

Staff Qualifications in a Forest School Setting Assistant Teacher, Teacher, and Director

Assistant Teacher Qualifications in a Forest School Setting

All Assistant Teachers in a Forest School setting must have the following qualifications:

Education

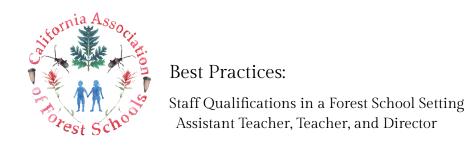
Assistant Teachers in a forest school setting must have **at least one** of the following educational requirements met:

- 6 units of concurrent enrollment or completed in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or equivalent field courses
- Have completed a minimum of level one Forest School teacher training
- Comparable recognized teacher training¹
- 1 or more years working with groups of children ages 2-6

Additional Requirements

- Basic pediatric CPR & First Aid training
- Basic safety and hazards knowledge
 - poisonous plants
 - o animals
 - site specific hazards
- Background check and fingerprint clearance
- Ability to lift 40lbs, navigate uneven terrain and sit comfortably on the ground

¹ "Recognized teacher training" is meant to include programs such as Waldorf and Montessori teacher training that may not provide their students with ECE units, but do provide a foundation in child development.



Teacher Qualifications in a Forest School Setting

In addition to all of the assistant teacher qualifications, all teachers in a Forest School setting must have the following qualifications:

Forest School teachers without director qualifications, must be under the supervision of a master forest school teacher or qualified forest school director.

Education

Teachers in a forest school setting must have **at least one** of the following educational requirements met:

- 12 units completed in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or equivalent field courses
- Completion of a minimum of level two Forest School teacher training
- Comparable recognized teacher training²

Additional Requirements

- Minimum 2 years experience teaching with groups of 2-6 year olds, including one year of teaching experience in a forest school setting
- The ability to track and document children's development
- The ability to assess development of children in care
- The ability to recognize the need for outside intervention for children in care
- The ability to implement emergency response plans in unexpected events
- Uphold safety guidelines, rules, and land regulations
- Knowledge of local hazards
- Previously acquired naturalist / nature connection / local natural history
- Ability to continually assess land for hazards
- Ability to continually assess impact of program on natural environment
- Conduct ongoing risk assessment
- Basic orienteering / wayfinding skills

² "Recognized teacher training" is meant to include programs such as Waldorf, and Montessori teacher training that may not provide their students with ECE units, but do provide a foundation in child development.



Staff Qualifications in a Forest School Setting Assistant Teacher, Teacher, and Director

Additional Requirements (continued)

- Basic use of hand tools (knife, saw, rope, sewing needles, etc)
- Basic fire tending and safety skills
- Basic tracking skills
- Basic understanding of bird language
- Interpersonal communication skills
 - Children
 - Co-teachers
 - Families
 - Greater community
- Leadership ability
 - Group management
 - Hold boundaries for children and adults
 - Responsiveness
 - Integrity
 - Supervision & mentorship of assistant teachers
- An understanding of the family as the child's primary teacher
- Developing cultural competency
- Storytelling abilities
- Repertoire of songs & willingness to sing
- Preparedness
 - Internal
 - External
- Ongoing professional development, including mentoring by senior staff, director or outside mentors



Staff Qualifications in a Forest School Setting Assistant Teacher, Teacher, and Director

Director Qualifications in a Forest School Setting

In addition to all of the teacher qualifications, all directors in a Forest School setting must have the following qualifications:

Education

Directors in a forest school setting must have **at least one** of the following educational requirements met:

- Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or equivalent field
- Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or equivalent field
 - With a minimum of 12 core course units in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or equivalent field
- Completion and certification of Forest School teacher training
 - With a minimum of 9 core course units in Early Childhood Education (ECE) or equivalent field
- Comparable recognized teacher training³
- Verifiable equivalent experience

Additional Requirements

- Minimum 5 years supervised teaching in the Forest School setting
- Minimum 8 years experience teaching groups of 2-6 year olds
- Direct experience in all teaching roles
- Ability to develop, maintain and effectively implement policies, procedures, and systems
 - legal
 - fiscal
 - staffing
 - programmatic
 - cultural
 - quality
 - development

³ "Recognized teacher training" is meant to include programs such as Waldorf, and Montessori teacher training that may not provide their students with ECE units, but do provide a foundation in child development.



Staff Qualifications in a Forest School Setting Assistant Teacher, Teacher, and Director

Additional Requirements (continued)

- relational
 - land
 - teachers
 - children
 - families
 - community
- communications
- Leadership
 - o supports high quality experiences for children, families and staff
 - o reflective
 - transparent
 - knowledgeable in
 - early childhood development
 - naturalist
 - community resources
 - o available as a resource for families, staff and community

This document was created by the California Association of Forest Schools Board, and unanimously adopted at the annual Board of Directors in-person meeting February of 2020.

Please see <u>CAforestschools.org</u> for more information.