

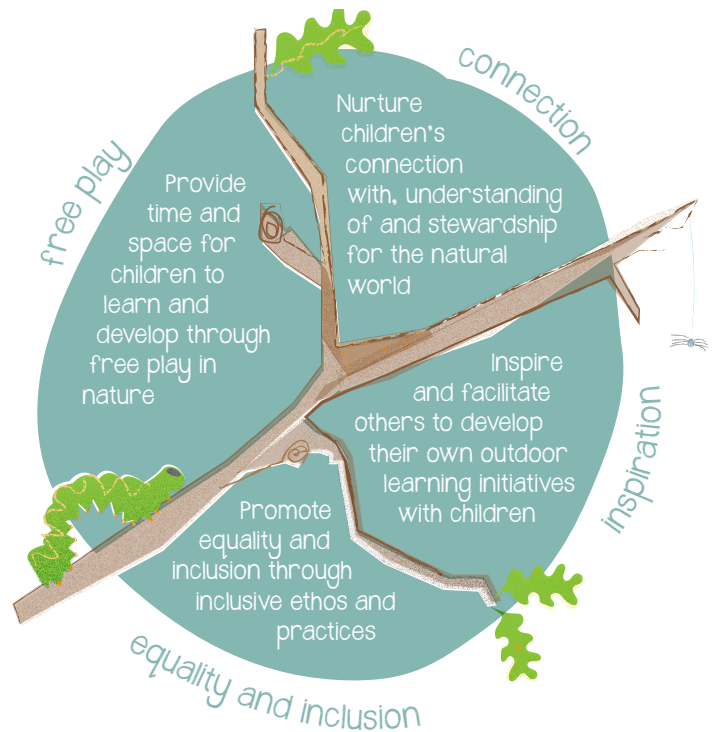
Wild Sparks Playscheme Worker

Wild Sparks Outdoor Play provides children in Perthshire with outdoor, playful, learning experiences in nature. We run holiday activity programmes, deliver training for educators and play practitioners and in January 2017 we opened an outdoor nursery in Coupar Angus.



Wild Sparks Playscheme sessions take place in woodland sites in Alyth and Dunkeld during school holidays, primarily from Easter – Autumn. Activities are run by a Wild Sparks leader and team of 1-3 sessional, support staff.

Our team of sessional staff is made up of a wide range of professionals including forest schools leaders, playworkers, community practitioners, support workers and outdoor educators. Each team member brings their own skills and interests and applies them to the principles of free play and active learning that underpin Wild Sparks playschemes. Training and guidance is provided to support this process.



Our governing Principles ➤

Role Description

Purpose of role: to work alongside the Wild Sparks team to facilitate free play and creative outdoor learning with children aged 5-12 as part of our woodland holiday playscheme programmes.

Hours: School Holidays only, weekdays, 8.30 am – 5.30pm (Alyth) 8.30 – 4.30pm (Dunkeld)

Pay Rate: £9.50 increasing to £10.50 per hour after 8 shifts

Location: Alyth: Quarry Woods, Bamff, Alyth, PH11 8LF
Dunkeld: Atholl Woods, Dunkeld, PH8 0BA

Reports to: Alice Warren / Nicky Bolland (playscheme leaders)

Key Responsibilities

Wild Sparks is child-led and has a strong emphasis on free play. Your role is to facilitate opportunities for children to explore the forest and its materials, build skills and connect with each other, providing them with skills and knowledge where appropriate in a safe but engaging environment.

Key responsibilities include:

- Assisting with set-up and safe management of the playscheme site (including organising and ensuring access to resources)
- Welcoming children on arrival and facilitating group games, supporting children to settle in
- Encouraging free play and use of different spaces and resources on the site
- Planning and delivering activities with children, including crafts, tool use, shelter building, group games, campfire cooking etc
- Communicating with colleagues throughout the day, referring any concerns to the leader and completing relevant incident/accident forms as required.
- Ensuring the ongoing health, safety and comfort of the children, as well as other staff, throughout the day
- Carrying out dynamic risk assessments in relation to activities and locations, i.e. tree climbing, swing etc.
- Modelling best practice in environmental stewardship and sustainable behaviours
- Assisting with pack up, leaving the site appropriately tidy and safe
- Participating in pre-session check-in and a debrief at the end of each day
- Undertaking relevant training in accordance with the demands of the job and taking an active role in determining own training needs and professional development responsibilities

1:1 Support work

At Wild Sparks we have a small number of children with additional support needs who attend on a 1:1 support basis. You will have the option of working in this capacity once you have met and observed the children. This role involves supporting individuals with complex needs on a 1:1 basis, ensuring they are safe, happy and engaged throughout the session. Each child has a support plan which you are expected to familiarise yourself with and use to guide your practice. No member of staff will be asked to do 1:1 support work if they are not comfortable in the role.

Person Specification

We are seeking individuals with a range of skills and experiences as follows:

Essential	Desirable
Previous experience of working with children in a play / learning context	Any of the following would be an asset to the team:
An understanding of and commitment to learning through play	Experience of Forest Schools or other outdoor learning initiatives
An appreciation of the natural world	Formal childcare, teaching or playwork qualifications and experience
The stamina to work long hours, outdoors in all weathers	Bushcraft and survival skills
A willingness to learn and to embrace Wild Sparks principles	Knowledge of eco-systems and the natural world
Ability to work in a team environment; showing initiative, asking for help, following guidelines, supporting others, sharing your views and ideas.	Creative expertise; visual arts, crafts music, drama, dance etc
An understanding of Child Protection and confidentiality or willingness to undertake training.	Experience of working with children with additional support needs, such as autism, ADHD, attachment disorder and downs syndrome.

Application process

1. Written expression of interest

We ask all interested individuals to send a written expression of interest to alice@wildsparks.co.uk that includes:

- Your relevant experience
- Why this post appeals
- What you understand about the benefits of child-led play
- Your availability, including access to transport or how you plan to get to us*

*There is no public transport to our Alyth site but we can pick up from Alyth town or Blairgowrie. Our Dunkeld site is a 5 min walk from Dunkeld village which is served by buses. Dunkeld and Birnam train station is 1.5 miles on foot. A pick up from Dunkeld could be arranged.

2. Visit

Instead of a formal interview process we ask prospective staff arrange a time to come and visit the site when the playscheme is happening. During this visit you will get the chance to ask questions and be encouraged to carefully observe how children and staff interact. The leader will sit down with you during this visit (or arrange a time shortly after if that's not possible) to discuss specific around the role, including your strengths and any general queries you have.

3. Induction and training

If both parties feel happy to proceed you will be invited to attend a paid induction day. During this day you will:

- Follow a series of guided induction activities
- Be asked to read our full set of policies and procedures
- Conduct observations of children and staff
- Join in with group activities, including lunch and fire time
- Have a brief meeting with the playscheme leader on duty

The purpose of this session is to familiarise you with Wild Sparks ethos in practice, get to know the site, observe session rhythms and routines and give you time to reflect on and ask questions about the playscheme worker role.

Once you have completed steps 1 – 3 satisfactorily we will ensure you are invited to sign up for shifts as the programme dates are announced.