



Preschool Director Job Posting

Roger Williams Park Zoo (RWPZ) of Providence, Rhode Island, is one of the nation's oldest zoos, exhibiting over 100 animal species. Our culture is built on our core values -community, fun, innovation, diversity, integrity, sustainability, and excellence. We value our role in the community as a treasured place for families and a trusted resource for learning; we create a sense of community for our staff and contribute to the global conservation community. We provide a fun experience for our guests and believe that a fun environment is essential to create a great workplace. We are willing to take risks, to propose novel ideas and to think "out of the box". Bold dreams are welcome here. We act with respect toward all. We value diversity. Integrity and honesty drive our business practices and our relationships with each other and our constituents. We are driven by our vision of greater sustainability in our environmental practices and in our business model. We believe that by establishing a sustainable financial base we can best achieve our goals. We are always striving for excellence. We work to exceed expectations in all areas.

RWPZ is currently recruiting a full-time, year-round, exempt, Preschool Director. The Preschool Director is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the development, implementation, management, oversight and evaluation of the Zoo's nature based preschool program and to ensure compliance with the RI Department of Human Services Program Regulations for Licensure including execution of the Learning and Development regulations. To support a thoughtful and sustainable start-up, this position will begin as a part-time role (approximately 20 hours per week) in October 2026, allowing the Director to focus on planning, licensing, and enrollment. The position will transition to full-time beginning January 1, 2027, as work intensifies in preparation for the preschool's opening which is scheduled for August/ September of 2027. Salary will be prorated based on the part-time schedule from October through December and will transition to the full annual salary when the position becomes full-time on January 1, 2027.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Leadership & Staff Management

- Supervision and leadership of program staff including hiring, training, management and evaluation.
- Developing and overseeing an individualized training plan, aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies, for each staff member.
- Required to complete 20 hours of training annually aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competencies relevant to the role.

Health, Safety & Compliance

- Ensure the health and safety of students, staff and volunteers at all times.
- Applying for and maintaining license with the RI Department of Human Services.
- Along with the Registrar, maintain program files and individual files for children and staff that are available on-site at all times with all relevant information outlined in the RI Department Human Services Regulations for Licensure.
- Develops and implements an individualized written plan to prepare for and respond to potential emergency/disaster situations in coordination with the Zoo's Manager of Safety and Security.

Curriculum, Philosophy & Classroom

- Development and implementation of the program's philosophy, beliefs and practices.
- Design and set-up of the classroom space.

Family & Community Engagement

- Development and implementation of a Family Engagement plan that includes but is not limited to program visits, pre-admission conferences, strategies for ongoing contact with program and classroom staff, directory of community resources; actively developing and maintaining positive relationships with families.
- Develop, maintain, and implement policies and procedures in the Family Handbook and a Staff Handbook.
- Develop and maintain relationships within the Early Childhood Community including but not limited to LISC, Children's Friend, RI Early Childhood Directors Network, The Rhode Island Association for the Education of Young Children, Natural Start Alliance, NAEYC and teacher preparation programs at local accredited colleges and universities.

Administration & Operations

- Develop and monitor program budgets.
- Working with the Zoo's PR & Marketing team and Registrar on marketing and exposure strategies.

Access & Financial Support

- Work with the Zoo's Development team to secure scholarships for students of low-income families.
- Work with LISC and RIDE to explore opportunities for state vouchers for low-income families.

Strategic Planning & Growth

- Develop a long-term plan for quality improvement, including potential Bright Stars program assessment and RIDE CECE approval.
- Recent experience with registration systems like Altru and Camp Brain.

Education Coordinator Responsibilities

- Development of the program level curriculum.
- Ensure program level curriculum:
 - is informed by program philosophy, beliefs, practices and relevant research.
 - is guided by the RI Early Learning and Development Standards.
 - considers the developmentally appropriate needs of all children served.
- Meet with the Classroom Teacher to consult on program planning and to assist in the planning for individual children at least monthly using assessment data.
- Ensure Classroom level curriculum for the previous 3 months is maintained on-site.
- Work collaboratively with local school districts to ensure that preschool children have the opportunity to participate in child outreach screening.

- Work collaboratively with staff and Early Intervention providers to support children's IEPs if applicable.

Other functions and responsibilities (Non-Essential/Marginal Functions)

- Assist Director of Education with operational needs and duties as assigned.
- Act as a resource for Zoo educators outside of the preschool program.
- Assist Manager of School Programs with Teacher Trainings.
- Safe operation of zoo vehicles when required.

Required Experience, Training and/or Education:

Required Experience and Education:

- A minimum of two years of experience in Childcare Administration.
- A minimum of two years of experience working in a licensed early childhood program.
- Completion of one of the following:
 - RI Department of Education Teacher Certification for grades pre-kindergarten- 2nd grade with a bachelor's degree or higher is early childhood and one year of teaching experience in a licensed/approved early childhood program.
 - RI Department of Education Teacher Certificate in Early Childhood Special Education, which includes early childhood certification, with a bachelor's degree or higher is early childhood and one year teaching experience in a licensed/approved early childhood program.
 - Bachelor's Degree or higher in a related field such as child development, elementary education or special education and 24 credits in early childhood education from an accredited institution of higher education and one year teaching experience, 3 months of which must be supervised teaching experience in a licensed/approved early childhood program.
- Completion of the "Implementing a Standards Based Program for the RIELDS" course through Bright Stars or willingness to complete course within 3 months of hire.
- Knowledge and experience:
 - utilizing the Rhode Island Early Learning and Development Standards Experience to develop program level curriculum.
 - with the RI Department of Human Services Program Regulations for Child Care Center Licensure.
 - with family engagement.
 - leading childcare staff, including knowledge of hiring, training, evaluating, coaching/mentoring, and performance management while creating a culture of growth, accountability and excellence for staff and self.
- Certified in CPR/First Aid (must include pediatric cardiopulmonary resuscitation) or willingness to become certified within 3 months of hire.

Preferred Experience and Education:

- Demonstrated experience in opening a new licensed preschool program including applying for an initial childcare license with Rhode Island Department of Human Services.
- Experience with:
 - National Association for Educators of Young Children (NAEYC) and North American Association for Environmental Education (NAAEE) Guidelines for Excellence in Early Childhood Education.
 - and knowledge with the Reggio Emilia approach.
 - teaching or serving as a childcare administrator in a nature-based preschool program.
 - working with diverse populations and fluency in speaking additional languages.

Competencies:

- **Ability to effectively:**

- create a workplace culture that values teamwork, open communication and collective problem-solving.
- model resiliency; successfully adapting to change and/or difficult or challenging experiences and adapting to internal and external demands.
- function professionally by demonstrating responsibility, creative problem-solving, and excellent interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills.
- Maintain working relationships with other departments, staff, professionals from other organizations, and the public.
- actively listen, responding in a respectful tone.
- build trust through regular open and honest communication.
- create a work environment of inclusiveness, welcoming others' suggestions and points of view.
- establish priorities, manage time, and organize resources effectively.
- work safely and follow established safety standards.
- use identified frameworks and tools to design, implement, and evaluate programs that prioritize equity, accessibility, and inclusion. This includes applying an equity lens to ensure that diverse audiences are meaningfully engaged, and programs are accessible to individuals with different backgrounds and abilities.
- train, lead, supervise and direct the work of others.

- **Must demonstrate proficiency in:**

- effective program design and evaluation.
- student assessment.
- working with Microsoft Office (primarily Excel, Word, Outlook, and Teams) Zoom and other digital communication platforms.

Additional Requirements

- Be comfortable working outdoors and in adverse conditions (heat, rain, cold, etc.).
- Ability to work occasional Saturdays, Sundays, Evenings and Holidays.
- Occasional travel via all modes of transportation.
- Successful completion of a background check.
- Valid driver's license.

Supervisory Responsibilities:

The Preschool Director leads and supervises classroom teachers, teacher assistants, substitute teachers, and preschool volunteers.

If you are interested in this exciting opportunity to be a team member at a well-renowned Zoo in the New England area, send a cover letter, resume and salary requirements to the address below.

Roger Williams Park Zoo
ATTN: Preschool Director
1000 Elmwood Ave
Providence, RI 02907

-or-

employment@rwpzoo.org



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OF ZOOS &
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