



Monomoy Early Childhood Council

A CFCE Advisory Council of Cape Cod Children's Place

Supported by

MA Early Education and Care "Coordinated Family and Community Engagement" (CFCE)

MINUTES Thursday October 2, 2025

Harwich Elementary School and on Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88995333546?pwd=wwbL0mbTLK8k1rKiBbCyX0bRgIQ3HS.1>

1. Welcome and Introductions

Facilitator: Lucy Gilmore: the EEC's Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant coordinator for Chatham and Harwich., administered by Cape Cod Children's Place

Minutes recorded by: Lucy Gilmore

Participants (18)

Lucy Gilmore - Monomoy CFCE Coordinator

Emily Faherty - Monomoy PUPS assistant teacher / Harwich parent

Ashley Our - Owner / Director of Three Harbors Preschool in Harwich

Robin Milen - Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Ashley Symington - Dir. of Harwich Youth and Family Services

Kristie Cutone - Principal of Harwich Elementary School

Alyson Joy - Assistant Principal of Harwich Elementary School

Jen Gould - Owner / Teacher Monkey Business Family Home Preschool

Kathie Smith - President of Friends of Harwich Early Childhood Advisory Council

Charles Gruszka - Retired Early Education administrator

Bambi Rosario Wyatt - Kennedy Donovan Cape Cod Early Intervention

Katie Nickerson -WIC Outreach Coordinator for Lower Cape Cod

Kristin Soltis - Fine Futures assistant director

Andra Walford - Early Childhood Educator / Director and Chatham parent

Francie Joseph - retired Family Resource Coordinator / HECAC volunteer

Sue Peterson - retired Early Educator / HECAC volunteer

MJ Kelly - retired Early Intervention specialist

Christy Lin - Occupational Therapist at Harwich Elementary School / Parent

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Early Childhood Council Mission

To ensure local coordination and maximize local participation in early education and care services and programs to best serve children and their families. The Council seeks to

- build upon and link to services in their communities,
- identify local gaps in services,
- improve the delivery of CFCE required services,
- coordinate and plan activities that benefit children ages birth through 5,
- refer to other local community partners that provide comprehensive services,
- provide opportunities for active participation of families to inform policies and planning of CFCE services and to develop leadership skills as their child's primary teacher and advocate.

2. Five Protective Factors

Parental Resilience, Social Connections, Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development, Concrete Supports in times of need and Social & Emotional Competence.

3. Review and Approve Minutes from April 3, 2025

 April 3, 2025 Monomoy Early Childhood Council MINUTES approved

4. Friends of the Harwich Early Childhood Advisory Council (501c3) Report by President, Kathie Smith: The Friends provided \$5,538.60 in tuition scholarships June thru September (\$1,338.60 to Learning Garden, \$1,500 to Sharon Bunting, \$2,700 to Rocking Unicorn) Our fundraiser in July, The Closest to the Pin, raised \$1,800. The Friends of HECAC needs new, younger leadership to carry it forward. We are looking for a new bookkeeper, if we can keep our nonprofit going. Having a 501c3 with a focus on supporting young children, their teachers and parents/caregivers lends the opportunity to write grants to meet the needs of local families and early education programs, have our annual Children's Book Drive, plan and host events for families and provide material and professional development support for early childhood educators. Please help us find people who will carry this important work into the future!

5. Robin Millen presented information about PRISM Early Literacy Grant (a \$95,000 grant from the DESE in collaboration with EEC) This multi year process begins with first year planning. The district has hired two literacy coaches who are fantastic. There have been many

meetings and an Early Literacy Council has been formed (including Jen McIlvin, Jill Sanderson, Erin Cronen, Christie Cutone, Alyson Joy and more!). They are looking to partner with local private early education schools, including licensed Family Home Preschool providers, who will have professional development opportunities and receive curricular materials for their programs. Please reach out to Robin if you are interested in this opportunity. The first Professional Development is planned for November 10th. Robin will send out information when planning is completed.

Robin says the PUPS preschool program is made up of 50% Chatham residents and 50% Harwich residents and 50/50 three year olds and four year olds. Only one student came from another preschool - all other students are having their first preschool experience!

Emily Faherty, who is an assistant PUPS teacher confirmed that it is a group of vibrant learners who are thriving in their new school!

Robin shared the news that Monomoy is investigating the possibility of potentially considering Universal Preschool. It is very early stages and nothing is definite.

The CPPI initiative through the MA EEC provides funding and technical assistance to cities and towns across the state to expand high-quality preschool options through a mixed-delivery model, blending public school, community-based, and family child care settings. For example, in Sandwich, CPPI funding has enabled the district to expand classroom capacity and better support children's transition into kindergarten.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/commonwealth-preschool-partnership-initiative-cppi>

CPPI grants are available to districts in high-need communities to support local coordination and investment in access to high-quality preschool. Initial grants support up to a year of planning with implementation grants following. The grant program aims to provide 3- and 4-year-olds in a district with equitable access to high-quality preschool, while ensuring families have multiple provider options to choose from across public and community-based classrooms. This levels the playing field for kindergarten readiness across the district, establishing coordinated curriculum and similar goals regardless of where a child is enrolled. Robin encourages community partner involvement in the planning process.

6. **Ashley Symington** reported the Harwich Preschool Family Support Program is currently assisting 60 children with up to \$2,500 in tuition assistance to attend licensed programs, with funding available to 40 additional children. She will continue to accept applications through December. In January, remaining funds will be dispersed to enrolled families. This program is now included in the Town Administrator's budget which is a safer place but still requires strong voting at Town Meeting in the Spring to remain in the level funded budget. Ashley mentioned she is offering Discipline with Heart: Connecting before Correcting at the Brooks Library 5:30 -6:30 on Oct. 22 - registration required - please share with families!. Ashley is hoping her department can expand to hire another clinician. She currently offers short-term individual counseling for youth up to age 24. For children younger than 5, she offers family support to help child mental health and wellness. Short-term counseling is 6-12 sessions long. Counseling sessions can be in-person or through telehealth. Parent Coaching for raising children and teens is also available. She has a strong relationship with the MRSD guidance counselors with many referrals being made.
7. **Katie Nickerson** is currently organizing holiday help for WIC clients in collaboration with Chatham Works. Please refer families to WIC to participate.
8. **Bambi Rosario** reported that Early Intervention is serving many Harwich and Chatham families
9. **Lucy** reported the Harwich Woman's Club donated over \$600 worth of diapers to our family resource center. If you work with a family who needs diapers you may give them Lucy's contact information (work cell # is 508-568-4583). Lucy can also make deliveries.
10. **Charles Gruszka** enthusiastically emphasized his support of the PRISM early literacy program and strongly encouraged all preschool community partners to take advantage of the opportunity to partner with Monomoy School District.

11. **Next Hybrid meeting: Thursday November 6, 2025**

Mark your calendars for our meetings this year which will be in person at the Harwich Elementary School library (enter through door 5) and on zoom:

November 6, 2025

January 8, 2026

February 5, 2026

March 5, 2026

April 2, 2026

May 7, 2026

June - Beach Party tbd