

Primary Lead Teacher

AMI Preferred · Full-Time · Richmond, Virginia

At Wild Fern Montessori School, we believe every child deserves access to an authentic Montessori education — regardless of their family's financial circumstances. As a small, mission-driven nonprofit in the heart of Richmond, Virginia, we offer a genuine three-year-cycle Primary experience grounded in AMI principles, financial equity through our Sliding Scale Tuition Program, government childcare subsidy provider status, and a tight-knit community where every team member's voice matters.

This is a rare opportunity to do meaningful work in a school that is growing, evolving, and deeply committed to its people. If you are a passionate Montessorian who wants your expertise to shape something lasting, this is your community.

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| ✓ Position: Primary Lead Teacher (Ages 3–6) |
| ✓ Certification: AMI Preferred (AMS Considered) |
| ✓ Schedule: Full-Time, Monday – Friday |
| ✓ Location: Richmond, Virginia (Lakeside/Brook Rd Corridor) |
| ✓ Start Date: Late July 2026 |
| ✓ Compensation: \$38,000–\$46,000 depending on certification and experience. |

WHY WILD FERN?

We know that talented Montessori educators have choices. Here is what sets us apart:

- Your voice is heard — we are small by design, collaborative by nature, and growing with intention
- Authentic Montessori is non-negotiable — no compromises on the three-year cycle, prepared environment, or AMI principles
- Financial equity is part of our identity — our Sliding Scale Tuition Program makes Montessori accessible to families who otherwise could not afford it
- We are in an exciting growth phase — Fall 2026 brings a new, dedicated facility at 5610 Brook Road
- Community isn't a buzzword here — it is woven into every parent engagement event, fundraiser, and staff meeting
- We invest in our people — professional development support, 401(k) with Safe Harbor match, generous paid time off, and more

THE ROLE

As a Primary Lead Teacher at WFMS, you are the heartbeat of the classroom. You will plan and sustain a beautifully prepared AMI Montessori environment for children ages 3–6, mentor and lead your classroom assistants, and serve as a trusted partner to the families in your community.

This is a full-time, lead teaching position with real responsibility, real relationships, and real impact.

Planning, Preparation & Instruction

- Plan and implement progressive lessons for each child using the authentic AMI Montessori curriculum throughout the year across all key areas of the classroom
- Maintain a carefully prepared, organized, and aesthetically inviting environment, thoughtfully rotating materials when necessary and appropriate
- Oversee classroom flow, managing the rhythm and energy of the work cycle with skill and calm
- Conduct regular planning meetings with assistants to review children's progress, revitalize the environment, and align on lessons
- Use observations, albums/scope and sequences, Montessori Compass, and children's portfolios to guide individual child plans
- Maintain accurate progress records in Montessori Compass
- Order classroom materials and manage the classroom budget responsibly
- Maintain a safe, clean, nurturing environment that upholds all AMI Montessori, licensing, and health standards
- Support daily practical life activities: snack, lunch, outdoor play, dressing, toileting, and rest

Communication & Community

- Build respectful, warm, consistent communication with each child's family
- Respond to parent questions and concerns promptly and professionally
- Send weekly classroom newsletters to offer parent education and highlight curriculum, activities, and upcoming events
- Lead parent conferences twice per year to share each child's growth and development
- Educate and engage families in Montessori philosophy, finding meaningful ways to involve them
- Model Grace and Courtesy — for children and adults alike
- Adhere to WFMS confidentiality and communication policies to protect the privacy and dignity of children, families, and colleagues at all times

Leadership & Professional Responsibility

- Confidently and professionally mentor, train, and lead your classroom assistants, including holding them accountable with care and directness
- Participate in and contribute to staff meetings, professional development days, and school events
- Attend and participate in WFMS community events, Open Houses, orientations, and fundraisers
- Complete a minimum of one week of on-site preparatory work during Summer Session (classroom setup, admin, professional development)
- Comply with all Virginia VDOE continuing education requirements for licensed childcare providers
- Check and respond to email daily; adhere to all school policies outlined in the Employee Handbook
- Participate in ongoing evaluation, including classroom observations and annual self-assessment

WHO YOU ARE

Required

- AMI or AMS Montessori Certification (AMI strongly preferred) in the 3–6 age range
- Bachelor’s Degree in Early Childhood Education or related field
- Experience managing assistants and navigating the full complexity of a working Primary classroom
- At least 1 year of Montessori classroom experience
- Demonstrated ability to lead and mentor classroom assistants — including navigating hard conversations
- Strong communication skills with children, families, and colleagues
- Experience working with diverse students and families

Highly Valued

- Experience in a small, nonprofit school environment
- Commitment to community outreach and parent engagement beyond the classroom door
- Familiarity with Montessori Compass or similar documentation platforms

The Mindset We Need

- Growth-oriented — you seek solutions rather than dwelling on problems
- A team player who understands that in a small school, everyone’s role is equally vital
- Calm, consistent, and reliable — children and families can count on you
- Deeply committed to Montessori as a philosophy, not just a credential
- Able to hold the bigger picture of the school’s mission alongside the day-to-day of classroom life
- Honest, direct, and open to feedback — from administrators, families, and your own reflection

COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

WFMS offers a competitive compensation package that goes beyond the paycheck — including a real seat at the table, genuine collaboration with school leadership, and the benefits listed below:

Voice & Influence Your perspective shapes school decisions	Strategic Planning Included in school-wide planning process
Head of School Collaboration Direct, ongoing partnership with HOS	Potential for Annual Bonus Based on performance and school growth
401(k) Safe Harbor match: 100% of first 3%, 50% of next 2%	Professional Development School-supported PD & conferences
Paid Time Off 10 days per school year	Family Tuition Discount 30% off enrollment
Paid Program Breaks & Paid Holidays 28 days + Summer Break / 15 holidays annually	Bereavement Leave 3 days per school year

PRE-HIRE REQUIREMENTS

The following must be completed upon hire and before the school year begins:

- Current Tuberculosis (TB) test
- Virginia Central Registry check, state background check, and fingerprinting
- Any other state background checks if you have resided outside of Virginia in the past five years
- First Aid / CPR Certification
- Proof of Montessori certification or letter of current standing from training center

OUR CULTURE & COMMITMENT

Wild Fern Montessori School is rooted in three pillars: **authentic Montessori, financial equity, and a safe space for all.** We began in 2018 as Glen Allen Community Montessori School, and after a period of thoughtful reassessment during COVID, relocated to Lakeside — a community better aligned with our mission — where we have been growing steadily ever since. Fall 2026 will bring our most exciting chapter yet: a purpose-built facility at 5610 Brook Road.

We are an all-hands-on-deck environment. We lean on each other, lift each other up, and show up together for each other and our families. If you are looking for a school where you can grow, lead, and be seen, we hope you will consider joining us.

Ready to join our community?

We'd love to hear from you. Please send your resume, a brief cover letter, and proof of Montessori certification to our Head of School, Kate Lipka, at kate@wildfernmont.org. Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis.

Wild Fern Montessori School is an equal opportunity employer.