

DECEMBER 2022

Ready. Set. Grow!

CAMBRIDGE OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD
NEWSLETTER



CAMBRIDGE
Office of Early Childhood

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.

A Letter From Our Executive Director



Dear Cambridge Early Childhood Community,

As we end another year, it is inevitable that we are looking forward at what's to come in the year ahead. At the top of our list is continuing to work towards ensuring high quality preschool is universally available to each and every child living in our community. With that, we continue to seek feedback from all in our community to help shape the future of this extremely impactful initiative.

There is still time for families to fill out our family survey linked [here](#). This survey allows families who have had preschoolers within our city at any point in the past, current families with preschoolers, and those who have yet to have young children enrolled in preschool the opportunity to share their experiences, as well as their hopes and dreams for our system in the future. Family voice is something we wholeheartedly value and plan to incorporate into this work.

We are also in the midst of assessing capacity within our current early childhood system from providers in the city. We have yet to hear from many programs and that voice is just as critical. If you haven't already, please access the program capacity survey [here](#). This survey will provide us with very important data that will allow us to assess where Cambridge preschoolers are currently attending school, and which programs have the capacity and desire to embark on this adventure with us!

As we head into a season of winter celebrations for many, I wish everyone a happy December and look forward to connecting in 2023!

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Grant'.

**Dr. Lisa Grant, Executive Director
Cambridge Office of Early Childhood**

HANUKKAH

DECEMBER 18 - 26th



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.



Families light one candle of the menorah on the first day, two on the second (and so on) after sundown during the eight days of Hanukkah while reciting prayers and singing songs. Eight candles symbolize the number of days that the Temple lantern blazed; the ninth, the shamash, is a helper candle used to light the others.

CHRISTMAS EVE & CHRISTMAS DAY

DECEMBER 24th & 25th

The origins of Christmas stem from both the pagan and Roman cultures. The Romans actually celebrated two holidays in the month of December. The first was Saturnalia, which was a two-week festival honoring their god of agriculture Saturn. On December 25th, they celebrated the birth of Mithra, their sun god.



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.



Dr. Maulana Karenga, a Black nationalist who later became professor and chairman of Black Studies at California State University, Long Beach, created Kwanzaa in 1966 as a way of uniting and empowering the African American community.



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.

Healthy Eating, Active Living (H.E.A.L.) Corner

Join the Healthy Monday Campaign!



We want to support the health of our staff and families, but the time required for research, finding speakers, and planning activities can be overwhelming. That's what makes the Monday Campaigns so wonderful. It's FREE, completely packaged materials on nutrition, physical activity, stress management, and tobacco cessation. All you have to do is pick a program, download the materials, sign up for weekly emails, and share/post/promote them!

- **Try the DeStress Monday At-School Program.** This kit includes 20 stress management practices for teachers to try on their own, then introduce into the classroom at their discretion. Watch a short introductory video for more information.
- **Try the Move It Monday Program.** Here you'll find simple, accessible exercises to help get folks moving at home, at work, or in the community.

Links to the Healthy Monday Campaigns (and so much more) can be found on the resources page at the Cambridge Public Health Department website.

Contact Dawn Olcott, Manager of Public Health Nutrition, at dolcott@challiance.org with questions or interest in this or other healthy eating active living projects.



Looking for activities and resources for you and your family?

Use Find It Cambridge to search for childcare, housing, health services, free events & more!

Visit www.finditcambridge.org ■ **Call or text** 617.686.2998 ■ **Email** info@finditcambridge.org

Need help searching?

Call, text, or email Andrew.

He can help you find what you are looking for.

The Preschool Scholarship Program from the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood

will open our scholarship application process for new families in early 2023.
Inquiries? Contact Allen Kesten, Scholarship Specialist | akesten@cpsd.us



Register this January for the
JK / Kindergarten Lottery!

Will your child be 4 by March 31, 2023, or 5 by August 31, 2023?

APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED JANUARY 3-31, 2023

Apply Here &
Find More Info



www.bit.ly/cpslottery

CPS Student Registration Center

welcome@cpsd.us | 617.349.6551
www.cpsd.us/departments/src



www.finditcambridge.org



Updates For The Field



The Center for Families December Newsletter is now available!

Inside you'll find information about a wide variety of resources and programs...from Cambridge Dads to Mindfulness Mondays to free resource bags for families and more.

To read the December Newsletter click [HERE!](#)

Department of Early Education & Care News



The Department of Early Care & Education's next board meeting will be held on:

Tuesday, December 13, 2022
1:00-4:00 PM

EEC Central Office
50 Milk Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA

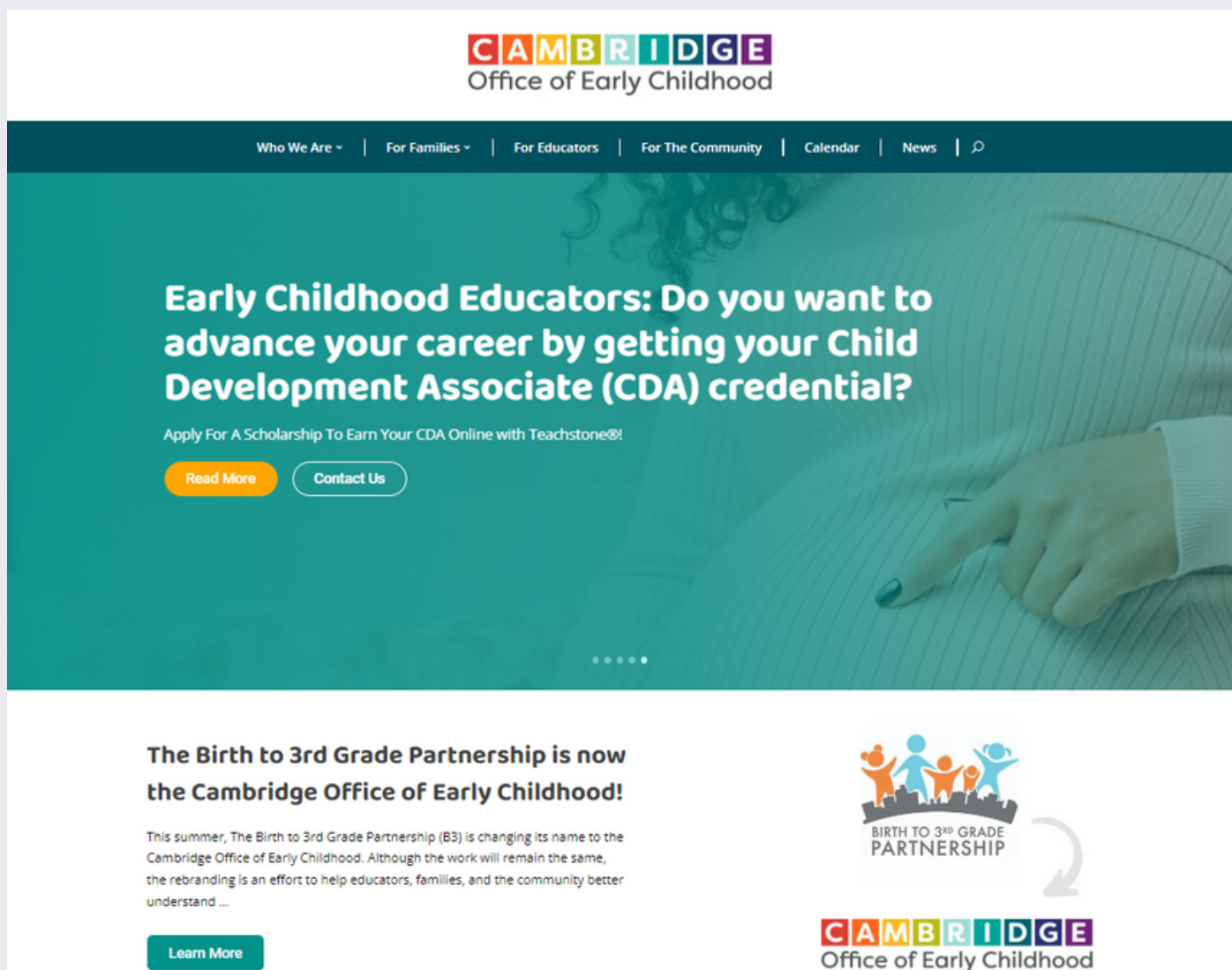
You can watch the meeting live on the Department's YouTube Channel [here](#).



Have You Checked Out The Cambridge Office of Early Childhood Website Yet?

www.earlychildhoodcambridge.org 

**The Cambridge Office of Early Childhood
has launched a new 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 VILLAGE

Our joy is powerful.

Advocating for Your Child Workshop:

Teaching Your Child Self-Advocacy

You are the most important advocate for your child's education and this starts with you teaching your child self-advocacy. During the workshop we will provide you with ways to help empower your child to self-advocate, find solutions that work to meet their learning needs, and how to collaborate with their teacher.

Wednesday, December 7th 6-7 PM

Use this link to register or scan the QR code:

https://secure1.cpsd.us/event_registration



The Village is a community and platform
for and by families of color.



Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities

DECEMBER

The Heart of Inclusive and Meaningful Assessment Practices with Young Children Wednesday, December 7, 2022

2:00-3:30 PM

Sponsored by Brookes Publishing

Presenters: Kristie Prett-Frontczak, Ph.D. Jennifer Grisham, Ed.D. and Lynn Sullivan, M.Ed

Authentic assessment, practiced well, can be one of the most beneficial tools for teaching all children in inclusive early childhood settings. The process of implementing authentic assessment, regardless of the tool, can help teachers connect deeply with children and families, as well as learn how to best support them as individuals.

Join this webinar to:

- Understand the impact of authentic assessment on decisions related to determining eligibility, planning instruction, monitoring child progress monitoring, and evaluating early childhood programs.
- Compare authentic and conventional assessment practices.
- Understand the importance of partnering with families and other professionals to ensure inclusive educational experiences for all children.
- Become more aware of and able to respond to systemic inequities and assessment practices that are harmful to children, who are Black, Indigenous, of Color, and/or who have disability labels.

All of the webinars are recorded. You can earn .2 CEUs for each webinar. The cost is \$15 paid to University of Oklahoma online when you apply. Learn more here: Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from University of Oklahoma

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Learning to Listen: Conversations for Change Listening to What Voters Want for Children, featuring Linda Smith

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

3:00pm



In the next conversation of BTC's Learning to Listen: Conversations for Change fall series, Linda Smith, Director of the Bipartisan Policy Council's (BPC) Early Childhood Development Initiative, will discuss what the midterm elections tell us about who is listening to the children, and their families, and what we can expect policymakers — on both sides of the aisle — will and won't do on their behalf.

Registration is free and includes live Spanish language translation and closed captioning. Certificates of attendance are available!

Can't attend the live webinar?

[REGISTER HERE](#) to receive the recording.

Upcoming Professional Development Opportunities

DECEMBER (cont.)

Gender, Expectations, and Social-Emotional Development in Early Childhood Programs

Thursday, December 15, 2022

2:00pm-3:30pm

Sponsored by Second Step

Presenters: Julie Nicholson, Ph.D., Nathanael Flynn, MA, and Mitali Purkayastha, AA

What does it mean to be a boy or a girl—or something else? How do we support children to love their gender, and to talk about what can feel restricting or harmful about it? As early educators, how do our own experience of and education about gender impact our ability to support gender diversity and healthy social-emotional development in our classrooms?

In this webinar, participants will learn about the importance of creating gender inclusive early learning environments and the concrete actions they can take to create environments that support all children's healthy gender development.

After participating in this webinar, you will be able to:

- Define the gender binary and identify its limitations.
- Recognize how gender diversity impacts social-emotional development during the early childhood years.
- Identify at least three strategies you can use to create gender-inclusive early learning settings for children and families.
- All of the webinars are recorded. You can earn .2 CEUs for each webinar. The cost is \$15 paid to University of Oklahoma online when you apply. *(continued in next column)*

Learn more here: Continuing Education Units (CEUs) from University of Oklahoma

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Developmentally Appropriate Practice: What Do Teachers Need to Know?

Presented by NAEYC

Listen as early childhood education experts Sue Bredekamp, PhD, Marie Masterson, PhD, and Iheoma Iruka, PhD reflect on NAEYC's newly revised Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) position statement. Get insights on the core considerations, principles of child development, and guidelines for DAP in action.

Then, hear from preschool teachers, Garnett Booker and Megan King, as they share how they incorporate DAP into their teaching practice. This presentation focuses on what preschool teachers need to know about the revised DAP statement and how it impacts them most directly.

Members price: \$20

Nonmembers price: \$25

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Language-Rich Learning Environments and Experiences: Increasing Opportunities-to-Learn for Today's Young Children

Live Sessions with Nonie Lesaux and Stephanie Jones!

Tuesday, December 6th: 1:00 - 4:15 PM (ET)

Thursday, December 8th: 1:00- 4:15 PM (ET)

Today's young children bring tremendous linguistic, cultural, and developmental diversity to their early learning settings and interactions – and every day, leaders and practitioners across the mixed-delivery early education system are working to create environments and experiences that promote their healthy language development.

Over the last decade, the science of early language development has evolved and expanded to inform quality improvement efforts in meaningful ways. What does this science tell us about the kinds of interactions and practices that foster children's early communication skills? And how can we use this science to create high-quality, language-rich, and equitable environments that meet the needs of all young children? What are the best practices for children who are multilingual learners?

We hope you'll join us on **December 6th and 8th** to explore answers to these important questions with our Zaentz co-directors, Nonie Lesaux and Stephanie Jones and HGSE guest faculty speakers, Meredith Rowe and Paola Uccelli. During this program we'll explore what the latest science reveals about creating optimal formal and informal language-learning environments and experiences — ultimately supporting children's healthy brain development and laying the foundation for lifelong learning.

We welcome you to attend this important program on your own, or with your district, community, or organization's team. Please forward this information to any colleagues within your early education networks who may benefit from participation. Register by Monday, November 28th to save your spot!

This program is eligible for 0.5 CEUs and 5 clock hours.

Program Objectives

During this live, online program, participants will:

- Explore the latest science of early language development among monolingual and multilingual learners.
- Learn how language development may be influenced by stress, adversity, or disruption.
- Discover effective strategies for supporting young children's emerging language skills.
- Make an initial plan to enhance children's language-learning opportunities in your early education setting.

[Learn More + Register](#)

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