

## **Full Time Nature Preschool Teacher- Irvine Nature Center**

**“A love of nature, a comfort with mud, and a nurturing spirit are musts!”**

### **Overview**

Irvine Nature Center is an environmental education non-profit based 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 an MSDE licensed and NAEYC accredited childcare program for children 3-5 years old that spends at least 75% of each day outdoors learning foundational skills through hands-on experiences. We approach learning through play and exploration, centering our practice on the natural world and child-led learning.

### **Position Summary**

We are currently hiring a full-time educator to join our Early Childhood Education team to co-lead two Nature Preschool classes on alternating schedules during the school week. They will facilitate mainly outdoor classes that nurture a child's close relationship with the natural world through developmentally appropriate play, trail walks and games, stories, animal encounters, song, and art. The teacher will create class communities in which students feel safe to be themselves, take risks, and develop skills at their own pace all with natural world as their classroom.

### **Responsibilities**

- Co-teach classes of 14 children, 3-5 years old
- 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, allowing children to take the lead
- Encourage and supervise child-led nature play and developmentally appropriate risk analysis
- Foster problem solving, collaboration, and imagination by providing scaffolding
- Regularly observe children during all activities to assess growth and inform future planning
- Document student learning and activity and share this growth with families
- Develop strong positive partnerships with families, students, and co-teachers
- Collaborate with supervisors to conduct on-going risk analysis
- Authentically reflect and evaluate self-practice and programs
- Attend and contribute to Preschool and Irvine Staff meetings
- Attend required on-going professional development courses as required by MSDE
- Contribute to/participate in special events outside of school hours (roughly 5 a year)

### **Full Time Commitment**

- 40 hours a week; Monday through Friday, 8-4pm
- August 15- June 13, (10 months with the possibility to work Summer Nature Camp over the summer and renew for the following school year)

### **Qualifications**

- Experience working with children 3-5yrs old, preferably outdoors, and an understanding of child development
- 90-hour MSDE childcare certification or the ability to complete it by August 2025

- Current First Aid and CPR certification or ability to complete by end of August 2024
- Strong communication and organizational 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
- Flexibility to deviate from a lesson plan
- Willingness to get dirty and handle live creatures (small and large)
- Desire to break out of your shell and sing and be silly
- 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
- Proof of vaccination against COVID-19 or an approved medical and religious waiver

### **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 completed coursework in forest schooling, nature-based education, or similar
- Has on-trail 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 and activities for 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 *10-month* salary of \$35,200 for individuals **with 90-hr MSDE** child care certification
- starting *10-month* salary of \$31,700 for individuals without the 90-hr MSDE certification
- full benefits including health insurance

### **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.