



Leila Day Nurseries



Executive Director

Information for Candidates

New Haven, Connecticut

July 1, 2023

Leila Day Nurseries seeks an Executive Director to begin as early as July 1, 2023. The Director develops and administers the full program, is responsible for its operation and financial health, adheres to all licensing and NAEYC accreditation requirements, and works collaboratively in a manner consistent with the educational philosophy and policies set forth by the Board of Managers. This is a year-round position with competitive salary and benefits.



ABOUT LEILA DAY

Leila Day was founded in 1878 to serve immigrant families; today it serves a broader population but has remained committed to accessibility by operating with a sliding scale for tuition. Leila Day's emergent curriculum is play-based and nature-based, reflecting the deep belief that children make discoveries, form ideas, and reach deeper understandings about themselves and about their communities through the natural world.

The school sits on 2.5 acres, affording each classroom its own outdoor space. A dedicated outdoor educator collaborates with classroom teachers to design the curriculum to align the learning that happens in both spaces.

MISSION

Leila Day Nurseries, Inc. is a nonprofit child care center serving children of working families from diverse economic and cultural backgrounds. Our guiding principle is to foster the children's social, emotional, intellectual and physical development within a warm and nurturing environment that is based on sound principles of child development and early childhood education.



CORE VALUES

- We believe in a culture of play.
- We believe that teachers are the heart of Leila Day.
- We believe in creating a safe environment.
- We commit to ethnic and socioeconomic diversity.
- We commit to stewarding resources to support our mission.
- We believe that Leila Day provides an important support for working families.

NEW HAVEN, CT

[New Haven](#) is a small city known for its educational offerings, most notably Yale University, and sits along the Connecticut shoreline. It boasts both a beautiful, historic train station through which Amtrak and Metro North trains flow, and a small airport that flies directly

to 13 U.S. destinations. Bradley International Airport in South Windsor is about an hour away, and the greater New York airports (JFK, LGA, and Newark) are within a 2-hour drive. New Haven itself has a lot of history and notable architecture; it is a fun walking city with a wide variety of food/restaurant options (especially [the pizza!](#)) and considerable cultural venues. The museums of Yale are free to the public; several theaters offer a wide variety of musical and drama venues; and the annual [International Festival of Arts and Ideas](#) celebrates art and artists from around the world in a community-building couple of weeks each summer.

Leila Day is located in the vibrant and diverse East Rock neighborhood of New Haven, directly across from East Rock Park whose beauty and expanse the school takes advantage of on a regular basis. East Rock is home to many Yale employees and graduate students, as well as artists, professionals and long-time residents. Several coffee shops, small restaurants and markets dot the neighborhood and add to its charm and appeal. One can easily walk into downtown New Haven from this part of the city.

Leila Day At A Glance

Location: 100 Cold Spring Street,
New Haven, CT

Campus: 2.5 acres

Founded: 1878

Enrollment: 115

Accreditation: NAEYC

Number Faculty/Staff: 28
(17 full-time teaching faculty)

Board of Managers: 10

Programs/Ages:

- 3 full-day and 1 part-day preschool classrooms
- 1 full-day kindergarten
- After-school programs serving grades K-5
- 8 week summer program

2023-24 tuition—Sliding scale based on
annual family income: \$1,000-\$23,130

Percent receiving financial aid: 55%

FUTURE LEADERSHIP

The Board of Managers has created a Search Committee, led by former parent and current board member Alex Kleiner and board member Sally Mixsell of [Educators Collaborative](#) (EC), to identify qualified candidates for this position. We are very excited to engage in this process in order to identify our next Executive Director (ED) and welcome this person to our community. What follows is an outline of community responses to what are considered the strengths and opportunities/challenges of Leila Day as well as the characteristics and skills desired in its next Executive Director.

STRENGTHS OF LEILA DAY

- Leila Day is clear about who they are and how they live the mission.
- Diversity is a hallmark of the school and has been since its inception. All families are valued for what they bring to the Leila Day community - a point of pride for all.
- The gifted faculty of early childhood educators is fully invested in the school's curriculum and philosophy.
- There is deep appreciation for the spacious outdoor areas that signals a commitment to the nature- and play-based curriculum of Leila Day. In addition to the Leila Day campus, East Rock park sits directly across the street, affording "field trips" and additional play spaces. Occasional parades through the neighborhood delight area residents - especially true during COVID.
- The committed and actively engaged Board plays a central role in ensuring the sustainability of Leila Day. The long history and strong traditions of Leila Day are appreciated and valued by both the Board and the Leila Day community.
- Leila Day is one of few early childhood programs in New Haven that offers a full food program that includes breakfast, lunch and snack. All food is prepared on site.



- The teacher-student ratios are low enough to allow for close relationships between the children and their teachers.
- Leila Day is in a strong financial position and benefits from an endowment that provides support for operations.



CHALLENGES / OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEILA DAY

- The Board looks forward to creating the next strategic plan once the new Executive Director is in place. There is much enthusiasm for this process and how it will enable the school to continue to raise its profile and participate in community-wide events in the New Haven area.
- Affordability and increased competition from other early childhood programs remain perennial challenges.
- While efforts have been made to hire diverse faculty and staff in order to reflect Leila Day families, there is more work to be done in this area.
- Leila Day recognizes the importance of compensation in recruiting and retaining its outstanding faculty and staff. Efforts have been made in recent years to increase compensation, such as adding retirement benefits, increasing salaries, and supporting the continuing education of staff members. Doing more as time and budgets permit is a priority of the Board.
- There is a need to clarify roles and responsibilities in a post-COVID environment.
- The current momentum of addressing physical plant upgrades and maximizing the use of limited spaces will need to be continued.

CHARACTERISTICS AND SKILLS DESIRED IN THE NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is especially important to Leila Day to identify the right match for its small community. With that in mind Leila Day seeks a Director who possesses:

- Love of young children and commitment to supporting their parents as they enter the early years of their children's "formal" schooling;
- Commitment to Leila Day's 5 Core Competencies: Problem-solving through play; Nature-based learning; Expression and communication; Ethical values; and Sense of self;

- A commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and a passion for providing the best in early childhood education to diverse families;
- Deep understanding of early childhood development, play-based learning, and experience working with young children;
- Excellent leadership and management skills, reflected in a strong, steady hand; commitment to collaboration; a community-wide growth mindset; and a distributed leadership model that includes strong supervision and performance assessment;



- Ability to sustain a safe, happy place in which to work and learn;
- Capacity to lead and participate in both enrollment management and fundraising for the school;
- Strength in oral and written communication;
- Proven success as a team builder, both at the faculty/staff and administrative levels;
- Ability to work in partnership with the Board of Managers, and to be flexible and creative in problem-solving;
- Experience in overseeing plant management and financial well-being of an organization, coupled with the patience for, and understanding of, the nuances involved in managing people;
- A record of successful hiring practices and staff retention; and
- An understanding of the changing landscape of early childhood education and interest in interacting with fellow early childhood leaders in the greater New Haven community.

The next Executive Director of Leila Day will have:

- Educational credentials to meet CT's administrative leadership qualifications (or willingness to earn them);
- Knowledge of [NAEYC accreditation standards](#), [CT licensing requirements](#), and other regulatory and quality measures (or willingness to learn this);
- A master's degree in early childhood education, or a related discipline;
- Previous experience directing an early childhood program is a plus.

SEARCH PROCESS AND APPLICATION

Candidates interested in this position are asked to submit the following materials to Sally Mixsell:

- EC Candidate Summary Sheet (contact Sally for this document via phone or email, below)
- Letter of Interest addressed to the Search Committee
- Current Resume
- Personal Statement or Statement of Educational Leadership
- A list of three to five references with contact information
(including phone numbers and email addresses)
- EC Disclosure Form (contact Sally for this document via phone or email, below)

This is an expedited search in order to have a director in place as early as July 1, 2023. Please submit applications asap and address any inquiries or expressions of interest to:

Sally Mixsell, Partner, Educators Collaborative, LLC,
smixsell@educatorscollaborative.com
203-824-3653

Leila Day does not discriminate based on gender, race, color, national or ethnic origin, physical disability or handicap, sexual orientation, or economic circumstances in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship or school administered programs, nor in its hiring of staff.

