

JOB DESCRIPTION FACILITATOR (Maternity Cover)

Free We Grow Ltd. is a not for profit company based at a nature reserve and field center in South London. It was created by a group of parents together with our Facilitator in 2017. Free We Grow offers an alternative education space for home-educated primary aged children up to 12 years old, and it functions on democratic and humanistic principles. The space is child-led and was created to offer children the possibility to freely explore their own ways of learning to learn, and to grow in a democratic environment connected to nature and the world around them.

At Free We Grow children's time for free-play, exploration, imagination, and the pursuit of their individual or group interests are respected. We foster a culture where adults and children learn from each other and they create a space for dialogue and open communication. Our approach is based on the values of integrity, authenticity and respect for one another as human beings and the world we're in.. As a community we strive to model these values.

The position of **Facilitator** is open to a professional who:

- believes in children's ability to self-direct their learning
- is motivated to support children in their individual learning processes through the facilitation of an engaging and inspiring learning environment
- Is enthusiastic about facilitating in a democratic/sociocratic setting for children.
- has experience working with children
- is comfortable and values being outdoors in the nature reserve in all weather.
- is excited by the vision of Free We Grow and wishes to help co-create its future

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Children

- Observing play and social interactions to support children's self-directed learning and interests
- Allowing for child-directed free play to happen by learning to take a step back
- Reflecting on and supporting children's social and emotional needs
- Supporting children in pursuing individual and group interests, organising relevant visits and hostings
- Facilitating and striving to continually improve the democratic and sociocratic mechanisms of the children's morning meeting
- Supporting children in their abilities to resolve conflicts
- Maintaining close contact with families to best support the children in the space
- Supporting new children and families during the settling-in process
- Be the safeguarding deputy and work together with the safeguarding lead
- Have an awareness of a broad set of neuro diversities and support children in the space to meet their needs while respecting those of others

Site

- Helping to create and maintain a comfortable, safe, clean and stimulating environment.
- Ensuring that the site and resources are organised and maintained.
- Work with local residents and partners to build connections and embed the project in the local community.
- Be a custodian of Dacres Wood, ensuring that the project has an overall positive impact on the environment and maintaining good relationships with neighbours.
- Ensure that the site meets the standards set in Free We Grow's Covid Policy, in line with government guidance.

Facilitator

- Work closely with the co-facilitator to plan and deliver the day to day routine and activities in the space.
- Keep open communication with the board of directors, including attending occasional team meetings.
- Agree with co facilitator specific time for reflection and debriefing
- Participate in the recruitment of new children (attending parents info meeting, receiving and reading application forms, liaise with potential families and organize visiting days for interested children)

.ESSENTIAL QUALITIES/SKILLS

General attitude

You will be excited about the prospect of co-creating a new type of educational space based on Free We Grow's vision and principles. You will be calm and friendly. You will model responsible and respectful behaviour consistently. You will ask questions when you don't know and bring in ideas when you see possibilities for improvement. You will work well as a part of a team and independently. You will strive for personal growth. You will be open, creative and resourceful, act with integrity and be reflective in your interactions. You will be open to dialogue, to learning, to growth and to sharing.

Skills

You will have strong communication skills. You will be able to express your thoughts in oral and written form in a respectful way and tailored to different groups including children, parents, neighbours and the company directors. You possess good conflict resolution skills and will be able to model them. You will bring strong time-management skills, and solid organisational abilities along. You will bring some practical skills along and are excited to share these with children. You will have the ability to research and learn where you do not have the pre-existing knowledge. Where appropriate you will plan activities and support enquiry into a wide range of subjects in accordance with children's emergent interests. You will be familiar with the idea of scaffolding in education.

With children

You will be able to build a trusting relationship with children. You will be able to spend time observing and getting to know the children, and vice versa. You will be able to support children to express their needs by listening to them actively and empathetically, and you will show interest in understanding their perspective. You will be a good listener. You will speak with children in a mutually respectful way, recognising their personhood and their agency. You will have the ability to lead activities, empower and inspire children and be able to support the development of an emergent curriculum according to children's needs, interests and aims. You will be able to learn from children. You will be able to set respectful and gentle boundaries when needed. You will support children to do things for themselves.

Working as a team

You will be working as part of a small and intimate team, where joint reflections, collaboration and creativity are practiced. You will strive to know your own qualities, acknowledge those of others, express what you need yourself, complement each other, learn, grow together and have fun!

A part of the facilitator team, you will hold the environment for the children, serving a point of reference, guidance and protection.

The formal requirements

Up to date Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Levels 1 and 2 child protection training (FWG can support in obtaining these qualifications).

Paediatric First Aid course.

DESIRABLE QUALITIES/SKILLS

- Educational background – Ideally candidates should have experience working with children between Early Age and 12 years old. We welcome applicants with a PGCE or some other formal training and teaching experience; we also welcome candidates with diverse educational backgrounds, a proven interest in childhood education and a willingness to learn.
- Experience in self-directed learning in a democratic or sociocratic setting.
- Interest and understanding of children's developmental psychology.
- Crafts and skills that can be shared with the children - music skills particularly sought.
- Forest school and/or bushcraft skills would be an advantage.
- Able to share administrative tasks for the day to day running of the space.

CONTRACTUAL SIDE (maternity cover)

The maternity cover contract is offered from the 5th of January to mid July 2022 (coinciding with end of academic year 2021/2022), with the possibility of renewal to a permanent contract from september 2022.

Per academic year:

The job is organised as a part-time job and consists of 99 days of facilitating time plus around 10 additional days for preparation time, meetings and administrative tasks. The timing for these additional days is agreed upon amongst the facilitator team and can take place during non FWG days, according to availability. Furthermore, 5 days are reserved for training and development. Training requests can come out of direct requirements for example safeguarding training or from your own personal development interests. In total approximately 114 days will be working days.

Free We Grow follows a term pattern with 3 terms (6 half terms) with 12, 11 and 10 weeks roughly aligned to school holidays. The working days are Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Each working day has 8 hours from which 5.5 hours are facilitating time. The additional 2.5 hours are planned for preparation, setup and team debriefing.

Facilitators are expected to arrive between 8:30 and 9am to set up. Children arrive at 9:30am and leave at 3pm. Facilitators can co-organise departure times according to needs which include debriefing, tidying up and meeting parents where required. There is a weekly facilitator team meeting which lasts up to approximately 5pm. Facilitators also participate in a termly professional supervision session with a psychotherapist to support the work you would do at Free We Grow.

In the case of a renewed lockdown due to CoronaVirus, Free We Grow operates an online program which follows our regular hours with a two hour lunch break.

In common with other educational roles the annual leave has to be arranged outside the 99 term days. Because of the small size of the project exceptions can only be made under special circumstances. However, we will always try to cater to timely requests.

Your annual salary will start at £16k.

A contribution to the pension is paid in accordance with the requirements for the workplace pension scheme. The successful applicant must have the right to work in the UK prior to employment.

Start date: January 5th, 2022

Application: Send us your CV with a cover letter stating why you are interested in this position.

Questions: write us an email with the subject: 'Query about facilitator vacancy'.

Email: hi@freewegrow.co.uk

Application deadline: Midnight (UK) on November 19 , 2021