

Head of Caregiver and Child Classes and Preschool Educator- Irvine Nature Center

Overview

Irvine Nature Center is an environmental education non-profit based in Owings Mills, MD. As part of our robust early childhood education programs, we offer caregiver and child classes and operate a MSDE licensed and NAEYC accredited child care program for children 3-5 years old- The Nature Preschool at Irvine. During both programs, we approach learning through play and exploration, centering our practice on the natural world and child-led learning.

Position Summary

A joyful, fun-loving educator will lead a variety of early childhood education programs for children birth through 5 years old in a full-time 10-month position. This position has 3 parts- they will teach a handful of sections of our Little Birds Caregiver and Child program and oversee additional Little Bird sections; they will oversee our popular weekly story hour and animal encounter, Tales and Tails; and they will teach a small group of preschoolers in our Fern Club Aftercare. The educator should be experienced working with infants, toddlers, and preschool-age students and have a love of nature and hands-on learning. The ideal candidate will thrive outdoors and, in all things, be silly and fun while comfortable working with parents and caregivers. This educator reports directly to the Director of Early Childhood Education.

Responsibilities

- Facilitate 3 sections of Little Bird semester classes to groups of 12 child/caregiver pairs.
- Oversee the facilitation of 3 additional sections of Little Bird semester classes and the monthly single day Weekend Little Bird sessions.
- Co-plan with the additional Little Birds educator hands-on, developmentally appropriate nature-based lessons that include song, movement, process art, hikes, animal handling, and PLAY.
- Ensure caregivers participating in Little Birds feel empowered to engage with their young child in nature and provide them with knowledge and tools to do so.
- Partner with the Director of ECE to maintain logistical oversight of Little Birds classes including make-up classes, managing supplies, budgeting, etc.
- Contribute to Little Bird program promotion and growth with our Marketing team.
- Plan for and implement nature-based activities that meet the unique needs of preschool children enrolled in Aftercare by being innovative, fun, empathic, and flexible.
- 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.
- Encourage and supervise child-led nature play and developmentally appropriate risk analysis
- Foster problem solving, collaboration, and imagination amongst children.
- Attend outreach and special Preschool events to help promote nature exploration and play for Irvine's Early Childhood Education programs.
- Attend required on-going professional development courses as required by MSDE.
- Contribute to greater Irvine programming during the slower Little Bird season.

Full Time Commitment

- 40 hours a week; Monday/Tuesday/Thursday 9-5pm and Wednesday/Friday 9:30-5:30pm
- September 16- June 13, (9 months with the possibility to work Summer Nature Camp over the summer and renew for the following school year for 10 months)

Qualifications

- Experience working with children birth-5yrs old, preferably outdoors, and an understanding of child development.
- 90-hour MSDE childcare certification or the ability to complete it by January 2025.
- Current First Aid and CPR certification or ability to complete by end of October 2024.
- Strong communication, organizational, and group management skills.
- Ability to work as part of a team.
- Comfortable with meeting children where they are on a given day at their pace, whether that is a slow wander or deer-like sprint.
- Willingness to get dirty and handle live creatures (small and large).
- Comfort in working alongside caregivers and speaking in front of large groups.
- Strong interest in natural sciences, environmental and science education, outdoor recreation, or related fields, or a willingness to learn.
- Basic computer experience (i.e., Word processing, Outlook, digital photos, etc.).
- Dedication to self-reflection and a desire to continually improve your craft.
- Physically able to walk up to 2 miles a day, in all weather, and lift objects of up to 50lbs.

The Ideal Candidate

- Holds a college degree or pursuing a college degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Elementary Education, Environmental Education, or related fields.
- Has experience working alongside caregivers in an educational setting.
- Has completed coursework in forest schooling, nature-based education, or similar.
- Has experience in engaging students and redirecting behavior.
- Approaches challenges with calm and a sense of humor.
- Is warm, approachable, joyful, curious, and creative.

Full Time Salary

- starting *9-month* salary of \$32,000 for individuals with 90 hr MSDE child care certification
- starting *9-month* salary of \$31,200 for individuals without the 90 hr certification
- full benefits including health insurance and retirement matching

To Apply

Send **cover letter**, resume, and three professional references to the attention of:

Katie Rooney, Director of Early Childhood Education Programs
Irvine Nature Center
RooneyK@ExploreNature.org

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

Irvine is proud to be an Equal Employment Opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and do not discriminate based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, veteran status, disability status, or any other applicable characteristics protected by federal state or local laws. This policy applies to all terms and conditions of employment, including recruiting, hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leaves of absence, compensation, and training.