

FEBRUARY 2024

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.

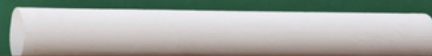
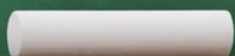


CAMBRIDGE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

www.earlychildhoodcambridge.org

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	3
WHAT WE'RE CELEBRATING THIS MONTH!	4
COACH'S CORNER: WE'RE ROLLING!	5
HEALTHY EATING, ACTIVE LIVING	6
LET'S TALK CAMBRIDGE: AT-HOME ACTIVITY CALENDAR	7
FLYERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS	8-10
UPDATES FOR THE FIELD	11-12
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES	13
VISIT THE OEC <u>WEBSITE!</u>	14
THE OEC TEAM	15



A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Cambridge Early Childhood Community,

As we work to support and elevate the field of early childhood education, it often feels like we are taking baby steps (no pun intended), rather than seeing the sweeping change our profession so desperately needs. This week, we've made a giant leap in Massachusetts in our efforts to support those working with our youngest citizens.

The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced that the third round of applications for the MA Repay Program is now open. This is the first time that direct care staff and their supervisors at programs licensed and/or funded by the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) are eligible to apply for the student loan repayment program! This includes staff who work in center-based child care, out-of-school time (OST), and family child care (FCC) programs, including educators and assistants.

1. Loan repayment awards will range between \$3,000 and \$30,000 per individual.
2. To be eligible, people must make less than 50% of the area median income (AMI) for a single-person household as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Read the [press release](#) for more information and find out if you qualify at <https://www.marepay.org/>.

Although we still have a lot of work to do in professionalizing our field, the financial support this program provides will have a tremendous impact on so many educators who work tirelessly (often for low wages) to provide high quality care and education each and every day. This initiative, coupled with our work in creating professional pathways through access to continuing education, and the raising of salaries for Cambridge preschool teachers is serving as a model to other communities and states across the country...certainly a milestone worth celebrating!

In partnership,

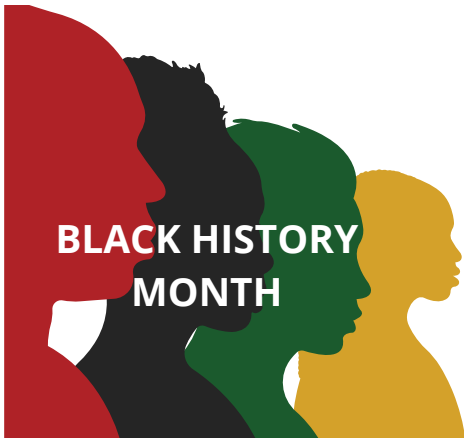


Dr. Lisa Grant, Executive Director



DR. LISA GRANT

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



The Black History Month theme for 2024 is “Rhythms of Resilience: One Soul, One Sound.”

“Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and a time for recognizing their central role in U.S. history. Also known as African American History Month, the event grew out of “Negro History Week,” the brainchild of noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every U.S. president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating Black history.”

[Read more about Black History Month from History.com](#)

Lunar New Year is one of the most important celebrations of the year among East and Southeast Asian cultures, including Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean communities, among others. The New Year celebration is usually celebrated for multiple days—not just one day as in the Gregorian calendar’s New Year.

China’s Lunar New Year is known as the Spring Festival or Chūnjié in Mandarin, while Koreans call it Seollal and Vietnamese refer to it as Tết.



Valentine’s Day Fast Facts!

- The first ever Valentines Day was in 496!
- 8. The oldest love poem was said to have been 4,000 years ago!
- Around 85% of Valentines Day cards are bought by women.
- Around 73% of flowers are bought by men!
- Valentines Day is said to be the second most popular day to send cards, after Christmas!

[Read more about these facts here!](#)

President’s Day FunFacts!

- Presidents Day is celebrated on the third Monday in February, thanks to the 1968 Uniform Monday Holiday Act.
- It was established in 1885 in honor of President George Washington's birthday.
- Washington's birthday was actually on February 22, 1732 (this would be his 282nd birthday!)

[Read more President’s Day fun facts here!](#)



WHAT WE'RE CELEBRATING THIS MONTH!

COACH'S

Cambridge Office of Early Childhood
Coach's Corner

COACH'S CORNER

We're Rolling!

As coaches, we encourage teachers to notice the VERBS, or the specific action, of what children are doing, and consider how to expand upon that action. Recently, some toddler classroom teachers have observed children rolling objects, and to support the play, teachers found ways to make ramps. One classroom used the top of the sensory table, while another classroom used wooden boards.

The story from one room: Children were drawn to the new material (ramps), and nearly every child tried rolling something down or up the ramp. The conversation included words such as high/low and fast/slow, but also words and concepts that adults put to what children could see happening: rubber wheels moving slowly, pretend wheels not turning but rather "sliding" (new verb!), and some objects rolling sideways instead of straight. The rolling ended up as a cooperative game of "roll the ball," a wonderfully turn-taking and community building experience. To build upon this play, in the coming days, perhaps the teachers will offer a basket of round and non-round objects to test and observe how they move on the ramp.



What are the VERBS you notice in your classrooms? How might you support and extend the play? What schema might they be exploring? Enjoy discovering with the children and send us a message if you want to share a story from your room!

Isis Arnesen | iarnesen@cpsd.us
Marilyn Pratt | mpratt@cpsd.us
Kathryn Hok | khok@cpsd.us

Making Smart Choices for a Healthy Smile



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

Smile! February is National Children’s Dental Health Month! What we eat affects our teeth– and our smile– and nutrition has a huge impact on tooth development in growing children. Avoiding foods and beverages with lots of added sugar and instead choosing fruits, vegetables, and water help the body fight inflammation and bacteria in the mouth that promote the plaque that leads to cavities. Fruits and vegetables contain a variety of vitamins that benefit oral health, such as Vitamin C for keeping the connective tissue in our gums strong.

Adult teeth are still developing throughout childhood, which means that it is extremely important for children to eat foods that provide them with nutrients to support this growth! Foods that are rich in or fortified with calcium and Vitamin D promote healthy teeth (and bones). Calcium is found in milk, cheese, yogurt, salmon, and shellfish, and plant sources include broccoli, kale, tofu, and black beans. Egg yolks contain a small amount of Vitamin D, while whole grain cereals and milks (dairy and plant based) are often fortified with it.

- [This tip sheet from Cambridge Healthy Smiles](#) can be shared with teachers and families!
- [H-2-Know: a fun graphic](#) to share to help promote water over sugar-sweetened drinks!

More tips for nutrition, staying active, and taking care of your smile are available on the [resources page](#) at the Cambridge Public Health Department website. Snack and meal ideas are shared on the [Cambridge in Motion Instagram account](#) as well.

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

February 2024: At-Home Activity Calendar

Designed for Cambridge children ages 0-4, but all are welcome!

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
--------	--------	---------	-----------	----------	--------	----------

Parents, check out these ideas to try at home.

The goal is to have fun!

You can change these ideas to match your child's age or interests.



				1 Talk Take a walk and play "I Spy." What do you see?	2 Play Play dress up with the clothes that are already in your house.	3 Read Read a book and look for the letters in your child's name.
4 Sing Dance as fast and as slow as you can.	5 Tell Stories Pretend you have never seen your home and you are exploring it for the first time.	6 Talk Find the biggest and smallest bowl in your kitchen. Compare: how are they different?	7 Read Read aloud the words you see at the grocery store.	8 Play Put on warm clothes and visit the park!	9 Tell Stories Imagine a different ending for a favorite book.	10 Talk Cook together! Read the recipe out loud and talk about the ingredients.
11 Tell Stories Pretend that you can fly! What do you see below you?	12 Play Make bubbles with soap and water, then play with them.	13 Sing Add your child's name into a favorite song and sing it together.	14 Talk Have a conversation about your child's favorite toy. What does your child like about it?	15 Read Read a familiar book as fast as you can. Make it silly!	16 Sing Share one of your favorite songs with your child.	17 Play Color on something other than paper. For example, use a cereal box or the sidewalk.
18 Read Read a book that takes place during the winter.	19 Talk Build a tower with blocks or household items. Is it tall or short?	20 Play Play with something sticky or squishy, like shaving cream, a sponge, or tape.	21 Tell Stories Use toys or household objects to tell a story.	22 Sing Sing a song about a family routine, like cleanup time or bathtime.	23 Play Crawl like a bear. Make bear noises if you want!	24 Tell Stories Tell your child a story about your own childhood.
25 Sing Use your feet to stomp along to a song. Can you find the beat?	26 Play Make a picture using 2 different art supplies. For example, use a crayon and a pencil.	27 Read Count the pages in a short book. Does your book have page numbers?	28 Talk Get household items and sort them by shape. Look for rectangles, triangles, and circles!	29 Play Play with something that makes noise, like an instrument or a pot or pan.	For more activity ideas, check out our social media accounts! @cambridgecenterforfamilies @cambridgema.gov/dhsp/cff @LetsTalkCambMA @LetsTalkCambMA @LetsTalkCambMA	



CAMBRIDGE
EARLY CHILDHOOD
PULSE SURVEY 2.0

CAMBRIDGE
Office of Early Childhood

SAUL ZAENTZ
Early Education
INITIATIVE



LAST CALL TO RESPOND!

The Cambridge Pulse Survey will close at the end of this month. We hope to hear from you!

We are thrilled to invite you to participate in the Cambridge Early Childhood Pulse Survey 2.0, the second round of an ongoing effort led by researchers at the Harvard Graduate School of Education in collaboration with the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood.

Survey translations now available in Spanish and Portuguese!

Purpose

- Map the composition and experiences of Cambridge's early education and care workforce
- Identify key barriers and opportunities to support workforce development and quality improvement

Eligibility

All Cambridge's early educators and caregivers working with children ages 0-5, including (but not limited to):

- ✓ **Center-based child care**
- ✓ **Family Child Care**
- ✓ **Head Start programs**
- ✓ **Public school prekindergarten**

NEW Individuals working with children under 5 in **family support** or **home visiting roles**

Gift Card



Eligible survey responders will receive a **\$40 gift card** for completing the survey.

[Click here to take the Cambridge Pulse Survey 2.0](#)

Questions? Reach out to us at cpetty@gse.harvard.edu



PRESENTS

DEI POLICY WORKSHOP

WITH DR. IHEOMA IRUKA

This workshop focuses on equitable policies and practices to address racism, systemic inequities, and bias in the early care and education system. Leveraging the recently released book, *We Are the Change We Seek: Advancing Racial Justice in Early Care and Education* by Iruka and colleagues (Teachers College Press, 2023) and *Start with Equity: 14 Priorities to Dismantle Systemic Racism in Early Care and Education Report* by Meek, Iruka and colleagues (2020), we will discuss how systemic inequities and biases are embedded in early care and education programs, practices, and policies.

The following areas will be addressed:

- Creating anti-bias and anti-racist classroom practice plans
- Engaging families in authentic and inclusive relationships
- Introducing a process to implement any and all of the 14 priorities from *We Are the Change We Seek* to dismantle systemic racism in early care and education



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29TH
6:30–8:00 PM
(VIRTUAL)

[Register HERE](#)



Speaker

Iheoma U. Iruka, Ph.D., is a Research Professor in the Department of Public Policy and the Founding Director of the Equity Research Action Coalition at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute at UNC Chapel Hill. Dr. Iruka is leading projects and initiatives focused on ensuring that minoritized children and children from low-income households thrive through the intersection of anti-bias, anti-racist, and culturally grounded research, program, and policy. Dr. Iruka has authored over 80 books and papers and has given over 300 talks addressing systemic inequities and advancing research and action on the well-being of children and families.



Learn more about Dr. Iheoma Iruka by visiting
www.iheomairuka.com

2024 Webinar Series ROCK ENROLLment

FEBRUARY 6TH 6:30-7:30 P.M.

Are you faced with enrollment and marketing challenges in your early childhood program? Do you need new ideas to engage your local community with your center? Are you a Teacher that wants to learn more about how you can support family engagement? Well then you should register for our next MAAEOYC webinar to ROCK your enrollment and marketing goals!



MELLISSA OPPEDISANO

Melissa Oppedisano, our presenter and MAAEOYC Secretary, has been in the Early Childhood Education field for over 25 years. Tapping into her 15 plus years in leadership roles, she will share her experience in both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. She has long-standing experience in building program reputation, collaborating with teams, and creating marketing strategies that support programs with a solid foundation to exceed enrollment and marketing visions.



Join Melissa on February 6th from 6:30-7:30PM, and you will walk away feeling inspired, with more tools in your toolbox to ROCK ENROLLment!

2024 Webinar Series Our Speakers

ALL EVENTS ARE AT 6:30-7:30 P.M.



MELLISSA OPPEDISANO
FEB. 6TH

ROCK ENROLLment
(enrollment & marketing)



KATE BARLOW
MARCH 5TH

Learn The Signs. Act Early



GREGG MILLIEN
APRIL 23RD

Peer to Supervisor



JENNIFER BUSBY
MAY 15TH

Process Vs. Product Art



PATTY SINCLAIR
JUNE 26

Inclusion on Purpose: Leading
with an Anti-Bias Approach



UPDATES

FOR THE FIELD



CAMBRIDGE Preschool Program

UPDATE



The application period for the **Cambridge Preschool Program (CPP)** is now closed for the 2024-2025 school year. Families in need of application assistance should contact cpp@cpsd.us.

If you have submitted a completed CPP application, please see the enrollment timeline below for what's next in the process:

- Notification of preschool match in early **March 2024**.
- Families have 2 weeks from notification to accept or decline their placement.

For additional information, including updated FAQs, please [visit our website](#).



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



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.](#)

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!***

FEBRUARY 2024

UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES



FEBRUARY 2024



Early Efforts | Including All Children: Creating More Inclusive Early Childhood Settings

Tuesday, February 6, 2024
2 PM ET

Presenters: Dr. Sarah Vanover, Dr. Alyssa Mwenelupembe, Jennifer Washburn

Supporting the needs of children with special needs is a critical, but sometimes daunting, prospect for early learning programs. How can both programs and state policies become more inclusive, and what supports will providers require to get there? Join an expert panel as we discuss including all children.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

How Perspective-Taking Nurtures Empathy, Kindness, & Justice in ECE

Wednesday, February 21, 2024
2:00-3:30 PM ET

Presenters: Jacky Howell, Makai Kellogg, Magy Youssef, Sabina Zeffler
Sponsored by Second Step

Join us to explore the stories of three experienced early childhood educators and their mentor who have created early childhood environments and experiences that nurture kindness, empathy, and perspective-taking. You will learn how to apply the principles adapted from Quaker values, social justice movements, and mindfulness practice in your classroom or program to support learning in a just and equitable environment. .

Certificates of attendance are free. As of January 1st, 2024, the option for CEUs has been suspended.

[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:

- Cambridge Preschool Program
- Child Care Resources
- Paying For Childcare
- Preschool Scholarships
- 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

MEET THE CAMBRIDGE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD TEAM!



Dr. Lisa Grant
Executive Director
lgrant@cpsd.us



Isis Arnesen-Pardo
Education Coach
iarnesen@cpsd.us



Nicole Johnson
UPK Project Manager
njohnson@cpsd.us



Elizabeth Barlock
Director of Education
ebarlock@cpsd.us



Allen Kesten
Scholarship Specialist
akesten@cpsd.us



Paula Bowie
Family Child Care Coach/Mentor
paulajbowie@gmail.com



Danielle Pazos
Program Quality Manager
dpazos@cpsd.us



Emily Callejas
Workforce Development Manager
ecallejas@cpsd.us



Megan Postal
Director of Family & Community Engagement
mpostal@cpsd.us



Candice Campbell
Enrollment Manager
cacampbell@cpsd.us



Marilyn Pratt
Education Coach
mpratt@cpsd.us



Christina Denis
Director Mentor
chrisdenis15@gmail.com



Rita Rzezuski
CDA Education Coach
rrezuski@gmail.com



Dawn Grassi
Operations Manager
dgrassi@cpsd.us



Yadling Richemond
Child Care Information Specialist
yrichemond@cpsd.us



Kaori Hattori de Panepinto
Director Mentor
kaorihdp@gmail.com



Erin Sarpard
Professional Development Specialist
esarpard@cpsd.us



Katharyn Hok
Education Coach
khok@cpsd.us



Christine Williams
Marketing & Communications Specialist
chwilliams@cpsd.us



Kyoko Itagaki
Administrative Assistant
kitagaki@cpsd.us



Your Name Here
Credentiaing Specialist
COMING SOON!