



2015

PLAYWORK IMMERSION COURSE

June 1 - September 5





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Work and learn with Ithaca Children's Garden, home of the Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone, and special friends Pop-Up Adventure Play this summer. Join us for an unforgettable summer of intensive training and hands-on experience while you build your knowledge and develop your playwork praxis. This residency course is the first of its kind in the US, and invites applications from across North America.



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Abstract

Join Ithaca Children's Garden for the first Playwork Immersion course offered in the United States. Designed for anyone pursuing a career in playwork or related fields, or for those who wish to gain direct experience fostering a culture of play with the children in their lives, this immersion offers breadth and depth in curriculum, training, and development of playwork praxis.

Limited to six apprentices, this 14-week immersion program offers intensive hands-on experience in an established play-rich environment, one of the nation's first adventure playgrounds in generations, working alongside a team of practitioners committed to the principles and practice of playwork. Designed as a residency, housing is provided along with logistical support to make the summer in Ithaca rich and rewarding. In addition, Pop-up Adventure Play's Playwork Development Course is included in this Immersion Course.

Approach

Playwork Immersion @ ICG is designed with apprentices at the center. ICG's unique focus is at the intersection of nature and play, yet the principles and practices we employ work in any setting. Apprentices work and learn in the Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone and across ICG's 3-acre public children's garden, a dynamic environment with visitors and program participants of all ages.

Playwork is a new field in the US, which means ICG playworkers are relatively new to the field, too. Our playwork approach is shaped heavily by training and mentorship by our good friends at Pop-Up Adventure Play, and three years of our own field experience.

There is a lot involved in fostering a culture of play. This immersion course is designed to empower graduates with the tools they need to become **champions of play** in their own communities, equipped with real experience, strategies, and confidence to take home in their play packs. In addition to hands-on practical experience, this immersion course includes Pop-Up Adventure Play's Playwork Development Course to provide the theoretical framework that grounds the playwork practice, taught by playworkers with nearly a decade of experience. The

learning curve is significant, so apprentices are expected to approach their work and studies with an open mind and consistent, dedicated practice.

In addition to playwork immersion, learn about sustainable gardening, working with children and teens, community engagement, non-profit management, and wherever your interests guide you. Time is allotted in the intensive schedule for each apprentice to devote to reflection and a capstone Legacy Project based on individual interests.

Methods

Each apprentice will:

1. Complete assigned reading prior to commencement of the Playwork Immersion
2. Complete the 12 module Playwork Development Course including readings, active discussion and written reflections
3. Learn what it takes to run the Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone, from funding to site development and maintenance, communications and programming to staffing
4. Hear from leading innovators and practitioners in the field
5. Develop an individual playwork practice through experience in a variety of contexts including summer camps, public garden settings, informal family play, community events, festivals, and more
6. Take field trips to local schools and community centers to observe, support, and reflect upon the variety of play opportunities that children are given.
7. Have opportunities to travel to regional play destinations, including Rochester's Museum of Play, Brooklyn Bridge Park, the new Discovery Garden at Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Imagination Playground in New York City
8. Learn by teaching! Teach teens the basics of playwork with a tiered mentorship approach
9. Complete an independent Legacy Project
10. Receive a certificate of completion upon satisfactory completion of all program requirements, including evaluation of the Immersion Program.
11. Become founding members of a family of Playwork Immersion alumni and stay connected to ICG and playwork well beyond course conclusion

Learning Outcomes

1. Develop a working definition of Playwork
2. Be able to clearly articulate the value and benefit of free play to all kinds of audiences
3. Understand cultural and contemporary challenges facing free play today
4. Identify ways that playworkers and those working with children can support child-directed play
5. learn how to create and maintain physical spaces that are rich in play opportunities and possibilities
6. develop ability to identify, assess, manage, and talk about risk, the value of risk in play, and the difference between hazard and risk.
7. Understand how to identify and reframe challenging behaviors within a playwork framework
8. Develop a list of achievable action items that can be put to use in your own setting and identify the tools needed to put these into practice
9. Develop your own philosophy of playwork informed by your playwork praxis

Impact

In its fourth year of operation at Ithaca Children's Garden, the Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone and playwork practice is continuously growing and developing. Apprentices have the unique opportunity to leave their handprint on the Culture of Play here as it continues taking shape at Ithaca Children's Garden. As the first class of Playwork Immersion @ ICG, apprentices will be invited to contribute feedback on all aspects of the Immersion for the benefit of all future apprentices and for the future of the program.

Legacy Project

As a key part of course impact, each apprentice will develop a legacy project, informed by the apprentice's own interests and designed to improve some aspect of the culture of Play at Ithaca Children's Garden or in the local community. Guidance and support will be provided to each apprentice in the initial defining of the project, however each apprentice will be expected

to implement their project independently, taking initiative to gather the resources they need to do so effectively. The Legacy Project will take the form of some kind of deliverable to be completed by the end of the course.

Examples of Legacy Projects include:

- Developing a resource for parents on how to support their child's play at ICG
- Compile research on the benefits of tree-climbing to repeal New York State Health Department's ban on tree-climbing in summer camps
- Create a video geared towards school administrators with tips for incorporating play into the school day
- Develop a "HONAZ on the Go" travel 'play cup' of loose parts for kids during car rides.
- Develop a Top Tips Guide for future Playwork Immersion course participants

Class of '15 apprentices will also have the opportunity to participate in some special site-based projects, including:

- building a cob wood-fired pizza oven
- installation of a rain barrel catchment system on our Kids' Kitchen
- hosting ICG's inaugural [Rejunevate](#) event
- and more

Resident Life

Community

Join a community of dedicated practitioners keen to support each apprentice in his or her pursuit of playwork. Take part in discovery activities that build a trusting, respectful, and playful team while getting to know the local landscape. While we will be immersed in the world of all things play and playwork, apprentices are encouraged to explore the richness of the region, from picking berries, canoeing Cayuga Lake, mountain biking Shindagin Hollow, and competing in the friendly Dragon Boat Festival, to camping at Treman State Park, hiking Watkins Glen, tasting and touring the Finger Lakes Wine Region, strolling the acclaimed Ithaca Farmers Market and dancing at GrassRoots Music Festival. Enjoy the colorful and vibrant

community life and all that the greater Ithaca area offers while you explore play through study, practice, reflection, mentorship, and community.

Housing

One of the following housing scenarios will be provided to apprentices:

1. A home-stay with an ICG board member or volunteer
2. A private room in a house share with other apprentices
3. A private room in a house share with other Ithaca residents

We will take your preferences into account when making placements and want apprentices to be as comfortable as possible, however placement depends on availability and cannot guarantee you will get your first choice.

Getting around

If you are arriving with public transportation, an ICG staff or volunteer will welcome you at the Ithaca airport or bus station, and deliver you to your home-for-the-summer. Once you are here, getting around on foot, bike and bus is easy. Depending on where you live, a bus pass may be provided to assist with commuting costs. If you live within 5 miles of ICG, a bike will be provided for your use during your stay if you are not able to bring your own. Carpooling with other apprentices, staff, and volunteers is always encouraged. You may also choose to become a member of **Ithaca Carshare**. If you should choose to drive to Ithaca, there is plenty of parking at ICG, ICG offices, and throughout the city.

Applying

Who is eligible to apply?

Any adult age 21 and over who can comply with the terms of the course is eligible to apply. Those with experience working with children who wish to bring more play into your existing setting, those seeking career opportunities related to fostering a culture of play, and those interested in affecting policy around fostering a culture of play, are especially encouraged to apply.

How do I apply?

Complete the attached application and submit with housing addendum and application fee by April 30 (by April 1 to benefit from early bird application fee discount). Phone interviews with semi-finalists will take place the first week in May. Successful applicants will be notified by May 11 of their selection, and will need to confirm intention to enroll within 24 hours to secure the position.

Fees & Payment

Application fee is \$40, (\$30 if received by April 1). This is due at time of application and is non-refundable.

The apprenticeship fee is \$2,800, due in its entirety upon enrollment. If you require a payment plan, please be advised that 50% of the total payment is due upon enrollment, and the remainder is due by June 1. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and limited scholarship may be available.

The course fee includes:

- all curriculum including local field trips and guest experts
- enrollment in 12 module Playwork Development Course
- active playwork with children of all ages
- shared housing and utilities. There will be a \$100 refundable security deposit for housing provided. Note: The tuition cost remains the same for 2015, whether or not you choose to accept accommodations provided or not. If you choose to make your own arrangements, you are responsible for all aspects of securing and payment for your own housing
- a garden farm share including seasonal produce, cut flowers, eggs, and honey
- some transportation support (bike loan, bus pass, carpooling, etc)
- Transportation costs to NYC and/or Rochester Museum of Play and subsidized accommodation costs
- 3 ICG t-shirts (additional shirts available for \$10 each)

The course fee does not include spending money, travel to and from Ithaca, refunds in the event you are unable to complete the program, (ICG will make every effort to assist in your completion of the course in extenuating circumstances), food or meals beyond the farm share provisions. Apprentices are encouraged to bring spending money for local excursions, travel within the region, and to budget \$200 in food and accommodations for course trips outside of Ithaca.

A note on fees:

The Playwork Immersion is designed to give you real experience to advance your career in education, nature-education, playwork, and related fields. The program relies on fees to operate, though the fees do not represent the full cost of the program. We have sought numerous and creative ways to extend maximum value to apprentices for a minimum cost. If you are aware of funding sources that might be interested in sponsoring apprentice tuition, please bring these to the attention of ICG staff.

Your Hosts

Visit ithacachildrengarden.org to learn more about ICG's programs, place, and philosophy. Learn about the Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone @ ICG, born in 2012, one of the nation's handful of public adventure playgrounds in the US.

Visit popupadventureplaygrounds.wordpress.com to learn more about the play professionals who trained Ithaca Children's Garden staff in playwork and who will be leading the 12 module Playwork Development Course as part of the Playwork Immersion Course.

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APPLICATION

NAME **First** _____ **Last** _____

ADDRESS **Street** _____

City _____ **State** _____

Country _____ **Zip Code** _____

CONTACT **Email** _____ **Phone** _____

DATE OF BIRTH (e.g. month/date/year) _____ **Age** _____

GENDER Male Female Other

ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION (optional) _____

How did you hear about the Playwork Immersion Course? _____

Are you currently a student? Yes No

If so, where and what are you studying? _____

Have you visited Ithaca Children's Garden before? Yes No **If so, when?** _____

Please answer the following questions in order, number them, and limit answers to no more than four (4) pages:

1. Please describe your previous experience, if any, in formal or informal education, child development.
2. Please describe your previous experience, if any, in gardening, food, nutrition, cooking, or ecology.
3. Explain your interest in the Playwork Immersion Course, and how this practical training fits into your future plans.
4. Describe your previous experience, if any, in cooperative living and working situations. What do you consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of such arrangements?
5. Briefly describe your recent work experience.
6. Describe your previous experience, if any, in social justice/diversity work.
7. Briefly describe your educational background.
8. Please include the names and contact information for two references.

Please send all application materials together by April 30. An application fee of \$40 must accompany your application in order to be considered (\$30 if postmarked by April 1). Checks should be made out to **Ithaca Children's Garden**.

Optional: Please include a recent photo of yourself, especially if you've visited. It helps us remember who you are. A copy of your resume is also helpful.

To apply: Fill out this application form, along with the attached housing addendum. Mail three (3) copies of the following:

- Application form
- Answers to eight (8) questions, listed above
- Resume (optional)
- Housing addendum
- Optional supporting materials (photo, resume)
- \$40 Application fee (check or money order)
\$30 if postmarked by April 1

MAIL TO:
 Playwork Immersion Course
 Ithaca Children's Garden
 615 Willow Ave, Suite G
 Ithaca, NY 14850

Questions? Email
ithacachildrengarden@cornell.edu
 or call (607) 272-2292 x258.
 Confirmation of receipt of your
 application will be sent within
 two (2) weeks after the deadline.
 Incomplete or late applications
 will not be considered.



HOUSING ADDENDUM

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The Apprenticeship will have one or more of the following options available to apprentices. We cannot guarantee you will get your housing choice, however it will be helpful to know your preference. Please rank the following: (e.g. one (1) is your first choice, three (3) is your last choice). If you have no preference, you can put one (1) for all.

A home-stay with an ICG board member or volunteer

A private room in a house share with other apprentices

A private room in a house share with other Ithaca residents

I have my own accommodations

Allergies, dietary restrictions, medical, mobility, or other special considerations that might impact my requirements for suitable accommodations

NOTES: The tuition cost remains the same for 2015, whether or not you choose to accept accommodations provided or not. If you choose to make your own arrangements, you are responsible for finding and paying for your own housing. There will be a \$100 refundable security deposit for housing provided.

I have read and agree to the above terms:

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____