



Ijams Nature Preschool Assistant Teacher (Part Time)

Department: Education

Supervisor: Jennie McGuigan, Education Director

Summary

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.

The Assistant Teacher will work as part of a team along with other Lead Teachers, Assistant Teachers, the Early Learning Coordinator, 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.

This position will work part time for up to 32 hours per week, Monday through Friday. Shifts start as early as 8:00 am and end as late as 5:45 pm. The employee's set 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.

Duties and Responsibilities

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 pick up
- 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, Early Learning Coordinator, and Lead Teachers.

Desired Skills and Abilities

- Ability to be creative, supportive, and enthusiastic with children
- Willingness to work outside most of the day with preschoolers, during all weather conditions
- Knowledge of Montessori and Waldorf education principles
- Attention to detail
- Willingness to multi-task and work under pressure
- Ability to work without supervision
- Strong customer service skills

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree or combined experience in Early Childhood Education, Outdoor Experiential Education, Science Education, Wildlife, Biology, or other resource management programs (*required*)
- Experience in a preschool setting, especially with programs that spend a great deal of time outside
- Experience working and/or spending amounts of time in outdoor natural settings
- Experience teaching others and/or the willingness to learn teaching strategies
- Experience working with Microsoft Office, PowerPoint, Excel, Google Suite (dynamic platforms), Canva, or other electronic platforms that enhance communication and documentation
- Experience teaching art, music, or drama to children

Other Requirements

- Must be at least 18 years old
- Must be able to clear a state-required, detailed background check
- Must be able to pass a pre-employment physical exam
- Must have or the ability to acquire CPR and/or First Aid Certification

Physical Requirements

- Must be able to lift and carry or otherwise move up to 50 pounds.
- Must be able to work around small children including sitting, standing, running, and climbing.
- Must be able to traverse safely over uneven or irregular terrain.
- Must be able to work in outdoor environments in all weather conditions.
- Must be able to see and respond to dangerous situations.
- Must be able to wear personal protective gear correctly most of the day.

Compensation/Benefits

Salary is commensurate with qualifications and experience. The position offers paid vacation and sick leave and paid holidays. This position is not eligible for enrollment in the company health insurance plan or retirement plan.

About Ijams Nature Center

Ijams Nature Center is a nonprofit nature center located on the 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, including 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 Opportunity Employment

Ijams Nature Center is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate against employees or job applicants on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, national origin, mental or physical disability, veteran status, or any other status or condition protected by applicable state or federal laws. These anti-discrimination policies also apply to volunteers and program recipients. Ijams Nature Center provides reasonable accommodations to all applicants and employees. Applicants with disabilities may request reasonable accommodation at any point in the employment process.

To Apply

Email a cover letter, resume, and a list of three references to Jennie McGuigan, Education Director, at jmcquigan@ijams.org and Abby Branstetter, Early Learning Coordinator, at preschool@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.