@northbranchnaturecenter.org