

Forest Preschool 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) Teacher works collaboratively with the FPS Director and other FPS teachers to facilitate child-centered play and learning with nature. The FPS Teacher promotes best practices of a nature-based early childhood program at NBNC. The FPS 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. The FPS Teacher helps nurture student growth, and supports the FPS Director in parent/teacher conferences and family communication, FPS

special events, and FPS files and documentation. A member of the NBNC Education Team, the FPS 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 full 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.
- Observe, assess, and document student growth and learning using Teaching Strategies Gold and other assessment tools. Conduct parent-teacher conferences.
- 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 with FPS families.
- Attend NBNC Education Team meetings and NBNC staff meetings.
- May sit on or lead Board/staff committees.

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*.
- BA in Early Childhood Education or Primary Education or an Early Childhood Certification in VT.
- Knowledge of or familiarity with Vermont Center Based Childcare Licencing Regulations.
- Background or coursework related to nature-based early childhood education and/or environmental education.
- Strong classroom and behavior management skills

- Experience leading and teaching students aged 3 to 6 in an outdoor nature-based program in all types of weather.
- 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 Mandated Reporter Training and Vermont Preschool Orientation Training and a clear background check.
- First Aid and CPR certifications (Wilderness First Aid preferred).

Position Details

Compensation and Benefits: \$40,179 annual salary, paid over either 10 months or 12 months, at the employee's choosing, that includes paid holidays and paid leave. Benefits package includes health insurance, paid sick time, paid personal days, a SIMPLE IRA retirement plan, flexible spending and dependent care accounts, NBNC program fee waivers, and pro deals.

Job status: Full-time, exempt, school year position, running late August to mid-June each year.

Reports to: FPS Director.

Supervises: no supervisory duties

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