



TALK WITH ME BABY

Georgia's Language Nutrition Strategy to Bridge the Word Gap

Ashley Darcy Mahoney, PhD, NNP¹; Lauren M. Head, BSN, RN¹; Jennifer L. Stapel-Wax, PsyD^{2,3}; Brenda Fitzgerald, MD⁴; Kennedy Moore, PhD⁵; Arianne Weldon, MPH⁶; Comer Yates, JD⁷; Bryan Williams, PhD¹

¹Emory University Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, ²Emory University School of Medicine, ³Marcus Autism Center, ⁴Georgia Department of Public Health, ⁵Georgia Department of Education, ⁶Get Georgia Reading Campaign, ⁷Atlanta Speech School

BACKGROUND

85% of Brain Growth Occurs in the First 3 Years of Life



Just as a baby requires a steady supply of food to develop a healthy body, healthy brain development in babies requires language nutrition—a steady delivery of language through words and conversation.

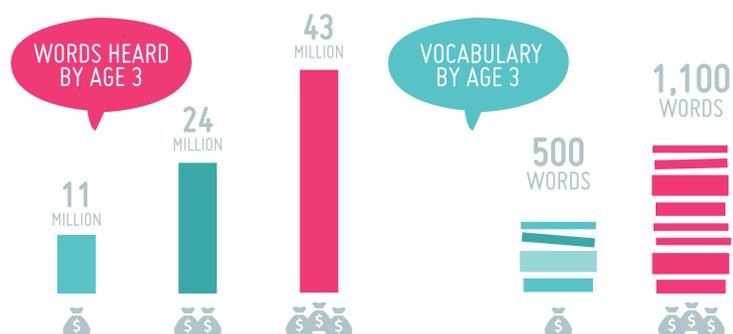
- Early childhood represents a critical period for brain development.
- Brain development is shaped by environmental experiences.
- The single strongest predictor of a child's vocabulary at age 3 is the quantity and quality of words spoken with the child in the first three years of life.
- Vocabulary at age three is a robust predictor of 3rd grade literacy.



- Third grade literacy is an important indicator of future academic success.
- Third grade marks a time when students transition from learning to read to reading to learn.
- Students who cannot read proficiently by the end of third grade are FOUR times more likely to drop out of school before high school graduation.

34% of fourth graders in Georgia can read proficiently at grade level
21% of fourth graders from low-income families can read at grade level

30 Million Word Gap → Early Vocabulary Gap



BY THE AGE OF 3, HIGH-INCOME CHILDREN HAVE DOUBLE THE VOCABULARY OF LOW-INCOME CHILDREN

LANGUAGE NUTRITION INTERVENTION

Purpose: To increase the capacity of parents to deliver language nutrition to their children by integrating language nutrition coaching as a core competency across large scale workforces.

Wide-Reaching Integrated Strategy

Population Level	Community Level	Individual Level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase public awareness • Website, phone apps, videos • Resource kits for all babies born in 13-county metro Atlanta area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement a curriculum to train nurses, WIC dietitians, and early childcare providers to educate parents • Help preschool educators teach language and vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate parents why they should talk with their babies • Coach parents how to talk with their babies

- 80% of low-income children are seen by WIC dietitians.
- Approximately 1/3 of children ages birth to three attend early childhood education programs.
- 99% of expectant/new parents are seen by nurses.
- Nurses care for babies at 9 checkpoints between the third trimester and 12 months.



COLLABORATIVE/COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Funded by the United Way of Greater Atlanta



EVALUATION

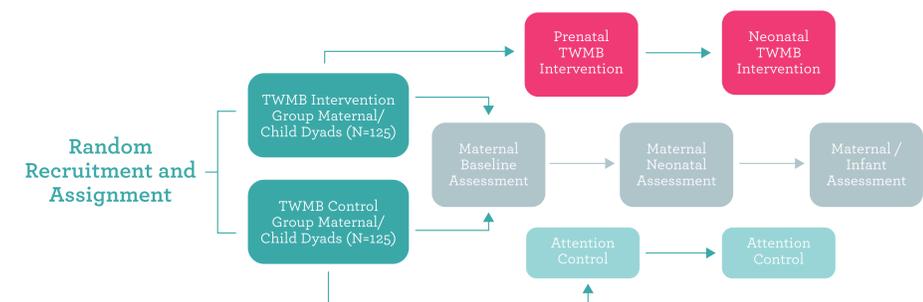
Logic Model

- Desired Results**
- Increase number of clinical environments and parents who deliver language nutrition
 - Improve cognitive trajectory and promote parent-child attachment
 - Increase percentage of Georgia children reading by the end of third grade

- Indicators**
- Participation measures and satisfaction measures
 - Treatment fidelity measures and process level measures
 - Pre-school classroom environment measures
 - GLR metrics and School Climate Index
 - Standardized assessments and Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills

- Activities**
- Classroom/webinar instruction of nurses
 - Clinically based coaching of parents by nurses in hospital and outpatient settings
 - Targeted multi-media campaign of program mission
 - Development of curriculum and program materials
 - Caregivers delivering language nutrition in home language

Randomized Control Trial



IMPLICATIONS

- Help bridge the word gap and close the nation's achievement gap
- Empower parents to be their child's first teacher
- Promote literacy success
- Public policy impact
- Sustainable, cost-effective
- Program with a universal design
- Disrupt the cycle of poverty
- By 2015, all 61,000 babies born in Atlanta will receive Talk With Me Baby
- By 2018, Talk With Me Baby will extend across Georgia to reach 130,000 babies each year