



Position Statement for Head of School National Child Research Center

Washington, DC

Start Date: July 1, 2026



Head of School Position Statement

Overview

Rooted in a deep and abiding belief in the power of early childhood education, the National Child Research Center (NCRC) is a joyful, mission-driven school serving preschool-aged children in Washington, DC. Founded in 1928 as the city's first preschool and a pioneer in inclusive education, NCRC is the oldest continuously operating preschool in DC and remains steadfast in its commitment to a child-centered, play-based approach that fosters the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of each child. Located on a spectacular 2-acre campus in DC's Cleveland Park neighborhood, NCRC serves children ages 2 through 5 and their families through a warm, collaborative, and inclusive learning community. The school is known for its rich traditions, play-based, emergent curriculum, commitment to research-informed practices, and deep dedication to diversity, equity, and community. NCRC seeks a compassionate, visionary Head of School to begin July 1, 2026, who will lead the school into its next chapter while honoring its legacy and mission.



Mission

National Child Research Center nurtures the whole child—socially, emotionally, and intellectually—toward a lifelong love of learning. Informed by current research and continuing education, NCRC's exceptional faculty guide each student's unique development through a play-based, child-centered curriculum in a diverse, family-focused community, with a commitment to the inclusion of children who benefit from additional supports and adaptations.

Diversity Statement

NCRC promotes and respects diversity, equity, and community through our commitment to foster empathy and respect for others in an environment that affirms all identities. We cultivate the ability to recognize, appreciate, and celebrate multiple perspectives and differences in age-appropriate ways. Our community of students, educators, and families is dedicated to upholding these principles.

NCRC's umbrella of diversity includes, but is not limited to: race and ethnicity, neurodiversity of thought and learning style, religion, national origin, socioeconomic status, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, family composition, and physical ability. We thoughtfully embrace each child as a vital thread of the social fabric of NCRC

At-A-Glance

Enrollment: 170 students
Diversity: 38% Students of Color
30% Faculty of Color
2024-25 Operating Budget: \$7,500,000
2024-25 Financial Aid: \$602,000
2023-24 Annual Giving: \$339,000

Community

At NCRC, the community is both the heart and the engine of the school. Faculty and staff are deeply committed educators who bring warmth, intentionality, and expertise to their work each day. Families are engaged partners in their children's learning and development, drawn to NCRC by its holistic approach and caring environment. NCRC's community thrives on a culture of belonging. The school's long-standing commitment to diversity and equity is reflected in its admissions practices, pedagogy, and professional development. NCRC is one of the only schools of its size that has a full-time Director of Diversity, Equity and Community (DEC) who leads classroom conversations, hosts parent affinity groups, and facilitates professional development about DEC. Parents, faculty, and alumni alike note that NCRC is a place where lifelong connections are made.



Program

NCRC's program is built around three age group tiers: Early Learning (2-3), Preschool (3-4) and Prekindergarten (4-5). The program places play, exploration, and relationships at the center of learning. NCRC's curriculum supports growth across all developmental domains through rich, emergent investigations and collaborative projects. Hallmarks include:

- **Play Based Learning:** Classrooms are environments of joyful inquiry where children make meaning through exploration and discovery. Curriculum is rooted in research and child development theory, and guided by our school Pedagogista.
- **Social Emotional (SEL) Practices:** A school-wide commitment to SEL practices and the Social Thinking Curriculum promotes self-awareness, empathy, and perspective-taking.
- **Inclusion Program:** All classes include neurodiverse learners who can thrive in a play-based setting, where faculty provide supports and adaptations in response to individual needs. Inclusive classrooms cultivate in children respect, empathy, and acceptance of others.
- **Child Development Team (CDT):** The CDT includes a full time counselor, speech and language pathologist, and occupational therapist who run special programs (Early Beginning and Play Pals). The team helps establish individualized goals, and provides supports and adaptations for all students.
- **Outdoor Learning:** NCRC's spacious, natural playground and garden spaces encourage wonder and foster environmental stewardship.
- **Specialist Enrichment:** Children participate in Mindful Movement, music, and library programs that complement their classroom experiences.

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- **Auxiliary Programs:** An extended-day program, Later Gators, is available until 5:00, and Summer Camp is available for 7 weeks.
- **Ongoing Schools:** Outplacement counseling is a critical component of the program. NCRC provides significant guidance and support to children applying to the area's independent, parochial, and public schools, many of which are the most competitive in DC.

To learn more about NCRC, visit the website at www.ncrcpreschool.org



Strengths

NCRC's unique strengths position it as a leader in early childhood education:

- **A Respected Legacy:** With nearly a century of service, NCRC has a powerful history of educational leadership and community impact.
- **Whole-Child Philosophy:** NCRC nurtures intellectual growth while supporting the social and emotional wellbeing of children and families.
- **Stable and dedicated Faculty and Staff:** Educators are experienced, reflective, and passionate about their work with young children. They are committed to ongoing professional development, developing and modeling innovative teaching methods, incorporating the latest research on child development, and sharing their expertise with other educators.
- **Inclusive Excellence:** NCRC's program reflects a deep commitment to access, equity, and belonging for every child and family.
- **Community Connection:** A small school with a large heart, NCRC cultivates meaningful relationships that last well beyond preschool.



Opportunities and Challenges

The next Head of School will inherit a beloved and vibrant institution and will be charged with building on its strong foundation. Key areas of opportunity and focus include:

- Working with the Board of Trustees and leadership team to deliver on the current strategic plan and imagine the next century for NCRC that reflects its values and ambitions.
- Strengthening community partnerships and enhancing student and family recruitment efforts to ensure a healthy, diverse enrollment pipeline.
- Building upon a strong culture of philanthropy and increasing fundraising capacity to support faculty compensation, financial assistance, program innovation, and building reserves to help ensure NCRC's long-term financial sustainability. The upcoming centennial (2028) provides a unique opportunity to celebrate the past and build for the future.
- Ensuring program excellence, delivery of rich and immersive experience for students, guided by NCRC mission, philosophy, and pedagogy.
- Supporting and retaining exceptional faculty and administrators and promoting collaboration, transparency, and shared leadership.
- Managing facility needs and neighbor relations.
- Continuing focus on research-informed best practice in all aspects of the program.
- Fostering relationship with ongoing schools in support of outplacement.

The Candidate

NCRC seeks a leader who embodies empathy, authenticity, transparency, and educational vision. The next Head of School will be:

- Grounded in early childhood best practices and a champion for the developmental needs of young children.
- An experienced and effective administrator.
- An ambitious and inspirational leader who can serve as a visible, energetic, enthusiastic, active, approachable, and joyful presence in the NCRC community.
- Deeply committed to NCRC's inclusive model, diversity, equity, and community; a track record of fostering a culture of respect, belonging, and partnership.
- Solutions oriented, creative, nimble, and consensus driven.
- A community builder, invested in fostering relationships through a warm and approachable presence with students, faculty, and parents; committed to building on strong parent and alumni communities.
- A strategic thinker, ready to collaborate with stakeholders to build a compelling and actionable vision for the school's future with a focus on enrollment management and financial sustainability.
- An outstanding communicator, skilled at listening, storytelling, and engaging diverse constituencies with clarity and care.
- Able to handle difficult conversations with grace and hold people accountable.
- Experienced with ongoing schools advising.



Application Process

NCRC has retained Resource Group 175 (RG175) to support the search for its next Head of School. Interested candidates should provide a cover letter, resume, and personal statement and submit these materials online at: <https://rg175.com/candidate/signup>

The application **DEADLINE** is **July 1, 2025** for a **START DATE** of **July 1, 2026**.

Compensation: NCRC expects to offer the new Head an annual base salary in the range of \$230,000-\$270,000 plus standard benefits.

For an initial inquiry or to nominate a potential candidate for this exciting leadership position, please contact the RG175 consultant Tony Featherston at tfeatherston@RG175.com.