



Nature-Based Preschool Teacher (Full Time)

Fernbrook Farms Environmental Education Center seeks passionate early childhood educators to join our Saplings program for ages 3-5. Since 2001, Fernbrook has worked to get kids outside and into nature by providing hands-on experiences that connect kids with their local food systems and environment. Our Saplings program, entering its sixth year, is geared towards our youngest learners and is designed to foster curiosity, wonder, and a lifelong relationship with the natural world.

Learning at Saplings is child-led, play-based, and nature-focused. Most of our days are spent outdoors, immersed in the many ecosystems of Fernbrook's 230-acre working farm. Our team of 5 works closely together to support and guide up to 22 students each day in nature play and exploration. Saplings students are encouraged to wander, investigate, experiment, create, and discover. Saplings teachers build on student cues, deepening the learning with intentionally-crafted experiences and activities. Teachers support students as they try new things to challenge themselves mentally, physically, and socially. They actively join students in play and exploration, but also know when to step back and let students organize themselves. They encourage students to ask and seek the answers to their own questions, and they understand that mistake-making is part of the learning process. Most crucially, they set the tone for the group by modelling warmth, interest, and enthusiastic playfulness.

Our Ideal Candidate:

- Has a nurturing spirit
- Uses their own love of nature to inspire their students
- Isn't afraid to get dirty!
- Seeks to understand the reasoning behind child behavior
- Is a team player
- Approaches challenges with calm and a sense of humor
- Shows a dedication to self-reflection and professional growth



Primary Responsibilities:

- Develop flexible plans for daily "adventures" inspired by natural events/rhythms and by the current interests and needs of the class
- Facilitate whole group and small group play, balancing active teacher participation with active observation
- Model engaged, enthusiastic learning through inquiry, observation, trial-and-error, and collaboration
- Monitor emergent interests in the class and build on them with stories, songs, crafts, and other activities
- Embrace risky and immersive nature play while maintaining safety standards
- Maintain a positive and encouraging atmosphere that respects the agency and capable thinking of children
- Provide "just enough" assistance with self-help tasks, conflict resolution, and other problem-solving
- Model fascination with, and empathy for, the natural world.
- Document student activity and growth with photos, written notes, and content for family communications
- Develop strong, positive, and professional partnerships with families and fellow staff



Preferred Qualifications:

This is a wishlist, not a mandate! If you meet most of these qualifications, we encourage you to apply!

- Bachelor's degree in a nature- or education-related field
- Experience and passion for working with children ages 3-5 years old:
 - Experience designing activities and experiences for young learners, especially outdoors
 - Ability to engage student attention and positively redirect behavior as needed
 - Knowledge of child developmental stages and needs
 - Ability to attend to the individual needs of children while managing the larger group
- Experience with informal and alternative teaching methods
 - Experience developing hands-on and/or nature-based learning activities
 - Familiarity with emergent curriculum and inquiry-based learning
 - Flexible, patient, creative approach to planning, with a strong ability to adjust on the fly
- Experience working outdoors in all weather
 - Willingness to get wet and muddy, and to handle critters such as bugs, fish, and frogs
 - Experience managing risk in an outdoor setting
 - Knowledge of environmental principles and of local flora and fauna, or willingness to learn
 - Knowledge of fire-making, bushcraft, or other practical skills, or willingness to learn
- Excellent communication and organizational skills
 - Reliable time-management and prioritization abilities
 - Ability to communicate clearly, empathetically, and proactively with others
 - Collaborate well with others in a team environment
- Clearance of a criminal background check
- Current First Aid and CPR certification, or ability to complete

Physical Demands/Work Environment:

- Spend multiple hours outdoors in all conditions (sun, rain, snow, extreme cold and heat, winds)
- Hike 1-5 miles a day on varied terrain, keeping pace with the children in your care
- Lift up to 50 pounds (the weight of a small child)
- Be able to see, hear, and guide children at all times
- Engage in sustained physical activity throughout the day, including frequent climbing, squatting, and kneeling



Position Details:

Compensation:	\$35,000-\$45,000, depending on experience Generous PTO, Fernbrook CSA membership, optional health insurance
Reports to:	Brian Kuser, Education Director and Lauren Flesher, Saplings Director
Start date:	August 25th for 25-26 academic year Availability to work summer camp starting June 16 th is a plus!

To apply, send cover letter and resume to Lauren Flesher, Saplings Director, at lauren@fernbrookfarms.com

