Apprentice Program
FAQs

What is the Apprentice Program? The Apprentice Program is a unique, hands-on program for students in grades 5-12* in which older apprentices guide younger apprentices in organic farming, animal husbandry and general farm maintenance. *We are currently only accepting new apprentices in grades 5-8.

My child knows nothing about farming or caring for farm animals, is that okay? YES. Under the creative guidance of Program Director, Kevin Meehan, and Assistant Program Director, Jennifer Grass, apprentices will learn all they need to know about working in our gardens and caring for our animals.

Do the apprentices work in groups based on their age? No. This is truly a mentoring program. Our older apprentices oversee mixed-age groups of younger apprentices as they work collaboratively to complete tasks. As your child grows through the program they too will have an opportunity to lead. Developing leadership skills will serve your child for a lifetime.

What is the basic principle of the program? How we connect with the land, how we connect with the animals and how we connect with each other makes a difference. What originally attracts younger apprentices to the program are the animals. What keeps them coming back year after year are the connections they make with one another through hard work and a shared experience.

How many months does the program meet? The program meets from May-October.

What days does the program meet? Mondays and Thursdays from 4pm-6pm and Saturdays from 9am-11am.

What is the required time commitment? We never take attendance and we are always happy to see our apprentices when they can make it. If your child has a family event or a lot of school work, your child should not come to the program on that day. Family and school work come first.

My child participates in other activities and might be late or may need to be picked up early, is that okay? YES. We are happy to see our apprentices whenever they can make it. The important thing is that they keep coming when they can and for however long they can, so they feel connected to the farm and to the other apprentices in the program.
What are the expectations of an apprentice? Our expectation is that if your child comes to the Apprentice Program on any given day, they are there to work. If they are having a day where they are tired and don’t feel like working hard, they should stay home.

What does a typical meeting of the Apprentice Program look like? The first half hour of the program is social. It’s a time for our apprentices to connect with each other. Many apprentices hang out in our animal enclosures and talk with one another. The last half hour of the program is social as well. If it sounds like we socialize a lot, it’s only because we socialize a lot BUT we work incredibly hard during that work hour. Farm tasks include cleaning animal pens, moving sand bags, staking the garden beds, holding baby chicks, weeding, planting, moving hay bales, asking the apprentices to order themselves from tallest to shortest (we like to see how they communicate and work together), harvesting, stacking wood, hay races and so much more!

Who is Ambler Farm’s farmer? Farmer Jonathan, of course, star of “Food for Thought” on our Instagram and FB page: #FoodForThought. We are fortunate enough to have a farmer who is willing to share his knowledge and his production gardens with our apprentices.

What animals live on the farm? Our resident animals are our Guinea hogs, sheep, goats and rabbits. In the spring and summer months we add baby chicks, ducks, geese and turkeys along with laying hens. Did you hear the big EWES? We have a new baby lamb coming this spring!

My child is shy. Is the apprentice program the right program for him/her? You bet! What we love most about our program is that it brings together a diverse group of individuals that may never have had the opportunity to meet. What unites them is their love of Ambler Farm. Our apprentices are thoughtful and kind above all else and we are always looking for ways to build connections and draw-in each apprentice.

Do the apprentices feel a sense of accomplishment and ownership of the farm? Absolutely! Our apprentices take great pride in a job well done and learn from one another how to interact with the community. They become experts about our animals and gardens and love to give tours to visiting families. Our apprentices are the true ambassadors of Ambler Farm!

Outside of the typical meeting days are there other times when the apprentices gather at the farm? There are many apprentice program celebrations and community events that our apprentices enjoy and help with: Ambler Farm Day, Apprentice Soup & Salad Farm-to-Table Event, Scout Events*, Fright Night*, Greens Sale*, End of Summer Party & Senior Send Off.
My child loves the Apprentice Program! Are there off-shoot programs for them to get involved in? We are always looking to develop new programs which allow us to bring together smaller groups of apprentices based on a shared interest. Our current offerings are Early Apprentice Program, Young Builders Program, Trebuchet Team*, CIT Program*, Buddy Program and High School Sugaring Program.*

*Programs and events for older apprentices to participate in or help run.

Still have questions? Email jennifer@amblerfarm.org.