

Earth Friends Outdoors Guide

Irvine Nature Center

Overview

Irvine Nature Center is an environmental education non-profit based on over 200 acres in Owings Mills, MD. In addition to its educational programming, Irvine has an interactive exhibit hall and hiking trails. The Nature Preschool at Irvine is a MSDE licensed and NAEYC accredited childcare program for children 3-5 years old that spends almost the entire day outdoors learning foundational skills through hands-on experiences. Part of the Earth Friends Outdoors Homeschool program, Forest Explorers is an exclusively outdoors forest school program for children 4.5-7 years old. Both programs approach learning through play and exploration, centering our practice on the natural world and child-led learning.

Position Summary

We are currently hiring a part-time educator to assist in our Earth Friends Farm and Forage to Table and STEM Nature Style classes for the 2022-23 school year. With their co-teacher, Earth Friends guides facilitate mainly outdoor classes that nurture a child's connection with and understanding of the natural world through developmentally appropriate play, trail walks and games, land art, nature-study, and child-led discovery. Guides will create communities in which students feel safe to be themselves, take risks, and develop skills at their own pace. They will encourage students to ask questions, explore, and take the lead.

The ideal candidate will have a variety of life experiences and skillsets in local naturalist knowledge, nature-based learning, emergent curriculum, and practical outdoors skills. This individual must also be dedicated to personal self-reflection and evaluation of their pedagogy while ECE staff begin their journey in anti-bias work to improve ourselves and programming.

Time Commitment

- **Fall through Dec. 15, 6.5 hours a week (Possibly additional 17.5 hours starting January)**
- Must be available Thursdays, 8:30-2:30
- Starting January preferably also available Mondays 8:30-2:30 and all day Wednesdays
- ASAP- May 31

Responsibilities

- Co-teach groups of no more than 14-15 children in mixed age classes 9-12 yrs and in the winter 4.5-6 yrs old and 6-9yrs old
- Plan and implement a nature-based curriculum which includes handling live animals, trail walks, and unstructured nature exploration and play alongside a co-teacher
- Encourage and supervise child-led wild nature play
- Create an environment of joy, appreciation, and wonder through word, action, and presence
- Embrace the beauty of each moment in all types of weather through vigorous outdoor play
- Approach teaching as a facilitator/guide and allow children to take the lead
- Foster problem solving and collaboration through just enough scaffolded assistance
- Regularly observe students to inform future planning and to share learning with families
- Develop strong positive partnerships with families, students, and co-teachers

- Communicate clearly, empathetically, and regularly with other staff, families, and interns
- Collaborate with supervisors to conduct on-going risk analysis and hazard-mitigation
- Maintain supplies through routine cleaning
- Authentically reflect and evaluate self-practice and programs
- Attend and contribute to regular program and ECE staff meetings
- Contribute to/participate in special Earth Friends Outdoors events (roughly 2 a year)

Qualifications

- Experience working with children 4.5yr-12 yrs old and an understanding of child development
- Experience working in an outdoor setting with children
- Comfortable with meeting children where they are on a given day, flexing to allow engagement in a variety of forms
- Flexibility to deviate from a lesson plan
- Willingness to get dirty and handle live creatures (small and large)
- Strong communication and organizational skills and the ability to work as a team
- Basic computer experience (i.e., Word processing, Outlook, digital photos, etc.)
- Current First Aid and CPR certification or Wilderness Survival First Aid and CPR or the ability to complete by end of December, 2022
- Dedication to self-reflection and continuously striving to improve your craft
- Physically able to walk up to 2 miles a day, in all weather, and lift object of up to 50lbs
- Your own reliable transportation
- Proof of vaccination against COVID-19 or an approved medical or religious waiver
- Available for in-person classes Thursdays, 8:30-2:30

The ideal candidate:

- Has a college degree or pursuing a college degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Elementary Education, Environmental Education, or related fields
- Is curious, flexible, and creative
- Has a strong base knowledge of local flora and fauna or a willingness to learn
- Has completed coursework in forest schooling, nature-based education, or similar
- Has practical skills in foraging, fire-making, bush craft, and/or similar
- Is experienced with emergent curriculum, planning loosely, and teaching “off script”
- Has a back pocket of ideas for engaging students, redirecting behavior, and activities
- Approaches challenges with calm and a sense of humor

Salary: part-time hourly starting pay of \$16.50 an hour

To Apply: Send cover letter, resume, and three professional references to:

Stephanie Holzman, Head of Homeschool, Irvine Nature Center, 11201 Garrison Forest Road, Owings Mills, MD 21117 or email HR@ExploreNature.org

Please note, employment is contingent upon completing and passing a criminal background check and fingerprinting.