



The Spark Arts for Children

Music Champions 2024/25 Musician

Information pack

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Leicester/shire Early Years Music Champions Project 2024/25: Musician Brief and Information Pack

Welcome

Hello and thanks for your interest in our Music Champions musician 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 move into the second year of our successful Music Champions project.

Working in partnership with Leicestershire Music Hub and Leicester City Council Early Help team, this project supports musicians to work in children's centres and nurseries to explore and play with sound and music, giving space to develop their practice and understanding of the magic of early childhood music making.

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

- 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.

Early Years Music Champions project

Background

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 together in schools, children's centres and nurseries to explore and play with sound and music.

Project aims

Championing early years music for children aged 0–5 by developing the workforce in depth (through a partnership approach to delivery between early years practitioner and professional musicians) and breadth (training, peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange).

What does Music Champions look (and sound) like?

Imagine a wide range of musical backgrounds (maybe a hip-hop artist or a folk singer who likes to play the Hurdy Gurdy) and imagine instruments as rich and diverse as they could be, from the soothing sounds of the kalimba, to the curious boom of the didgeridoo, to beat boxing using your voice. A brilliant range of voices, flutes, drums, cajones, and everyday objects you might find in your home or garden, like sticks, stones, and wooden spoons - all waiting to come to life in the hands of the children!

The brief

We are looking for 3 x musicians to work with The Spark and partners in children centres and nurseries in Leicester.

Role and responsibilities

- Each musician will be paired with an early years practitioner and based in an Early Years setting (children centre or nursery), working with local families or children
- They will engage in a training programme hosted by Early Years Music Specialist Nicola Burke, this training is provided by The Spark and musicians time is covered within the fee to attend these sessions. Mentoring sessions will also be provided as part of the programme (4 x sessions in total) to support reflection and the development of the project
- They will co-design and co-deliver explorative child led sessions in partnership with an Early Years Practitioner over 16 weeks of music sessions with children and families in the setting
- They will engage children, families and other practitioners in reflection and planning
- With their Early Years practitioner partner they will plan and deliver a sharing event for their setting
- They will also share their learning and outcomes from the project at an end of year gathering for all partners and other key stakeholders.

Criteria

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

Essential

- Highly skilled musician
- Experience of working with children
- Desire to develop your practice and understand different ways of working
- Commitment to develop their learning of early childhood creative practice supported by training and mentoring
- Committed to working in Leicester/Leicestershire in EY settings
- Solid understanding and working knowledge of Safeguarding good practice.

Fees, timescale and contract terms

Fee

The total fee available for this project is £4,840. The fee is calculated at a rate of £240 per day/£140 per half day. The fee will cover:

- Delivery of 16 x half day music sessions in settings, plus 4 x half day planning, preparation, evaluation and reflection (£2,800)
- Attendance at 3 x CPD learning days and 4 x half-day mentoring sessions (£1,280)
- Delivery and attendance at 2 x half-day network/sharing events (£280)
- Attendance at one end of year gathering (£240)
- Attendance at Early Years Symposium (£240).

The fee is inclusive of all travel and personal expenses.

There is a project budget for materials / instruments 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.

This opportunity is subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.

Timeline and project delivery dates

Monday 16th September 2024 (midday)

Application deadline.

Either Thursday 26th September or Tuesday 1st October 2024

Interviews. Please indicate your availability for these dates in your application.

Thursday 7th November 2024, 4.00 – 5.30pm

Welcome briefing for all the musicians and settings involved in the project.

5th and 6th December 2024

2 x Training Days for all Music Champions (musicians and Early Years Practitioners).

November – December 2024

- Observation session in the setting to see the space and meet some of the families
- 6 x weeks delivery
- 2 x mentoring sessions per each Music Champion pair.

January – May 2025

- 16 x weeks delivery
- 4 x mentoring sessions per each Music Champion pair
- 2 x 0.5 day Training for Music Champions (musicians and Early Years Practitioners).

May 2025

- Sharing event at setting
- Project gathering sharing learning with other Music Champions and partners.

June 2025

Early Years Symposium.

Questions

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

We will also be holding an online information session on: Tuesday 3rd September 5.30 – 6.15pm.

You can also come along and meet some of the team and previous Music Champions at a Leicester City Council summer family event we will be taking part in on Wednesday 21st August 2024 11.00 am – 3.00 pm 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.

Deadline for applications is 12.00 pm (midday) on Monday 16th September 2024.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview with us on either Thursday 26th September or Tuesday 1st October 2024. Please indicate your availability in your application. The 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).