



FENNER CONSERVANCY

CO-LEAD OUTDOOR TEACHER

Fenner Nature Preschool is a State of Michigan licensed, outdoor nature-based preschool program managed by Fenner Conservancy, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Maple Grove site operates as a fully outdoor program, where children spend the entirety of their school day immersed in the natural environment. The program utilizes a child-directed, inquiry-based approach with a provocation-driven curriculum inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

Summary

The Maple Grove Co-Lead Teacher, reporting directly to the FNP Director, shares responsibility for the instruction, care, and guidance of students in collaboration with a co-lead partner. Together, the Co-Leads plan and implement curriculum using emergent, nature-based, and Reggio-inspired approaches, while supporting the physical, emotional, and developmental well-being of each child.

The Maple Grove program operates as a fully outdoor program, and Co-Lead Teachers are responsible for facilitating learning experiences entirely within the natural environment across all seasons.

The ideal candidate demonstrates a strong personal connection to nature and a commitment to fostering that same connection in young children. As a member of the Fenner Nature Preschool teaching team, the Co-Lead Teacher values collaboration, engages in reflective practice, and contributes to a program culture grounded in curiosity, respect, and joy.

This is an exempt, full time (i.e., year-round) position requiring a minimum of 40 hours a week with personal time off (PTO), retirement, short-term disability, and health benefit options. The position offers additional paid breaks and holidays and offers a starting base salary of \$40,000 annually.

Duties & Responsibilities

Planning and Administration (5%)

- Implement and reflect on program practices in alignment with licensing requirements, the mission and vision of Fenner Nature Preschool, and best practices informed by the Natural Start Alliance and NAEYC.
- Participate in enrollment and outreach efforts, including open houses and community events.
- Collaborate in maintaining accurate documentation, child records, and family communication.
- Support onboarding and mentoring of assistant teachers and support staff as needed.
- Contribute to ongoing program development through reflection, documentation, and team collaboration.

Teaching and Evaluating (90%)

- Plan and facilitate high-quality, child-directed learning experiences grounded in emergent, nature-based, and Reggio-inspired practices.
- Build strong, respectful partnerships with families, recognizing them as a child's first teachers.
- Observe, document, and assess children's development in alignment with program philosophy.
- Provide leadership, guidance, and support to assistant teachers and support staff as needed.
- Ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all children through active supervision and sound judgment in an outdoor environment.
- Apply risk-benefit thinking to support children in engaging with appropriate challenges, while maintaining a safe and responsive learning environment.
- Support the inclusion of all children by adapting the environment and approach to meet a range of developmental needs.
- Create and maintain a thoughtful, inviting outdoor program environment that reflects children's interests and ongoing investigations.

Program and Facilities (5%)

- Maintain a clean, organized, and hygienic environment across the program space.
- Conduct daily safety checks of the property and learning areas.

Additional Requirements:

- Build and maintain positive, professional relationships with staff, families, volunteers, and community partners.
- Represent Fenner Nature Preschool with professionalism in all interactions.
- Participate in family conferences, staff meetings, and program events as needed.
- Complete required training (CPR, First Aid, bloodborne pathogens) and ongoing professional development.
- Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in a dynamic, fully outdoor program.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

Qualifications:

- 18 years of age or older and have CDA or college degree (Associates or higher) in early childhood education, child development, or a child related field
- At least two years of early childhood teaching experience preferred
- 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 as well as 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 Reggio Emilia teaching preferred
- Excellent communication skills. Able to effectively and comfortably communicate with parents and peers
- Criminal history background check and Central Registry Clearance will be required

Environmental Conditions of Position:

- The majority of the work associated with this position will occur in the outdoor learning environment.

Mission, Vision & Beliefs:

Mission: Connect the early learners of Lansing to nature through exploration, play, and discovery.

Vision & Values: At Fenner Nature Preschool, children are **respected** and treated as **capable and competent** individuals who learn through play. Families are seen as a child's first teacher and are valued as **partners**. Teachers serve as **advocates** for the success of both children and their families. We value being interconnected within our **community** and both our indoor and outdoor environments serve as the third teacher.

To apply, please submit cover letter that addresses your interest in the position, along with your résumé to:

Email: preschool@mynaturecenter.org
 Note: email submissions are preferred, but not required

Mail:
 Fenner Conservancy
 Attn: Preschool Director
 2020 E. Mt. Hope Ave. Lansing, MI 48910

It is Fenner Conservancy's policy to provide equal opportunities in employment, promotions, wages, benefits and all other privileges, terms and conditions of employment to all qualified persons without regard to race, color, religion, gender, age, height, weight, national origin, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, marital status, or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.