



Nature Preschool Assistant Teacher

Berks Nature

Reports to: *Preschool Director*

About this Position: Scope of Work

Berks Nature seeks a passionate and energetic early childhood educator to engage our Nature Preschool children through meaningful and innovative learning experiences in nature. The ideal candidate will have experience teaching in a progressive preschool as well as experience in, and a passion for, using nature as a context for learning.

Nature Preschool Assistant Teacher helps to guide children to cultivate senses that are attuned to their surroundings during a developmentally crucial time. Daily observation and experimentation on an individual and group level to foster a love of nature and our environment as well as social and emotional development. The Nature Preschool Assistant Teacher encourages children to guide their own learning experience in a way that fosters the development of responsibility, independence, and executive functioning skills to create a strong foundation for future growth.

Education Primary Responsibilities

- Assist the Preschool Director and Lead Teacher and collaborate with other staff to accomplish program goals and designated activities.
- Under the guidance of the Nature Preschool Director and Lead Teacher, facilitate immersive play- and nature-based, culturally responsive and place-based curriculum that reflects the needs of the children (cognitive, social, emotional and physical development), the standards for early childhood education, and the mission of Berks Nature.
- Coordinate daily activities and supervise aides in the absence of the Lead Teacher.
- Base interactions on early childhood development and manage reasonable expectations for young children.
- Assist in on-going evaluation methods designed to document student learning and development and aid in the creation of an individualized growth plan for each student.
- Plan for and carryout parent conferences as well as daily, weekly and monthly communication.
- Cooperate with the President, vice presidents, and/or Board of Directors as requested.

General Essential Job Functions

- Use developmentally appropriate practices that are respectful of all children while modeling a healthy relationship with and curiosity for the natural world.
- Follow all established policies, procedures and protocols related to internal and external communications, child health and safety, crisis management and risk and hazard management.
- Assist in the care of the physical facilities and equipment in the program area.
- Ensure the physical and emotional health, safety, and well-being of students through daily safety and risk site scans and daily check-ins with students.
- Observe student behavior, assess its appropriateness, enforce appropriate safety regulations and emergency procedures, and apply appropriate behavior-management techniques
- Maintain expected professional standards and compassionate manner.

- Prepare, clean up and maintain teaching supplies and supporting materials in a well-organized and efficient manner.
- Assist children with meals, handwashing and toileting.
- Develop and steward a sense of community, belonging and connection to nature.
- Champion equity, diversity and inclusion efforts to accomplish strategic goals.
- Maintain expected professional standards and compassionate manner.
- Maintain clear communications and a positive relationship with fellow staff, interns, students, and their families to achieve common goals and avoid potential conflicts.
- Complete the required training, professional development, and paperwork in a timely manner.
- Maintain a schedule as determined by the Nature Preschool Director. Attend staff meetings, Nature Preschool Open House and school-wide community activities.
- Assist in other Berks Nature and educational activities, as needed.

Education, Experience and Qualifications

Required Qualifications

- Must be 18 years of age
- Required Education (55 Pa. Code Chapter 3320 Child Care Centers)
 - A High school diploma AND 30 credit hours from an accredited college in early childhood education, child development, special education, elementary education, or the human services field; OR
 - A high school diploma and 15 hours from an accredited college in early childhood education, child development, special education, elementary education, or the human services field. Plus, one year of experience with children; OR
 - A high school diploma plus 2 years of experience with children.
- Clearances and Training (obtained before hire date)
 - Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) Criminal History (PA Act 35 and Act 114)
 - Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Abuse History (Act 151 and Act 114),
 - Federal Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) – FBI Report (Act 114)
 - Mandated Reporting Training (Act 126),
 - National Sex Offender Registry (NSOR)
- Pediatric CPR & First Aid certification or ability to obtain them before hire date
- Reliable transportation

Most Desirable Qualities

- Previous teaching experience with preschool age children and/or the environmental field
- Knowledge of Pennsylvania environment and ecology
- A strong work ethic with a track record of being reliable, honest, and kind
- Ability to laugh, remain calm, and persevere when faced with challenges
- Patient, positive disposition
- Eager to grow and learn with others

Knowledge Skills and Abilities

- Desire and ability to work with children and adults outdoors in varied conditions.
- Excellent organizational skills
- Ability to communicate and work with groups in an indoor and outdoor classroom environment

- Strong leadership abilities and excellent interpersonal skills, strategic thinking, project and grant management, organizational, entrepreneurial, and time-management skills
- Self-motivated, solution-oriented and self-directed with the flexibility to work independently and collaboratively as part of a team
- Skilled communicator, guided by a desire to listen to and speak compassionately with both children and adults; Strong written and communication skills
- Proficient in software and integrated applications (communication applications, Microsoft suite, project management, and other productivity tools)

Physical Demands/Work Environment

The physical demand and work environment characteristics described are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential functions.

During most of the year, Preschool staff spend the better part of their day outdoors. The employee must be able to:

1. Spend multiple hours outdoors in all weather (heat, cold, rain, snow) in multiple terrains.
2. Hike 2-5 miles a day on rough, uneven, and steep terrain, keeping pace with the children in their care and caring materials and gear.
3. Engage in sustained physical activity throughout the day.
 - a. Standing, walking or hiking, some bending, stooping, and stretching
 - b. Verbal communication to groups of students in an outdoor setting
 - c. Eye-hand coordination and manual dexterity to set up equipment and assist students
4. Lift up to 50 pounds (size of a small child).
5. Normal range of hearing and eyesight to record, prepare, and communicate appropriate activities/programs to guide children at all times
6. Visual and auditory ability to identify and respond to environmental and other hazards related to the activity
7. Physical ability to respond appropriately to situations requiring first aid. Must be able to assist clients in an emergency (fire, evacuation, illness, or injury) and possess strength and endurance required to maintain constant supervision of students

Berks Nature offices and The Nature Place and its campus are smoke-free. Successful candidates should have the ability to work harmoniously in a friendly environment. The ideal candidate will be a self-directed, flexible team player.

This job description is not designed to cover or contain a comprehensive listing of activities, duties or responsibilities that are required of the employee.

Compensation and Hours

This position's base salary range is \$16.00-\$20.00 per hour. Actual salary will reflect the level of experience and qualifications relative to the position requirements.

Hours: Full-time (40 hours per week) or Part-time (up to 37.5 hours per week); Monday – Friday, occasional evenings and weekends as needed.

This position is: Exempt (from overtime) or Non-Exempt (eligible for overtime)

This position is: Paid hourly or Salaried position

Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

Berks Nature is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees and applicants. Berks Nature prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type without regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws.

Berks Nature's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice and Belonging

We value a racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse work community and we strongly encourage applications from people of all backgrounds within our community to help Berks Nature achieve its mission.

Just like it takes a diversity of species to make our natural environment thrive, Berks Nature recognizes that having a culture of inclusion where all individuals feel respected and are treated fairly will bring us a power of talent to do our work and engage others in the love for and protection of nature. Accordingly, it is Berks Nature's goal to be intentional and inclusive in the involvement, engagement, and empowerment of all groups of people within our community to help Berks Nature achieve its mission. Berks Nature will take the broadest possible view of diversity in order to attract, develop, engage and retain people from all walks of life and backgrounds in our work. Berks Nature endeavors to not see any species become extinct. So to, we desire not to neglect or exclude any audience from our work.

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To Apply

Submit a cover letter and resume along with contact information to Human Resources at hr@berksnature.org or mail to Human Resources at Berks Nature, 575 St. Bernardine Street, Reading, PA 19607.

Employee Name (Printed):

Employee Signature:

Date: