



CENTER FOR FAMILIES

CAMBRIDGE, MA



INFORMATION, SUPPORT, AND PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES WITH
CHILDREN BIRTH–8 YEARS OLD LIVING IN CAMBRIDGE.

January 2021 Newsletter

Dear Families and Friends,

Wow, it is now 2021! We have enjoyed connecting with so many of you during 2020, both in person and virtually. We look forward to continuing to connect in 2021. We have many exciting programs coming in 2021 and hope you can join us.

Please continue to look for our monthly newsletter for up to date Center program information and community resources and supports. **If have questions or need information, please contact us at 617-349-6385.**

The Center for Families is a part of the Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs, is the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grantee from Department of Early Education and Care, and a Children's Trust Family Center. We offer free programming and supports for all families living in Cambridge with children birth-8 years old. Currently, the Center is offering virtual and some limited in person programming, including programming just for dads. Center staff are available to support families in connecting with community resources, meet one-on-one for support, and provide access to the Ages and Stages Questionnaire, which supports parents in understand more about their child's development.

Do you need information, support, or just want to connect? While our physical office at the Peabody School is currently closed to the public due to the pandemic, Center staff are available by appointment only to meet with you at our office at 51 Inman Street. Center staff are also available via phone Monday through Friday, 9:00am through 5:00pm. **Our phone number is 617-349-6385.** When you call, please leave a message at the end of the voicemail, and someone will return your call within 24 hours.

You can also reach us via email at centerforfamilies@cambridgema.gov or visit our website at www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP/CFF.

Family Playing and Learning Activities

With so many of us spending so much time at home, we wanted to share a few fun at-home activities that can be done with everyday materials around your home! Playing helps children learn and grow!

Family Fun Activities from Cambridge In Motion

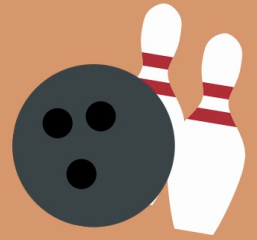
Treasure Hunt



Kids love searching for hidden objects using clues. Write your clues on some slips of paper and place the first clue somewhere easy for your child to find. Then leave as many clues as you want around the house, making a trail to the final clue.

Indoor Bowling

You can use water bottles, paper towel rolls, markers or anything else you have around the house as "bowling pins". Line up 6-10 "bowling pins" and use a soft ball and begin the fun. Take turns bowling and setting up pins.



Family Fun at Home

Play and learn together—and enter a weekly raffle for a chance to win prizes!



Diversión en familia y en casa

Juguemos y aprendamos juntos. Y participen en una rifa semanal para ganar premios!



For more activity ideas, you can also check out **WGBH Family Fun at Home!** Help your children birth through age 8 learn and grow by doing fun activities at home. They post new activities, videos, games, and songs weekly!

Available in English and Spanish.

Check it out at:

<https://www.wgbh.org/distance-learning-center/family-activities>

AGES & STAGES QUESTIONNAIRE (ASQ) WITH THE CENTER FOR FAMILIES!

- The Center for Families wants to support you in providing the best start for your child.
- The ASQ online tool helps you to better understand all your child's different stages of development from one month up to 5 years old.
- The ASQ ask questions about your child's communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal social skills. It only takes about 10-15 minutes, that's it!
- Once you complete the online tool, a Center for Families staff will be in touch to discuss your experience and share activity ideas and resources.
- The Center for Families staff are available to support you in accessing or completing the ASQ tool. Please feel free to reach out to us anytime at centerforfamilies@cambridgema.gov.
- To complete the ASQ, please scan the QR code below with your phone's camera or type the link into your Internet Browser: <https://www.asqonline.com/family/3ef982>



SECURE LINK
TO ASQ
QUESTIONNAIRE (SCAN
WITH PHONE'S
CAMERA)



Cambridge Public Schools

Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten

January 2021 Lottery Information

Hello Families and happy January!

It is time to think about the Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten Lottery for the Cambridge Public Schools!

The Lottery runs from January 4th through 4pm on January 29th for the 2021-2022 school year.

Age Requirements

- Children born between September 1, 2016 – March 31, 2017 JK/K Lottery: January 4-29, 2021 as a Junior Kindertartner.
- Children born between September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016 JK/K Lottery: January 4-29, 2021 as a Kindertartner.

It is very important to register for the lottery in January. This will give you the best opportunity for your child to be matched to a school of their choice. Families may register any time between January 4th and 4pm on January 29th. There is no special benefit for registering early in the month. All registrations that are completed by 4pm on January 29, 2021 will be included in the lottery.

You can find more information and recordings from the information sessions here:
https://www.cpsd.us/administration/src/registering_for/january_kindergarten_lottery

You can contact the Cambridge Public Schools' Student Registration Center at 617-349-6551 or welcome@cpsd.us with questions about the lottery process.

Center for Families staff are also available to support you through this process. Give us a call at 617-349-6385 or send us an email at centerforfamilies@cambridgema.gov.



JANUARY 2021 PROGRAMMING

Center for Families y Harvard Museum of Natural History Evento Virtual para Las Familias de Habla Hispana.

Sabado, Enero 23rd desde 11:00am-11:45am. ¡Hablemos del clima! Pero espera, del ¡Clima Espacial! ¿Sabías que el Sol nos sopla todo el tiempo? ¿Y que a veces sopla pero muy fuerte? ¡Tormentas! Aprende con nosotros del clima espacial y qué tan grandes y poderosas éstas pueden ser. Veremos el Sol en acción y te revelaremos cómo funciona. Conviértete en meteorólogo, en un ¡meteorólogo espacial! **Para registrarse, por favor llamar a Lucy al 617-349-6385 or email lhernandez@cambridgema.gov.**

Virtual Moms' Discussion with a Craft Activity Groups

Thursday, January 21st from 4:30pm - 6:00pm. Join Christine Doucet and Kim Tran from the Center for Families as well as other moms as we talk about parenting and share our experiences while doing a craft activity at our own homes. Kits for the activity will be delivered at your home. Even if the activity is not specifically designed for children, we understand that your children might be around you during this program. We hope you can join us! **This session will run on Zoom. All mothers must register. To register, email Christine Doucet at cdoucet@cambridgema.gov or call 617-349-6385 and leave a message after the long voicemail.**

Virtual Baby Time Infant Playgroup/Infant Support Group (New Time)

Runs weekly on Tuesdays starting January 5th from 12:00pm-1:00pm (new time). This group is for Cambridge families with babies birth through 15 months old. This group is a way to break isolation for parents and babies during this pandemic, get answers to questions and share resources. It is also a time for babies to interact with each other and participate in a fun sing-along that can benefit their social/emotional development. During the Baby Time Playgroup, Christine Doucet will share an activity you can do with your baby while at home. The activity will be included in her weekly Baby Time Playgroup email. **This series will run on Zoom. To register, email Christine Doucet at cdoucet@cambridgema.gov or call 617-349-6385 and leave a message after the long voicemail.**

Have children birth to 4 years at home? Need new ideas for things to do with them? Come learn how your child is developing language and literacy skills and fun ideas to support them during your everyday activities by talking, reading, playing and telling stories!

Early Language and Literacy at Home Series: Dads and Moms Make a Difference! A 4-part virtual series for Cambridge parents with children birth to 4 years.

Tuesdays January 26, February 2, 9, 23 from 8:00pm-9:15pm. Get concrete activity ideas that will work for your life, free books and giveaways, and connect with other dads and moms. Sponsored by Let's Talk! and Center for Families. **To register, contact Cynthia at cwoodward@cambridgema.gov or call 617-349- 6385.**

Exercise and Stress Reduction Series: Virtual Zumba!

Mondays, January 25th, February 1st, 8th, 22nd, March 1st and 8th from 7:00pm-7:45pm. Are you looking for fun ways to get moving and stay active? Do you want to a fun and new stress-reducing experience? Join the Center for Families for our Zumba Series! There is no experience needed! This series is designed for Cambridge parents, but children are welcome to participate or be near by! **This series will run on Zoom. To register, email Lucy Hernandez at lhernandez@cambridgema.gov or call 617- 349-6385 and leave a message after the long voicemail.**

Winter Playgroups at Home Series with Weekly Virtual Live Sessions!

Join the Center for Families and the Agenda for Children for our Playgroups at Home Series! Series will run from the week of January 25th through the week of March 15th. Playgroups at Home is for Cambridge families with children ages 15 months through 4 years old. During the series, we send an email each Monday with an activity idea that can be done with materials from around your home, a tip for support your child's early literacy development, child development information and supports, and a story time video created by CFF and AFC staff! You can use these whenever you want during the week. We will also add the newest information to our Playgroups at Home website for you to be able to easily access all you need. **We host a live virtual session each week on Wednesdays at 10am.** During these live sessions, we do sing-alongs, story times, mindfulness, and lots of movement! **Interested in joining our Playgroups at Home Series? Email Cynthia at cwoodward@cambridgema.gov.**

Virtual Nurturing Touch/Baby Massage and Infant Development 6-Part Series

Wednesdays January 13th, 20th, 27th, February 3rd, 10th and 24th from 12:15pm to 1:30pm (last session will run until 1:45pm). This Series is for Cambridge Families with a baby 4 weeks through pre-crawling. Massaging your baby helps in developing strong relationships between you and your child. Massage helps your baby relax, decrease gas and constipation, increase body awareness and maturation & regulate sleep. The discussion topics and handouts in this series are designed to support you in your parenting. Other members of the family can participate too. **All families must register for the entire series. This series will run on Zoom. To register, email Christine Doucet at cdoucet@cambridgema.gov or call 617-349-6385 and leave a message after the long voicemail.**

Virtual Reading Challenge

Starting January 11th. Hey dads, moms and kids – join Let's Talk, Cambridge Dads, and the Center for Families for a virtual reading challenge starting January 11th, 2021! It's easy and fun! Join by reading with your child(ren) and sharing a picture or a thought with us on social media or text. A submission enters you in a weekly raffle for a chance to win a pack of five books for your child! More details coming soon! **Questions? Call or text John at 857-209-4964.**

Virtual Pajama Story Time Series!

Wednesday, 1/27, 2/24, 3/31 from 6:45pm-7:15pm. The Center for Families and the Cambridge Public Library invite Cambridge children birth through age 8 and their grownups to join us from home for 20-25 minutes of songs, stories, and rhymes to wind down the day. Feel free to wear your favorite cozy pajamas! Caregivers are asked to participate in the program with their children. Plan to join in and sing along! This series is run on Zoom. It is free and open to the public and is not recorded. **All families must register for each session. To register, contact Cynthia at cwoodward@cambridgema.gov and you will be sent the registration link.**

Virtual Creative Movement and Dancing for Families with Young Children: Two Part Series

Saturdays, February 6th and 27th (two options, depending on age of your child)

- 10:45am-11:15am for children 2-4 years old and their grown-ups (siblings welcome)
- 11:30am-12pm for children 4-8 years old and their grown-ups (siblings welcome)

Are you feeling stuck inside with your little ones during this time? Join us on Saturday mornings to move, dance, play, wake up our bodies, and meet new friends both for the children and for the grown-ups! We will focus on connecting with each other through creative movement and finding ways to regulate our bodies and express ourselves. Don't miss the chance to dance and play! Groups will be facilitated by board-certified dance movement therapist Hang Yin Candy Lo and student interns from Lesley University. **This series will run on Zoom. All families must register for a series. To register, contact Cynthia at cwoodward@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-6385.**

Baby University

Virtual Program Series

Baby U will be starting in February 2021 and will run parenting workshops on Saturday mornings for 6 weeks.

If you live in Cambridge and have a child 3 years old or younger, you are eligible to be a part of Baby U!

We'll be leading parenting workshops on different topics each week. At the end of each workshop, we'll join each other virtually in family play activities. Our focus is on strengthening the parent child relationship and supporting parents to become better advocates for their children. Baby U staff will also lend support in connecting with community resources and other families with young children.

This series will run on Zoom. For more information and to register, contact Angela at 617-349-6204 or aconway@cambridgema.gov.



CAMBRIDGE DADS

Cambridge Dads is a partnership between the Center for Families and the Agenda for Children Literacy Initiative.

John and Shawn connect with fathers and father figures and provide information on how a dad can get involved with Cambridge Dads.

Some of the programs we offer include:

- events for Dads and Kids
- events and workshops for Dads only
- connecting one on one
- information on community resources
- information on child development (through the Ages and Stages Questionnaire)

Fathers and Father-figures who live, play, pray, learn or work in Cambridge can reach us by:

- Phone - call or text: 857-209-4964
- Email: cambdads@cambridgema.gov
- Facebook: @CambridgeDads
- Twitter: @CambDads

Fatherhood Text Campaign

Our Fatherhood Text Campaign offers a great way to be connected and informed! Sign up to receive a text once a week about fatherhood, events, and activities to do with your kids in and around Cambridge.

To Sign-Up: Text the word **father** to **95577** (standard text messaging rates apply).



CAMBRIDGE DADS JANUARY PROGRAMMING

Virtual Dads & Kids at Home Facilitated by Knucklebones!

Saturday, January 16th from 10:00-10:45am. Get your Saturday morning started with fun movement games led by Knucklebones and story time! We can't get together at Dads & Kids at the Gym this year so join us virtually this Saturday for an engaging time with your child and other Cambridge dads and their kids! All Cambridge dads, uncles, male-caregivers, grandfathers, stepdads, godfathers, etc. welcome with at least one child between the ages of 2 to 6 years old. **This event will run on Zoom. All Dads and kids must register. To register, complete this online form: <https://bit.ly/3clQLPM> or email Cambridge Dads at cambdads@cambridgema.gov. Questions? Call or text John at 857-209-4964.**

Virtual Monthly Drop-In Dads Discussion Group

Thursday, January 14th from 7:30pm-8:30pm. At this group you will have a chance to connect with dads from Cambridge and share your experience as a father, challenges and joys of parenting today, and ideas for navigating these times. This event will be held on Zoom. Link will be sent to participants after registering. **To register, complete this online form: <https://bit.ly/3llgeBT> or email Cambridge Dads at cambdads@cambridgema.gov. Questions? Call or text John at 857-209-4964.**



CAMBRIDGE
DADS

EST. 2014

CENTER FOR FAMILIES INFORMATION

Are you looking for resources and supports? The Center for Families can help connect you to information and resources for families in Cambridge! We have information about: Childcare, Preschool, Kindergarten/Cambridge Public Schools, Afterschool, Early intervention, Special education, Housing, Employment, Tutoring, English classes, Ages and Stages Questionnaire (a child development screening), and more! **Please contact the Center for Families at 617-349-6385 and leave a message with your name and phone number. We will get back to you within 24 hours. You can also email us at centerforfamilies@cambridgema.gov.**

Do you have questions or need more information about your child's development? Here at the Center for Families, we understand how amazing and challenging parenting can be for all of us. Whether you are a first-time parent or having your fourth child, we all need support and information to understand our child's early growth and development. At the Center, we have two knowledgeable and experienced staff members who are here to help! **If you have an infant and need support, please contact Christine Doucet at cdoucet@cambridgema.gov or 617-349-6385. If your child is over 15 months, please contact Fran Roznowski at froznowski@cpsd.us or 617-821-4504.**

Friends of the Center for Families Needs Your Input!

Friends of the Center for Families (FCFF) is a nonprofit organization that supports and promotes programs, activities, and events for the Center for Families. We are looking for community members to be representatives who are willing to share their experiences and perspectives as a parent, caregiver, program participant or educator to help shape the future of the Center for Families. Even if you can spare just a little bit of time, we welcome your interest! **Please visit our website for more information (www.FriendsOfTheCenterForFamilies.org) or e-mail us at: FriendsOfTheCenterForFamilies@gmail.com.**



RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES



Find It Cambridge: Find It Cambridge (www.finditcambridge.org) is a website to help you easily find the activities, services, and resources you are looking for in Cambridge. Find It Cambridge can help those who live and work in Cambridge learn about the different opportunities the City has to offer. The website can be translated into different languages! If you have any questions you can call Find It at 617-652- 5232 or email Find It at info@finditcambridge.org.

Clothing Resources

The Center for Families can help you connect with clothing resources in Cambridge. Clothing resources provide gently used clothing for families. **Want to learn more?** Contact the Center for Families at centerformfamilies@cambridgema.gov or call 617-349-6385 and leave a message with your name and phone number after the voicemail. We will get back to you within 24 hours. Please include you child's name, age, and clothing and shoe sizes.



Let's Talk

Let's Talk! is a free early literacy program for families with children ages birth-age 8 in Cambridge that offers services for moms, dads and childcare providers. To sign up for a free (virtual) literacy home visit, call 617-665-3812. For tips and resources on ways to support young children, text "letstalk" to 313131 for a weekly tip via text or connect with Let's Talk! at: www.letstalkcambridge.org, facebook.com/LetsTalkCambMA or twitter.com/LetsTalkCambMA



RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES

Adult Education

- **Cambridge Employment Program:** Provides free assistance to Cambridge residents looking for work, career counseling, help with resumes/cover letters, using a computer/internet to help with job searches, and interviewing. Please call 617-349-6166.
- **Community Learning Center (CLC):** Offers ESOL Family Literacy classes (held virtually due to COVID-19) for parents to help them develop their English skills and provide literacy support to their children. Contact Bayyinah Pandolfo at 617-349-6371 for more information and to hear about current openings.

Childcare, School & Support

- **Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP):** Runs programs for children and families, including Preschool and School-Age programming, Community Schools, and Youth Centers around the City. For information, call 617-349-6200 or visit www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP.
- **Riverside Community Care:** Provides an array of services to help children and families cope with developmental, mental health, social and behavioral difficulties. Call (617) 354-2275.
- **JF & CS** has resources for families and Support Groups for parents with babies: <https://www.jfcsboston.org/Our-Services/Center-for-Early-Relationship-Support/Support-Groups>
- **One Tough Job:** connects parents in Massachusetts and beyond with the latest and greatest parenting information, ideas, and on-the-ground resources. www.onetoughjob.org.

Food & Clothing

- **The Cambridge Food Pantry Network:** Provides food and information about food pantries to families around the City, such as the Margaret Fuller House and the East End House. Call the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC) at 617-868-2900.
- **The Somerville/Cambridge WIC Program:** Provides nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and nutritious food for pregnant women, infants, and children up to age 5. For more information, call the WIC at Windsor Street Health Center at 617-665-3750, or the North Cambridge WIC office at 617-575-5370.
- **Cambridge in Motion Healthy Eating & Active Living Resources During COVID-19.** Check out this list of Cambridge Food Resources Available During COVID-19 in the following languages: English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Amharic, and Mandarin. See it today at: https://www.cambridgepublichealth.org/lifestyle/Cambridge_in_Motion.php.

Special Needs Services

- **Riverside Community Care:** Provides developmental services for children under age three at risk for developmental delays. If you are concerned about your child's development, call 617-629-3919.
- **Cambridge Special Start:** Provides developmental screenings for children ages 3 & 4. For more information, call Jeannie Parkus at 617-349-3252.
- **Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities:** Provides information and referrals to individuals with disabilities and their families on all kinds of disability and access issues. Call 617-349-4692 or see <https://www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP/programsforadults/ccpd.aspx>
- **Exceptional Lives** has created free, easy-to-read resources for families who have children with disabilities. Check their website: ma.exceptionallives.org
- **Special Education Liaison - Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC):** If you are looking for parent-to-parent support and information, please contact Zuleka at 617.593.4402 or ZQueen-Postell@cpsd.us.

Housing

- **The Cambridge Multi-Service Center:** Provides housing information and assistance to families from Cambridge who are or are at risk of becoming homeless. Call 617-349-6340.
- **Just-A-Start Corporation:** Free mediation and coaching services for Cambridge residents. Just-A-Start helps with disagreements between landlords and tenants, between neighbors, or even between tenants and service providers. Contact Elizabeth Winston at 617-918-7518 or elizabethwinston@justastart.org to talk to someone about your situation.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES

Department of Human Service Programs

- This winter, the Department of Human Service Programs is offering DHSP Online, **free virtual programming for young people in kindergarten through eighth grade**. Beginning Monday, December 14, Cambridge youth can join their peers in virtual activities led by DHSP staff. Virtual activities will be offered Monday through Friday from 3:00–6:00 p.m. via Zoom or Google Classroom, depending on the child's grade. Learn more and register here: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP/newsandevents/News/2020/12/dhsponline>

Wellbeing and Emotional Support Resources

- **Healthy Minds App**: a FREE app that includes a combination of podcast-style lessons and both seated and active meditations. You'll learn what the science says about the brain while developing skills to tap into these learnings for a healthier, happier you. Check it out at: <https://hminnovations.org/meditation-app>.
- **Center for Mindfulness and Compassion at Cambridge Health Alliance**: free daily programming as well as resources and supports.
- **Sesame Street in Communities**: Sesame Street has lots of great resources and activities for social and emotional wellbeing for both parents and children! Check it out at: <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org>.
- **Massachusetts Launches New Family-Friendly Website to Help Parents Support Children's Mental Health**: www.HandholdMA.org provides free tools and resources for parents concerned about their children's mental health. **HandholdMA.org is available in six languages**: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese.

Other

- **The Commission on Immigrant Rights & Citizenship (CIRC)**, addresses the needs of Cambridge's immigrant community in identifying, accessing and obtaining City and local resources, including legal services. Reach out to CIRC through www.Cambridgema.gov/circ.
- The **Fuel Assistance Program** assists households in Cambridge and Somerville with winter heating costs between November 1st and April 30th. Renters and homeowners in both cities are eligible to apply if they meet federal income guidelines. Due to COVID-19, all application appointments will be done by phone and applications will be submitted through no-contact options. **English, Spanish, and Amharic-speaking intake workers are available to assist applicants.** Learn more about the program and application process and requirements here: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP/programsforadults/fuelassistance/howtoapply>. You can also call 617-349-6252.

If you have questions or need more information, please feel free to contact the Center for Families at 617-349-6385 or centerforfamilies@cambridgema.gov.