



PROFILES: SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

State:	Georgia
Partnership name:	Talk With Me Baby
Web site(s):	
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1. Background

Talk With Me Baby (TWMB) is a collaborative effort that emerged from a focus on improving health and education outcomes for children at risk of not achieving reading proficiency by the end of third grade. TWMB is built on the understanding that the number of words spoken to babies and the amount of time spent in active engagement from birth to 3 years are strong predictors of future academic achievements. Both quantity and quality of language are essential for vocabulary development and are predictive of third grade reading proficiency; children who can't learn to read by the end of third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school.



2. Mission and Goals

The goal of TWMB is to ensure that all children born in Georgia receive essential language nourishment so that Georgia's children have a strong foundation for cognitive ability, social-emotional competency, school readiness, educational achievement, and ultimately lifelong success. Just as food nourishes a growing child's body, language interactions nourish a child's brain. By 2017, TWMB will reach all newborns in the Atlanta metro region, where 61,000 births occur each year. By 2020, access to language nutrition will extend across Georgia, reaching the 130,000 babies born each year. Two goals shape the rapid scale-up of TWMB: 1) to establish a wide-reaching public health, clinical, and early childhood

education workforce that has the capacity to train parents and caregivers to talk with babies by demonstrating dynamic language transactions; and 2) to dramatically increase the number of language rich environments both at home and in early childhood education.

3. Governance and Partnership Members

TWMB is guided collectively by a team of leaders from the Georgia Departments of Public Health and Education, Emory University's School of Nursing and Department of Pediatrics, the Marcus Autism Center at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, the Atlanta Speech School's Rollins Center for Language and Literacy, and Get Georgia Reading – Georgia's Campaign for Grade Level Reading.

4. Funding and Other Resources

United Way of Greater Atlanta is providing \$1.5 million in seed funding and the Marcus Autism Center at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta serves as fiscal agent. The Georgia Department of Public Health is contributing \$200,000 to train staff and create videos to be shown in every Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) office throughout the State, highlighting the importance of language nutrition.

5. Activities



By training nurses, WIC nutritionists, and preschool educators, TWMB utilizes the everyday environments in which families, infants, and young children interact with health care and early childhood education systems. This integrated model can provide language nutrition to almost all children in Georgia because more than 99 percent of expectant or new parents and their children are seen by nurses, more than 80 percent of low-income expectant or new parents and their children are seen by WIC nutritionists, and about one-third of children ages birth to age 3 attend early childhood education programs.

TWMB is engaged in the following activities: 1) designing and implementing a curriculum to train OB/GYN, labor and delivery neonatal and pediatric nurses, midwives, and WIC nutritionists—the curriculum is aimed at understanding the importance of language nutrition and acquiring the skills to coach parents on this critical behavior; 2) providing universal access to preschool educators to effectively teach language and vocabulary skills; 3) maximizing technology to design and deliver reinforcements and reminders for parents to deliver language nutrition with their babies; and 4) evaluating the efficacy of the language nutrition intervention using a comprehensive logic model and research plan including randomized clinical trial and measurement of the factors leading to powerful collaborations and collective impact.

6. Evaluation and Outcomes

Evaluation plans are in place but the effort is too early in its implementation to report results.

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