

# NANAIMO

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## Innovation Academy



### FOREST SCHOOL PROGRAM MANAGER JOB DESCRIPTION

The Basics:

Title	Forest School Program Manager
Reports To	Executive Director
Employment Type:	Full-time
Regular Hours	Monday to Friday 7:45AM-2:45PM
Pay Range	\$25-27/hour + Wage Enhancement
Location	Reports on site at 905 Hecate Street

Nanaimo Innovation Academy is a new and innovative non-profit daycare in Nanaimo, BC., opened February 15, 2018. We are excited to welcome educators who love working with children in a creative and dynamic work environment!

### OUR PHILOSOPHY AND VALUES

Please read our full guiding philosophy at <https://www.nanaimoinnovation.org/our-philosophy-1>

- Lower student to teacher ratios helps us to provide more individualized support, built on positive relationships between the educators and children
- Ensure guidance and support of children that encourages positive self-esteem, creativity, independence, and good problem-solving skills
- Positive, respectful, and clear communications between all people
- An openness to change and collaboration
- Commitment to providing students access to nature and to help them understand the natural world and our responsibility to sustainability.

### JOB SUMMARY

The Forest School Program Manager will often work independently and in collaboration with the Pre-K Program Manager, IT Program Manager, and ECE teachers to provide a high-quality, caring, safe, and supportive Forest School Program at Nanaimo Innovation Academy. This must take into account and address individualized child social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs, meet all regulatory standards required by federal, provincial and municipal governments, and operates within the licensing regulations as overseen by the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA).

This position reports to the Nanaimo Innovation Academy Executive Director. The Forest School Program Manager will also attend 'Monday Morning' team meetings followed by a smaller meeting with the other Program Managers and/or HR Support.

The Forest School Program Manager requires personal and programmatic reflection, collaboration with teachers, volunteers, and parents, open dialogue about children's progress, and interfacing with Nanaimo Innovation Academy's community partners. The Forest School Program Manager may also be

required to write content, provide data, or other supplemental information to assist in the grant-writing process. Specific targets and goals for grant tracking and evaluation may also be required.

The Forest Program Manager will work largely with the ECEs in the Forest Program, 929 Pre-K Program, Forest Explorers Program and, on occasion, may sometimes work in other areas of the daycare.

#### DESIRED COMPETENCIES & BEHAVIOURS

This position requires a blend of qualifications that span having sound knowledge about early childhood education as well as nature-based pedagogy. Candidates should possess a commitment to lifelong learning and helping young children develop socially, emotionally, physically, and mentally through inquiry and play.

The ideal candidate:

- Believes in and practices the philosophy, values, and goals of Nanaimo Innovation Academy
- Is committed to fully understanding the daycare's policies and is responsible of ensuring they're being followed effectively.
- Has a good understanding of the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) licensing regulations.
- Has strong leadership abilities, excellent interpersonal, organizational, and time-management skills.
- Has the ability to intervene respectfully with staff if policies or protocols are not being followed.
- Be able to have complicated conversations and conversations that are sensitive or difficult.
- Listen to and speak compassionately with both children and adults
- Is a creative problem solver. Asks others for input when assessing a problem.
- Does not take things personally, has self-reflective abilities on performance critique.
- Is a lifelong learner, who is open to all/any professional development.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills. Can write delicate and sensitive emails with regards to children and families.
- Handles emergencies skillfully and calmly. Is able to take charge to ensure the safety of all staff and children.
- Is passionate about educating children in an environment inspired by nature and natural toys.
- Is self-motivated and self-directed with the flexibility to work independently and collaboratively as part of a team
- Takes initiative and responsibility for their assignments and duties
- Participates in the developing of new ideas and methods for curriculum or program enhancement and has the ability to adjust and adapt to changes
- Has the ability to build trust and positive relationships with staff and families
- Acts as a role model of appropriate behaviour for children, families, teachers, volunteers, and others.
- Acts as a role model of professional behaviour and desired ECE skills and best practises for ECE teachers.
- Helps to assess and mentor ECE teachers, trains new staff, and oversees practicum students.
- Feels comfortable and confident about meeting the needs of children outdoors in all seasons and climates
- Has a strong awareness of risk management and risk assessments, in order to keep all children and adults safe.
- Has the ability to be positive, resilient, self-reflective, and maintains a sense of humour when personal resources are challenged

- Is creative and innovative when it comes to providing quality programming within a limited budget
- Maintains timely and accurate files
- Has the physical, emotional, and mental stamina to withstand full days of activities five days a week.
- The physical ability to perform all assigned tasks including walking, bending, crouching, standing for extended periods of time, and lifting items is important.

#### Most Desirable Personal Qualities:

- Love of children
- Love of nature and knowledge of the local flora and fauna
- Strong work ethic and reliability
- A professional demeanour and an interest in professional growth
- An honest, kind, and positive team attitude. The interpersonal skills necessary to work successfully within teams
- Committed to being a life-long learner whose passion for teaching engages and inspires children
- A positive, outgoing, and friendly attitude towards children, parents, and other staff
- The ability to think creatively and innovatively, with reflective practice, in order to continue to improve the operations and programs
- An understanding of the issues that affect children and their families
- Self-motivated and proactive when dealing with conflicts
- Excellent communication skills in both oral and written
- Flexibility, be open minded, and willing to work with new initiatives
- Ability to laugh, remain calm, and persevere when faced with challenges
- Patience, kindness, and empathy towards others

#### Required Qualifications:

- Must be over 19 years of age
- Hold Canadian residency and/or be legally entitled to work in Canada
- Have a current ECE Certificate and has a license in good standing that is valid in British Columbia (with Diverse Abilities preferred and IT is an asset).
- Previous experience working with children aged 30 months- 5 years old in a child care setting. Experience also working with children under 30 months is valuable.
- Experience, interest and/or understanding of Montessori, Waldorf, Reggio, Free-Play, Forest School Theory, and Whole Child philosophies
- A valid First Aid/CPR Certificate (or the ability to get it within 3 months of employment)
- Up-to-date record of immunizations
- Be in adequate physical and psychological capability to work with children and carry out assigned duties
- Have a clear Criminal Record Check, including a vulnerable sector search, dated within six months of your commencement date with the Centre
- 2 Written References from previous employers
- Up to date resume
- Well written cover letter
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Proficient in programs including Word, Excel, Gmail, and PowerPoint
- Proficient use of social media platforms including Instagram, Twitter, and FaceBook
- Must be willing to get a Class 4 driver's license within 3 months of employment

Nice Additions to Have (Not Required):

- Possess or in pursuit of a Bachelors' degree in related field is an asset
- Food Safe Certificate

## DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Overseeing the daily operation of the daycare Forest School Program with professionalism and creativity. This will involve working collaboratively with other managers and the ECEs in the program. The responsibilities of the Forest School Program Manager at Nanaimo Innovation Academy are to ensure the program:

- Honours young children as independent, capable thinkers through child-directed, experiential, place-based approaches to learning
- Engages in a rhythm of reflection, inquiry, observation, trial-and-error, risk-taking, perseverance, discussion, problem-solving, expression, and teamwork through a balance of emergent curriculum, intentional activities, and unstructured nature play
- Offers opportunities for children to explore identity in the context of nature and the larger community, while cultivating kindness, empathy, compassion, and gratitude
- Upholds and models best practices and approaches to nature-based early childhood education

The Forest Program Manager works most closely with the ECE teachers and the children in the Forest class to facilitate programming guided by the children's interest and the natural progression of the seasons.

Here is a breakdown of the duties.

### 1. Hiring and Training

- Be a part of interview and hiring process of program staff
- Provide an initial tour and orientation to program
- Complete orientation checklist with staff
- Go over staff policies book and train on procedures
- Go over daycare policies and train on all protocols and procedures
- Be familiar with our OH&S and Bullying Policy and ensure a safe working environment.
- Ensuring staff understand how to record hours accurately
- Manage that staff hours are used effectively and productively
- Train and implement any new procedures or changes to procedures
- Initiates professional development opportunities for themselves and staff within a limited budget.
- Hold pre-probationary period (before 3 months) and annual performance reviews

### 2. Behaviours and Relationship Building

- Understand and model all aspects of relationships that we foster, as highlighted in our philosophy.
- Support teachers to set reasonable behaviour expectations consistent with center's philosophy and policies
- Provide teachers with training on positive guidelines such as redirecting, positive language, and positive reinforcement
- Immediately address behaviours with staff that do not align with our philosophy and guidelines.

- Follow behaviour guidance and policies established by the centre and consistent with accepted practice in the field
- Maintain a knowledge and understanding of the services offered by Nanaimo Innovation Academy for referral to parents

### 3. Collaborating on the curriculum

- Support ECE teachers to plan a daily activity schedule that incorporates child directed activity, care routines and transition times
- Set up the weekly schedule of activity planning and what teacher is responsible for what days. Ensure teachers are following the schedule and have activities prepared.
- Assist the ECE teacher with thoughtful curriculum design based on children's emergent interests (inside and outside of the classroom), on-going reflection about and assessment of children and the forest school program, and collaboration with other teachers and/or volunteers.
- Assist in planning developmentally appropriate activities and experiences in harmony with the centre's philosophy. Provide suggestions or idea for ECEs
- Assist in developing and implementing outdoor activities and programming that support and promote the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children.
- Assist in identifying outdoor programming that helps the children connect with nature.
- Ensure the programs provide a daily balance of active/quiet and individual/group activities
- Set the tone for playing and learning as an engaged, enthusiastic role model while maintaining a safe, positive atmosphere.
- Support ECE teachers to explore and try a variety of teaching techniques including modelling, observing, questioning, demonstrating, and reinforcing
- Plan and carry out experiences that foster an understanding of a variety of cultures and value systems in accordance to our Diversity Policy.

### 4. Documentation

- Observe how children use materials and interact with each other and adults
- Use observations to expand play and plan activities that recognize individual difference
- Document learning processes in many formats for children's portfolios (written documentation, photos, content for FB posts, Instagram)
- Support teachers in the documentation process and ensure that documents are produced each month. This may require your assistance (either with the document or being in the class to allow the teacher time to work on it).
- Ensure regular updates are uploaded to our Facebook group minimally once a week.

### 5. Program Logistics

- Provide experiences and play materials that actively promote diversity and acceptance in interactions and attitudes.
- Ensure ECE teachers provide opportunity each day for each child to have space to do something by self.
- Ensure ECE teachers provide opportunity for child directed play experience
- Ensure ECE teachers provide and carry out activities that encourage problem solving
- Ensure that a weekly rotation of toys and books occurs.
- Help teacher plan the toy rotation and display
- Ensure teachers store and return materials in an organized way
- Ensure book library is organized

- Fixing or removing broken toys and replacing toys when needed
- Reporting hazards and broken play structure to admin
- Recognizing birthdays of staff and children in programs
- Cover breaks in both programs plus support hours in both programs each day
- Participate in program evaluations and classroom audits.
- Participate in short and long-term planning and evaluation and staff program reviews

6. Keep accurate records

- Ensure the following classroom documents are completed and correctly filed
  - i. Attendance Sheets
  - ii. Daily summary
  - iii. Fire/earthquake drills are done
  - iv. Diaper log
  - v. Incident reports
  - vi. Medication log
  - vii. Care plan
  - viii. Emergency bags
  - ix. Monday meeting notes

7. Ensure the child's environment is healthy and safe

- Maintain a safe, loving environment with safety routines that protect yet empower children
- Maintain friendly yet professional interpersonal communication skills with children, families, fellow staff and volunteers.
- Train the ECE teachers, practicum students and/or volunteers as needed on daycare safety and protocols
- Perform site assessments and risk assessments prior to using a new site (walks to playgrounds, library, and so on).
- Ensure the Supervision Protocols are being managed in the classes.
- Maintain all safety aspects and follow safety protocols of the daycare yard. Monitor the environment for hazards and ensure yard checks are being done daily.
- Keep the equipment safe and clean. Report any dangers immediately.
- Keep accurate and up-to-date records of risks, sites, incidents and other such information.
- Manage materials and equipment; request/order new materials as needed.
- Ensure activities are safe or a risk assessment has been done prior.
- Organize space, equipment and materials so that they are safe.
- Maintain a neat, orderly and clean environment in all activity and program areas
- Follow the centre's procedures for administering medications and maintaining health records
- Know the procedures and protocols for reportable and non-reportable incidents.
- Update oneself daily on children's allergies and other special conditions
- Support daily eating routines that are safe for children
- Maintain our no screen time policy (this includes phone, laptops, or televisions without prior consent from the Executive Director).
- Attend to children's physical needs for toileting support (if needed)
- Report all incidents of child abuse to the supervisor and follow centre procedure and government regulations

- Ensure children are released only to authorized persons. Make sure that children's files are updated with this information and ECEs know where to find it.
8. Welcome new families
- Tour new families around the daycare and introduce them to people
  - Ensuring all new children have complete files before attending care
    - i. Policies signed
    - ii. Fee agreement signed
    - iii. Emergency card/ emergency photo
    - iv. Family photo/ birthday on wall
    - v. Birth certificate, immunization record and care card copies
9. Positive communication with parents
- Reply to parent emails and phone calls regarding program
  - Check the program email each morning to see if there are any communications from parents about attendance or anything else.
  - Connect with the Office Manager about messages from the parents each morning.
  - Communicate with parents about children if necessary (communication should go through program staff first).
  - In addition to the ECE teachers, also discuss the programs daily events and the child's daily progress with parents.
  - Accommodate the parent's instructions for daily routines, when possible, within group routines.
  - With the support of the Executive Director, facilitate a respectful conflict resolution process when dealing with difficult issues regarding staff and parent/guardians
  - With the support of the Executive Director, plan for parent meetings for Care Plans or discussions of high concern.
  - Set up Care Plan meetings with families, following our Care Plan protocols.
  - Encourage parents to participate in community activities and events
  - Initiate referrals or additional services for parents and children
  - Other duties that support families, children, and staff will also be assigned as needed.
10. Positive communication within the team
- Reply to staff emails and messages regarding program needs, attendance, sickness and other such matters.
  - Problem-solve staffing absences.
  - Communicate with staff about children in care, needs, CDC, communication with parents, and other items.
  - Work with CDC and program staff in developing strategies and plans.
  - Communicate with CDC representatives about strategies and upcoming visits to the program. Ensure all CDC documents are filled out in a timely manner.
  - Check in on programs communication book daily to see what is happening in the program.
  - Communicate between programs and make sure daily staff plan (breaks and coverage) is clear and feasible.
  - Facilitate Program staff meetings as needed
11. Practicum Students and Volunteers
- Corresponds with our partners at VIU and Sprott Shaw to accept practicum students.

- Oversee the practicum program at NIA for the IT classes.
- Assign an ECE to the practicum student but also help overseeing the student and filling out paperwork. Both the IT Manager and the assigned ECE will support the student's learning and will be responsible for the correspondence with the practicum supervisor.
- Actively welcomes and incorporates volunteers and practicum students into the program area.
- Provide training to the practicum student and volunteer, going over the training package and checklist with them before they start in the program.

#### 12. Contribute to the ongoing operations of the centre

- Help ensure the Centre meets all VIHA requirements on a daily basis
- Implement a problem-solving approach with practical solutions when faced with difficult situations
- Carry out the responsibilities assigned to you in a positive and productive manner
- Attend regular staff meetings and professional development days
- Maintain confidentiality of all information related to the Centre, children, their parents, and staff
- Contribute to annual plan for the centre
- Plan and carry out annual personal development
- Willingness to participate in work-related courses, seminars and training
- Model the expectations of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Be flexible to accommodate changing schedules

#### 13. Promote the centre within the community

- Actively participate in Nanaimo Innovation Academy events and activities whenever possible
- Maintain a positive working relationship with other staff, volunteers, parents, and others community members you encounter when representing the daycare.
- Participate in various community-building initiatives with staff and local partners.
- Implement community events and/or fundraisers for prospective families and stakeholders

#### 14. Perform other related duties as required

### HOW TO APPLY

This job description offers a comprehensive guideline for the position. If you feel this is a good fit for your skill set, we encourage you to apply! Send your resume and cover letter to [nanaimoinnovation@gmail.com](mailto:nanaimoinnovation@gmail.com)