



JOB DESCRIPTION

Title: **Preschool Lead Teacher**
Supervisor: Early Childhood Director
Prepared by: Heather Parker
Date Prepared: May 23, 2016
Classification: Full-time, Regular

The Kalamazoo Nature Center (KNC) is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to inspire people to care for the environment by providing experiences that lead them to understand their connection to the natural world.

Non-Discrimination Policy:

The Kalamazoo Nature Center is an equal opportunity organization that will not discriminate in its programs or hiring practices on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, ethnic origin, physical or mental disability, veteran status, height, weight, sexual orientation or gender identity, marital status, or political affiliation.

Summary of Position:

Nature's Way Preschool offers experiences typically found in child-centered programs such as discovery-based learning through play, sensory exploration, large and fine motor activity, creative expression, making friends, and developing social skills. Our nine acres of natural areas serve as an extension of the classroom, allowing children to experience daily nature walks and exploration through forests and along a creek. The naturalized playground provides opportunities for digging, playing in the mud, climbing on rocks, building 'beaver dams' and balancing on logs. Nature's Way Preschool is licensed by the State of Michigan, and classes are limited in size to 16 students and two outstanding teachers.

The Preschool Lead Teacher position is a full-time position with responsibilities including but not limited to planning, preparing and leading classroom activities at Nature's Way Preschool (NWP). This position will maintain a developmentally appropriate classroom within the philosophical guidelines of Nature's Way Preschool and the Creative Curriculum® model, in order to develop students' relationship with the natural world. The Preschool Teacher will report to the Early Childhood Director and work collaboratively with all other KNC staff.

Duties:

- Teach and develop curriculum for Nature's Way Preschool in conjunction with other members of the teaching team.
- Assure that the classroom operates within the guidelines and standards of the Michigan Department of Human Services, Office of Children and Adult Licensing; and the Kalamazoo County Ready 4s Program.
- Responsible for the health, safety and welfare of all children in the group.
- Interact with children to encourage positive self-concept and enthusiasm for the discovery process.

- Develop relationships with parents, addressing any concerns and celebrating accomplishments of the children.
- Work with parents both formally and informally, individually and in groups. This will involve classroom newsletters and parent/teacher conferences as well as social events. Some of these may require working other than regularly scheduled hours.
- Assist NWP staff with open houses and recruitment efforts for enrolling new families.
- Provide ongoing developmental assessments for children enrolled.
- Work with Early Childhood Director and NWP teachers to help organize field trips and family events.
- Assist with daily cleaning and facility upkeep.
- Attend training sessions and staff meetings to comply with QRIS standards, maintaining 24 hours per year of professional development.
- Provide quality customer service, representing the mission of KNC and NWP.
- Participate in other Kalamazoo Nature Center functions as appropriate.
- Other duties as assigned by supervisor.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor Degree in Early Childhood, or Elementary Education with current certification and early childhood endorsement.
- Two years teaching experience required.
- Additional experience in environmental education or related fields preferred.
- Demonstrated strength in leading outdoor activities.
- Demonstrated understanding of principles and techniques of early childhood education and developmentally appropriate practices and the ability to implement that knowledge.
- A demonstrated knowledge about the natural world or a willingness to acquire knowledge about the natural world.
- Experience with Creative Curriculum® preferred.
- Ability to communicate effectively and comfortably with parents and peers.
- Excellent written and communication skills.
- Ability to solve practical problems.
- Creativity and high energy.
- Ability to work as a team member as well as demonstrate leadership skills.
- Commitment to the mission of KNC.
- Able to lead groups over rough terrain in all weather conditions.
- Able to lift 50 pounds.

How to Apply:

Send resume, cover letter, and names and telephone numbers of three references to: Heather Parker, Early Childhood Director at hparker@naturecenter.org.

Because we value the strength diversity brings to the workplace, the Kalamazoo Nature Center is committed to the recruitment, retention, and development of a workplace that reflects the society in which we live. We encourage applications from candidates representing diverse backgrounds.