

Forest Preschool Co-Teacher 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 15,000 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. Our Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion steps taken to date are detailed [here](#).

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 40-100% 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) Co-Teacher works collaboratively with the FPS Director and other FPS teachers to facilitate child-centered play and learning with nature. The FPS Co-Teacher promotes best practices of a nature-based early childhood program at NBNC. The FPS Co-Teacher is responsible for a regular teaching schedule, ongoing and collaborative curriculum and education philosophy development, student safety, risk management, outdoor site assessments, and student behavior. If the Lead Teacher is absent, the FPS Co-Teacher would take the lead teacher role for the day. The FPS Co-Teacher helps nurture

student growth, and supports the FPS Director in family communication and FPS special events. A member of the NBNC Education Team, the FPS Co-Teacher plays a supporting role in maintaining Swallow's Nest (the building that houses the FPS program) and the adjoining Nature Playscape through daily upkeep.

Responsibilities include:

Forest Preschool Teaching

- Coordinate and teach FPS lessons and activities in a part-time teaching schedule. Much of this teaching occurs outside in all of Vermont's weather conditions.
- Support all areas of whole-child development and promote a nature- and play-based approach to learning. Provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all children and families. Nurture relationships with students and their families.
- Assist in the observation and assessment of student growth and learning
- Support children through transitions including dressing for outdoor play, using the bathroom and handwashing, and during drop-off and pick-up times.
- Communicate and collaborate with all other FPS staff and FPS families.
- Attend NBNC Education Team meetings and NBNC staff meetings.

Management of Risk, Spaces, and Materials

- Adhere to all NBNC safety protocols, and manage risk in an outdoor setting.
- Conduct risk benefit assessments and site assessments for frequently used outdoor learning spaces.
- Collaborate with the FPS teaching team to prepare the learning environment for the day. Clean and maintain the Swallows Nest indoor classroom and the Nature Playscape outdoor classroom.

Qualifications

- A passion for NBNC's mission of Connecting People with the Natural World.
- At least a Vermont Early Childhood Career Ladder Level One (1) or Two (2) Certificate, or another qualification for a Teacher Assistant as required by [Vermont Child Care Licensing Regulations](#).
- Knowledge of or familiarity with Vermont Center Based Childcare Licensing Regulations.
- Background or coursework related to nature-based early childhood education and/or environmental education.

- Experience leading and teaching students aged 3 to 6 in an outdoor nature-based full-day program in all types of weather.
- Strong classroom and behavior management skills
- Experience with storytelling, singing, and incorporating nature-inspired lessons in daily teaching routine.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and a commitment to high professional ethical standards.
- Commitment to professional development in equity, inclusion and justice; values diversity of thought, backgrounds, and perspectives.
- Completion of both the Mandated Reporter Training and Vermont Preschool Orientation Training.
- Pediatric First Aid and Infant/Child CPR
- Proof of “up to date” COVID-19 vaccination is required for this position. Per CDC recommendations, boosters are required for immunization to be considered “up to date.” Exemptions will be considered by the Executive Director only in special circumstances.

Position Details

Compensation and Benefits: Hourly at \$20/hour. Benefits package includes eligibility for NBNC-sponsored health insurance, option to purchase group-rate dental and vision insurance, paid sick time, paid personal days, a SIMPLE IRA retirement plan, NBNC program fee waivers, and pro deals.

Job status: Part-time 34 hrs/week, non-exempt, school year position. (Position will follow a set, mutually agreed upon schedule. Exact number of hours per week may be negotiable.)

Reports to: FPS Director.

Start date: August 26, 2024.

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

Ken Benton

Director of Education

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