



Ijams Nature Preschool Assistant Teacher 2022

DEPARTMENT: Education

SUPERVISOR: Jennie McGuigan, Education Director

Ijams Nature Preschool (INP) provides a hands-on, experiential approach to learning that is based on the needs and curiosity of young children. Its mission is to inspire children, families, and educators to connect more deeply with the world around them. Through INP research and programs, children and families develop a profound engagement with the natural world, where nature is an integral part of daily learning. All of these efforts focus on safety, customer service, and effective educational methods in a supportive environment.

EMPLOYMENT PERIOD

The INP Assistant Teacher is employed part-time for the INP school year (approx. 30 hours/week). This position will start the week of July 18. The Assistant Teacher will work within an Introductory Period for the first 90 calendar days of employment; at that time, the employee will be given an Introductory Review by the Education Director. Upon completion of a satisfactory review, the Assistant Teacher will be eligible to begin using the paid time off benefits. Prior to the completion of the Introductory Period, any time off requests would need to be approved by the Education Director and would be considered leave without pay.

HOURS OF WORK

The Assistant Teacher will work Monday-Friday from 8:30 am-12:00 pm and 3:30 pm-6:00 pm, approximately 30 hours per week. These hours may be adjusted at any point at the discretion of the Education Director or at the request of the Assistant Teacher with the approval of the Education Director. Any change in scheduled hours must be agreed upon in advance by both the Assistant Teacher and Education Director to prevent lapse in classroom ratio.

The Assistant Teacher will receive a copy of the INP Annual School Calendar, which will detail all school breaks, holidays, and teacher work days. In general, INP follows the Knox County Schools' holiday calendar, but not always. The Education Director reserves the right to alter this schedule at any time throughout the year. A minimum of two weeks' notice will be given upon the alteration of the set schedule.

ASSISTANT TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

The Assistant Teacher will work as part of a team along with other Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers, the Education Director, and Ijams Nature Center staff to foster the social, emotional, environmental, and academic development of students at INP during the regular school year. **The Assistant Teacher will be required to assist with and teach during Ijams Preschool Summer Camp in June and July each summer.**

Detailed duties are as follows:

Teaching/Assisting

- Assist Lead Teachers in daily curriculum activities
- Focus on outdoor exploration and nature-based learning
- Encourage and guide children's academic progress
- Maintain records of student progress
- Assist with guided hikes, outdoor unstructured free play, and outdoor classroom lessons

Aftercare

- Lead students who participate in aftercare
- Prepare lessons and activities for students in aftercare
- Communicate with parents at pickup
- Communicate any and all important information to lead teachers and administration for the following day
- Close the school at the end of the day

Classroom Setup

- Prepare and maintain preschool materials
- Arrange and organize classroom per Lead Teachers' requirements
- Organize and straighten materials on shelves
- Photocopy materials
- Clean indoor classroom, outdoor classroom, and bathrooms

Maintaining Proper Learning Environment

- Assist Lead Teachers in directing children's activities
- Model appropriate behavior
- Encourage independence and self-esteem
- Assist in correcting inappropriate behavior
- Ensure safety of students
- Assist students with snacks, lunch, and nap
- Supervise playground activities
- Maintain tidy, clean, and organized storage areas and common staff areas such as bathrooms, staff kitchen, and office

School Administration

- Assist Lead Teachers with student attendance, progress reports, weekly newsletters, and other clerical duties

The Assistant Teacher will perform other duties as deemed necessary by the Education Director, Administrative Assistant, and Lead Teachers.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Experience in a preschool setting, especially with programs that spend a great deal of time outside
- Willingness to work outside most of the day with preschoolers, during all weather conditions
- Strong customer service skills
- Experience teaching others and/or the willingness to learn teaching strategies
- Attention to detail
- Willingness to multi-task and work under pressure
- Ability to work without supervision
- Experience working with Microsoft Office, PowerPoint, Excel, Google Suite (dynamic platforms), Canva, or other electronic platforms that enhance communication and documentation
- Must be at least 18 years old
- Must be able to clear a state-required, detailed background check

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS DESIRED

- Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education, Outdoor Experiential Education, Science Education, Wildlife, Biology, or other resource management program
- Ability to be creative, supportive, and enthusiastic with children
- Knowledge of Montessori and Waldorf education principles
- Experience teaching art, music, or drama to children
- CPR, First Aid, and/or other medical training

SALARY

Base entry-level salary starts at \$12/hour with opportunity to increase with applicant's level of experience and training.

BENEFITS

Sick/Personal Days: The Assistant Teacher will receive 11 paid combined sick and personal days (at 8 hours per day for a total of 88 hours) during the contracted period. A doctor's note may be required for two or more consecutive sick days used and is at the Education Director's discretion. INP requests that personal leave not be requested during the first two weeks or last two weeks of the regular school year. INP also requests that all planned personal leave be submitted two weeks prior to the requested days off. Personal leave requests may be denied by the Education Director if adequate substitutes cannot be acquired. Unused sick and personal days will not be paid out or rolled over at the end of the contracted period.

Professional Development: INP is committed to furthering the development of staff. Training and certification may be provided at the expense of INP when deemed appropriate by the INP Administrator and the Education Director.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Email a cover letter, resume, and a list of three references to Jennie McGuigan, Education Director, at jmcguigan@ijams.org. This position is open until filled. Interviews will begin ASAP and this position will be filled as soon as an exceptional candidate is identified.

ABOUT IJAMS NATURE CENTER

Ijams Nature Center is a nonprofit learning center and preserve on the southern banks of the Tennessee River near Knoxville's urban center. Its mission is to encourage stewardship of the natural world by providing an urban greenspace for people to learn about and enjoy the outdoors through engaging experiences. Ijams Nature Center manages 318 acres of land with more than 12 miles of trails, a large visitor center, Mead's Quarry lake, mountain biking trails, river access, gardens, and much more. People of all ages attend educational programs at Ijams Nature Center. These programs include school field trips, family programs, summer camps, and adult workshops. Ijams Nature Center partners with Knox County and the City of Knoxville as well as with multiple agencies to provide outstanding educational offerings. Visit the Ijams website at ijams.org for current program information.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Ijams Nature Center is an Equal Opportunity Employer, working to create experiences of belonging for all. In order to further these goals, Black people, Indigenous people, People of Color, immigrants, women, LGBTQIA+ candidates, people with disabilities, and people of all economic realities are strongly encouraged to apply.