



Environmental/Outdoor Educator Job Description

About Nature's Classroom

Founded in 1973, Nature's Classroom (NC) is a non-profit environmental education teaching service which operates as a residential field trip program. Schools from all over the Northeastern United States join us for up to 5 days. We serve a wide variety of students, typically ranging from third-eighth grade, who come from every background imaginable: big cities, suburban areas, rural communities, public schools, private schools, charter schools, parochial schools, and schools that serve students with special needs. The experience that our teachers gain by working with different groups each week is incredibly rewarding and valuable.

NC is a supplement to schools' curriculum; our program expands upon content already covered in the classroom, as well as introducing new topics that will be covered in the future. Because we work with different grades and school systems, some aspects of our program vary from week to week. Being able to focus on different topics and at varying grade levels keeps things fresh and exciting for our teachers, while allowing them opportunities to hone their teaching skills.

Our program operates out of 12 locations in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island. We partner with a variety of camp and retreat organizations who host us and allow us to utilize their facilities and property during our seasons. Each of our sites has their own staff consisting of 5-15 educators, a program coordinator, and a medical staff person.

Environmental Educator Position Overview

When school groups come to NC, they bring classroom teachers and occasionally chaperones from their community who provide supervision of students overnight and during our break times throughout the day. NC staff and school staff work together to provide supervision during meals by eating with the students and engaging them in conversation. Other than these periods, NC educators are responsible for supervising students and providing educational experiences. With some exceptions, program runs from 8 am through about 9 pm each day. All staff are expected to lead all aspects of our program (please see "Program Overview" for a detailed description of activities and responsibilities and "Sample Schedules" for the timing of activities).

In addition to delivering educational content to our groups, our staff also work together to ensure the entire program is running smoothly and effectively. To accomplish this, your job can also include:

- Maintaining discipline and order, especially when students are in large groups
- Doing occasional light maintenance to ensure property and equipment are safe for our groups
- Cleaning student living spaces and facilities (including bathrooms) after groups depart
- Washing dishes and cleaning the dining hall after meals
- Working at other sites (we reimburse for transportation between sites)
- Helping other staff members learn and prepare activities
- Assisting in emergencies during program and afterhours
- Doing anything else not mentioned that will contribute to a successful week for our students

Teachers are employed on a seasonal basis during the fall and the spring. Our fall runs from roughly September-December and spring is roughly March-June, specific dates vary depending on location. Educators are assigned a site that will be their home-base for the length of the season. Depending on availability, teachers have some freedom in choosing their site. There may be times throughout the season when your site does not need all of their teaching staff, and you may have the opportunity to work at another site for a week. This is an exciting opportunity to visit a new location and meet other NC staff, and we strongly encourage all of our staff to do this at least once a season.

Position Benefits

Room and Board: Other than potentially working at a different site for a week, your site will be your new home for the season. You will be given a place to live in one of our staff cabins or houses and meals will be provided for the duration of the season. Our housing accommodations vary depending on location, but generally you will have one roommate and up to 12 housemates that you will share common areas with. All of our housing has heat and indoor plumbing, and all of our sites have common areas for relaxing, socializing, and cooking meals. There is Wi-Fi access at all locations.

With our long hours and community housing, we live and work very closely together. You will be closer to your co-workers than probably any other job you've had. Most of the time this is a huge benefit, but it can be a challenge as well. To help alleviate the stress that this can cause, we encourage our staff to have open communication with co-workers and to share their needs and expectations of one another. This builds a very strong sense of community among our staff and will contribute to a successful program for our students.

Weekly Salary: Our teachers are paid weekly and their salary varies according to background and experience. Factors that affect your salary include: relevant experience, degrees, medical certifications, ability to play an instrument, etc. All of our staff are guaranteed five days of work each week of the season. If there is a day with no students on property, staff have the option to work by performing site maintenance and program development, or take the day off.

Weekends off: From roughly 5pm on Fridays to 9am on Mondays, our staff have time off. Many people will stay on property and enjoy time to themselves, while others take advantage of the beautiful areas surrounding our sites and go on day trips. Staff are able to bring vehicles if they choose to, with parking available on-site.

Curriculum Flexibility: As described in the "Program Overview" document, we allow our educators a great deal of freedom in the content they present to the students. We believe that if our staff is passionate about what they are teaching, their excitement will be passed to the students and foster a positive learning environment. We have a curriculum guidebook and hundreds of lesson plans available, but do not require educators to teach directly from those resources. We only require that students are learning grade-level appropriate content and that we are meeting the expectations of the schools, which change weekly.

Opportunities for Advancement: At NC, we hire our management team from within and are a supportive organization that helps our staff develop and meet their professional goals.