

Roger Williams Park Zoo / Rhode Island Zoological Society

RI Zoological Society is a nonprofit entity dedicated to the development and enrichment of Roger Williams Park Zoo

Play Partner Volunteer Application

Complete Applications Include the Following:

Completion of Digital or Paper Application (Pages 1-2)

Application Questions (Page 3)

To Submit Your Application:

Please email to:

volunteer@rwpzoo.org

OR

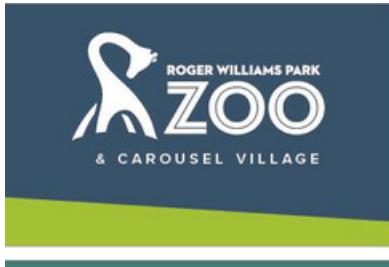
Please mail to:

Manager of Volunteer Resources
Roger Williams Park Zoo
1000 Elmwood Avenue
Providence, RI 02907

Application Deadline: February 28th 2026

Next Steps ↗

After the application deadline passes, we will review applications and offer interviews to candidates.



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| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Position Title: | Play Partner |
| Classification: | Volunteer |
| Reports To: | Big Backyard Coordinator, Manager of Interpretation |
| Dues: | Average \$20 fee to cover I.D. badge and appreciation events (sliding scale payment is offered) |
| Commitment: | 45 hours April 1-October 12 (Indigenous People's Day) |

Position Description

Play Partner volunteers facilitate and support children's free play at Hasbro's Big Backyard at the Roger Williams Park Zoo. In this space, Play Partners help families create memories through outdoor play experiences that connect them to the natural world. This volunteer opportunity is great way to grow skills and gain experience with play-based early childhood education, and to explore the introduction of environmental education at the early childhood level with infants through elementary ages.

The main responsibility of a Play Partner is to play and interact directly with children. Interacting with our adult guests is a secondary responsibility. This position is trained on play theory, behavior management, and basic interpretation skills. This volunteer opportunity does not work directly with our animal collection.

Responsibilities:

1. Seek out opportunities to play and interact with kids and families in the Big Backyard space.
2. Engage kids and families by focusing on their interests and experiences and provide guidance or engage them in an activity.
3. Provide opportunities for "profound experiences" – interactions and experiences that create emotional connections to the Zoo and nature.
4. Prioritize safety, courtesy, and professionalism.

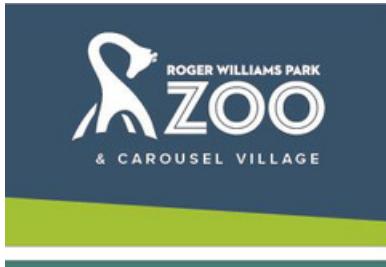
Essential Position Functions:

1. Deliver developmentally appropriate play-based activities and monitor Play Stations:

Indoor: Nature Swap (requires computer use) and Activity Room

Outdoor: Drip Drop Water Garden Play Station, Creativity Corner Play Station, Sticks and Stones Building Zone Station, Beyond the Fence Play Area, and the Treehouse

2. Assist in the supervision and safe play of children and zoo guests.
3. On high traffic days, assist Big Backyard staff with crowd management.
4. Appropriately communicate and liaison with zoo staff and guests of all ages.
5. Assist with upkeep of resources.



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Requirements:

1. Must be at least 16 years old by April 1st. Age verification may be required.
2. Ability to pass a background check upon selection. (Applicants 18 and older only)
3. Attend in-person Play Partner training. In-person training is tentatively scheduled on:

Wednesday, March 18th 12pm-4pm

or

Saturday, March 21st 10am-2pm

If under 18 at first shift, a parent/guardian must attend the first hour of this training.

4. Participate in a general orientation required of all staff and volunteers, which may include in-person and online components. Training is scheduled:

Saturday, March 28th 9am-1pm

Other dates may be available if there is a scheduling conflict.

5. Volunteer for at least 45 hours per season by committing to a 3 hour shift each week.
 - a. The Play Partner season begins April 1st and concludes Columbus Day each year.
 - b. Morning (9:30am-12:30pm) and afternoon (1:00pm – 4:00pm) shifts are available daily. Volunteers commit to a regular weekly schedule on the same day and at the same time each week. Accommodation can be made on a case-by-case basis for students and those with transportation limitations.
 - c. Volunteers are committing to volunteering through at least Labor Day weekend, even if the 45-hour commitment is met before that time.
 - d. Please note: season ends after Columbus Day. Shifts are scheduled by staff for special events or specific needs only.
6. Arrive on time and stay for the entire shift unless prior arrangements have been made with staff supervisor.
7. Ability to be outside, in all weather, for the duration of your shift.
9. Must be comfortable using a radio to communicate with Zoo staff. Training is provided.
10. Ability to respond appropriately in high stress situations, including lost children and first aid situations.
11. Ability to perform duties in a high energy environment.
12. High level of comfort speaking with the public, especially children. Comfortable speaking with diverse groups regardless of their ages, personalities, ability levels, backgrounds, etc.
13. Must be willing to engage with children/families, adapt to changing situations, show patience, be positive and enthusiastic about nature/play, and have a willingness to learn new things.
14. Effectively support the mission and priorities of Roger Williams Park Zoo.
15. Must be committed to the idea that children create meaningful connections to nature through play and exploration.
16. Adhere to all policies described in the Roger Williams Park Zoo Volunteer Handbook.

Benefits:

1. Free year-round admission to Roger Williams Park Zoo for yourself.
2. Eight free passes per year to Roger Williams Park Zoo for your friends and family.
3. Good resume builder with potential opportunities for professional development.
4. Community service hours for school, sports teams, etc.
5. Meeting new people in a fun environment.
6. Supporting the Roger Williams Park Zoo's mission as leaders in conservation and animal care through creating engaging experiences that empower guests to join us in conserving wildlife and wild places.

Play Partner Volunteer Application

Professional / Academic References

Please list two professional or academic references. By providing these references, you authorize Rhode Island Zoological Society to contact these individuals regarding your suitability for volunteering.

Full Name: **Relationship:** **Years Known:**

Company Name: **Phone:**

Full Name: **Relationship:** **Years Known:**

Company Name: **Phone:**

Previous Employment / Volunteer Experience

By providing these references, you authorize Rhode Island Zoological Society to contact these individuals regarding your suitability for volunteering.

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Start Date: | End Date: | Employer Name: | Telephone: |
| Position Title: | | Address: | |
| Nature of Position/Position Responsibilities: | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
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Play Partner Volunteer Application

Paper Application Questions

Please submit your responses on a separate page/document. Do not complete these answers on this form. Applications submitted without this information will not be considered.

- 1. Why do you want to volunteer as a Play Partner at Roger Williams Park Zoo?**
- 2. What does "play" mean to you?**
- 3. How comfortable are you with leading play-based activities? Very Somewhat Not at All**
Please elaborate.
- 4. Please briefly describe any professional experiences or skills you have that would be useful as a Play Partner** (i.e. working with children, working with the public, free play opportunities, professional trainings, etc.)
- 5. Please list any interests or hobbies that could be applied in the "Our Big Backyard" play spaces.**

Disclaimer and Signature

I hereby certify that the information stated above is to the best of my knowledge true, correct and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation of facts or any false or incomplete statements in this application are sufficient cause for dismissal if I am accepted as a volunteer. I authorize the investigation of all statements contained in this application in return for being considered for a volunteer position. I know that my completion of this application form does not mean that any volunteer positions are available. I acknowledge that RIZS has not made any promise that I will be accepted as a volunteer. I understand that RIZS has no obligation to offer me a volunteer position, and that I have no right or entitlement to a volunteer position. I understand that any offer of a volunteer position by RIZS is for no definite period of time and that either RIZS or I may terminate the relationship at any time without prior notice and without any reason or cause. I have read the Play Partner volunteer position description, and certify that I am able to perform the duties described therein with or without reasonable accommodations. I understand that I am applying for a volunteer position. No payment or remuneration will be given in exchange for volunteer service. I further certify that I am applying for this volunteer position out of a desire to further my personal education and development, as well as to further the civic and community benefits which the Zoo provides.

Applicant Signature:

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Date:

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**Parent/Guardian
Signature:**

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Date:

.....

If the applicant is under 18 years old, or under a legal guardianship.