



CAMBRIDGE FAMILY NEWS

Information, Support, & Activities for Families of Children Ages 0-6

March - April 2005

Summer is Coming! No Kidding.

About this time every year, we start planning for the summer. Kids are eager to shed their coats, summer camps are starting to enroll children, families are making vacation plans, and the Center for Families is getting ready to move more activities outside to take advantage of beautiful Cambridge weather. Families have many different resources in this area for outside fun. In this issue of *Cambridge Family News* see a short list of local places to go on page 3 and remember that our 2nd annual Center for Families Fun Day is coming June 18th, at Rindge Field behind the Peabody School.

Enjoy the pleasant weather. We'll see you outside.

SAVE THE DATE

CENTER FOR FAMILIES FUN DAY

AT RINDGE FIELD

**SATURDAY, JUNE 18TH,
11:00 AM - 2:00 PM**



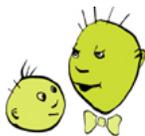
This is a day of fun activities especially for young children and their families. Last year the day included relay races, face painting, obstacle courses, bubbles, crafts, clowning, picnics, giveaways, and much more. Celebrate Summer with friends and neighbors. Call Heather Searles (617-349-3003) or Luz Hernandez (617-349-6385) to help plan this year's event.

5 Essential Messages of Family Literacy

1. Talk and listen to your child every chance you get.
2. Let your child see you read, write and do math.
3. Learn with your child.
4. Talk to teachers about your child's background and culture.
5. Expect the best for you and your children.

"Family literacy" is what parents and children do individually and together to build all family members' skills in reading, writing, speaking, math, computers and problem-solving. Literacy specialists from the Cambridge Family Literacy Collaborative (CFLC) have highlighted five essential messages for parents.

The CFLC has just released a video entitled The Five Essential Messages of Family Literacy, with technical assistance from Cambridge's community access cable TV channel. The messages are in five languages (English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese and Mandarin Chinese); and the video illustrates these five suggestions for parents on how to support their children's literacy and success in school with photographs of Cambridge families.



The Five Essential Messages of Family Literacy will be running on CCTV's channel 9: Mondays at 7:55 am, Wednesdays at 7:55 am and 4:00 pm, and Fridays at 7:55 am. The Center for Families will have copies to lend. Call Jenn for information: 617-349-3002.

Let's Talk...



it makes a difference!

Fundraising Thank You's

The Center for Families and our partners rely on a variety of funding sources. Unfortunately program costs, especially as we reach more families, have gone up while funding levels have not. This means that we face a budget gap every year. This year we received fundraising help to fill the gap from several new friends. We want to thank the folks at City Square Associates and BostonChefs.com in Cambridge who made Project Playgroup the beneficiary of their October fundraiser. "Flavors of Fall", an evening of jazz and hors d'oeuvres from local restaurants, raised \$5,000 to support the growth of our collaborative playgroups. We'd also like to acknowledge a group of employees at WR Grace who raised over \$900 to buy toys and books for our Outreach Program. If you'd like to help us plan fundraising events, contact Jenn (jkapuscik@cambridgema.gov).

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PLAYING AND LEARNING

Make a Changing Picture Book

Do not throw those old calendars or magazines away! The pictures are wonderful, and it is easy to cut them apart to make a book. Let your child choose pictures to include in his or her book. Children can look through the book while you are doing paperwork or studying. And when your child is waiting with you at the laundry or at an older sibling's activity, take the book along and talk about the pictures with your child. Make up a story or have a lively discussion about the pictures. When your child loses interest in these pictures, you can simply replace them with new ones.

Materials:

Pictures from old calendars or magazines
Scissors
Three-ring binder (or small photo album)
Plastic page protectors, 8 1/2 x 11
Permanent marker



Directions:

1. Cut apart an old calendar or magazines with pictures that would interest your child. Ask family and friends to save them for you.
2. Cut the pictures to fit into the page protectors or paste smaller pictures on a piece of blank paper.
3. Slip two pictures in each page protector, back to back.
4. Place page protectors in a three-ring binder. A binder with 1/2-inch rings would be a good size.

You can create special books about family routines, upcoming events, or anything else. A friend showed us a book she made to prepare her nephew for a trip to get his first hair cut. One way that we help small children get ready to be readers is just to encourage them to enjoy telling stories and turning pages, so have fun with it.

A Child's Reading Rug

Turn a bathroom rug into a Reading Rug for your toddler or preschooler by laying it out on the floor with a bunch of board books and picture books. Bathroom rugs are ideal for creating a reading area for young children because they are usually small and plush with a nonskid surface. You can find them at yard sales or discount stores. Your child will love having a special little rug to curl up on when he or she wants to be alone with a good book.



Buy, Trade, and Give Away

Many families have things their children no longer use - car seats, baby swings, strollers, cribs - that could find a happy home with another family. At the Center for Families, we are organizing a community swap board where families can post requests for items they need or advertise things they would like to sell or give away. This board (restricted to baby and child items only) will be located in the multipurpose room next to the Center for Families office at the Peabody School (where parent groups meet). Write your needs or offers down clearly on an index card and you can post it on the board. If you want to post an item and can't make it to the center, email the information to hsearles@cambridgema.gov or leave a message for Heather at 617-349-3003 and she can post it for you.

And for those of you looking to clean out your long-term storage, keep an eye out for our next Cradles to Crayons donations drive this summer.

Goop

Goop is a squishy mixture similar to silly putty. You can make your own at home following this easy recipe.

1/2 teaspoon Borax
1/4 cup water
1/4 cup cornstarch
4 oz. white craft glue (like elmers)
Food coloring



In a disposable plastic container, combine Borax and water until Borax has dissolved. Set aside. Sift the cornstarch into a mixing bowl. Add the glue to the starch and mix well. Add the Borax solution, stirring constantly for 2 minutes, even after the Goop has formed. Now knead the Goop with your fingers until no longer sticky.

FAMILY NEWS

Center for Families Outreach Team Hello, Alo, Bonjour, Hola, Jambo

Cambridge is a city of great cultural and linguistic diversity. The Center for Families Outreach Team was started to help more families get information and access to family support, services, and fun activities. The Outreach Team can serve people in Haitian Creole, Spanish, English, and Tigrinya. The Outreach Team, led by Heather Searles, has four members - Lucy Hernandez, Merline Sylvain, Letekidan Medhane, and Lamos Paul. Many members of the team have personal experience of coming to this country and having to learn the language and customs.

The Outreach Team offers activities that are linguistically diverse and located in the community. Parents and caregivers who come to these activities enjoy playing and learning with their children and can also get help to access other resources. We have weekly drop-in playtimes at Fresh Pond Apartments, Jefferson Park, 402 Rindge Ave., and Windsor Street Community Center and hope to offer more in other areas. In playtimes we have met families from Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, India, Pakistan, China, Korea, Vietnam, Haiti, Trinidad, Ghana, and more.

At playtimes we do learning activities for children, offer parenting support, and share information about how different services in this country work. We have also led several successful field trips to the Children's Museum and Franklin Park Zoo.

Share your Ideas

Join us for a **Parents' Planning, and Pizza Night** at the Center for Families. Any parent interested in helping shape our programs is welcome to attend. You don't need to commit to more than one meeting to be part of our parent advisory group. We'll be working on plans for summer activities and groups.

**Tuesday, April 12th,
5:30-7:30 pm**

**Center for Families,
Peabody School**

Call ahead if you need childcare.

617-349-6385 or email jkapuscik@cambridgema.gov.



We are now creating a short outreach newsletter that will be printed in multiple languages and will include some of the same information as our *Cambridge Family News* as well as more detailed information about resources important to immigrant communities.

For more information about the Outreach Team, contact Heather Searles at 617-349-3003.

Local Parks of Interest to Families

It's spring, so get out and explore with your kids. There are many interesting places to play and learn that are easily reached by public transportation or by walking from one of the "squares."

Cambridge Playgrounds/Tot Lots (map of all parks at www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/cp/parks)

Cambridge Common Tot Lot, Mass. Ave and Waterhouse St.

Clement G. Morgan Park, Columbia St. at Washington St.

Costa Lopez Taylor Playground, Charles St. and 3rd St.

Dana Park, Magazine St. at McTernan St.

Danehy Park, Sherman St. and Garden St.

Hoyt Field, Western Avenue at Howard Street

Joan Lorentz Park (Library Park), Broadway Street

King School Playground, 100 Putnam Avenue

Sennott Park, Broadway at Norfolk Street

Nature Walks

Fresh Pond Reservation, Fresh Pond Parkway and Huron Avenue

Linear Park, Davis Square to Alewife T, crossing Mass Ave. at Cameron (continues beyond Alewife as the rail trail bike path)

Charles River Esplanade, paths on both sides of the river from Back Bay to Soldiers Field Road and beyond



Help us make the *Cambridge Family News* a fun and useful resource for Cambridge families. In the next issues we'd like to include more ideas from you about places your family enjoys, activities that can engage curious toddlers and preschoolers, or community resources that should be more well known. We'd also love to include short articles on topics of concern or interest to parents. Send feedback to Center for Families, 70 Rindge Ave., Cambridge 02140 or jkapuscik@cambridgema.gov.

PARENT-CHILD PLAY ACTIVITIES

PROJECT PLAYGROUP

PLAYGROUPS FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS AND CHILDREN 1-5



Playgroups are designed for parents/caregivers and children together. The groups give children a chance to try new things and make friends. Playgroup leaders plan activities that include freeplay, arts and crafts, gross motor activities, and circle time with songs and stories. Snack is provided.

Cambridge parents and caregivers may sign up by **March 25th** for Spring playgroups. You can get a registration form by calling Nadine Jones-Ruffin at the Center for Families (617-349-6967) or Michelle Godfrey at the Child Care Resource Center (617-547-1063x271).

Spring Playgroup Schedule: April 4th to May 27th, 2005

Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays
Central Square Area (to be announced) 10:15-11:45 am	Windsor Comm. Ctr., 119 Windsor St. 10:00-11:30 am	Center for Families, North Camb. 10:00-11:30 am	Jefferson Park Head Start 3:00-4:30 pm
Center for Families, North Camb. 10:00-11:30 am	Center for Families, North Camb. 4:00-5:30 pm	Center for Families, North Camb. 4:00-5:30 pm	
Windsor Head Start, 119 Windsor St. 3:00-4:30 pm			

DROP-IN PLAYTIMES

A time for parents and children to just drop by to play and share. You do not need to sign up in advance to come to any of these drop-in playtimes. Children must be supervised at all times. Open to children from 0-5 years old and their parents/caregivers.

AT FRESH POND APARTMENTS

Stop by for play and conversation every Tuesday morning in the Community Room at Fresh Pond Apartments. Open to all neighborhood families and residents.
(No parking in the Fresh Pond lot.)

Leaders: Heather Searles & Luz Hernandez
Tuesdays, 10:30 - 12:00 am
Fresh Pond Apartments, 364 Rindge Ave.

AT GATELY YOUTH CENTER

Come out and meet up with young friends for fun at the Gately. You bring the kids and the creative energy.
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 - 11:30 am
Gately Youth Center (behind the Peabody School)

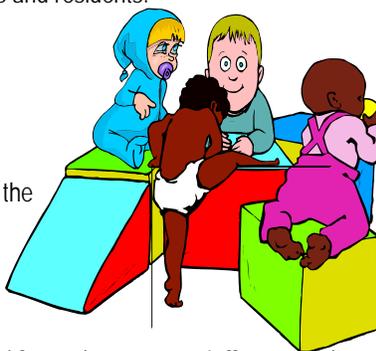
AT JEFFERSON PARK

Come out and play Wednesday mornings in the Workforce classroom at Jefferson Park. Open to all neighborhood families and Jefferson Park residents.
Please call Luz for information at 617-349-6385.

Leaders: Luz Hernandez & Merline Sylvain
Wednesdays, 10:30 am - 12:00 pm
6 Jefferson Park, Rindge Ave. near Clifton St.

AT WINDSOR COMMUNITY CENTER

Starting in April we'll be offering a new drop-in on Wednesdays for families in the Area IV neighborhood in the Workforce classroom in the Windsor Community Center. If you'd like information about this upcoming activity, please call Luz at 617-349-6385.



Cambridge Somerville Early Intervention Playgroups

Cambridge-Somerville Early Intervention (CSEI) serves children 0-3 years old with special needs or risks. Their playgroups are designed for children with or without identified special needs. Groups engage children in challenging developmental play. CSEI groups are open to all Cambridge or Somerville families and meet weekly for a 10-12 week period. A sliding fee is required for non-EI clients.

For more information call Erin Segal at 617-269-3919 x167



Agassiz Community Schools Infant & Toddler Groups

Parent-led groups meet Tuesday and Thursday mornings at the Agassiz Neighborhood Council building, 20 Sacramento Street. Call Kelly Tyler for information 617-349-6287

ART, MUSIC, AND LITERACY ACTIVITIES



"Jaguar Dancers"

(18 months-4 years)

Join the Center for Families and the Bennett Dance Company for a special dance class for young children and their parents.

Thursdays 10:30 am -12:00 pm, March 3, - May 5, 2005

Area IV Youth Center, 243 Harvard St.

This is a parent/child activity and space is limited.

To sign up or be put on the waiting list for the next class, call Nadine Jones-Ruffin at 617-349-6967

Free English Classes with Childcare for Parents

The Cambridge Even Start Family Literacy Program has openings. English classes for speakers of other languages are offered three mornings a week in the Peabody School in North Cambridge. Childcare for children from 1 to 3 years old is provided for parents while they attend the ESL classes.

To find out more about this program, please call Carole Sousa at 617-349-6278.

Child Care Resource Center ABC Room

The ABC Room has books and learning materials for parents and providers.

Open weekdays during business hours. Come in get helpful tips on literacy.

Call to receive a list of fun activities for kids and computer training and workshops for adults that take place throughout the month.

Child Care Resource Center,
130 Bishop Allen Drive (Central Sq.)
Call for information: 617-547-1063 x271

PAJAMA STORY HOUR

Parents and children can come to the library in pajamas on the last Monday of the month to hear stories read by neighborhood parents and to enjoy a snack before bed. Bring a favorite book to share.



**6:30-7:30 pm Last Mondays,
March 28th & April 25th**
O'Neill Branch Public Library,
70 Rindge Avenue

Cambridge Public Libraries

Call your local branch for information about storytimes and other family activities.

Main Children's Room (617) 349-4038
At the Longfellow School, 359 Broadway

Boudreau Branch (617) 349-4017
245 Concord Ave.

Central Square Branch (617) 349-4010
45 Pearl Street

Collins Branch (617) 349-4021
64 Aberdeen Ave.

O'Neill Branch (617) 349-4023
70 Rindge Ave.

O'Connell Branch (617) 349-4019
48 Sixth St.

Valente Branch (617) 349-4015
826 Cambridge Street

Family Literacy Activities

The Agenda for Children offers these fun workshops for parents with gifts and prizes. Workshops are in English with translation into Haitian Creole.

Activity Time for Parents & 4-7 Year Olds
Saturday, April 2nd 10:00 am-12:00 noon

Story and Songs with Andy and Alice
Saturday, May 7th 10:00 am-12:00 noon

Jefferson Park Community Center, 1 Jackson Place.
For information call Michelle at 617-665-3827.



Mother-Child Art Classes

Classes for young children (2-4 years old) with their moms. Children explore creativity and develop fine motor skills, while painting, sculpting, and drawing. Call (617) 868-9900 for info. The Cambridge Women's Center, 46 Pleasant Street.



FAMILY SOCIAL EVENTS

FAMILY POTLUCK DINNER

Time for children and parents to get together with old and new friends. Bring a family-size dish to share!! We will provide drinks and paper goods. We celebrate children's birthdays for each month. Volunteers needed to help. Call Jenn at 617-349-3002 to find out more.

Friday, April 1st and May 6, 5:30 - 7:30 pm
Peabody School Cafeteria

**** No Pre-registration Required****

FAMILIES OF TWINS AND MULTIPLES

Come to the Center for Families on a Saturday afternoon play date with other families of twins and multiples. This monthly gathering is a purely social occasion. We'll have activities for the kids and snack will be provided.

Saturday once a month, 3:30-5:00 pm

April date to be announced

Center for Families, Peabody School

Call Marie-Noelle for more information at 617-349-3003-ext 2.

PARENT EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PARENTING

This is a five week class for parents. We talk about child development in the early years and discuss a variety of parenting issues including behavior, communication, and learning. Couples are encouraged to participate as a "parenting team." Dinner and childcare provided.

Facilitator: Rick Colbath-Hess

Tuesdays, 6:00-8:00 pm, April 12, 26, May 3rd, 10, 17

Location to be announced

****Call 617-349-6385 to sign up for this group****

RENAISSANCE JOURNEY:

A SINGLE MOMS' SUPPORT GROUP

This eight week support group will take members on a journey through music, journal writing, and listening to nourish and renew ourselves as single mothers. We'll share dinner as part of our group building. Childcare provided.

Facilitator: Nadine Jones-Ruffin

Wednesdays, 6:00-8:30 pm, March 23 – May 7, 2005

Center for Families, Peabody School

****Call 617-349-6967 to sign up for this group****

MOMS' DISCUSSION GROUP

Being a mom is challenging. You have to juggle your time and roles—mother, spouse, worker, learner. Take a break to contemplate your priorities, share with other moms, and talk about where you want to go. Snacks and limited childcare provided.

Facilitator: Suzan Wolpow

Saturdays, 10:00-11:30 am, April 9 and May 14

Center for Families, Peabody School

****Call in advance to sign up for childcare 617-349-6385 ****

NEW GROUP FOR FAMILIES OF YOUNG CHILDREN (0-6) WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Changes in both Early Intervention and public Special Education programs have made support for families of preschool children with special needs harder to find. We want to create a safe atmosphere where families can find community, children can engage in fun activities, and parents can give and receive support for playing the dual roles of caregiver and advocate. Come enjoy a low-key afternoon out and help design this new group or plan activities for families.

Facilitator: Kitty Burns

Saturday April 30th, 3:00-5:00 pm

Location to be announced

****Call 617-349-6385 for more information****



SURVIVING THE TODDLER YEARS: ROUTINES AND CHOICES

Toddlers (ages 1 to 3) are exploring their world and as they explore they have to test their limits. Join us for a workshop on how routines and choices help toddlers explore their world safely and help parents and caregivers support and enjoy this learning time. Bring your own toddler stories to share. Childcare and refreshments provided.



Facilitator: Donna Schutt

Monday, April 25, 6:00-8:00 pm

Center for Families, Peabody School

****Call 617-349-6385 to sign up for this group****

DADS' MORNING OUT

(dads and children 0-5 years)

A chance for dads to talk with each other about parenting. Play for the first half hour and then dads meet for coffee and conversation. Snack provided; bring goodies to share.

Facilitator: Rick Colbath-Hess

Saturdays, April 2nd, 16 and 30 - 9:30-11:30 am

Center for Families, Peabody School

****Call in advance to sign up for childcare 617-349-6385 ****

SCRAPBOOKING FOR PARENTS

This workshop will give you tools and time to collect and preserve photos and other special things. Come join the fun. *fee \$8 per session*

Facilitator: Tina Prille

Saturday, May 7th, 10:00-11:30 am (no group in April)

Center for Families, Peabody School

****Call in advance to sign up for childcare 617-349-6385 ****

The Family Center, Inc.

The Family Center offers a range of supports for families including the Parenting Journey, Parenting in America, and other activities. A Parenting in America group in Haitian Creole will be starting April 4th.

For information call 617-628-8815 x234

Union Square, Somerville

The Guidance Center, Inc.

This agency provides counseling, parenting support, and educational groups for families dealing with violence. They offer self-defense/stress management groups for women and adolescents and programs for different cultural/language groups.

Call Ilana Amrani-Cohen 617-354-2275 x139

5 Sacramento Street, Cambridge 02138

Families First Parenting Programs

Workshops and classes for parents in the Boston area. Schedule at www.families-first.org or call 617-868-7687.

Childcare Policy: The Center for Families provides limited childcare for many of our parent groups, classes, and meetings. We ask that you only use childcare if you would not be able to attend otherwise. If you have an alternative (spouse, babysitter, friend, etc.) it is often easier for young children to be at home. Parents must sign up in advance for childcare so we can have enough staff and plan for special needs. If you plan to attend any parent group or meeting, please call or email to sign up for childcare two days before the group. On the day of a group we can accept children up to our safety limit for the day, but we cannot guarantee childcare for anyone who is not signed up. Because we serve families of children 0-6, we must limit childcare to those ages in most cases. If you want to bring an older child, please contact us to discuss your situation. We find that older children get bored in childcare with much younger kids and this makes it difficult for our childcare staff to be attentive to all children. If you have any questions about our childcare policy, contact us or ask your group leader.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Looking for services? See the **Cambridge-Somerville Resource Guide**: www.cambridge-somervilleresourceguide.org.

For information about the **Cambridge Public Schools** call the **Family Resource Center** at 617-349-6551. Multilingual voice mail 617-349-6550 (Portuguese, Haitian Creole, and Spanish).

The **Cambridge Public Library** has storytime activities in all its other neighborhood branches. Call 617-349-4023 .

Cambridge-Somerville Early Intervention provides evaluations and developmental services for children under age three at risk for developmental delays. For more information, call 617-629-3919.

The **Child Care Resource Center** provides information about childcare options in Cambridge. Call 617-547-1063. Their ABC Room has a lending library. It is open weekdays from 9:00-5:00 in Central Square.

The Department of Human Services runs a variety of childcare programs, including **Preschool** and **School Age Programs** in schools around the City. For enrollment information, call Chandra Williams at 617-349-6254.

For information about activities for school age children and youth in Cambridge, including school vacation camps, contact the **Community Schools** at 617-349-6236 and the **Cambridge Youth Programs** at 617-349-6200.

The **Community Learning Center** offers adult education, including GED and ESL classes; call 617-349-6363.

The **Cambridge Multi-Service Center** provides help to families who are facing homelessness. Call 617-349-6340.

The **Children's Clothing Exchange** is a program of Solutions At Work. The Exchange takes children's clothes in good condition to trade for other clothes or equipment. Call for information: 617-576-0039.

The **Cambridge Food Pantry network** provides food to families around the city. To get more information, call the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC) at 617-868-2900.

The **Cambridge Program for Individuals with Special Needs** serves people with special needs from school age to adults. There is an after school group and a Saturday morning recreation program. Call 617-349-6200 for information.

SUPPORT FOR NEW PARENTS

PARENT INFANT GROUP

(parents with infants 0-14 months)

This informal support and discussion group at the Center for Families offers parents with new infants up to 14 months the opportunity to share experiences, ask questions, and meet other parents while babies sleep, eat, gurgle, or safely explore in our infant-toddler room.

Facilitator: Marie-Noelle Doucet

Every Monday, 12:30 - 2:30 pm

Center for Families, Peabody School

****No Pre-registration Required****



INFANT MASSAGE

(parents with infants 2 months - pre-crawling)

Massaging your baby gives you a wonderful opportunity to connect with your child. Massage can also help with digestion, sleep, and baby's health. This is a fun and relaxed five-week course with an optional one-session workshop for fathers/partners. Groups are organized in locations that are convenient for parents.

Instructor: Marie-Noelle Doucet, CMI.

****Call 617-349-3003 to sign up for the next session****

CHILDBIRTH & INFANT CARE CLASSES

The Cambridge Health Alliance, through its Obstetrics Dept. and the Cambridge Birth Center, offers childbirth classes and other supports for expectant and new parents, including workshop for new fathers. Some are limited to families who receive their healthcare from CHA while others are open to the general public.

For information about their groups, call 617-665-BABY.

DOULA PROGRAM SUPPORT GROUPS

The Doula Program at the Cambridge Health Alliance offers drop-in postpartum and breastfeeding support groups run by multilingual Doulas (birth and parenting coaches). Groups are open to all new parents in Cambridge.

Call for more info: 617-665-1662

Cambridge Birth Center, 8 Camelia Avenue

(across from the entrance of the Cambridge Hospital).



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70 Rindge Avenue
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Office and Resource Room: Community Wing
(entrance at back of school)

Funding for Center for Families Programs

The Center for Families receives funding from the City of Cambridge, the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), and the Massachusetts Children's Trust Fund (CTF). Ours is one of 41 programs around the state that are part of the DOE Massachusetts Family Network and CTF Mass Family Centers programs. We also receive financial and administrative support from the Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs, Cambridge Public Schools, and Cambridge Health Alliance.

The Center for Families serves families of children 0-6. Activities are open to all Cambridge residents.

Center for Families

c/o Peabody School
70 Rindge Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02140

