

The Spark Arts for Children

Early Years Coordinator

Information pack – easier read

Welcome

Hello and thanks for your interest in the Early Years Coordinator role, supporting the development of our growing early years work across Leicester.

Celebrating our 21st year, it is an exciting time for The Spark in terms of the development of our early years work as we re-ignite our Small Wonders project, go into the second year of our successful Music Champions project, and join a new learning community of organisations from across England developing innovative work for early years through our partnership with Youth Music.

This new role will help us drive this work forward, together with our other early years and learning projects. It is advertised on a fixed term basis but we hope to use this the new Small Wonders project, and our learning about child voice and child centred practice, as a springboard for future projects as part of our developing learning programme. It is offered as a full time role but we will also consider this post as a job share.

Working at The Spark is something special. It's a place where we value care and champion challenge every day and where we are keen to move new work forward and try things differently.

I'd be more than happy to talk to you a bit more about our culture and the role with an informal chat in advance of you making your application. Just let us know.

Thanks for your time and interest in the position!

Hazel Townsend

Creative Producer: Learning

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We value people's experiences and believe that working with people from different backgrounds and with different experiences strengthens and develops the work that we do. We also value the lived experience of the people that work for us and recognise the contribution this makes to the organisation's understanding of the climate we operate in and the communities we engage in our work.

We welcome and encourage applications from people who are underrepresented in the creative and cultural industries. We particularly encourage people to apply from Asian, Black or ethnically diverse backgrounds, who are LGBTQIA+, who define as D/deaf, disabled or neurodivergent and/or from low socio-economic backgrounds.

About us

The Spark Arts for Children supports children's creative potential with a year-round cultural programme of theatre, music, dance and combined arts. Our audiences are at the heart of what we do, and our work with artists, schools, families and festival audiences is collaborative, creative and playful.

Our vision

Extraordinary experiences for children, sparking creativity and change – is at the heart of our values and mission. We pride ourselves on delivering a collaborative and innovative children's arts festival, organising world-class cultural work in local communities all year round, and working with others to help them grow and present the most exciting ideas, productions and cultural programmes in Leicester.

Our mission

Working to inspire children to thrive, we explore the difference culture makes through involvement in the arts, creative interactions and cultural connections, and enabling children's voices to be heard, their creativity to be supported and their cultural values to be understood.

Values

Our values underpin everything we do:

- A fair and safe environment where everyone is valued
- The space for big ideas to grow
- We are curious and love learning
- Empowering children and young people to be amazing.

Our current Early Years work

The Spark's work around early years creativity is well-established and is expanding, with an exciting symposium taking place in 2025. Our two main current early years projects are Small Wonders and Music Champions. The role will mainly be supporting the coordination of the re-ignited Small Wonders project over the next year.

Small Wonders

The Small Wonders project is child-led, parent powered, and artist facilitated.

We will be working closely with children and families through creative play and storytelling in children's centres and libraries across Leicester, exploring the potential of child voice in early years more deeply; to really see what happens when young children are

supported to take the lead, and importantly, to see what changes as a result. In 2024–25 we will be working in nine settings across the city (five libraries and four Children's Centres).

Working closely in partnership with Leicester City Council Early Help and Libraries teams, the project will also focus on empowering parents and carers, developing and exploring a parent champion model; bringing creativity in the home and community closer together.

This project is funded by Arts Council England, Leicester City Council Early Help and Libraries, and Youth Music. As part of our Youth Music Energiser funding supporting this project we will also be part of a three-year learning community focussed on early years creativity, working with ten other arts organisations from across England.

Music Champions

At The Spark we believe that everyone is musical and at a key time in their development, we want children to have access to high quality, musical, playful encounters. Working in partnership with Leicestershire Music Hub and Leicester City Council Early Help team, this project supports early years practitioners and musicians to work in schools, children's centres and nurseries to explore and play with sound and music.

This two-year project champions early years music for children aged 0–5 by developing the workforce in depth (20 early years practitioners and professional musicians) and breadth (training, peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange). The project will culminate in an early years symposium in 2025.

Job Description

Who we're looking for

Job title

Early Years Coordinator

Reporting to

Creative Producer: Learning

The role

To drive the coordination and enable the practical delivery of The Spark's early years programmes, organising the programmes efficiently and building strong stakeholder relationships.

Key responsibilities

Project coordination

- Coordination and delivery of The Spark Early Years programme, including the following projects - Small Wonders and Music Champions
- Plan and coordinate the delivery of projects within the timelines and budget agreed, including artist, partner and venue liaison and administration
- Support the Small Wonders lead artist in developing, recruiting to, and coordinating the parent champion element of our early years projects
- Work closely with partners (colleagues at children's centres and libraries) to plan and agree activity schedules and dates for early years sessions in children's centres, libraries and community venues
- Support the contracting of artists and sourcing of materials/resources for activities

- Support the planning and delivery of events (e.g. family fun days), including budgeting, scheduling, sourcing equipment and materials, delivery, and evaluation. This includes supporting the development and coordination of an early years symposium in 2025
- Coordinate and support the monitoring and evaluation of the project and support the Creative Producer in reporting.

Administration and communications

- Oversee the lead and support artists' schedules
- Budget administration and monitoring
- Collate project materials for publication on various platforms (e.g. website or marketing materials)
- Work with the wider Spark team to promote events via print and online media
- Coordinate and administrate the systems for data collection, registration and permissions, with participants and partners, ensuring data collected is in line with funding requirements and GDPR regulations
- Ensure the project work operates within the context of delivering best practice around safeguarding, and that staff and volunteers work to the Spark Safeguarding Policy
- Represent The Spark at project partner or funders meetings as required.

General

- Work with the Creative Producer and partners to gather data and promote and celebrate learning from our projects
- Work with the Creative Producer to plan and risk assess activities (including ensuring all work adheres to best practice in terms of safeguarding)

- Attend relevant events, projects and meetings within and on behalf of The Spark Arts for Children
- Carry out the duties of the post with due regard to the organisation's Equality and Diversity Policy and in line with core values, promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and access
- Ensure the project work operates within the context of delivering best practice in environmental responsibility in line with the organisation's Environmental Policy
- Ensure your own health and safety and that of members of the public, staff, and contractors by complying with organisational health and safety
- Undertake training as required to ensure appropriate levels of skills and knowledge
- Other duties and responsibilities as may be reasonably required, commensurate with the overall remit of the post.

Person specification

The Spark is seeking to work with an individual that has the following knowledge and skills.

Essential

- At least two-years experience of working in with young children and families
- Experience of working with early years professionals in schools, children's centres, libraries or nursery settings
- Experience and understanding of good practice in relation to child-led learning
- Project and event coordination experience
- Budgeting skills and experience of monitoring budgets
- Experience of monitoring and evaluation, data collection, analysis and project reporting

- Strong communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to maintain good contacts and relationships
- Project communication and advocacy skills, e.g. collating data and testimony and development case studies
- Good organisational skills with a flexible approach to working patterns
- Ability to prioritise workload whilst dealing with conflicting demands
- Understanding and working knowledge of Safeguarding good practice.

Desirable

- An understanding of the role creativity plays within early childhood development
- Experience of working alongside artists in educational or community settings
- Experience of developing training for early years practitioners and/or artists.

Terms of appointment

Contract type

Fixed term to 30th September 2025.

Salary

£28,121 FTE plus contributory stakeholder pension, pro rata for part-time.

Hours

Full-time 37.5 hours per week (excluding an unpaid lunch hour) plus occasional evening and weekends.

Location

The role is based at the LCB Depot in Leicester and will require travel to a variety of children's centres, libraries and community settings across the city.

Hybrid working

Is it expected that this role will be required in the office or at activity locations in Leicester for typically 30 hours and 7.5 hours available for home working, each week.

Start date

Immediate

Probation

One month

Pension

The Spark Arts for Children operates a contributory pension scheme provided by NEST.

This post is subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.

Questions

If you have any questions about this role please contact Hazel Townsend for an informal chat (email hazel@thesparkarts.co.uk or call 07395 058149).

We will also be holding an online information session on: Tuesday 20th August 2024 6.00–6.45pm.

You can also come along and meet some of the team, at a Leicester City Council summer family event we will be taking part in, on Wednesday 21st August 2024 11–3pm at Victoria Park, Leicester.

How to apply

You can apply in a variety of formats and we encourage you to use the format you are most comfortable with. You'll apply for the role using our online portal. When you arrive in the application portal you will be able to complete your personal details in the form, then choose to either:

- Answer the questions by typing or copying and pasting your answers from a word processor of your choice
- Upload a video file that answers the questions.
- Upload a voice recording that answers the questions.

If you want to submit a video or voice application you can use the additional guidance sheet which will guide you through the process.

When your application is ready, use the link on our website access the application portal.

The closing date for applications is 12.00 (midday) Monday 2nd September 2024.

Interviews will take place on Tuesday 17th September 2024 in person in Leicester.

We look forward to hearing from you.

The Spark Arts for Children

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The Spark Arts for Children is a company limited by guarantee (company number 5254229) and is registered as a charity (registration number 1106952).