



## Small Steps Nurturing Center

### **Mission:**

Small Steps' mission is to provide an exemplary early childhood program to instill and foster the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth of economically at-risk children and their families.

Small Step's nurturing environment provides its students who are ages 2-6 with a strong academic program and attention to the needs of the whole child. Small Steps program includes:

- Highly qualified and committed teachers who inspire learning
- Small classes that allow relationships to be nurtured
- Academic environments that are enriching and encourage children's imaginations
- Our innovating social-emotional curriculum that fosters self-esteem and respect
- Site-prepared meals that offer daily nutritional needs
- Staff-driven vans that provide dependable transportation
- An environment where each person is treated as a unique creation and deserving of God's grace

For more information, visit <https://www.ssnc.org/>.

### **Current Student:**

This year Sarah Hernandez is working on an important project with Small Steps. Sarah is a senior majoring in Mechanical Engineering.

### **Current Project:**

Sarah is working in the classrooms at Small Steps twice a week, playing with the children and assisting the teachers. Her project involves utilizing 3D printing and laser cutting to create a gear and puzzle kit suitable for children and designed to foster curiosity and develop motor skills. The kit involves moving gear parts and puzzle pieces that can be arranged in 3D space.



**Past Projects:**

In the past, fellows have worked on a variety of projects with Small Steps. Two years ago, fellows observed teachers at Small Steps and collected the number and types of questions the teachers asked their students. The fellows then used this information, along with background knowledge of best education practices, to give data-based feedback to teachers on their teaching. This helped Small Steps to set higher standards for their teachers in order to ensure high academic outcomes for their students.

Other projects have included our fellows facilitating field trips to Rice University and the Houston Zoo. The fieldtrip to the zoo included classroom preparation lead by our fellows. This preparation included classifying animals into types and by what they eat. The experience culminated with the trip to the zoo where our fellows encouraged students to have conversations about animals, look for things discussed in class, and connect what the students learned with the real world.

**Who should apply?**

Students who:

- Are motivated and can work independently
- Are interested in and willing to be involved with our student population and their advancement
- Have strong written communication and research skills

**Who should not apply?**

Students who are not comfortable being in an environment that serves young children.

**Address:**

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