

TITLE: Founding Nature Preschool Administrator and Lead Educator

REPORTS TO: Executive Director

POSTED: 9/10/2026

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

Please submit a cover letter, resume, and three references to director@woldumar.org or use the general job application at woldumar.org. Pre-application inquiries are encouraged. Position open until filled.



OVERVIEW:

How often do you get 180+ acres of woods, prairies, and riverfront as your classroom, creative freedom over a play-based curriculum, and the mandate to launch a brand-new nature preschool? Woldumar Nature Association is seeking its inaugural Founding Director to turn a vision into reality – designing the space, securing state licensing, enrolling our very first 20-child cohort, and leading them into the woods.

Supported and supervised by the Executive Director, the Founding Nature Preschool Administrator and Lead Educator is a dual-role leadership position designed for an ambitious, creative educator who is energized by the opportunity to build a nature preschool program from the ground up. As the leader of a new initiative, this individual will carry the responsibility, and enjoy significant creative freedom, of designing a play-based, nature-immersive curriculum, finalizing state licensing approvals, establishing operational protocols, and shaping the school's foundational culture across Woldumar's 180+ acres. In addition to administrative, compliance, and program development, the Administrator serves as the lead classroom teacher and outdoor guide, fostering whole-child development and environmental literacy through hands-on discovery in all of Michigan's seasons. The ideal candidate thrives in an innovative and collaborative environment, serving as an ambassador among families, staff, and the broader Lansing community. The Administrator ensures complete compliance with all State of Michigan Child Care Center Licensing Rules.

STATUS/HOURS/WAGE:

\$44,000 to \$52,000 annually, commensurate with education and experience; plus benefits including paid time off (PTO), paid holidays, 3% IRA retirement match, and QSEHRA health care stipend.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Program Administration, Licensing & State Compliance (40%)

- **Licensing Compliance:** Obtain and maintain center licensing through MILEAP. Ensure strict adherence to all Child Care Center Licensing Rules, environmental health standards, and fire safety codes.
- **Emergency Preparedness & Drills:** Develop written emergency plans (fire, tornado, severe weather, power outage, active shooter/intruder) and maintain logs of all required drills.
- **Center & Student Records:** Oversee student intake, Child Information Cards, immunization reporting (DHHS), physical evaluations, daily attendance, and maintain the public Licensing Notebook.
- **Fiscal & Operations Management:** Manage the preschool budget in coordination with the Executive Director. Oversee enrollment targets (up to 20 children), family intake, fee policies, supply ordering, and grant reporting.

2. Teaching, Curriculum & Outdoor Exploration (35%)

- **Instructional Leadership:** Serve as lead teacher for preschool sessions, providing direct instruction and fostering student development across cognitive, social-emotional, physical, creative, and environmental literacy domains.
- **Curriculum Design:** Design, implement, and evaluate developmentally appropriate nature-based lesson plans guided by Woldumar's mission, NAEYC principles, Natural Start Alliance standards, and Michigan's Early Childhood Standards of Quality.
- **Outdoor Exploration:** Lead daily hikes, outdoor excursions, and play across Woldumar's woods, prairies, and wetlands, in all weather conditions.
- **Child Assessment & Progress:** Conduct regular child observations and assessments. Host parent-teacher conferences and progress evaluations twice per year.
- **Family Engagement:** Build supportive relationships with enrolled families through regular communication, including newsletters, program updates, and parent engagement opportunities.

3. Staff Supervision, Mentorship & Training (15%)

- **Team Leadership:** Provide direct supervision, training, scheduling, mentoring, and annual written performance evaluations for Preschool Teaching Assistant(s), substitutes, and volunteers.



- **Outdoor Benefit-Risk Training:** Train all program staff, assistants, and volunteers on the Outdoor Benefit-Risk Assessment and Risk Management Plan before they care for children.
- **Orientation & Professional Development:** Ensure all staff complete required health and safety orientation training and track completion of 16 annual professional development hours.

4. Site Stewardship & Risk Management (10%)

- **Outdoor Risk Management:** Develop, implement, and update site-specific Outdoor Benefit-Risk Assessments and Risk Management Plans addressing natural feature climbing, tool use, plant foraging, weather extremes, and wildlife encounters.
- **Daily Safety Sweeps:** Conduct daily hazard sweeps of indoor classroom spaces, managed outdoor playspaces, and trail routes prior to student arrival.
- **Facility & Grounds Coordination:** Communicate facility, trail, and groundskeeping maintenance needs to the Grounds & Facilities Steward and Executive Director.
- **Organizational Integration:** Collaborate with year-round Woldumar staff to integrate preschool activities into broader organizational initiatives, community events, and summer camp early childhood programming.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS

1. Education & Administrative Credentials

- **Age Requirement:** Must be at least 21 years of age (State Licensing Rule 400.8204(9)(a)).
- **Preferred Education:** Bachelor's or Master's degree in Early Childhood Education, Child Development, Environmental Education, or a related child-related field.
- **Required Minimum Education:** A valid Child Development Associate (CDA) credential, Associate degree or higher in a child-related field, or equivalent state-approved credential.
- **Administrative Coursework:** Must possess or obtain at least 2 semester hours or 3.0 CEUs in child care administration within 6 months of hire.
- **MiRegistry Training Tracks:** Completed or willingness to complete MiRegistry-approved training in Program Management (3 hrs), Observation/Assessment (3 hrs), Teaching & Learning (3 hrs), and Guidance/Challenging Behaviors/Trauma-Informed Practices (6 hrs).

2. Experience & Competencies

- **Experience:** Minimum 3 years of teaching experience in an early childhood classroom, with at least 1 year in a lead teacher, administrative, or supervisory role.
- **Entrepreneurial/'Builder' Mindset:** Demonstrated comfort with ambiguity, a track record of self-directed initiative, and enthusiasm for designing programs, policies, and spaces from a blank slate.
- **Pedagogical Expertise:** Demonstrated expertise in play-based, emergent, and nature-based early childhood pedagogy.
- **Licensing Knowledge:** Thorough knowledge of Michigan Child Care Center Licensing Rules and state compliance procedures.
- **Natural History Passion:** Aptitude and enthusiasm for natural history, Michigan ecology, wildlife, and outdoor skills.
- **Leadership & Communication:** Strong leadership, organizational, written, and verbal communication skills.
- **Technical Proficiency:** Proficiency in Microsoft Office Suite, Google Workspace, and digital recordkeeping platforms.
- **Personal Attributes:** Proactive problem-solver with high emotional intelligence, flexibility, and a collaborative team spirit.

3. Health, Safety & Licensing Certifications

- **Background Check:** Must pass a comprehensive background check (including electronic fingerprinting and Child Care Background Check system eligibility determination) prior to unsupervised contact with children.
- **CPR & First Aid:** Current certification in Pediatric First Aid, Infant/Child/Adult CPR, and AED, or ability to obtain before the first cohort begins. Wilderness First Aid certification preferred. Woldumar can support this training if needed.
- **Bloodborne Pathogens:** Mandatory Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP) certification prior to start date.
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- **Mandated Reporter Statement:** Signed Mandated Reporter statement on file at time of hire acknowledging statutory reporting obligations.

WORKING CONDITIONS & PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

Work is performed both indoors in a classroom setting and outdoors across Woldumar's 180+ acres. The position requires the physical ability and enthusiasm to work outdoors and lead active hikes on rough, uneven terrain in all seasons and variable Michigan weather conditions (including rain, snow, ice, wind, heat, and mud).

Candidates must be capable of supervising young children safely in natural habitats, bending, squatting, stooping, kneeling, trailing, reaching, and lifting a minimum of 50 pounds.

WHO WE ARE:

The Woldumar Nature Association is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with a mission "to educate people about the natural environment." Since 1963, Woldumar has been a resource for area schools, families, and the entire Greater Lansing Community, offering seasonal day camps, field study, and educational community events. We serve over 6000 students each year.

Woldumar protects and restores over 180 acres of ecologically significant green space in southwest Lansing. A working farm before it was generously donated by Gladys Olds Anderson, the property now boasts prairie, pine forest, wetlands, and hardwood forest, bounded by over 1.5 miles of Grand River shoreline. Five miles of hiking trails are open daily to the public.

A community of association members, volunteers, and individual and corporate program sponsors help keep this tremendous local resource available. The nature center is a popular venue for weddings, meetings and conferences, birthday parties, and other social events which help raise funds to support our nonprofit mission.

Woldumar is governed by a board of directors elected by the membership and operated by a small year-round staff currently consisting of an Executive Director, Program Director, Hospitality Manager and Groundskeeper. During an exciting time of growth for the organization, we strive to continue engaging more people in our existing programs while diversifying our offerings to reach new communities.

Our Values:

- We deeply care for Woldumar and our community.
- We act with compassion, respect, and integrity.
- We are passionate about the conservation of nature and committed to the fulfillment of our mission.
- We effectively collaborate with each other and our community.

Our Guiding Principles:

- Woldumar is nature for all.
- Woldumar is a cause and a community that inspires, empowers, and promotes well-being.
- Woldumar is dedicated to the stewardship and preservation of our resources.

Our Goals:

- **EDUCATION:** To grow exceptional educational programs.
- **STEWARDSHIP:** To enhance the long-term sustainability of Woldumar's land and facilities.
- **COMMUNITY:** To expand opportunities for people to feel connected to Woldumar and nature.