

The Spark Arts for Children

Small Wonders Artist

Information pack – easier read

Funded By Arts Council England, Leicester City Council

Welcome

Hello and thanks for your interest in our Small Wonders artist brief.

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.

We will work with young children (0–4 year olds) and their families exploring creative play and story-telling at 4 libraries and 3 children's centres in Leicester. The project aims to empower children through the creative process, enabling their voices in real and imagined worlds.

Working closely in partnership with Leicester City Council Early Help and Libraries, the project will also focus on empowering parents and carers. We will work closely with families to co-create the project, recruiting a number of 'parent champions' who will play a key role in the development of the project.

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

Thanks for your time and interest in the opportunity!

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.

Small Wonders project

This project builds on learning from our previous early years work developed in partnership with Leicester Library service (2019–22); developing a wide range of creative play experiences, all with story-telling at the heart. We want to build on our strong partnerships with libraries and extend this project to children's centres - supporting family community engagement and belonging through 4 local partnerships: Pork Pie library and Eyres Monsell Children's Centre, St Barnabas Library and Highfields Children's Centre, Highfields Library and Highfields Children's Centre, and Beaumont Leys Library and Beaumont Leys Children's Centre.

Small Wonders will promote a child's right to creativity and play. We will work closely with staff (from both the libraries and children's centres) and parents to develop creative play sessions inspired by books and storytelling over 3 terms (Autumn, Spring and Summer)

culminating in a community-led festival of connectivity and celebration in summer 2025.

The project will take an artist in residency model in each setting to develop relationships and reach new and existing users of the libraries and children's centres, connecting people and buildings through a sense of belonging and real and imagined stories.

We will also programme magical performances in libraries during the project, aligned with Spark Festival programming.

The brief

We are looking for up to 6 x artists to work with The Spark and partners in children centres and libraries in Leicester.

Role and responsibilities

- Each artist will be based in a community (children's centre and/or library), as an artist in residence working with staff from the setting/s and local children and families
- We are open to the art form and creative approach to the brief e.g. dance/movement, visual storytelling, drama/theatre, music etc. but we are keen to work with creative practitioners who use books, narratives, and storytelling in their work with children and families
- Each artist will co-design and co-deliver explorative child led sessions across 3 terms from October 2024 - July 2025 (approx 14 weeks delivery in total) with children and families in the settings
- They will engage children, families and early years/library staff in reflection and planning
- Working closely with parent champions they will plan and deliver an end of project celebration event for their community. Parent champions will also be supported by a lead artist supporting the project

- They will engage in termly reflection sessions with other artists, key staff and parents from across the 4 Small Wonders community areas
- They will attend development and training days with other project artists (2 days across the year).

Criteria

The Spark is seeking to work with musicians who have the following knowledge and skills.

Essential

- Experience of working with young children (0–4 years) and their families
- Experience of child-led practice
- Experience of working with young children, enabling them to gain confidence to contribute and develop in language and communication activities
- Good understanding and working knowledge of Safeguarding good practice.

Desirable

Knowledge and understanding of the positive impact of arts and culture on early childhood development.

Fees, timescale and contract terms

Fee

There is a fee of £2,970 available for each artist. The fee is calculated at a rate of £230 per day/£130 per half day. The fee will cover:

- Delivery of 14 x half day sessions settings across the year
- 3 x days planning and reflection
- 2 x days training and development.

The fee is inclusive of all travel and personal expenses.

There is an opportunity to extend the number of delivery days across the project (to up to 28 sessions per artist) dependent on each artists' availability/capacity.

There is an additional project budget for materials/resources which is managed by the Programme Manager.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an important priority at The Spark and as a freelancer working on this programme we expect you to hold an Enhanced DBS check (within the last 2 years) and follow our Safeguarding Policy and procedures. Our Safeguarding Policy will be supplied separately.

Contract terms

This opportunity is offered as a freelance opportunity. The work will be undertaken in accordance with The Spark Arts for Children standard contract terms and conditions and any additional agreed conditions specifically required for the delivery of this work.

Timeline

12.00 pm (midday) Monday 16th September 2024

Application deadline.

Weeks commencing 30th September / 7th October 2024

Interviews.

October 2024

Planning meetings with settings.

October - December 2024

Autumn season sessions.

January 2025

Artist development day.

January - April 2025

Spring season sessions.

April 2025

Artist development day.

May - July 2025

Summer season sessions culminating in a community celebration event.

This opportunity 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 3rd September 2024 6.30–7.15pm.

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 16th September 2024.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to meet with us during the week of 30th September or during the week of 7th October 2024. Interviews will take place 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).