



CENTER FOR FAMILIES

CAMBRIDGE, MA

APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER

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



Dear Families and Friends,

Happy Spring! Spring is here and with it comes warmer weather and the chance to get outside more! Our April Newsletter is full of program information and community resources and supports that are great for Cambridge families! Wondering what our summer programs will be? We will be sharing more information about outside in-person programs as well as virtual options for the summer soon! **If you 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 understanding more about their child's development.

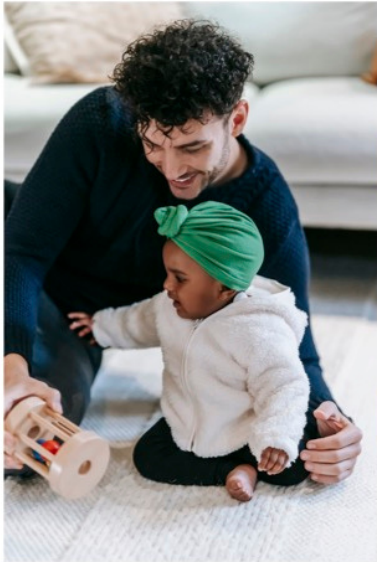
Do you need information, support, or just want to connect? **Our phone number is 617-349-6385. You can also reach us via email at centerforfamilies@cambridgema.gov or visit our website at www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP/CFF.**



The Center for Families is funded by the City of Cambridge, the Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) grant from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC), Children's Trust, Cambridge Public Schools, and the Cambridge Health Alliance.

Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) with the Center for Families

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 with activities you can do at home. It only takes about 10-15 minutes!



Let's hear from a parent, just like you!

"The ASQ has allowed us to know more about our daughter's developmental stages. Our follow-up conversation with Christine has been equally calming, inspiring, and enlightening about how to motivate our baby girl. We are sure that we will continue using this helpful resource." - **Cambridge Mom**

What Cambridge Parents Are Saying

"The ASQ is a valuable resource for all parents, especially for new parents. If you're curious about your child's development and want to learn about activities to do with your child, this is the opportunity for you! Our family had such a positive experience that we did the questionnaire multiple times for my child at different ages. I highly recommend this resource!" - **Cambridge Parent**

To access the ASQ, please visit:
<https://www.asqonline.com/family/3ef982>
or scan the QR code with your phone's camera.



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 617-349-6385 or centerforfamilies@cambridgema.gov.

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APRIL 2021 PROGRAMMING

Exercise and Stress Reduction Series: Virtual Zumba!

Mondays, April 5th, 12th, 26th and May 3rd 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 nearby! **This series will run on Zoom. To register, email Kim Tran at ktran@cambridgema.gov or call 617-349-6385.**

Virtual Moms' Discussion with a Craft Activity Groups

Thursday, April 15th from 10:00am - 11:30am. 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.**

Harvard Museum of Natural History Virtual Family Event!

Wednesday, April 21st from 11:00am-11:45am. Join Museum Educator Javier Marin from the Harvard Museum of Natural History as we explore the relationships between living things and the places they live! During this live Zoom session, learn about how animals, plants and their environments are connected. Get up close and personal with a Madagascan hissing cockroach and meet their beneficial hitchhikers—the mites. Find out what special tools tarantulas and geckos use to survive in the rainforest, desert, and other biomes as we investigate the incredible diversity of our natural world. For Cambridge families with children 3-8 years old, siblings welcome! **All families must register for this event. To register, email Cynthia at cwoodward@cambridgema.gov.**

Virtual Family Concert: Canta Canta with Maura Mendoza!

Thursday, April 22nd from 7:00pm-7:45pm. Families with young children will enjoy songs in English, Spanish and Portuguese. Through family engagement efforts in education, Maura Mendoza has gathered these songs directly from families in the community. Whether with a chacarera or a bossa nova, Maura delights multicultural, multilingual and monolingual families, wherever she goes. Please join us for an evening of dancing and celebration! **All families must register for this event. To register, email Cynthia at cwoodward@cambridgema.gov.**

Virtual Pajama Story Time Series!

Wednesdays, April 28th, May 26th, and June 30th from 6:45pm-7:15pm (summer dates coming soon!). 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 Nurturing Touch/Baby Massage and Infant Development 6-Part Series

Next series will begin in July 2021. 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. **For more information on this series and other Baby Massage options, email Christine Doucet at cdoucet@cambridgema.gov or call 617-349-6385.**

APRIL 2021 PROGRAMMING

Spring 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 begin the week of April 5th and run for 8 weeks!. 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 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 Infant Support Group with Sing-along!

Runs weekly on Tuesdays from 12:00pm-1:00pm (no group on 4/20). 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 and Athena will share an activity you can do with your baby while at home. The activity will be included in Christine's weekly Infant Support Group 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.**

Families with Infants - Stay tune for outside, in-person programs in May/June for parents and their babies!

Programs will include:

- Outside, In-Person Baby Playgroup/Support Group in the Park Series for Parents with babies 3 months to 15 months. Singalong and activity kits provided.
- Baby Walk Series! We will walk together with babies in strollers or in baby carriers, starting from a park and ending with a singalong. This series is for parents with babies birth to 15 months old.

Virtual Three-Part Series: Postpartum Exercises, Tips and Stretches for Mothers in their First Year after Giving Birth

Thursdays, May 6th and May 13th with a follow up session on June 17th from 10:00am to 11:30am. Postpartum workshop for mothers with babies birth-12 months. Learn from a physical therapist specialized in postpartum how to improve your physical health after birth. This workshop will give you tools to strengthen your whole body safely especially the pelvic floor and abdominal muscles. Instructor: Sybille Bosslet. **This series will run on Zoom. All mothers must register for the entire series. To register, email Christine Doucet at cdoucet@cambridgema.gov or call 617-349-6385 and leave a message after the long voicemail.**

April 2021: At-Home Science and Math Activity Calendar from Let's Talk/Agenda for Children Literacy Initiative and Center for Families.

Enjoy science and math together with new ideas daily to do with your child in the April 2021 At-Home Activity Calendar! Designed for children birth to 4 years old but all ages are welcome to try the activities. The goal is to have fun! Parents - you can change the ideas to match your child's age and interest. **You can see the calendar here: <https://bit.ly/31pg5oU>.** Have questions or need help accessing the calendar, call or text Jen at 617-800-9154 or email jbaily@challiance.org. Enjoy!

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 APRIL PROGRAMMING

Reading/Listening Book Club

Dates: Tuesdays, April 6th and May 4th

Time: 7:30pm-9:00pm

Join us and other Cambridge dads in this 2-part series! We will read/listen to The Five Love Languages and engage in conversation! During our two sessions we will explore the benefits of understanding your Love Language. **This series will run on Zoom. We will provide a physical or audio book version of the title! Sign up by completing this form: <http://bit.ly/2ONR7wZ> or email us and let us know you want to sign up: cambdads@cambridgema.gov.**

Dads & Kids at Home

Date: Saturday, April 10th

Time: 10:00am-10:45am

Dads & Kids at Home returns with a fun packed morning! We can't get together at Dads & Kids at the Gym this month, so join us virtually Saturday, April 10th at 10:00am for an engaging time with your child and other Cambridge dads and their kids! **This session will run on Zoom. Sign up by completing this form: <https://bit.ly/3ciQLPM> or email us and let us know you want to sign up: cambdads@cambridgema.gov.**

Dads Talk! Monthly Discussion Group

Date: Tuesday, April 27th

Time: 7:30pm-8:30pm

A virtual discussion group for Cambridge dads! This is a great opportunity to:

- Connect with other dads in the community and talk about topics related to fatherhood
- Share challenges as well as ideas for navigating challenges
- Learn about resources in the community

This session will run on Zoom. To register, complete this form: <https://bit.ly/3llgeBT> or email us and let us know you want to sign up: cambdads@cambridgema.gov.



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 or child's behavior? 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

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 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.
- **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

- Looking for fun virtual afterschool activities? **DHSP Online offers free, daily virtual programming for youth in Kindergarten through 8th grade.** Children in each grade band can join a variety of 1-hr virtual activities every day of the week to connect with their peers and DHSP staff through crafts, trivia games, meditation, STEAM activities, fitness classes, and more! Learn more here:
<https://www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP/newsandevents/News/2021/01/dhsponline.aspx>

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.
- **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
- **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.



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