



Director Smith Urban Nature Preschool

The Smith Urban Nature (SUN) Preschool is hiring a Founding Director to help design and launch a new preschool in the 2022-23 school year with a full-time, year round program for students ages 3 through 5.

Located on the grounds of Smith Memorial Playground and Playhouse, the new preschool will have access to 6.5 beautiful acres of open fields, wooded terrain, and sloped hills. Smith Playground, founded in 1899, is a treasured family destination and home to the beloved Ann Newman Giant Wooden Slide, a certified Nature Explore outdoor classroom, and other unique pieces of play equipment.

The SUN Preschool will be located in the newly renovated lower level of the historic 16,000-square-foot Smith Playhouse. It will include two classrooms filled with natural light, administrative offices, and an adjacent private outdoor classroom space. Each classroom is designed to accommodate up to 20 students.

The SUN Preschool will provide the City of Philadelphia, generally, and the neighboring Strawberry Mansion community, specifically, with quality early childhood education. Diversity, access, and inclusion will be a key focus for recruitment, operations, and programmatic design. The long term goal is to establish the school as a training center that will work toward enhancing the quality of preschools across Philadelphia.

The Founding Director will help shape the strategy, vision, curriculum and facility design for this new nature-based school. S/he will recruit and train the founding staff of teachers and administrators. This position will begin as a part time position during the pre-opening planning period. Starting in June, it will transition into a full-time salaried position with a competitive salary and full range of benefits, including vacation, health, dental, and retirement. The position reports to the Board of Trustees of the Smith Urban Nature Preschool. Responsibilities include:

Teaching and Learning

- Plan, research, assess, and continually evolve the preschool's curriculum.

- Organize and develop professional development and training for the teaching staff.
- Serve as a Lead Teacher part-time and/or as needed during the initial building of enrollment for the school.
- Serve as a substitute or special-activities teacher for preschool classes, as needed and when not scheduled for other conflicting duties.

School Operations

- Oversee day-to-day operations of the preschool.
- Lead the effort to develop partnerships that advance the mission, curriculum and operations of the school.
- Ensure that the Center maintains proper licenses and compliance with all relevant governmental regulations.
- Be aware of, and responsive to, non-regulated best practices within the early childhood profession.
- Work with the board, consultants and partners to ensure financial stability of the operations.

People Management

- Assure the safety, well-being, and healthy development of all enrolled children.
- Hire, train, manage and motivate preschool staff partners, etc.
- Oversee communication to families and resolve any issues or dispute.

Enrollment and Marketing

- Lead the public relations and marketing efforts for the nature preschool.
- Ensure that the preschool meets enrollment targets and manage the annual re-enrollment process.

Qualifications

- Bachelor's degree in early childhood education required; advanced degree preferred.
- At least 3 to 5 years of experience in teaching, early childhood education preferred.
- Active interest in the natural world and a powerful commitment to its use as a central and daily learning and play environment for the preschool.
- Demonstrated skills in planning, personnel management, budgeting, and team building.
- Can satisfactorily pass a background and criminal check.
- Meets all PA requirements for preschool Director and Lead Teacher, or is willing to acquire all qualifications within a predetermined time frame after being selected for the position.
- Experience with diverse communities and interest in engaging in DEI work.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills; excellent listening skills.
- Excellent organizational, time-management, and multi-tasking abilities.
- Proficiency with word processing and basic use of social media.

- CPR and First Aid certification, or willingness to obtain them.
- Ability to easily traverse varied terrain and trails, and to maintain a high level of energy throughout very full work weeks.

How to Apply

Interested candidates please submit a resume and cover letter to preschool@smithplayground.org.