



Photo: Leo Paredes, November 2024, Falkirk

WILLOW DEN

Children's Outdoor Nursery
at Spartans Edinburgh

EARLY YEARS
PRACTITIONER
OUTDOORS

Background

Willow Den Scotland is a fully outdoor nature-based early learning and childcare (ELC) organisation. Located in Ainslie Park Football Stadium, Willow Den at Spartans offers a unique woodland setting based in the heart of urban Edinburgh, for children from age 3 up to when they join primary school.

Our nature based nursery has access to a hidden garden through our 'secret gate'. It is the perfect environment to connect with nature - do some climbing, swinging or even build a den or have fun in our mud kitchen.

Children can see some of Scotland's top female sporting athletes in training, and if your wee one chooses, they can engage in play-based sport.

We are a funded partner provider to City of Edinburgh Council so you can use some or all of your 1140 hours with us. We accept a wide range of childcare vouchers as well as Tax Free Childcare for payment of non-funded sessions or additional hours.



Background cont.

Willow Den was founded in 2020 by Inspiring Scotland to increase the availability and accessibility of outdoor nurseries across Scotland, enabling more children to thrive outdoors. Inspiring Scotland has been supporting the development of outdoor play through its various funds since 2008, establishing Willow Den as a trading arm is a continuation of this work. We will measure our achievements through the success of our profit-for-purpose and our social impact.

Our **vision** is for every family to have the choice for their child to play and learn outdoors

Our **mission** is to improve children's health and well-being in Scotland through access to fully outdoor Early Learning and Childcare.

Role Description

The EYOP will work with the Nursery Manager to play a key role in embedding high quality learning experiences for children. We are seeking an enthusiastic, friendly practitioner with the skills, knowledge and experience who will enhance our existing team.

A passion for delivering outdoor play-based learning for young children is essential. But that is not all. We are looking for a EYP who will 'walk the talk,' who can support the creation of play and learning experiences that are high quality and child-led.

You will know how to extend learning opportunities, support risky play and most importantly, how to communicate effectively with children and their families.



Skills and Abilities

- Be skilled at creating outdoor play based learning opportunities
- Understand the impact of positive interactions
- Be able to create experiences and spaces that provoke curiosity with children outdoors
- Demonstrate active listening and responding
- Follow children's interests
- Problem solving
- Excellent communication skills



Responsibilities

- Work as a team in planning, designing and continually developing the outdoor spaces
- Hold a Key Worker role providing positive experiences and interactions for children
- Lead by example implementing child led learning
- Embed a curriculum based on curiosity using Realising the Ambition and other relevant local and national documents
- Support and implement the daily routine
- Carry out administrative duties and complete daily/weekly/monthly record sheets and risk assessments
- Carry out observations ensuring children's files, learning/care plans are accurate and up to date
- Contribute to planning and evaluation of learning
- Continually develop own skills & knowledge in outdoor ELC practice
- Build positive relationships and clear communication lines with parents and families
- Fully participate in planning for improvement using HGIOELC/Care Inspectorate Quality Framework
- Provide a role model as a reflective practitioner
- Use technology to communicate children's progress
- Follow policies and procedures, ensuring these are understood and implemented

Person Specification

Essential Criteria

- Qualified to SCQF level 7 (HNC/SVQ 3) Childhood Practice/Early Years as a minimum or working towards this
- Experience in an EYP role
- Have a passion for the outdoors
- Full, clean PVG membership
- Must be able to register with SSSC as a Childcare Practitioner
- Knowledge of Curriculum for Excellence in Early Years, specifically Realising the Ambition
- Commitment to continued professional learning
- Experience with Health and Safety procedures and Risk Assessments with particular emphasis on outdoor settings
- Competent with online communication, and completing children's learning journals to a high standard



Desirable criteria

- Knowledge and understanding of outdoor play/learning (see skills and abilities)
- Knowledge of reflective planning/planning in the moment
- Recent first aid/Outdoor paediatric first aid certificate
- Outdoor skills training (Bushcraft/Den Building, etc.)

Personal Qualities

- Approachable and friendly, 'a people person'
- Caring and nurturing
- Good verbal and written communication skills
- Positive, 'can-do' approach
- Passion for outdoor learning
- Collaboration and team working comes naturally



Inclusion and Diversity

The Willow Den team is made up of diverse people from all kinds of backgrounds bringing vast and unique experiences, all united in our passion for outdoor Early Learning and Childcare.

Terms of Engagement

- Reporting to the Nursery Manager
- Hours of work: Full time 40 hours
- Contract Basis: Permanent
- Salary: £26,000 - £28,000 (based on skills and experience)
- Employer pension contribution 7%
- Location: North Edinburgh
- Reference ID: 1025_EYOP



How Do I Apply?

Please email a completed Application Form to jobs@willowden.scot. Please review the Application Guidance before completing your application form.

For more information or if you have any questions about the role or the application process please contact Kathie at kathie@willowden.scot

