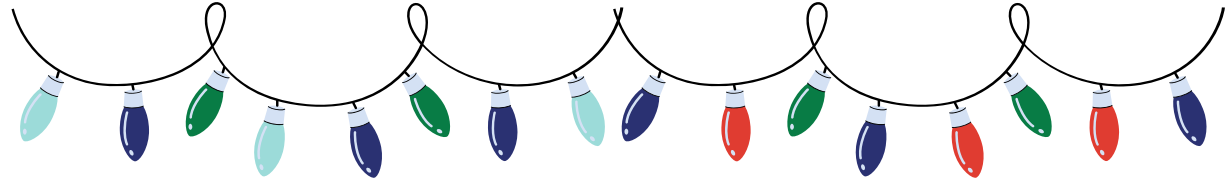


DECEMBER 2023



Ready. Set. Grow!

CAMBRIDGE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
NEWSLETTER



CAMBRIDGE
Office of Early Childhood

The mission of the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood is to **connect** the city's early childhood ecosystem, **align** early childhood services and information, and **advocate** for and **advance** the needs of all young children, their families, and the early childhood workforce.

The Cambridge Office of Early Childhood is a collaboration supported by the City of Cambridge and Cambridge Public Schools.



WHAT'S INSIDE!
TABLE OF CONTENTS

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	3
WHAT WE'RE CELEBRATING THIS MONTH	4
ANNOUNCEMENTS: CAMBRIDGE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM APPLICATION IS NOW OPEN!	5
COACH'S CORNER	6-7
HEALTHY EATING, ACTIVE LIVING BLOG	8
UPDATES FOR THE FIELD	9-10
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	11-12
VISIT THE OEC <u>WEBSITE!</u>	13

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Cambridge Early Childhood Community,

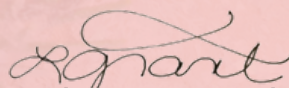
After almost 3 years of intensive work we've finally arrived at the launch day for the Cambridge Preschool Program...hooray! The application for this preeminent universal preschool program went live on Friday, December 1st, just as planned. We are thrilled that all Cambridge families will now have access to FREE preschool for their 4-year-olds, with many 3-year-olds being served by this program as well.

I want to acknowledge the immense amount of time, energy, resources, and heart that the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood (OEC) team has put into making CPP happen. It's so exciting to see this vision come to life!

I'm thankful for the leadership of the Cambridge Public Schools and the City of Cambridge for supporting this work, making tough decisions, being advocates, and believing in the importance of quality early childhood education. A special thank you to all of our school and city colleagues for being allies and partners in this work with us as well. And of course, we could not have made this happen without the hard work and dedication of the 47 program partners who work tirelessly to make high quality early childhood education happen in their classrooms each and every day. I know we will all be working throughout this year to prepare for Fall of 2024 when our inaugural cohort of CPP children start their preschool experience as part of our newly designed universal preschool system...and then we'll celebrate again!

Kudos to our entire early childhood community on this very momentous occasion! I wish everyone a happy December and look forward to connecting in 2024!

In partnership,



Dr. Lisa Grant, Executive Director

DR. LISA GRANT

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CAMBRIDGE OFFICE OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD**



**CAMBRIDGE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM APPLICATION OPENS!
DECEMBER 1, 2023 - JANUARY 15, 2024**

CAMBRIDGE

Preschool Program

www.earlychildhoodcambridge.org/cpp/#application

RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL HOLIDAYS

HANUKKAH

DECEMBER 7-15th



The eight-day Jewish celebration known as Hanukkah, or Chanukah, commemorates the rededication during the second century B.C. of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, where according to legend Jews had risen up against their Greek-Syrian oppressors in the Maccabean Revolt.



CHRISTMAS DAY

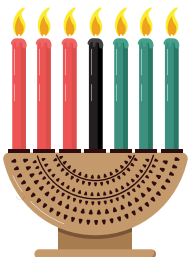
DECEMBER 25th

There are many different events and activities we can participate in during Christmas time such as: Take a holiday card photo with Santa, visit a Christmas tree farm, decorate a gingerbread house, bake unique Christmas cookies, plan a family photoshoot, host a holiday game night, host a Christmas craft party, or write letters to Santa.



KWANZAA

DECEMBER 26th - JANUARY 1st



Kwanzaa is an annual celebration of African-American culture from December 26 to January 1, culminating in a communal feast called Karamu, usually on the sixth day. The name Kwanzaa is derived from the phrase “matunda ya kwanza” which means “first fruits” in Swahili. Each family celebrates Kwanzaa in its own way, but celebrations often include songs and dances, African drums, storytelling, poetry reading, and a large traditional meal.

CHECK OUT WHAT WE'RE CELEBRATING THIS MONTH!



CAMBRIDGE Preschool Program

The Cambridge Preschool Program (CPP) Application is NOW OPEN! Application for the 2024-2025 school year will be open December 1, 2023 – January 15, 2024.

The Cambridge Preschool Program (currently known as UPK) is a mixed delivery system funded by the city of Cambridge that will provide access to high quality early education and care for all Cambridge 4 year-olds and many 3 year-olds as well!

Highlights of the Cambridge Preschool Program (CPP):

- The program will be free for families for a school-day, school-year placement.
- There will be additional costs for extended day and summer programs for most families.
- High-quality state-approved curriculum
- Equitable learning experiences that focus on school readiness and social emotional learning
- Single, centralized online application (paper application will be available)

Programs to choose from:

- Cambridge Public Schools (CPS)
- City of Cambridge's Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP)
- Head Start
- Select community based preschool & family childcare providers

A child is eligible if they live in Cambridge and are:

- 4 years old by August 31, 2024 for 4-year-old programs; or
- 3 years old by August 31, 2024 for 3-year-old programs
 - Please note there will be limited seats for 3-year-olds and there may be additional eligibility requirements.

APPLY TO Cambridge Preschool Program NOW!

In-person assistance is available throughout the application period. Please contact cpp@cpsd.us for more information.

COACH'S

Cambridge Office of Early Childhood
Coach's Corner

ORNER

Hello Amazing Educators!

We are excited to have begun our monthly Professional Learning Communities, or PLCs. These meetings are an opportunity for center-based and family child care educators from across Cambridge to gather and share experiences, reflect about teaching and learning, and to support and encourage one another.



WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING PLCS THIS YEAR:

INFANTS PLC - These sessions provide an opportunity for teachers of infants (6 wks - 12 months) to come connect and learn more about the RIE model (Resources in Infant Educators).

CREATIVE EXPLORATIONS PLCs for toddler and preschool teachers - These sessions are designed for teachers to have the opportunity to experience process-oriented exploration. Each session we explore a different element: natural materials, light and shadow, movement and sound.

TEACHER BUILDING BLOCKS - The goal of this series is to support incoming teachers. Topics include professionalism, building supportive classroom communities and nurturing interactions, and strategies for children's self-regulation.

If you would like to join a PLC, email earlychildhood@cpsd.us!

We would like to highlight our first PLC: Creative Explorations using Natural Materials.

First, we'd like to extend a huge thank you to Khadija Barre and her team for sharing the beautiful Cedar Childcare Center with us. We were all inspired by the thoughtful environments you have created.

It was wonderful to connect with these two groups of dedicated toddler and preschool educators! During our time together we each shared an experience in which we felt connected to nature. It was powerful to hear everyone's stories, including childhood memories of days spent in nature with family and friends, times of freedom to dig through the soil or sand, finding nature's treasures, having moments of deep connection and healing surrounded by trees, being at the top of a mountain, or taking in the vastness of our world's great bodies of water. As everyone shared we took a moment to connect our experiences with how similar opportunities might impact the children we work with. Time in nature or exploring natural materials indoors may lay the foundation for deep connections with self and others, for learning through our senses, and the freedom to explore and create.

And how best to reflect on all of this than by putting into practice and playfully exploring natural materials ourselves? We hope you notice the social aspect of the group, the hands-on aspect of our time, and the creative possibilities in these photos.



Staying Healthy this Holiday Season



If only there was a guaranteed way to prevent getting one another sick around the holidays when family and friends gather! While we can't buy a warranty on our health, we can reduce our risk of getting sick, and keep our immune systems in tip-top shape, by remembering to follow a few simple guidelines:

- Sleep for 7-9 hours each night.
- Eat a well-balanced diet with lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Move your body on most days (aim for 20-30 minutes).
- Actively manage stress with mindfulness, meditation, yoga, movement, etc.
- Stay up to date with vaccinations and visits with the doctor.

What needs attention in your life? Are you having trouble sleeping, or are you feeling stressed each day?

- Think about the reason why; find the root cause. What is a change you can make to resolve that?
- Who is your accountability partner? An accountability partner is someone you can share your goal(s) with (and vice versa) who keeps you on track, and it is proven that having a partner increases the likelihood of accomplishing the goals you have set for yourself. Even if your partner's goals look nothing like your own!

More tips for nutrition and staying active are available on the [resources page](#) at the Cambridge Public Health Department website.

Contact Brigitte DeVeau, Public Health Nutritionist, at bdeveau@cambridgepublichealth.org with questions or interest in this or other healthy eating active living projects.

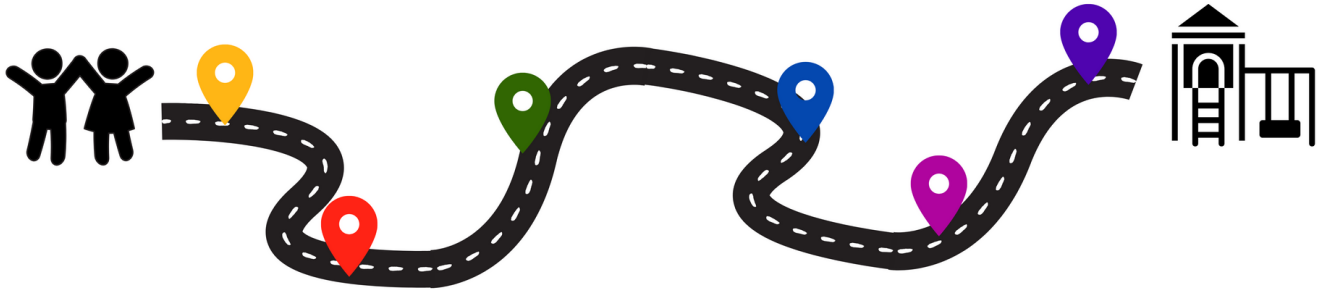
H.E.A.L.
Healthy Eating, Active Living

UPDATES FOR THE FIELD



CAMBRIDGE
Preschool Program

CAMBRIDGE PRESCHOOL PROGRAM ENROLLMENT ROADMAP



1

SEARCH

Families are encouraged to explore CPP options!

- Program Profile provides you a snapshot of our partner programs.
- Use filters to search programs by location, hours, or transportation.

2

APPLY

Applications will be accepted through midnight on 1/15/24. The CPP application consists of a series of questions to assess **ELIGIBILITY**, collect child and family **INFORMATION**, and allow families to **RANK** their preschool choices.

3

MATCHING

Children will be matched with a preschool program based on the information provided in the application. Children who are 4 years old prior to August 31, 2024, would like to remain in their current program, have siblings in their preferred program, or are otherwise considered "high priority" will be prioritized in the matching process.

4

NOTIFICATION

Families will be notified of their preschool match in **early MARCH 2024**.

5

ACCEPT/DECLINE

- If a family **ACCEPTS** the preschool match, they then **ENROLL** in that program.
- If a family **DECLINES** the preschool match, they will be ineligible to reapply and will need to seek a private preschool placement, if desired.

6

ENROLLMENT

CONGRATULATIONS! Families will complete the enrollment process with their preschool program provider, and children will begin their first day of the Cambridge Preschool Program in **Fall 2024!**

For more information on the Cambridge Preschool Program please visit www.earlychildhoodcambridge.org/CPP

NOV. 2023



CITY OF
CAMBRIDGE



The Center for Families
Newsletter is now available!

Inside you'll find information about a wide variety of resources and programs such as:

- Cambridge Dads + Activities
- Mindfulness Mondays
- Free resource bags for families in need
- Resources & Supports for families
- and more!

To read the latest CFF Newsletter
click **HERE!**



UPDATES

FOR THE FIELD



LIKE & FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK!



Did you know we're now on Facebook?

Like & Follow the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood Facebook page so you can see early childhood updates, new resources, and helpful content we share on your favorite social media platform!

You Can Find Us [Here!](#)

or save the url below:

www.facebook.com/cambridgeoec

***Thank you for supporting our
office!***



MASSACHUSETTS
Department of
Early Education and Care

Department of Early Education & Care News



The Board of Early Education and Care meets monthly from September to June.

For meeting locations, or any additional information please call: EEC Main Office at (617) 988-6600

You can watch the meeting live on the Department's YouTube Channel [here](#).

To view archived meetings click [here](#).

DECEMBER 2023

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



DECEMBER 2023



Overcoming Burnout in the ECE Workplace

December 6, 2023

2:00 -3:30 PM Eastern Time

Presenter: Ellen Drolet, author, early childhood educator, consultant, trainer, keynote speaker, Positive Spin VT, LLC

Sponsored by Redleaf Press

Join this webinar to explore strategies for avoiding burn-out and low morale. Based on the book, *Overcoming Teacher Burnout in Early Childhood: Strategies for Change*, Ellen will use inspiring stories from the field to examine the structures and practices that support the development of healthy attitudes, quality engagement, and optimism in the workplace.

Certificates of Attendance are free. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are optional and can be obtained from Bertelsen Education.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Early Efforts: 2023's Big Wins for Little Kids

December 11, 2023

2:00pm

Join The Hunt Institute and a panel of leaders from across the nation for a year-end recap of the biggest early childhood policy advancements of the year.

[REGISTER HERE](#)



Trauma-Informed Practice: Promoting Protective Factors to Combat ACEs

December 12, 2023

Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 noon (ET)

In this session, participants will learn about early childhood brain architecture and the impact of chronic, toxic stress on children as well as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and the long-term *(continued on next page)*

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

(DEC. 2023 CONTINUED)

physical and mental impact of ACEs in adulthood. Participants will leave the session with new knowledge on shifting our view of children and families using a trauma-informed lens and families using a trauma-informed lens and perspective and recognizing certain behaviors as a trauma response rather than a behavioral issue.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand how early experiences and relationships influence brain development in children
- Identify different kinds of stress affect our bodies, minds, and behaviors
- Recognize how Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) may affect people later in life
- Utilize a trauma lens for understanding child behavior
- Learn how to use strategies in each of the REST categories

REGISTER HERE

Need information on all things Early Childhood in Cambridge? Visit the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood website!

www.earlychildhoodcambridge.org



Our Mission

The mission of the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood is to connect the city's early childhood ecosystem, align early childhood services and information, and advocate for and advance the needs of all young children, their families, and the early childhood workforce.

Our Vision

Every child and family in Cambridge has access to high quality early care and education experiences. As a result, all children enter school ready to thrive academically, physically, socially, and emotionally, and continue to do so through third grade and beyond.

[Learn More](#)



What Information Can I Learn From The Website?

www.earlychildhoodcambridge.org is a one-stop-shop for the Cambridge community to access information and resources related to early childhood education and programs. The new website culminates a rebranding process for the Office of Early Childhood, formerly known as the Cambridge Birth to 3rd Grade Partnership. The website includes but is not limited to:

- Child Care Resources
- Paying For Childcare
- Preschool Scholarships
- Preschool Lottery
- Early Learning & School Readiness
- CPS Programs
- Program Quality Improvement
- Educator Resources
- Professional Development
- Workshops & Trainings
- Career Pathways
- Announcements & Events
- Collaborating Organizations
- Publications
- Research & Evaluation
- Who We Are
- COEC Contact Information

Need additional assistance? Please email us at earlychildhood@cpsd.us