



Cambridge Preschool Program Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is the Cambridge Preschool Program?

The Cambridge Preschool Program (CPP) is a publicly funded program that will provide **free** preschool to families of all 4 year-olds (and some 3 year-olds) across the city in their choice of a variety of program settings. Those settings include Cambridge Public Schools (CPS), the City of Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) preschools, and selected community-based programs, accessible through a single application process.

2. Who will administer/oversee the Cambridge Preschool Program?

The Cambridge Office of Early Childhood (OEC) will oversee the implementation of the Cambridge Preschool Program in collaboration with the City of Cambridge and CPS.

3. Who is the Office of Early Childhood?

The mission of the OEC 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. As such, the OEC is leading the design, development, and implementation of a universal preschool program on behalf of the Cambridge community.



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4. What makes a program eligible to be a CPP partner?

To be a partner organization of the Cambridge Preschool Program, a program must meet the following criteria:

1. Located within the City of Cambridge.
2. Be a licensed program by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care or the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
3. Demonstrate high quality through the implementation of a set of program requirements outlined in the Cambridge Preschool Program Implementation Guide.

5. When will CPP begin?

The application for the Cambridge Preschool Program will open in the winter of 2023/2024, with enrollment in preschool programs beginning in the fall of 2024.

6. How much will CPP cost?

The program will be free for families for a school-day, school-year placement. There will be additional costs for extended day and summer hours for most families.

7. Who is eligible for CPP?

Any child who resides in the city of Cambridge and is 4 years old by August 31st, 2024 is eligible to apply for the first year of CPP. There will be limited space for some children who are 3 years old by August 31st, 2024, however, there may be additional eligibility requirements for those children.

8. How will families access the application?

The application will be available online (and on paper for those who need it) in the winter of 2023/2024. The application will be accessible via the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood website.

9. What will the application process look like?

There will be a universal application process for CPP that is managed by the Office of Early Childhood. The application will require families to provide information about their child and family, and will provide an opportunity to identify programs in which a family



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has interest. Families will then be matched with a preschool program based on their eligibility criteria and information provided. Enrollment will then be completed with each CPP site including Cambridge Public Schools (CPS), the City of Cambridge Department of Human Service Programs (DHSP) preschools, Head Start, and community-based programs. This new universal application will replace the current CPS 3 year-old lottery, CPS Junior Kindergarten lottery, DHSP Preschool lottery, and OEC Scholarship application processes. There will be a separate lottery process held for Kindergarten enrollment.

10. Are there options for families to choose a part-time or extended day enrollment?

CPP is a school-day, school-year program. However, many participating providers will provide extended care hours for families who need it. There will be an additional cost for an extended day for most families. There will not be an option to enroll on a part-time basis only (meaning half days or less than 5 days per week). Families seeking part-time enrollment must do so directly through their selected provider.

11. How do we receive more information on the Cambridge Preschool Program?

- Office of Early Childhood communication updates
 - [Sign up](#) for the OEC Newsletter! We update CPP information there monthly.
 - Visit www.earlychildhoodcambridge.org - A CPP webpage is coming soon!
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