

Welcome Baby Training Presentation

Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing

An Innovative Campaign to Boost Early
Learning and Close the “Word Gap”



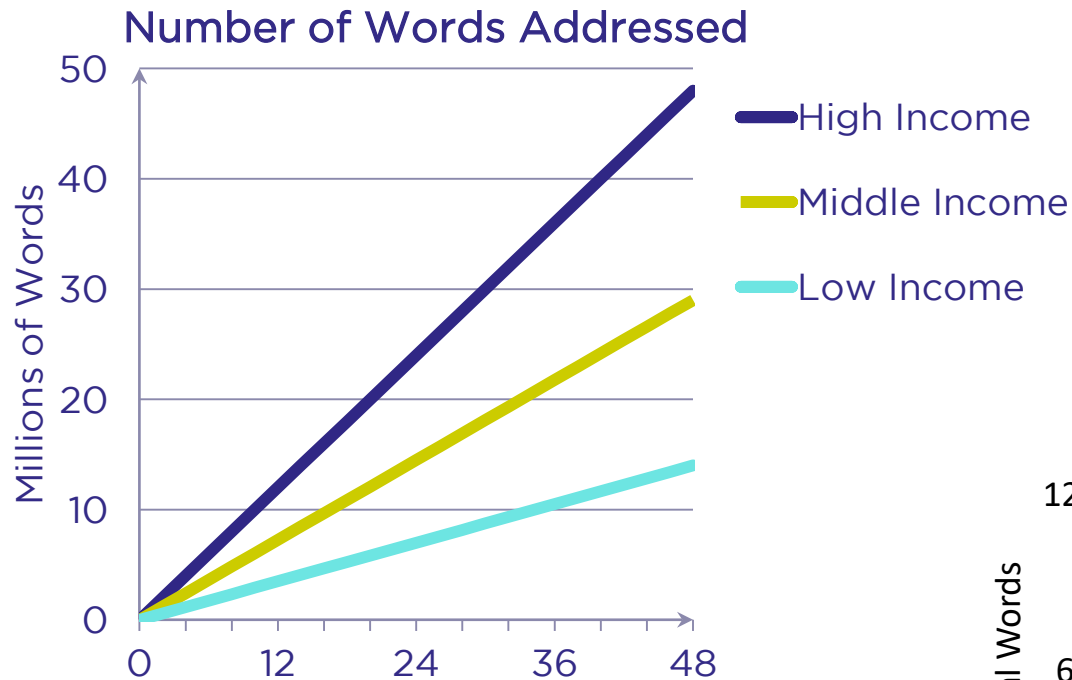
Background



Children build most of their speech and language skills during the *first three years of life.*

- Every word a child hears impacts brain development and sets the foundation for future reading and literacy skills.
- When a child is left alone in front of a TV, the part of her brain responsible for language development receives little stimulation.
- That's why First 5 CA's new campaign encourages parents to talk, read, and sing to their babies. These activities exercise a baby's brain, helping it grow bigger and stronger.

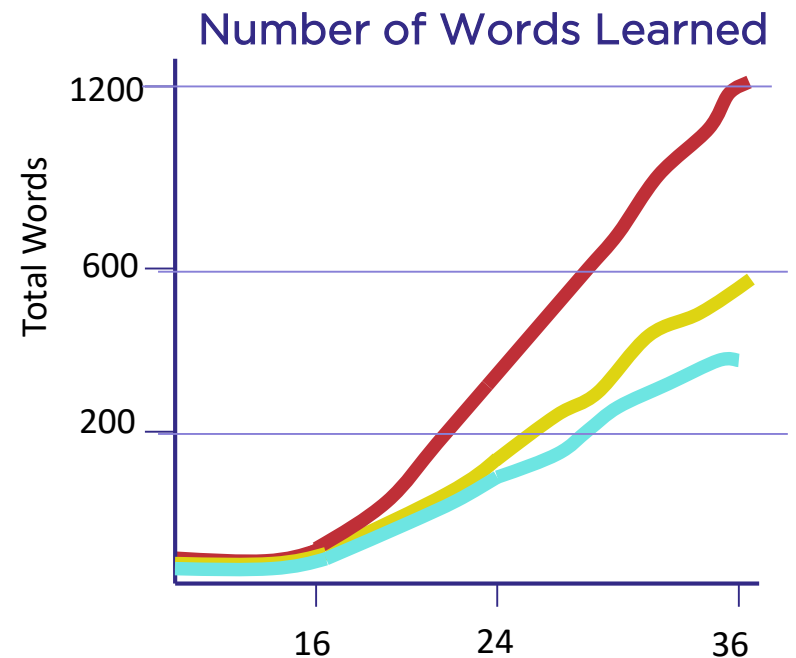
The Research



Source: Hart & Risley (1995)

Lower-income children hear 30 million fewer words than affluent children do.

This has lifelong implications for learning and success.



“Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” is a public awareness and action campaign to get parents to talk, read, and sing with their young children.

The Campaign aims to help parents understand the critical role they play in their child’s development.

LET’S TALK AND SING TOGETHER

SILLY SONGS CAPTURE ATTENTION. SING A SILLY SONG WITH YOUR BABY TO A FAVORITE TUNE ABOUT YOUR DAY.



LET’S TALK ABOUT BATHTIME

LET’S BE SCIENTISTS. DURING BATH TIME, USE WORDS LIKE “FLOAT” OR “SINK” TO HELP YOUR CHILD EXPERIMENT AND LEARN NEW WORDS.



YOU will be a part of this campaign by teaching families how to engage in language-rich activities with their children.

These simple actions can improve a baby’s ability to learn new words and concepts.

Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing

The TRS campaign focuses on **3 things** that motivate behavior change:

1. **Trusted messengers**
2. **Environmental prompts & paid media**
3. **Tools to facilitate change**



L.A. Campaign: Media Messages

TRS campaign messages in L.A. use these paid media:

Billboards

Radio

Newspapers

TV Spots

Social Media



L.A. Campaign: Broadcast Highlights

- “Successful Futures” 30-second TV spot, ran statewide.
- 30-second TV spot featured Univision’s Omar & Argelia.
- 45+ custom TV vignettes featuring local network talent aired across 28 different media outlets.
- 59 custom radio spots featuring Mario Lopez & local talent together.
- 20+ custom radio 30-second live reads featured local talent.
- 40+ custom radio 10- and 15-second live read traffic and sponsorships
- Station-recorded Spanish language spots, including hard-to-reach TV and radio, including Mixteco and Hmong.

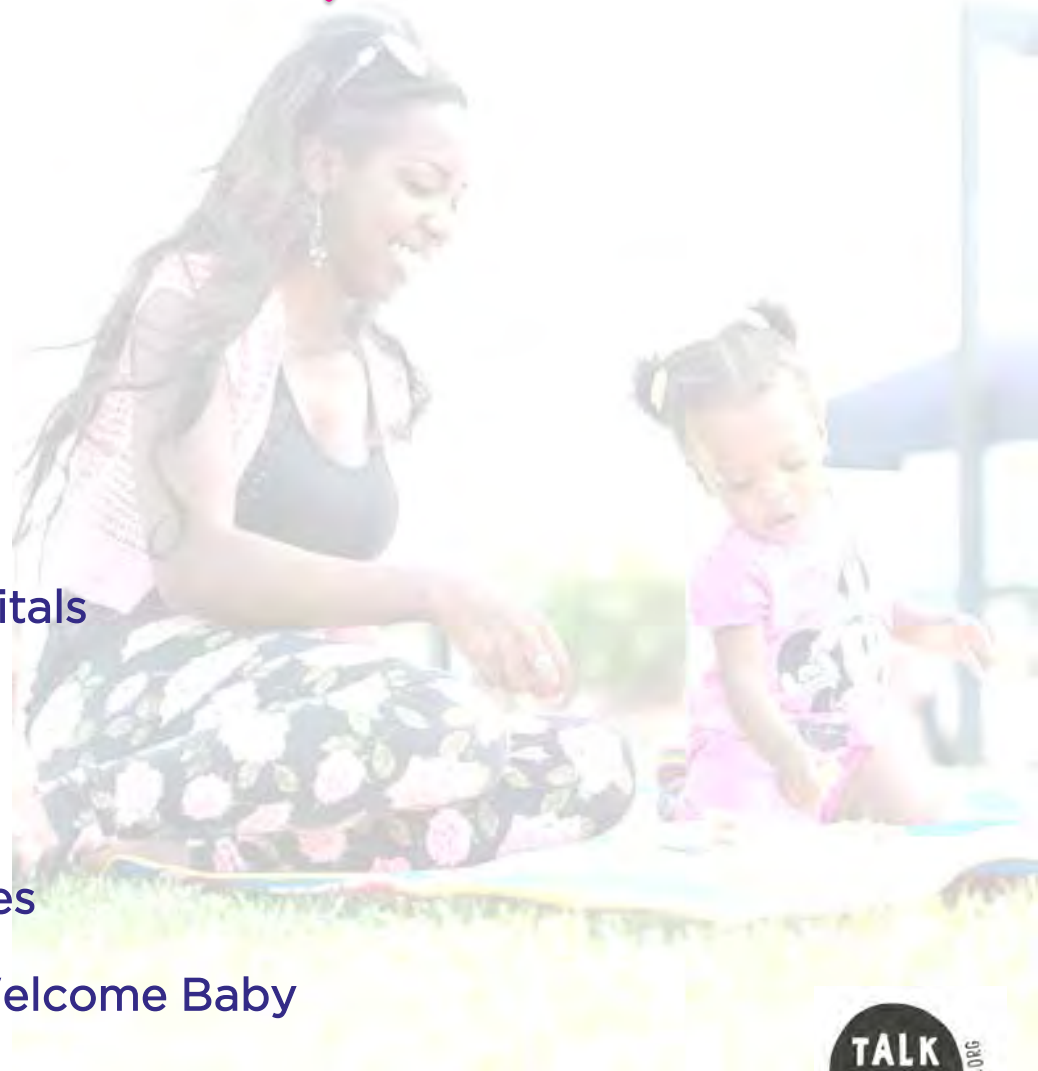
Over 400 million impressions were delivered across a 4-month period.



L.A. Campaign: Community Touch Points

Touch Points for the TRS LA Campaign *via* F5LA's Welcome Baby Program

- Home Visiting Programs
- Child Care Centers/Schools
- Welcome Baby Partnering Hospitals
- Family Strengthening Programs
- Faith Leaders & Churches
- Pediatric Clinics, Private Practices
- Local Resources Identified by Welcome Baby
- Former Clients/Welcome Baby Moms!



Talking is Teaching Materials/Toolkit: A Conversation Starter



- Toolkits include 3 high-quality items that encourage parents to engage every day with their young children
- All materials come in English and Spanish
- Pre-packaged toolkits have been delivered to your site
- Toolkits given to **ALL families (BS/NBS)** at the 2-month visit

Talking is Teaching Materials/Toolkit: A Conversation Starter

- Go through each item and discuss how to incorporate talking, reading, and singing into daily routines.
- The kits come in plastic bags. After presenting TRS items, review the hazards associated with plastic bags.
- Take the empty plastic bag when you leave the home.



Talk, Read, Sing Blanket

The TRS blanket doubles as an educational tool: it prompts parents to talk, read, and sing to their children.

Designed with graphics and prompts optimized for learning based on the child's age and environment.

Provides parents with an easy way to transform everyday life into an opportunity to talk, read, and sing.

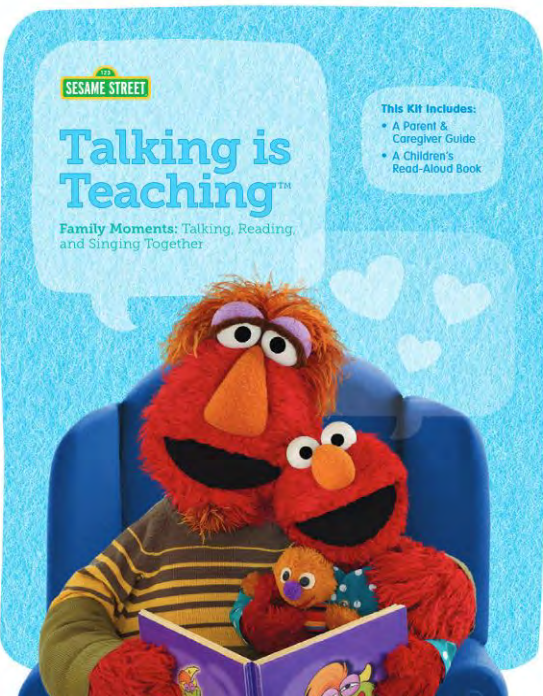


Sesame Street “Talking is Teaching” Parent/Caregiver Guide



Includes tools, ideas, and activities that help parents learn to talk, read, and sing with their young children during their daily routines.

Walk through the guide with mom and show her the tips and activities she can use with her baby.



This Kit Includes:
• A Parent & Caregiver Guide
• A Children's Read-Aloud Book

write
d reading.
as?"
om:
C:
tory:
esn't

i read together
uprised
the same thing

Choosing a Book as Your
Child Grows:
Babies love sturdy board, cloth,
or plastic books. Look for simple
rhymes, repeated text, and
colorful pictures.

Toddlers might be interested
in books about animals, trucks,
or food. They also enjoy
sequenced stories.
Older
ans,
Cov,
and
also.

Use everyday moments, like grocery shopping or bath time, as a time to talk with your child about the world around him.

Make sharing a book a time to bond by snuggling with your baby in your lap.

Music CD



- The CD has both English and Spanish songs.
- Educate parents about how music is a great bonding tool.
- Suggest families can play the CD during everyday activities.
- Encourage moms to sing, dance, and talk about the songs with their babies.



New Parent Kit Insert

Talk. Read. Sing.SM
It Changes EverythingSM

The secret takes you into this way of thinking is a habit of thinking the conversations that will determine how they learn, think, and grow. In fact, more than 60% of your child's brain growth is completed by age three, and it starts from day one. Just remember:

- Talk, read, and sing with your baby every day.
- Talk about all kinds of things or happenings. It helps build your child's vocabulary.
- Start early. Don't wait until your child is older to start talking and reading aloud with them.

Babies who are talked to and read to from the time they're born are better prepared by the time they start school. Kids who aren't have a much bigger chance of falling behind and have a hard time catching up.

Go to First5California.com for great ideas about talking, reading, and singing with your child every day.

FIRST 5 CALIFORNIA
First5California.com

Remember:

- Talking, Reading, Singing = Language Development
- Language Development = Increased Vocabulary
- Increased Vocabulary = Better Prepared for School
- Success in School = Better Prepared for Life

Callouts from the brain graphic:

- "What do you think? Should we buy red or green apples today?"
- "Remember to sing 'Don't you? Let's sing together!'"
- "Look at that! That's a gray squirrel. See his fluffy tail and front paws?"
- "There's a spider for the week. Are you worried we saw this one?"
- "Honey, your Grammy. I'd love you how to swing what like that."

- The F5CA New Parent Kits include this “Talk, Read, Sing” insert
- When you review the New Parent Kit with families, let families know about the campaign and its purpose.



Evaluation Goals



- Are parents talking, reading, and singing more with their children starting at birth?
- Which messages and tools were most effective?
- What can we learn from the process of implementation?

Powered by Great National & Local Partners



American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Thank You!

For questions, feedback, comments:

Amanda Helvie

Sr. Communication Specialist

LA Best Babies Network

P: 213-250-7273, x102

E: ahelvie@labestbabies.org



For information and tips for parents:

- First5LA.org/Parenting
- TooSmall.org or TalkingIsTeaching.org
- [@2SmalltoFail](https://twitter.com/2SmalltoFail)



Talking is Teaching

TALK READ SING



Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing is a public awareness and action campaign to support parents and caregivers to engage more with their young children. Families are critical in supporting their child's early development. However, many families are not aware of what powerful roles they play and may have questions about *how* to engage with their child.

This document provides information about the campaign the information and materials provided to families, along with suggestions to introduce and encourage parents to engage with their children during the most critical developmental period. The materials offer families fun and simple ways to use everyday moments to talk, read and sing together.

You are a trusted messenger.

Families rely on you for support, information and guidance. You are in a unique position to share these messages and model specific activities. Let parents know about the power of their words and interactions with their children. Your encouragement will go a long way!

Talking to families.

Here are some messages and tips to guide your discussions, along with any examples you can share from your own experiences.

- **Acknowledge families' strengths.**

Explore and recognize what families already do to support their child's development. Help families find activities that work best for them and their child.

- **Encourage engagement.**

Engagement is essential to promoting brain development and helps children feel safe and loved, even before they can talk!

- Engagement is physical affection – holding and snuggling with a child during reading time.
- It's loving and responsive communication – responding to babies' coos and asking toddlers open-ended questions.
- It's giving attention – making eye contact while singing to a baby or dancing with a toddler.

When families engage with their children, they are building skills that will last a lifetime.

- **Small moments matter.**

Let families know that every opportunity to talk, read and sing with children is an opportunity to help them grow. You can do it while changing a diaper, giving a bath, or during mealtime. Every small moment together matters!

“Talking is Teaching” Materials: A Conversation Starter.

The “Talking is teaching” items given to moms are a great way to talk about early learning and child development. It doesn’t take long to go through the items and they’re fun!

Please take a few minutes to go through the items below and discuss how families can incorporate talking, reading and singing during their daily routines.

Items	Talking Points
“Talking Is Teaching” Guide by Sesame Street	The guide is full of tips and activities. Use the tear-out cards to learn about literacy milestones and how to support your child’s learning at different ages.
Baby Blanket	This is a fun item to inspire talking, reading and singing during daily routines. Find creative ways to talk and sing about the things around you - when you’re on the bus, at the store, making dinner, doing laundry, or getting ready for bedtime.
CD	Music is a great way to bond with your child. Play this CD and sing, dance and make noise (clap, shake, or tap) with your child. Music can sooth infants, encourage movement, lift your spirits, and reduce stress.

SCRIPT FOR ENGAGEMENT: ACTIVITY WITH FAMILIES



Raise your hand if life is busy! PAUSE FOR A MOMENT.

Think about some of your daily or weekly activities that seem boring or seem to pull you away from time with your children.

Can anyone name some activities?

ALLOW PARENTS TO COME UP WITH IDEAS.

PROMPT IF NEEDED:

(Any housecleaning activity, preparing meals, going to the grocery store, getting dressed or dressing children, driving in the car, bathing kids, etc.).

How could we make a game or interact with our child while doing that same activity?

ALLOW PARENTS TO COME UP WITH IDEAS.

What about laundry? Did you know that if you let your child help sort the laundry as you are folding it, you can help them begin to “think like a detective” because he is using his senses, like touch and vision, to put things into categories? These are magical opportunities to help our children’s brains grow!

Who can think of other ideas that can turn the boring chores into games?

ALLOW PARENTS TO COME UP WITH IDEAS.

What about grocery shopping? As you go down each aisle, try to give your child something to look for...“I spy something red” or “Can you help me find the corn?”

The best thing is that there are no wrong ways to do this!

Just explaining or “narrating” what you’re doing with your child throughout the day and asking your child questions as you go about your activities is one of the most important ways to help your baby’s brain grow during the most important time in his life.



“TALKING IS TEACHING: TALK, READ, SING”

The “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” campaign aims to motivate parents to talk, read and sing more with their babies in order to build vocabulary and reduce the “word gap.” A large body of research shows how talking, reading and singing with young children every day helps them learn, and benefits their physical and emotional health.

As members of a health care team, you are a trusted resource for families and communities. Your encouragement will go a long way to raise awareness about the word gap and provide valuable knowledge to families about ways to support their children’s healthy development.

Below are suggested ways for you to talk with families about this campaign:

THE TOTE BAGS

- I am so happy to tell you that you will receive a “Talking is Teaching” tote bag today with valuable information on ways you can communicate with your baby to help their brain develop. Your doctor or MA will tell you more about it during your visit!
- I am so excited to share this “Talking is Teaching” tote bag with you. It's full of things your doctor will go over with you that can help your child learn better, and improve the way he (or she) communicates with you.
- This tote bag has tools for you to take home and use with your baby every day – a book, a guide from Sesame Street, and baby clothing and a blanket with suggestions for things to talk about and questions to ask your child.
- Talking is teaching. When you talk, read and even sing with your baby – even though she can’t use words yet – she is really learning from you and you’re helping them become smarter and happier.





MORE TIPS FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

- Talk with your baby about anything and everything. When they coo, coo back. When they smile, smile back.
- Sing with your baby during everyday activities like bathing, eating and getting dressed.
- Read a book to your baby every day—in whatever language you feel most comfortable—beginning at birth. And if you don't feel comfortable reading words, you can point out the pictures in the book and talk with your baby about them.
- You are your child's first teacher. The more words your baby hears from you, the better prepared she will be to learn.
- Everywhere you go, talk about what you see. Point out the world to your child. A stop sign, a traffic light, or a tree might seem boring to you, but it's a whole new world for your baby, so tell them about it!
- Singing songs and telling stories to your baby helps him bond with you, and helps his brain develop.
- Babies whose families talk, read, and sing with them every day become stronger readers and bond more with their families than babies who don't have that experience.
- Hugging, laughing, and sharing close moments helps your baby bond with you, and helps her brain develop. The more words she hears from you and other caregivers— and the more positive experiences she has with you -- the better prepared she will be to learn.



*Learn more about our campaign at www.talkingisteaching.org,
and about Too Small to Fail at www.toosmall.org.*

DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS: FIVE TIPS FOR PARENTS

Parents with limited English proficiency have heard different messages about the language-learning needs of their children.¹ Some believe that speaking to their children in their native language may hold them back from learning English or confuse them as they enter preschool and kindergarten.

Yet, new research from brain scientists and linguistic experts tells us that a child who learns many words in her native language will have a stronger foundation for learning a second language, like English.² Studies also show that exposing a child to two languages during their preschool years may help them learn more efficiently as they grow.³

In fact, exposing children to lots of words early on, regardless of the language, is the best way to prepare them for the future. In the earliest years, children's brains are able to distinguish between, sort, and understand sounds associated with different languages.⁴ This begins with the processing of sounds and information in the womb,⁵ and continues as language networks form and grow in the brain. Repeated use of these networks creates the essential building blocks for lifelong language learning.⁶

Parents or caregivers who do not speak English, but who are eager for their children to thrive in the American educational system, can benefit from this new research. Tips from the research include:



- 1. Talk, read, sing, and play with your child often – in both your native language as well as other languages you know.** Talking directly with a child is the surest way to help them build their early vocabulary. In fact, researchers at Stanford University found that the amount of talk directed at a child predicted the size of their vocabulary as early as 24 months.⁷
- 2. Know that if you speak a language other than English at home, it's normal for your child to start out slowly learning English. With time and attention, they'll match their peers.** Early language learning is complex – under any circumstance – and your child will be working to store two languages at once. It will take time for them to begin sorting out and using new words they learn from friends and teachers in preschool with the words they learn at home.⁸ By helping your child build their vocabulary in the language of your home, their young minds will be ready to learn new languages. Research has even found that dual language learning children have similarly-sized vocabularies, but spread over two languages, and that many early differences in speech can fade with time.⁹
- 3. Be proud.** Children raised in households that speak a language other than English are lucky. Research has shown that children who learn two languages display greater concentration, have a better grasp on the basic structure of language, and may have an easier time understanding math and science symbols later on in school.¹⁰ In fact, strong evidence suggests that when it comes time for your child to learn English, they'll be better at it with a strong foundation in their native language.¹¹
- 4. Visit your public library as often as you can.** Local library branches often have children's books in Spanish, as well English related materials for the whole family. If you or a caregiver you know does not read in English, find books to read aloud in your home language. If books are not available, talk to your librarian.

- 5. Follow-up classroom or caregiver learning by reading and conversing with your child in your preferred language.** Point out words that match some of the new English words that your child may be hearing that share similar roots – such as *August* and *Agosto* or *plant* and *planta*. This process will reinforce their new language skills while showing them how much they may already naturally understand, boosting confidence and learning at the same time.¹²

Parents who are not proficient in English may feel stress and anxiety about their children’s language skills. But it is becoming increasingly clear that there are many advantages to growing up bilingual. Parents who talk, read, sing, and play with their children – often and in the languages they know best – will prepare them for success in preschool, elementary school, and beyond.

It is becoming increasingly clear that there are many advantages to growing up bilingual.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Linda Espinosa, “PreK-3rd: Challenging Common Myths About Dual Language Learners,” (New York: Foundation for Child Development, 2013) and Annick De Hower, *An Introduction to Bilingual Development* (New York: Multilingual Matters, 2009).
- 2 L. Quentin Dixon and others, “What we Know About Second Language Acquisition: A Synthesis from Four Perspectives,” *Review of Educational Research* 82 (1) (2012): 5-60.
- 3 Catherine Sandhofer and Yuuko Uchikoshi, Cognitive Consequences of Dual Language Learning: Cognitive Function, Language and Literacy, Science and Mathematics, and Social-Emotional Development.” In Faye Ong and John McLean, eds., *California’s Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners* (California Department of Education, State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care, 2013).
- 4 Patricia Kuhl, “Early Language Learning and Literacy: Neuroscience Implications for Education,” *International Mind, Brain, and Education Society* 5 (3) (2011): pp 128-142.
- 5 Barbara Conboy, “Neuroscience Research: How Experience with One of More Languages Affects the Developing Brain.” In Faye Ong and John McLean, eds., *California’s Best Practices for Young Dual Language Learners* (California Department of Education, State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care, 2013).
- 6 Patricia Kuhl, *Id.*
- 7 Adrianna Weisleder and Anne Fernald, “Talking to Children Matters: Early Language Experience Strengthens Processing and Builds Vocabulary,” *Psychological Science* (2013).
- 8 Barbara Conboy, *Id.*
- 9 Barbara Pearson and others, “The Relation of Input Factors to Lexical Learning by Bilingual Toddlers.” *Applied Psycholinguistics* 18 (1997):41–58.
- 10 Ellen Bialystok, “Levels of Bilingualism and Levels of Linguistic Awareness,” *Developmental Psychology*, 24 (4) (1988):560-567 and Raluca Barac and Ellen Bialystok, *Cognitive Development of Young Bilingual Children: A Review of the Literature* (Under Review, 2013).
- 11 L. Quentin Dixon and others, *Id.*
- 12 Linda Espinosa, *Id.*



BUILDING YOUNG BRAINS THROUGH TALKING, READING, AND SINGING

Too Small to Fail and the Bay Area Council, in partnership with UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland, Kaiser Permanente, the American Academy of Pediatrics, Reach Out and Read, Scholastic, Sesame Workshop, Text4baby and many others, have launched an exciting new community campaign in Oakland. The campaign, titled "Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing" aims to motivate parents and caregivers to talk, read and sing more to their babies and toddlers in order to build vocabulary and reduce the "word gap." A large body of research shows how talking, reading and singing to young children every day helps them learn, and benefits their physical and emotional health.

What the Research Tells Us

After decades of brain research, we know that brains develop most rapidly in the first few years of life, when 700 to 1,000 new neural connections form every second. Infant brains are hard-wired to absorb information about the world around them so that they can build linguistic as well as important cognitive and social skills. But not all children receive the positive stimulation needed to develop their physical, emotional and mental health to their fullest potential:

- **In 1995, researchers Betty Hart and Todd Risley found that by age four, children in high-income families hear up to 30 million more words than children in families living below the poverty level, and acquire double the words.** This is what is referred to as the "word gap".
- **Harvard professor Robert Putnam discovered** that in the 1960s and 1970s parents who had more formal education and those who had less were spending similar amounts of "Goodnight Moon Time"—or time spent in activities like reading to their children. But by 2010, less formally educated parents were spending up to 30 fewer minutes a day on those same activities than more formally educated parents.
- **And in 2013, researcher Anne Fernald of Stanford University found that by the time a child is two years old, there is already a six-month gap in language comprehension between infants from higher-income and lower-income families.** This early learning gap is the strongest predictor of the persistent achievement gap in educational attainment.



The good news is that small and meaningful actions—such as talking, reading, and singing to young children—support early learning and development, and strengthen the parent-child bond. Children who are securely attached to adults show better physical and mental health, including more positive emotions, and have an easier time forming relationships with adults and peers. Additionally, strong parent-child bonds can help prevent many chronic diseases that result from "toxic stress," brought on by repeated negative experiences in early childhood.

Finally, there is evidence to suggest that knowledge about child development—rather than income or education level—is the strongest predictor of the frequency and quality of a mother’s communication with her child. If all parents and caregivers realize how much they can benefit their children’s lives by talking, reading and singing to them every day, this will make a huge difference in our communities here and across the country.



Reaching Parents and Caregivers

As healthcare providers, you are a trusted resource for families and communities. Your encouragement will go a long way to raise awareness about the word gap and provide valuable knowledge to families about ways to support their children’s healthy development. Below are some simple messages and tips for you to share with parents and caregivers on being their child’s first teachers:

- Talking is teaching. When you talk to your baby—even though they can’t use words yet—they are really learning from you and you’re helping them become both smarter and happier.
- During the first year of life, your baby’s language will develop faster than any other time. To make the most of this time, talk to your baby about anything and everything. When they coo, coo back. When they smile, smile back.
- Make routines out of singing during everyday activities like bathing, eating and getting dressed.
- Read a book to your baby every day—in whatever language you feel most comfortable—beginning at birth. And if you don’t feel comfortable reading words, you can point out the pictures in the book and talk with your baby about them.
- You are your child’s first teacher. The more words your baby hears from you, the better prepared she will be to learn.
- Everywhere you go, talk or sing about what you see. Point out the world to your child. A stop sign, a traffic light, or a tree might seem boring to you, but it’s a whole new world for your baby, so teach them about it!
- Singing songs and telling stories to your baby helps him bond with you, and helps his brain develop.
- Babies who hear their families talk, read, and sing to them every day become stronger readers and bond more with their families than babies who don’t have that experience.
- Hugging, laughing, and sharing close moments helps your baby bond with you, and helps her brain develop. The more words she hears from you and other caregivers—and the more positive experiences she has with you—the better prepared she will be to learn.



*Learn more about our campaign at www.talkingisteaching.org,
and about Too Small to Fail at www.toosmall.org.*



TALKING IS
TEACHING.

TALK
READ
SING

When you talk, read and sing with your child – even before they can use words – you’re helping them become both smarter and happier. Research shows that talking, reading and singing with your child every day from birth helps build their brains as well as important language, math and reading skills for use in school and beyond.

You probably naturally talk to your baby about the events of the day. Keep doing it, and do it more! The more words they hear from you, the better prepared they will be to learn. You are your baby’s first teacher!

TIPS FOR INFANTS

TALK

- Your touch and voice help your baby learn. Listen to the fun sounds your baby makes and repeat them. When they coo, coo back. Hold their hand gently and when they smile, smile back. Your loving touch combined with this "baby language" are the first steps in talking.
- Everywhere you go, talk about what you see and what your baby is looking at: "Wow, I see the four dogs, too!" "I love that red truck you're playing with. It goes beep beep!"
- Play "Peek-a-boo" while getting your baby dressed. Ask, "Where's (baby's name)?" when you pull a shirt over your baby's head. Then say, "There you are!"
- As you feed your baby, use words to describe what foods taste, feel, and look like. "This yogurt is smooth." "That yellow banana is sweet!"
- Looking into your baby's eyes, holding your baby's hand, and talking to your baby in a high voice are all ways that you can help your child grow up to be a confident, loving adult.

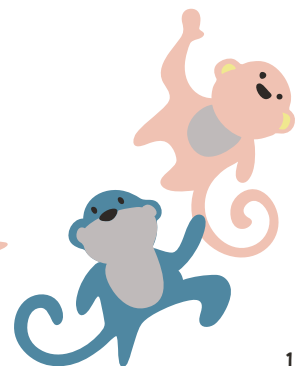
READ

- Read a book or tell a story to your baby every day – in whatever language you feel most comfortable – beginning at birth.
- Cuddle with your baby as you share a book. It doesn't matter how young your child is; even newborn babies show excitement when their parents read with them.
- Point to the book's pictures: "Look, the train goes choo-choo!" Using words to describe what you see builds language.

SING

- Hold your baby close during bedtime and sing a favorite song again and again. Singing the same song can help your baby feel calm and safe.
- Sing silly songs about your day to help get your baby's attention during diaper changing.
- Your baby loves to hear your voice even if you think you can't sing! The sound of your voice is comforting to your baby.

LET'S GLAP
TO A SONG.



TIPS FOR TODDLERS

TALK

- Everywhere you go, talk about what you see. A stop sign, a traffic light, or a tree might seem boring to you, but it's a whole new world to your child, so teach them about it!
- Young children learn best during playful, everyday activities. Play "I-Spy" in the grocery store together. Choose a color and encourage your child to point out objects that match the color.
- Try some early math activities: point out shapes on your child's plate or around the kitchen. Ask your child, "How many sides does a square have?" "How about a triangle?"
- Play games during bath time to help your child learn new words. Take turns dropping toys in the water. Say, "Watch it sink!" or "It floats!" toys in the water. Say, "Watch it sink!" or "It floats!"

READ

- You can inspire a love of books and words in your young child by reading or telling a story together every day.
- Point to the pictures in books, and ask your toddler questions about what you see as you share the book together. You can make up a story, too!
- Let your child turn the book's pages. It's OK if they skip pages, or like a few pages better than others. You just want your child to get used to touching books.

SING

- Sing during everyday activities like driving in the car, or during bath time. It can be repetitive and simple, like "Wash your toes, wash your nose!"
- Singing songs that have basic counting or rhyming patterns also helps children learn basic math skills. "One, two, buckle my shoe. Three, four, open the door."
- Your toddler loves to get positive attention from you. Singing is a great way for you and your toddler to share an activity together.



You can find more tips like these—as well as videos, information, and more—on our website,

TALKING IS TEACHING.ORG



“TALK MATH” ACTIVITIES SHEET

Research tells us that exposing children to math early improves their success in school. Talking to young children about numbers helps their brains **develop**, and may improve their confidence with math later on. So get counting! These ideas will help you spark your child’s math interest while you talk, read and sing!

Find opportunities to count everywhere you go. Count the steps as you and your child are walking up and down the stairs, or the cars passing by. Use your baby’s fingers and toes to count one, two, three, four, five!

Ask “how many?” Ask your child questions like “how many children and adults live in our home?” or “how many silver cars do you see?” These questions encourage children to count and compare things they see every day.

Talk about the shapes and sizes of objects all around you. Describe the shapes of everyday objects: the large table that is a rectangle, or the small, round orange. When your child has mastered these concepts, describe less common shapes: the stop sign is an octagon, the pond is an oval.

Sing and clap along together. One clap for each syllable builds understanding of “**one-to-one correspondence**,” or the ability to count in sequence. Practicing rhythm and melody also helps children understand patterns.

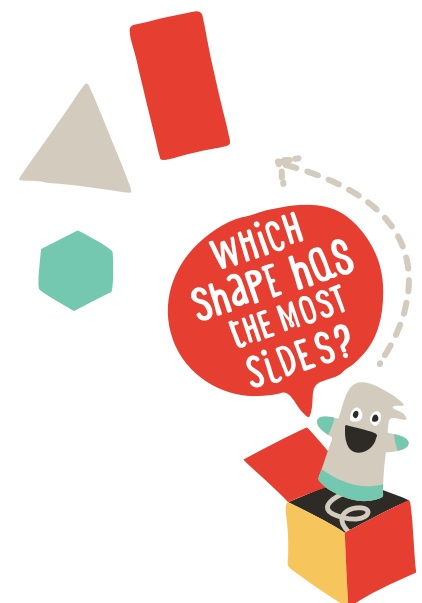
Talk about directions. Use physical descriptions of the world around you, such as “through,” “next to,” “around” and “behind” to help your child understand where things are in relation to other things.

Use comparison words throughout the day. Is the grapefruit bigger or smaller than the orange? Is my hair longer or shorter than yours? Grouping objects together helps children discriminate between sameness and difference. Sort things by size, color, length, or anything else you can think of together. The list is endless!

Talk math in any language. Math is a universal language, and its concepts are translatable across all languages. Look for ways to **talk about math** in whatever language you feel comfortable with. Talking math to your child every day builds her brain.

Additional Resources:

- Check out our [Q&A](#) with early math expert, **Deborah Stipek**, on the importance of building early math skills.
- Our partners at **Sesame Street** have a [toolkit](#) showing how math is everywhere around us!




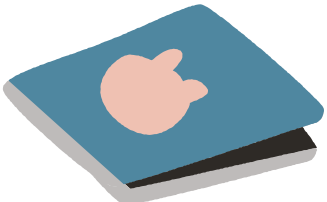
#TALKINGISTEACHINGTIPS CHALLENGE

TALK, READ, AND SING WITH YOUR BABY!

We're encouraging you to keep talking, reading, and singing to your baby during everyday moments. With simple actions like the ones below, you're helping boost your child's brain development and build their vocabulary, setting them up for success in school and beyond.

Join us for a 14-Day "Talking is Teaching" Challenge, where we are inviting parents and caregivers to complete one of the **#TalkingIsTeachingTips** every day! Let us know once you've completed the tip by commenting on our Facebook page, **Too Small to Fail**, or tweeting at **@2SmalltoFail** with the challenge hashtag, **#TalkingIsTeachingTips**. And don't forget to share your own tips, photos, and videos of talking, reading, and singing with your baby, too. Stay tuned – we'll share some of our favorites!

<p>While getting your baby dressed, have fun playing "Peek-a-boo" together. Ask, "Where are you?" when you pull a shirt over your baby's head. Then say, "There you are!"</p> <p>1</p>	<p>Encourage creativity. Make today an "art day" with crayons or washable paint. When your child finishes his art, ask him open-ended questions like, "Tell me about your drawing" or "Tell me about the colors you used."</p> <p>2</p>	<p>Turn wash time into talk time! Say "I spy something blue and soft" or "spy" the bubbles as they spin around in the washing machine and talk about what you see.</p> <p>3</p>	<p>Did you know? Your face is one of your child's favorite toys. Take turns showing each other different feeling faces and use words to label them. "We're smiling because we're so happy! Can you show me a frown?"</p> <p>4</p>	<p>Silly songs capture attention. Sing a silly song about your day using the tune of your favorite song at bath time or diaper changing.</p> <p>5</p>
<p>When you go food shopping, have fun talking about math with your child. Point to and name different shapes you see or count the food items as you place them into your cart. Anytime is a good time to help your baby learn basic math words and ideas.</p> <p>6</p>	<p>Let's be scientists! Play games during bath time to help your child experiment and learn new words. Take turns dropping toys in the water and ask, "Will the toy sink? Will the toy float? What do you think will happen if we fill the toy with water?"</p> <p>7</p>	<p>Sing "Old MacDonald" with your child, and change the words to animals or objects you see in your home or neighborhood. Take turns picking animals to sing about!</p> <p>8</p>	<p>Let's talk about food! As you feed your baby, ask questions like, "What does it taste like? Feel like? Look like?" You might say, "This yogurt is smooth." "That yellow banana is sweet!"</p> <p>9</p>	<p>During bedtime, hold your baby close and sing a lullaby together. Close, loving bonds between babies and their parents build a foundation for lifelong support and learning.</p> <p>10</p>
 <p>11</p>	<p>While walking or driving down the street together, talk to your baby about the traffic lights you see at the crosswalk every day. Red means "stop," green means "go," and yellow means to "slow down."</p> <p>12</p>	<p>Inspire imagination and a love for stories at an early age. Take time to read or make up a story every day with your child. As he or she gets older, take turns telling stories to one another about his or her favorite characters from books and shows.</p> <p>13</p>	<p>Everywhere you go, use words to talk about what you see and what your baby is looking at or pointing to. For example: "Wow, I see the four furry dogs, too!" "I love that red truck you're playing with. It goes beep beep!"</p> <p>14</p>	<p>Sing songs that have basic counting or rhyming patterns like "One, two, buckle my shoe. Three, four, open the door." This can help your child learn to count.</p>





TALK, READ, AND SING TOGETHER EVERY DAY! IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO HELP YOUR CHILD LEARN.

Learn more about your baby by watching for developmental milestones. Smiling, cooing, and babbling are just a few. Your baby will show you many more milestones in how he plays, learns, speaks, acts, and moves! Look for your child's milestones regularly and share his progress with the doctor at every well-child visit.

TIP: Respond to your baby's first smiles, gurgles, and coos — she's talking to you and wants you to talk, too!

BIRTH TO 2 MONTHS

- Coos, makes gurgling sounds
- Turns head toward sounds



4 MONTHS

- Begins to babble
- Babbles with expression and copies sounds he hears



TIP: Hold and talk to your baby; smile and be cheerful while you do.

6 MONTHS

- Responds to sounds by making sounds
- Responds to own name
- Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with "m," "b")



TIP: Read books to your baby every day. Praise him when he babbles and "reads" too.

9 MONTHS

- Understands "no"
- Makes a lot of different sounds like "mamamama" and "bababababa"

2 YEARS

- Points to things or pictures when named
- Says sentences with 2 to 4 words
- Follows simple instructions

18 MONTHS

- Says several single words
- Points to show someone what he wants

12 MONTHS

- Uses simple gestures, like shaking head "no" or waving "bye-bye"
- Tries to say words you say

TIP: When you read with your child, have her turn the pages. Take turns labeling pictures with your child.



TIP: Describe what your baby is looking at; for example, "red, round ball."



3 YEARS

- Follows instructions with 2 or 3 steps
- Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time
- Carries on a conversation using 2 to 3 sentences

4 YEARS

- Tells stories
- Can say first and last name
- Knows some basic rules of grammar, such as correctly using "he" or "she"

5 YEARS

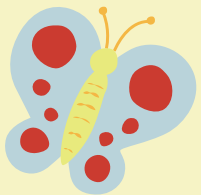
- Speaks very clearly
- Says name and address
- Uses future tense; for example, "Grandma will be here."

YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD'S LANGUAGE SKILLS BY TALKING, READING, AND SINGING WITH HIM OR HER EVERY DAY. IT'S EASY TO DO AND CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE IN HOW YOUR CHILD LEARNS AND GROWS!



IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START TALKING, READING, AND SINGING WITH YOUR BABY.

TALKING BACK AND FORTH WITH YOUR BABY BY RESPONDING TO HER SMILES, COOS, AND BABBLING HELPS YOUR BABY LEARN LANGUAGE.



LEARNING LANGUAGE HELPS YOUR BABY LEARN LOTS OF OTHER IMPORTANT SKILLS.

Go to [cdc.gov/ActEarly](https://www.cdc.gov/ActEarly) to find:

- Free **milestone checklists** to help you learn more about how your baby is developing
- Tips for **How to Help Your Child** and **How to Talk with the Doctor** if you ever become concerned about your baby's development
- A free children's book, **Amazing Me: It's Busy Being 3!**, for order or download
- More of the Too Small to Fail **Talking is Teaching Materials**

Remember, every child develops at his or her own pace, but if you are ever worried about your child's development, don't wait! Acting early can make a big difference. Remember, you know your child best. Talk with your child's doctor if you have concerns. Get tips to help you prepare at [cdc.gov/Concerned](https://www.cdc.gov/Concerned).





¡HABLEN, LEAN Y CANTEN JUNTOS EN SU LENGUA MATERNA TODOS LOS DÍAS! NUNCA ES DEMASIADO TEMPRANO PARA AYUDAR A QUE SU HIJO APRENDA.

Aprenda más sobre su bebé, para que pueda estar al tanto de su desarrollo. Sonreír, gorgear y balbucear son solo algunos de los indicadores. ¡Su bebé le mostrará mucho más por la forma en que juega, aprende, habla, actúa y se mueve! Esté pendiente de los indicadores del desarrollo de su hijo de forma regular y comunique su progreso al médico en cada consulta de rutina.

CONSEJO: Responda a las primeras sonrisas, balbuceos y arrullos de su bebé ¡Le está hablando y quiere que usted también le hable!

DEL NACIMIENTO A LOS 2 MESES DE EDAD

- Hace sonidos como de arrullo o gorjeos.
- Mueve la cabeza en la dirección de los sonidos.



4 MESES

- Empieza a balbucear.
- Balbucea con expresión y copia los sonidos que escucha.



CONSEJO: Cargue a su bebé en sus brazos y háblele, hágalo sonriendo y con alegría.

6 MESES

- Responde cuando oye su nombre.
- Reacciona a los sonidos con sus propios sonidos.
- Comienza a hacer sonidos con las consonantes (como la "m" o la "b" repetidamente).



CONSEJO: Léale libros a su bebé todos los días. Felicítelo cuando balbucee y también cuando él "lea".

9 MESES

- Entiende lo que "no" significa.
- Produce muchos sonidos diferentes como "mamamama" y "babababab".

2 AÑOS

- Señala cosas o imágenes que oye nombrar.
- Dice frases de 2 a 4 palabras.
- Sigue instrucciones sencillas.

18 MESES

- Puede decir varias palabras.
- Señala para mostrar lo que quiere.

12 MESES

- Usa gestos simples, mueve la cabeza de lado a lado para decir "no" o dice adiós con la mano.
- Trata de repetir las palabras que usted dice.

CONSEJO: Cuando lea con su hijo, permita que pase las páginas. Tome turnos con su hijo para nombrar las ilustraciones.



CONSEJO: Describa lo que su bebé esté mirando; por ejemplo, "pelota redonda roja".



3 AÑOS

- Sigue instrucciones de 2 o 3 pasos.
- Casi siempre habla lo suficientemente bien para que otras personas puedan entender lo que dice.
- Puede conversar usando 2 o 3 frases.

4 AÑOS

- Cuenta historias.
- Puede decir su nombre y apellido.
- Sabe algunas reglas básicas de gramática, como el uso correcto de "él" y "ella".

5 AÑOS

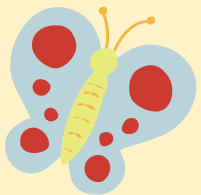
- Habla con mucha claridad.
- Dice su nombre y dirección.
- Usa el tiempo futuro; por ejemplo, "la abuelita va a venir aquí".

USTED PUEDE AYUDAR A QUE SU HIJO DESARROLLE HABILIDADES DEL LENGUAJE AL HABLAR, LEER Y CANTAR JUNTOS EN SU LENGUA MATERNA TODOS LOS DÍAS. ¡ESTO ES FÁCIL DE HACER Y PUEDE TENER UN GRAN EFECTO EN LA FORMA EN QUE SU HIJO APRENDE Y CRECE!



NUNCA ES DEMASIADO TEMPRANO PARA EMPEZAR A HABLAR, LEER Y CANTAR CON SU BEBÉ EN SU LENGUA MATERNA.

TENER CONVERSACIONES CON SU BEBÉ, RESPONDER A SUS SONRISAS, ARRULLOS Y BALBUCEOS, LO AYUDA A APRENDER EL LENGUAJE.



APRENDER EL LENGUAJE AYUDA A QUE SU BEBÉ APRENDA MUCHAS OTRAS HABILIDADES IMPORTANTES.

Visite [cdc.gov/Pronto](https://www.cdc.gov/Pronto) para encontrar:

- **Indicadores del desarrollo** gratuitos para ayudarle a aprender más sobre cómo su bebé se está desarrollando.
- Consejos sobre cómo ayudar a su hijo y cómo hablar con el médico si alguna vez siente preocupación por el desarrollo de su bebé.
- Un libro para niños: **Soy maravilloso**, que puede solicitar o descargar gratuitamente.
- Más información sobre los materiales de la campaña: **Pequeños y valiosos y Hablar es enseñar**.

Recuerde que cada niño se desarrolla a su propio ritmo, pero si alguna vez está preocupado por el desarrollo de su hijo, ¡no espere! Actuar pronto puede hacer una gran diferencia. Usted conoce a su hijo mejor que nadie. Hable con el médico de su hijo si algo le preocupa. Obtenga consejos para ayudarle a prepararse en [cdc.gov/Preocupado](https://www.cdc.gov/Preocupado).



**PEQUEÑOS
Y VALIOSOS**





PLAYTIME ACTIVITIES SHEET

For curious, young minds, playing is learning. Playtime is fundamental to your child's early development, helping hone her cognitive, social, and emotional skills. Opportunities to play are everywhere! Here are a few ideas to integrate play into your daily routine with your toddler:



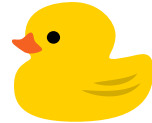
While getting ready in the morning, let your child explore your closet (or theirs!).

Playing dress up, or even exploring the different colors and textures of the fabrics in your closet, can be exciting.



Involve your toddler in meal preparation.

Give your child kid-friendly pots, pans, and other kitchen props so he can play chef while you make dinner. Describe spices and vegetables to your child and encourage him to smell, touch, and even taste the ingredients you're using.



Sing a song about toes, fingers, and noses during bath time.

It can be repetitive and simple, like "wash your toes, wash your nose." Couple singing with a game where your child pours water on the body parts mentioned in the song.



Turn reading time into playtime.

Have your child look at the pictures and tell the story. Act out the stories together as you read aloud or have her retell the story using her favorite toys.



Go on a scavenger hunt while out on a walk.

Help your child look for birds, benches, trees, bushes, and other common outdoor features. Encourage your child to explore the texture of leaves, rocks, and gravel. Describe the shapes and colors of the things you see.



Play a game of "I-Spy" while shopping together.

Choose a color and/or shape and challenge your child to point out as many objects that fall into that category as he can. Build your child's vocabulary by describing any unfamiliar or new objects that he encounters.



Every moment together is an opportunity for role play--all it takes is imagination. While waiting at the doctor's office, your child can play the doctor and you can introduce yourself as the patient. Pretend you have a stomachache or a headache and ask your child for a cure. You can encourage your child's role play in many other settings like restaurants, grocery stores, and subways.

LET'S TURN 'WASH TIME' INTO 'TALK TIME'!

Laundromats aren't just for washing clothes! You can talk, read, and sing there too!

Did you know? Simple actions like talking, reading, and singing with your children—right from the start—can build their brains and prepare them for success in school and beyond.

So whether it's meal time, bath time, play time, or even laundry time, have fun turning these everyday moments into "talk time"! Here are some ideas on ways you can talk, read, and sing together during each cycle of laundry!

WHILE WASHING

Play I-Spy! Take turns finding clothes you need to put in the washer. "*I-Spy your little blue shirt that is soft.*"

Read together. Words are all around the laundromat—even on clothing labels and machines! Have fun pointing them out together. You can say, "*My shirt tag says 'wash cold' so I'm turning the washer knob to cold. What does your tag say and how will we wash your clothes?*"

Talk about the bubbles! You can say, "*Let's find bubbles in the washer! How are they moving? They're moving around and around!*"

WHILE DRYING

Talk about colors. Name the colors you see all around. You can ask, "*What color are my socks? What color are yours?*" You can also use words like *bright* or *dark* to describe the colors.

Go on a shape hunt! Look for different shapes around the store. Ask, "*What shape is the dryer?*"

Count together. You can count washers, dryers, or older children can count the number of coins you need to put into the machine.

Sing a song! Sing your favorite song or make up a fun song about being at the laundromat together. Clap, tap, stomp, or dance along!

WHILE FOLDING

Play peek-a-boo! Cover your baby's face and say, "*Where's (baby's name)?*" Then say, "*There you are!*"

How does it look and feel? Take turns using words to describe how each clothing looks and feels!

Find a pair! Talk about numbers and use math words like *pair*. You might say, "*Let's find a pair of socks. Pair means two things that match.*"

Play a sorting game. You can say, "*Can you make piles of different kinds of clothes like shorts, shirts, socks, and dresses? All the socks go here and all the shirts go here.*"



Share your talk, read, sing moments at the laundromat!

#WashTimeTalkTime

For more ideas, visit TALKINGISTEACHING.ORG

TOO SMALL TO FAIL

TALK READ SING
TALKING IS TEACHING.ORG

¡VAMOS A CONVERTIR LA ‘HORA DE LAVAR’ EN LA ‘HORA DE HABLAR’!

¡Las lavanderías no son solo para lavar la ropa! ¡Ustedes pueden hablar, leer y cantar ahí también!

¿Sabía usted que simples acciones como hablar, leer y cantar con sus niños desde el principio puede desarrollar sus cerebros y los prepara para tener éxito en la escuela y más allá?

Así que si es la hora de comer, bañarse, jugar o hasta la hora de lavar, ¡diviértanse convirtiendo estos momentos cotidianos en la “hora de hablar”! Estas son algunas ideas sobre maneras en las que pueden hablar, leer y cantar juntos durante cada ciclo del lavado:

MIENTRAS LAVA

¡Jueguen a Veo, veo! Tomen turnos para encontrar la ropa que necesita poner en la lavadora. *Veo, veo tu camisita azul que es suave.*

Lean juntos. Hay muchas palabras alrededor de toda la lavandería, ¡hasta en las etiquetas de la ropa y las máquinas! Diviértanse juntos señalándolas. Usted puede decir: *La etiqueta de mi camisa dice ‘lavar en agua fría’, así que llevo la perilla de la lavadora a frío. ¿Qué dice tu etiqueta y cómo vamos a lavar tu ropa?*

¡Hablen de las burbujas! Usted puede decir: *¡Vamos a buscar las burbujas en la lavadora! ¿Cómo se están moviendo? ¡Están dando vueltas y más vueltas!*

MIENTRAS SECA

Hablen de los colores. Nombren los colores que vean a su alrededor. Puede preguntar: *¿De qué color son mis calcetines? ¿De qué color son los tuyos?* También, puede utilizar palabras como *brillante* u *oscuro* para describir los colores.

¡Vayan en una búsqueda de formas! Busquen diferentes formas por toda la lavandería. Pregunte: *¿Qué forma tiene la secadora?*

Cuenten juntos. Pueden contar las lavadoras, secadoras; o los niños mayores pueden contar las monedas que necesita poner en la máquina.

¡Canten una canción! Canten su canción favorita o inventen una canción divertida sobre estar juntos en la lavandería. ¡Pueden aplaudir, zapatear fuerte, dar golpecitos rítmicos o bailar!

MIENTRAS DOBLA

¡Use la ropa para jugar a ‘¿Dónde está mi bebé?’! Cubra la carita de su bebé y diga: *¿Dónde está (nombre del bebé)?* Luego diga: *¡Ahí estás!*

¿Cómo se ve y se siente? Túrnense para usar palabras que describan cómo la ropa se ve y se siente.

¡Encuentra un par! Hablen de los números y use palabras matemáticas como par. Puede decir: *Busquemos un par de calcetines. Par significa dos cosas que corresponden.*

Hagan un juego de clasificar. Puede decir: *¿Puedes hacer una pila de diferentes tipos de ropa, como pantalones cortos, camisas, calcetines y vestidos? Todos los calcetines van aquí y todas las camisas van allí.*



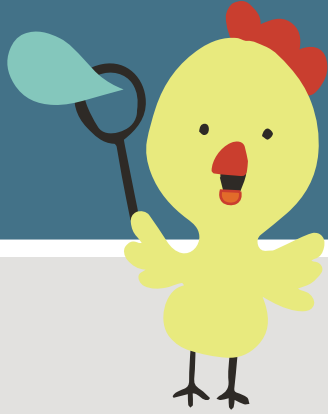
¡Comparta sus momentos para hablar, leer y cantar en la lavandería!

#WashTimeTalkTime

Para más ideas, visite HABLARENSEENAR.ORG

**PEQUEÑOS
Y VALIOSOS**





HABLEN, LEAN Y CANTEN JUNTOS TODOS LOS DÍAS!

CONSEJOS PARA LAS FAMILIAS

Cuando usted habla, lee y canta con su hijo, incluso antes de que ellos puedan usar palabras, les está ayudando a aprender. ¡Y los hace más feliz también! Las investigaciones muestran que hablar, leer y cantar con su hijo todos los días desde el nacimiento ayuda a construir sus cerebros, así como a desarrollar importantes habilidades sociales, de lenguaje, matemáticas y lectura que utilizarán en la escuela y después. Hable, lea y cante con su hijo en el idioma con el que usted se sienta más cómodo de usar.

Probablemente usted le hable naturalmente a su bebé acerca de los acontecimientos del día. Siga haciéndolo, ¡y hágalo más! Cuantas más palabras y conversaciones ustedes compartan, mejor preparados estarán ellos para aprender. ¡Usted es el primer maestro de su bebé!

Para los niños con discapacidades o retrasos, comuníquese con sus proveedores de servicios y manténganse mutuamente informados acerca de las estrategias que usted está utilizando para mejorar su entorno de lenguaje.

CONSEJOS PARA BEBÉS

HABLE

- Su tacto y voz ayudan al bebé a aprender. Escuche los divertidos sonidos que hace su bebé y repítalos. Cuando le dice "cu", respóndale "cu". Sostenega su mano suavemente y cuando sonría, devuélvale la sonrisa. Su toque de amor combinado con este "lenguaje de bebé" recíproco son los primeros pasos para hablar.
- Donde quiera que vaya, hable de lo que usted ve y de lo que su bebé está mirando: "¡Vaya, yo también veo los cuatro perros!" "¡Me encanta ese camión rojo con el que estás jugando. Hace bip, bip!"
- Juegue a "¿dónde está el bebé?" mientras viste a su bebé. Pregunte: "¿Dónde está (nombre del bebé)?" mientras pasa la camisa sobre la cabeza de su bebé. Luego diga: "¡Ahí estás!"
- Mientras alimenta a su bebé, use palabras para describir el sabor, la textura y el aspecto de los alimentos. "Este yogur es suave." "Esa banana amarilla es dulce."
- Mirar a los ojos de su bebé, darle la mano, y hablarle en voz alta son todas maneras en las que usted puede ayudar a su hijo a crecer hasta ser un adulto amoroso y seguro de sí mismo.

LEA

- Léale un libro o cuénteles una historia a su bebé todos los días desde el nacimiento, en el idioma que usted se sienta más cómodo.
- Abraza a su bebé mientras lee un libro. No importa qué tan joven sea su hijo; incluso los bebés recién nacidos aprenden cuando sus padres leen con ellos.
- Señale los dibujos del libro: "¡Mira, el tren hace chu, chu!" El usar las palabras para describir lo que se ve construye el lenguaje.

CANTE

- Sostenega al bebé cerca durante la hora de acostarse y cánteles una canción favorita una y otra vez. Cantar la misma canción puede ayudar a su bebé a sentirse tranquilo y seguro.
- Cante canciones locas acerca de su día para ayudar a llamar la atención de su bebé durante el cambio de pañales.
- A su bebé le encanta oír su voz, incluso si usted piensa que no sabe cantar. El sonido de su voz es reconfortante para su bebé.

CONSEJOS PARA NIÑOS PEQUEÑOS

HABLE

- Donde quiera que vaya, hable de lo que usted ve. Una señal de pare, un semáforo, o un árbol pueden parecer aburridos para usted, pero es un mundo completamente nuevo para su hijo, así que enséñeselos.
- Los niños pequeños aprenden mejor durante actividades de juego cotidianas. Jueguen juntos "a los espías" en la tienda de comestibles. Elija un color y anime a su hijo a señalar los objetos que coinciden con ese color.
- Pruebe algunas actividades tempranas de matemáticas: señale formas en el plato de su hijo o en la cocina. Pregúntele a su hijo, "¿Cuántos lados tiene un cuadrado?" "¿y un triángulo?"
- Juegue a la hora del baño para ayudar a su hijo a aprender nuevas palabras. Por turnos sumerja los juguetes en el agua. Diga, "¡Cuidado que se hunde!" o "¡Este flota!"

LEA

- Usted puede inspirar en su pequeño hijo el amor por los libros y las palabras al leer o contar una historia juntos todos los días.
- Señale las imágenes, las letras y los números en los libros. Haga preguntas abiertas, a medida que comparten el libro juntos. "¿Que ves? ¿Cómo se siente él? ¿Qué harías si fueras ella? ¿Cuál es tu página favorita?"
- Deje que su hijo pase las páginas del libro. Está bien si se saltan las páginas, o si les gustan algunas páginas más que otras. Lo que se busca es que su hijo se acostumbre a tocar los libros.

CANTE

- Cante durante las actividades cotidianas como al conducir en el coche, o durante la hora del baño. Puede ser repetitivo y simple, como "¡Lávate los pies, lávate la nariz!"
- Cantar canciones que tienen números básicos o patrones que riman también ayuda a los niños a aprender habilidades básicas de las matemáticas. "Uno, dos, me gusta el arroz. Tres, cuatro, voy al teatro."
- A su hijo le encanta recibir mucha atención de usted. Cantar es una gran manera para que usted y su hijo compartan una actividad juntos.



En el sitio web de "Pequeños y Valiosos" www.hablarensenar.org usted podrá encontrar más consejos como estos, así como videos, información y mucho más.

Cada niño se desarrolla a su propio ritmo, pero si alguna vez está preocupado por el desarrollo de su hijo, ¡no espere! Actuar a tiempo puede hacer una gran diferencia. Recuerde, usted es quien mejor conoce a su hijo. Si tiene preocupaciones hable con el médico de su hijo. Obtenga consejos para ayudarlo a prepararse en cdc.gov/Concerned.

Para obtener más información sobre la detección temprana de problemas del desarrollo y del comportamiento, visite [Birth to Five: Watch Me Thrive!](#)





TALK, READ AND SING TOGETHER EVERY DAY!

TIPS FOR FAMILIES

When you talk, read and sing with your child – even before they can use words – you’re helping them learn. And making them happier too! Research shows that talking, reading and singing with your child every day from birth helps build their brains as well as important language, math, reading and social skills for use in school and beyond. Talk, read and sing with your child in the language you are most comfortable using.

You probably naturally talk to your baby about the events of the day. Keep doing it, and do it more! The more words and conversations you share together, the better prepared they will be to learn. You are your baby’s first teacher!

For children with disabilities or delays, communicate with your service providers and keep each other informed about the strategies you are using to enhance their language environment.

TIPS FOR INFANTS

TALK

- Your touch and voice help your baby learn. Listen to the fun sounds your baby makes and repeat them. When they coo, coo back. Hold their hand gently and when they smile, smile back. Your loving touch combined with this back-and-forth “baby language” are the first steps in talking.
- Everywhere you go, talk about what you see and what your baby is looking at: “Wow, I see the four dogs, too!” “I love that red truck you’re playing with. It goes beep beep!”
- Play “Peek-a-boo” while getting your baby dressed. Ask, “Where’s (baby’s name)?” when you pull a shirt over your baby’s head. Then say, “There you are!”
- As you feed your baby, use words to describe what foods taste, feel, and look like. “This yogurt is smooth.” “That yellow banana is sweet!”
- Looking into your baby’s eyes, holding your baby’s hand, and talking to your baby in a high voice are all ways that you can help your child grow up to be a confident, loving adult.

READ

- Read a book or tell a story to your baby every day – in whatever language you feel most comfortable – beginning at birth.
- Cuddle with your baby as you share a book. It doesn’t matter how young your child is; even newborn babies are learning when their parents read with them.
- Point to the book’s pictures: “Look, the train goes choo-choo!” Using words to describe what you see builds language.

SING

- Hold your baby close during bedtime and sing a favorite song again and again. Singing the same song can help your baby feel calm and safe.
- Sing silly songs about your day to help get your baby’s attention during diaper changing.
- Your baby loves to hear your voice even if you think you can’t sing! The sound of your voice is comforting to your baby.

TIPS FOR TODDLERS

TALK

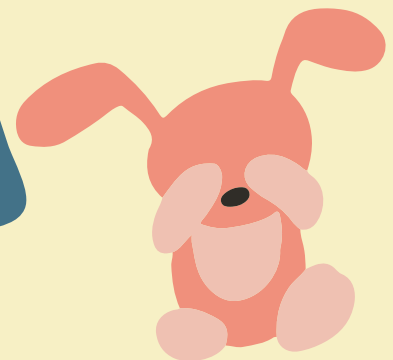
- Everywhere you go, talk about what you see. A stop sign, a traffic light, or a tree might seem boring to you, but it's a whole new world to your child, so teach them about it!
- Young children learn best during playful, everyday activities. Play "I-Spy" in the grocery store together. Choose a color and encourage your child to point out objects that match the color.
- Try some early math activities: point out shapes on your child's plate or around the kitchen. Ask your child, "How many sides does a square have?" "How about a triangle?"
- Play games during bath time to help your child learn new words. Take turns dropping toys in the water. Say, "Watch it sink!" or "It floats!"

READ

- You can inspire a love of books and words in your young child by reading or telling a story together every day.
- Point to the pictures, letters, and numbers in books. Ask open-ended questions as you share the book together. "What do you see? How does he feel? What would you do if you were her? What's your favorite page?"
- Let your child turn the book's pages. It's OK if they skip pages, or like a few pages better than others. You just want your child to get used to touching books.

SING

- Sing during everyday activities like driving in the car, or during bath time. It can be repetitive and simple, like "Wash your toes, wash your nose!"
- Singing songs that have basic counting or rhyming patterns also helps children learn basic math skills. "One, two, buckle my shoe. Three, four, open the door."
- Your toddler loves to get positive attention from you. Singing is a great way for you and your toddler to share an activity together.



You can find more tips like these—as well as videos, information, and more—on Too Small to Fail's website, www.talkingisteaching.org.

Every child develops at his or her own pace, but if you are ever worried about your child's development, don't wait! Acting early can make a big difference. Remember, you know your child best. Talk with your child's doctor if you have concerns. Get tips to help you prepare at cdc.gov/Concerned.

For more information on developmental and behavioral screening, visit [Birth to Five: Watch Me Thrive!](#)



LET'S TALK ABOUT GRANDPARENTS!



As a grandparent, you play a truly special role in the lives of your grandchildren and family members.

When you share rich conversations and stories with your grandchildren, you are helping to support their early brain and language development. Here are some fun ideas for ways you can bond with your grandchildren—simply by talking, reading, and singing together (in person or over the phone).

- **Celebrate your family history.** Cuddle up at home and share a story about a cultural family tradition. Talk together about why it's important to you.
- **Share a memory.** Tell your grandson about a favorite childhood memory. Ask your grandchild to share one of his favorite memories, too.
- **Empower your grandchild.** Explain a time when you were a child and it may have been difficult to learn how to do something new. What or who helped you learn to get better? You might ask, "What can grandma/grandpa do to help you learn something new?"
- **Read a favorite book.** Ask your grandchild to select a book that he loves and why it is special to him. Read it out loud together!
- **Sing and dance together.** Sing a favorite song and dance and teach the words and moves to your grandchild. Singing can introduce young children to new vocabulary words.
- **Draw together.** Draw a picture of a special day from your childhood. Describe why it was special and how it made you feel. Encourage your grandchild do the same.
- **Learn new words together.** Teach your grandchild a word or phrase in the language you speak at home. By helping your grandchild build her vocabulary, her young mind will be ready to learn even more!



FOR MORE TIPS AND
INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT
TALKINGISTEACHING.ORG.



Tips for Parents of Children Ages 0-2

Babies are born to learn. Just talking and reading together each day lays the foundation for them to become readers and writers! Here are some fun and simple ways to enjoy talking, reading, and writing together as you go about your daily activities:

Make every day a talking day.

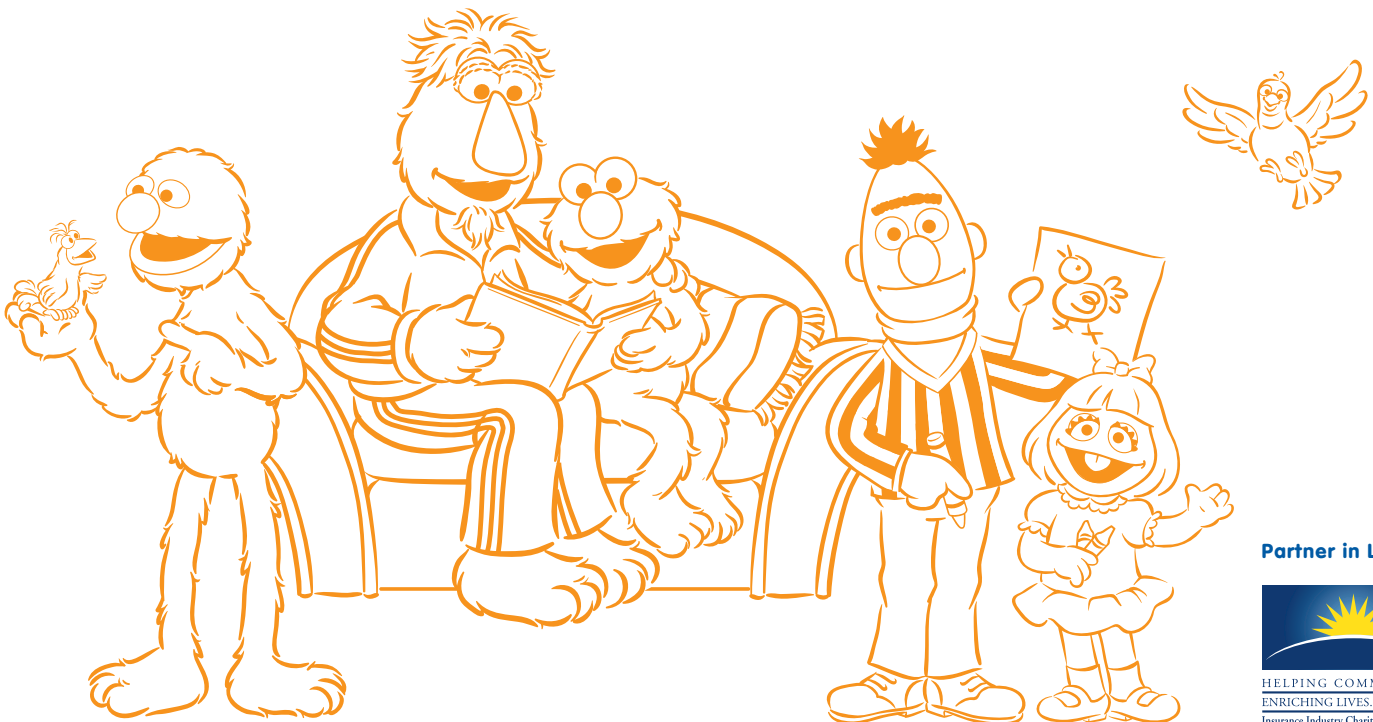
- » **Enjoy conversations.** Your child's smiles, coos, and squeals are her way of talking with you! Make eye contact as you talk, make faces, and imitate her sounds.
- » **Talk and sing together often.** Talk out loud about everything you do and see as you go about your day. You could also sing a song like "Head, shoulders, knees, and toes" while getting dressed or taking a bath.

Make every day a reading day.

- » **Read aloud together every day.** It's never too early! Babies may want to play with the pages while toddlers want you to read the same story over and over again. This encourages a love for books and reading. Whenever you read, take time to point to and name the pictures.
- » **Read words all around you.** Words are everywhere – on street signs, storefronts, cereal boxes, and magazines – so take time to point them out.

Make every day a writing day.

- » **Let them explore with their hands.** Give babies many opportunities to practice grabbing and holding toys or finger foods with their hands and fingers.
- » **Encourage them to scribble freely.** Over time, you can give your child a chunky crayon. He'll be delighted to see that he can use it to scribble on paper! After he's done with his drawing, encourage him to tell you about his picture.



Partner in Literacy



Your Baby's Development

The first 3 months are all about babies learning to feel comfortable, safe, and secure in the world. By responding to their signals and providing lots of love and comfort, you help them form a trusting bond with you.

How are you helping your baby learn to feel safe and secure?



What Your Baby Can Do	What You Can Do
<p>I am getting to know you and the other people who love and care for me.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I recognize your faces, voices, and smells.• I respond to your smile and touch with pleasure.	<p>Talk and sing to your baby. This makes him feel loved and helps him bond with you.</p> <p>Hold your baby. Enjoy some skin-to-skin cuddle time with your little one.</p>
<p>I am learning how to “tell” you what I need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can use my sounds, facial expressions, and body movements to tell you how I’m feeling—sleepy, hungry, happy, or uncomfortable.• I can show you when I want to play and when I need a break.	<p>Watch your baby to learn her signals. Does she have a “hunger” cry? Does she rub her eyes or look away from you when she is tired? Smiles are easy to figure out.</p> <p>Respond to your baby’s signals. When her eyes are bright and she is awake and alert, it is time to play. Slow things down when she cries, turns away, or arches her back.</p>
<p>I am beginning to use my body to make things happen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can grip your finger or a toy you put in my hand.• When I am hungry, I might move my head toward my mother’s breast or the bottle.	<p>Give your baby something to reach for and hold onto—a finger or toy. Let him touch objects with different textures and shapes. Hold a toy within your child’s reach so he can swat it with his hands or feet.</p> <p>Watch to see how your baby is “discovering” his body. Does he look at his hands, suck on his feet, or try to roll?</p>
<p>We are becoming closer and closer every day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am learning to trust that you will read and respond to my signals.• I rely on you to comfort me. This helps me learn to comfort myself.	<p>Comfort your baby whenever she cries. You can’t spoil a baby. Soothing makes her feel safe, secure, and loved.</p> <p>Help your baby calm herself by guiding her fingers to her mouth, giving her a pacifier, or offering her a blanket or soft object that is special to her.</p>



As you use this resource, remember that your child may develop skills faster or slower than indicated here and still be growing just fine. Talk with your child’s health care provider or other trusted professional if you have questions.

Your family’s cultural beliefs and values are also important factors that shape your child’s development.

For more information on parenting and child development, go to: www.zerotothree.org

Spotlight on Crying

What's on Your Mind

I have to go back to work. Will my 8-week-old be okay in child care?

Yes, as long as it is a high-quality program. Look for a clean and safe setting with no more than three babies for every caregiver. There should be toys and books at the baby's level and child care providers who will let your baby sleep, eat, and play according to her own schedule. Make sure that the caregivers talk and play with the babies, that they comfort them when they are upset, and that they are loving and nurturing.

- Crying, as hard as it is to hear, is a normal way babies communicate hunger, discomfort, distress, or a need for your attention.
- Most newborns reach a crying peak at about 6 weeks. Then their crying starts to decrease. By 3 months they typically cry for about an hour a day.²
- Being with a crying baby who is hard to soothe can be exhausting, stressful, and frustrating. But keep in mind that just by being there—holding and comforting your baby—you are teaching him that

he is not alone and that you will stick by him through thick and thin.

- While all babies cry, some babies cry much more than others. This is known as colic and it's defined as crying that:

- ✓ begins and ends for no obvious reason
- ✓ lasts at least 3 hours a day
- ✓ happens at least 3 days a week
- ✓ continues for 3 weeks to 3 months³

What You Can Do

Did You Know...

Babies whose mothers reported high stress cried and fussed more than babies whose mothers reported little stress.¹

What It Means for You:

Even very young babies pick up on how their loved ones are feeling. When you are calm and relaxed, your baby is more likely to feel calm. When you are feeling stressed out and overwhelmed, your baby is more likely to feel tense. So in order to take good care of your baby, **it's really important that you take good care of yourself.** Ask trusted friends and family members for help when you need a break. Make time to do things that make you feel good. And be sure to talk to a trusted health care provider if you are feeling down or depressed.

Talk with your health care provider. Crying may have a medical cause—a food sensitivity, heartburn, or other physical condition.

Try holding your baby more. Some babies cry less when they are held more.⁴ Wrap your baby snugly in a blanket—called “swaddling”—and rock her gently.

Use soothing sounds. Talk or sing softly to your baby. Try running a fan or humidifier in your baby's room. Sometimes babies are soothed by this background noise.

Reduce stimulation—lights, sights, sounds, and textures—for your baby. Sometimes less stimulation leads to less crying for babies with colic.⁵

Reach out for support. Extended families and friends may be able to step in to give you a needed

break. Everyone needs support, and nobody needs it more than the parents of a crying baby.

Stay calm. When you're calm, it helps your baby calm down. If you find yourself feeling frustrated, put your baby on his back in a safe place—like the crib—and take a short break. Crying won't hurt your baby, and taking a break will let you soothe another very important person...you!

Don't give up. Soothing your baby is a trial-and-error process. If one strategy doesn't work, try another. Hang in there, and remember that the crying will get better.

What are some things you can do to soothe yourself after a tough day?



Authors: Rebecca Parlakian and Claire Lerner, LCSW, ZERO TO THREE
www.zerotothree.org

Endorsed by:
American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

This handout was made possible by a generous grant from

MetLife Foundation

Copyright 2008 ZERO TO THREE
All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America.
ISBN 978-1-934019-28-3

- 1 - Wurmser, H., et al., 2006.
- 2 - Neuspiel, D. in www.healthology.com
- 3 - Wessel, M., Cobb, J., & Jackson, E., et al., 1954.
- 4 - Monfort, G. in www.americanbaby.com
- 5 - Garrison, M. M., & Christakis, D. A., 2000.

Photo credit: Digital Vision/Parents and Babies/Getty Images



WHAT SHAPES
DO YOU SEE?

HOW MANY
MONKEYS
ARE THERE?

TALKING IS TEACHING Let's Talk About Math



CAN YOU SPOT
THE PATTERN?



A FUN-FILLED activity book to introduce
Early Math CONCEPTS AND WORDS TO YOUR CHILD



Math is all around us!



If you've ever passed out snacks to a group of children, you know that they are quick to notice if they didn't each receive the same amount. The ideas of **more** and **less**—basic math concepts—are obvious, even to very young children.

Did you know that **you can easily help your little one learn math skills?** Yes, you can! Children are interested in math and love thinking about it.

In fact, scientists have found that children's brains are ready to understand number concepts from a very early age. And a recent study found that if you **use math words in everyday conversations** with your toddlers and preschoolers, they'll do better in math and reading when they reach elementary school.

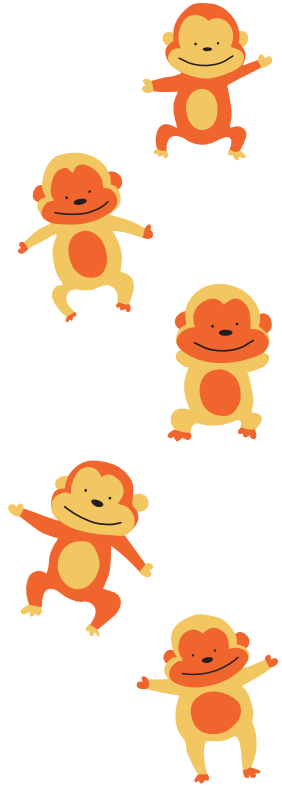
You can help your child by simply **talking about numbers, counting out loud, and using other math words as you go about your day**—and this book is full of ideas to get you started! To make it easy to find **math words and concepts** to say out loud with your children, we've highlighted them throughout this guide. We hope you have fun talking **math** with your children.



Look!
Do you see the
pattern?

In this book, you'll find fun and easy math activities that you and your child can do anywhere.

- **When riding the bus or driving in your car**, count the traffic lights or signs you see along the way.
- **While doing laundry**, give your child the job of finding the matching pairs of socks.
- **At the grocery store**, count the number of cans you place in your cart. In the produce section, ask your child to count the number of apples you place in the bag.
- **While setting the table**, have your child tell you how many forks you need for everyone to have one, and then count them out.



Let's measure
how tall you are.

Inside This Book

- Count by Numbers 4–5
- What's Big, What's Small? 6–7
- Sorting Shapes 8–9
- Find the Pattern 10–11
- Add It Up 12–13



Count by Numbers

Your child is beginning to develop an understanding of math—even before she can say number words out loud. Once she can begin to say number words, she can begin to match the words to set size and then count the set (for example, “Look at

the spoons. There are three! 1, 2, 3.”). You can help her do this by providing this kind of talk.

You can help her understand that a number word represents a specific amount. When waiting in line, say, “Let’s count the people in front of us. 1, 2, 3. There are three people in front of us. Then it’s our turn. How many people are behind us?” If your child answers incorrectly, instead of supplying the correct answer, say, “How did you get your answer? Let’s check if that’s right. Can you think of another way to solve that problem? Let’s count together.” Below, find other simple ways to talk math with your children when you’re in town.



Out and About

- **Count** the number of traffic lights you pass along the way and emphasize the total. “We’re passing 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. That’s five traffic lights we just passed.” Next time, count the number of stop signs.
- Explain that **numbers** identify buildings (“See the house numbers we’re passing?”) and businesses (“We’re looking for our dentist’s office at 129 Autumn Road”). Ask, “What numbers do you see?”

When Riding the Bus or Driving in Your Car

- Say to your children, “Let’s **count** how many cars pass by while we wait for

the light to turn green.” Another time, count trucks or buses.

- Talk about vehicles with different **numbers** of wheels. **How many** wheels does a car have? How many wheels does a bicycle have? A tricycle? A scooter?

When Parking Your Car

- When parking in a lot, **count** the cars between your car and the store: “1, 2, 3, 4. There are **four** cars between our car and the store.”
- If parking on the street, **count** the cars between your car and the crosswalk: “1, 2, 3. There are **three** cars between our car and the crosswalk.”

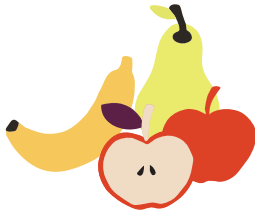
Around Town

- How many cars do you see?
- How many doors do you see?
- How many white dogs do you see?
- How many brown dogs?
- How many dogs are there all together?
- What else will you count?



What's Big, What's Small?

Have you ever thought about how often you **count, measure, estimate, and compare** when you're cooking? Measuring one cup of this and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of that teaches your child how to compare the relationship of parts to wholes. Your kitchen is rich with fun and yummy ways your child can learn the basics, and here are some easy ways to start.



Preparing Food

- Ask your child to compare the sizes of measuring spoons. Use words like **smallest, small, medium, big, bigger,** and **biggest** to describe each spoon.
- **Line up** the fruits you'll use for fruit salad from **smallest to largest**. (Try starting with a blueberry and ending with a watermelon.)

Setting the Table

- Think about plate sizes. Ask, "Do we need **big** plates or **small** plates for this meal?"
- Put your spoons down on the table and ask, "Who has a **long** spoon? Who has a **longer** spoon? Who has the **longest** spoon?"

At Mealtime

- Show your child a **whole** piece of toast and cut it in **half**. Then say, "These two pieces are the **same size**. They're called '**halves**.'" Cut each piece in half again. After your child counts, "1, 2, 3, 4 pieces," say, "These four pieces are called **fourths**. Fourths are **smaller** than halves."
- At snacktime, say, "We have an orange and an apple for a snack. Which one is **wider**?"
- Have your child hold two different pieces of fruit in her hands and ask, "Which one is **heavier**? Which one is **lighter**?"
- At dinner, compare the size of your food portions. Say, "You have **more** carrots than I do. I have **fewer** carrots than you."



In the Kitchen

Which plant is the tallest?

Which bowl is the widest?

Which drawer is the narrowest?

What else is large? What else is small?



Sorting Shapes



Your young child has a natural ability to understand shapes—but needs your help to learn what each one is called. So talk it up! Describe the shapes of objects and what makes each one different. For example, you might say, “A **circle** is **round with no corners**. A **triangle** has **three straight sides** and **three angles**.” Children learn best by touching objects of different shapes. There are plenty of shapes at home, but a trip to the grocery store offers some fun ways to find all sorts of shapes!



Look Around

Look around—you’ll find shapes everywhere.

- **Circles** are round with no corners. Look for circles printed on billboards and road signs. Encourage your child to use a finger to trace around the edges of plates and cups.
- **Rectangles** have four straight sides and four corners. The sides across from each other are the same length. Look for windows, doors, and flags. Trace the edges of envelopes and sheets of paper.
- **Squares** are a special type of **rectangle**—all four straight sides are the **same length**. Look for windows and signs that appear to be square. Help your child trace the edges of square floor tiles or square picture frames and **count** each side.
- **Triangles** have three straight sides and three **angles**. Look for them printed on billboards and yield signs. Cut used envelopes or cards from one corner to the opposite corner to make

two triangles. **Count** the sides as your child traces the edges of each one.

- **Spheres** are round, three-dimensional shapes. Find some balls and explore what happens when you drop something that doesn’t have straight sides—it rolls! Look for spheres in the produce aisle of your grocery store.

At the Store

- Have your child trace the edges of a box of cereal or crackers and **count** the sides. Say, “The top of the box is a **rectangle**” (or **square** if all four sides are the same length).
- Point out the express sign that says “10 items or fewer.” Ask, “Is this sign a **square** or a **rectangle**? How do you know?”
- When paying for your groceries, **point out the different shapes of money**. Say, “This dollar bill is a rectangle. What shape is the quarter? Are all my coins the same shape? Are they the same **size**?”

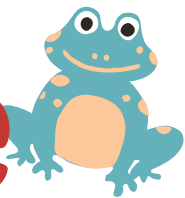


At the Grocery Store

What's happening in this store?
What shapes do you see?
What will you count?



Find the Pattern



Patterns are everywhere, and you can give your child opportunities to create and play with them. After all, a pattern is as easy as **something that repeats more than once**—like red, blue, red, blue, red, blue. Thinking about patterns helps children make sense of math; it helps them predict what will happen. After just a bit of practice, you'll be amazed at how often your child will find patterns that you don't even see!

In the Bedroom

- When folding laundry with your child, make a pattern with socks. Line them up like this: **big, small, big, small, big, small**. Then, have fun matching the **pairs** of socks together.
- Help your child lay out a **pattern** with her toys—a book, stuffed animal, block, book, stuffed animal, block, etc. Then **count** the number of toys all together and repeat the last number as you say, "So we have (total number of) toys on the floor."

Getting Dressed

- When you help your child get dressed, help him **count** the items of clothing he is putting on (one shirt, two socks, etc.). Do any of them have a pattern?

At Playtime

- Help your child make a **pattern** with his crayons. Place one pointing up, the next pointing down, etc. As you make the pattern, ask, "**What comes next?**"
- String pieces of macaroni into a beautiful patterned necklace. Place a **big** piece, another **big** piece, and then a **small** piece on the string. Repeat with more **big, big, small** pieces to create a pattern. When the necklace is complete, **count** the number of "beads" on the necklace.
- **Grow a pattern!** Put **one** object on the table. Below that object, put **another** object on the table and have your child place **one** object next to it. Below that row, put **two** objects in a row, then ask your child to **add one more** to the row. Below that row, put **three** objects in a row, then have your child **add one more**. Ask, "How many do you think will be in the next row? Let's find out!"

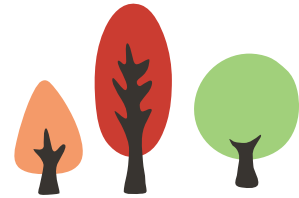


In the Bedroom

Blue square, red square, blue square, red square.
The red and blue squares make a pattern on
Grandma's quilt. What other patterns do you see
in this bedroom?



Add It Up



Here's an easy way to think about introducing addition: **group like things together, then add them up.** (Say, "Let's put all your red blocks in one pile and your blue ones in another. Now, let's count how many blocks there are **all together.**") Be sure to **use easy concepts and small numbers**, and whenever possible, **use familiar objects as examples** rather than numbers. The playground is a perfect place to practice addition with these tips below.



At the Playground

From the number of things to play on to the number of children playing, there are many ways to **use math words when visiting the playground.** Get started with these, then make up your own.

- **Count** how many big-kid swings you see, and how many little-kid swings. Then count the two groups of swings **all together.**
- If there are children on the swings, say, "There are five swings all together. And there are three children on the swings. **How many** swings don't have children on them?"
- If you see people walking dogs, ask, "Are there **more** people or dogs?" After your child answers, ask, "**How do you know?**" "Yes, we can **count to find out!**"
- **Count** your steps as you walk from the bench to the swings. Then count your steps as you walk to something else. Which took **more** steps? Which distance is **farther**?

Playing Outside

Use lots of number words as you walk along.

- Have your child run to, **touch**, and **count** a few trees. Ask, "**How many** trees did you touch?" Have her run, touch, and count a few more. Then hold up your fingers to show each number. Help her **add** the numbers to find out **how many** trees she touched.
- Find a picnic table and take a rest. Ask, "Are there **more** benches or tables? So there are **fewer** tables than benches. Fewer is the opposite of **more.**"
- Say, "We each brought a water bottle, so we had **four.** I recycled mine. **How many** do we have now? **How do you know?**"
- On the way home, play a game. Say, "Let's pretend I have some stars. If I gave you **two** and I kept **three**, how many stars did I have before I gave you some?" (Fingers can be useful tools for this game.) Repeat using other objects and numbers.



At the Playground

How many children are on the slide?
How many are on the climbing dome?
How many are riding a bike?
How many children are at the playground
all together?



Developed by:



Devoted to Fun with a Purpose®, global family media brand Highlights for Children, Inc. has helped children become their best selves for generations. In addition to *Highlights*®, the flagship magazine for children ages 6 to 12, the company's other offerings include *High Five*®, a magazine for preschoolers; *High Five Bilingüe*™, a magazine for preschoolers in English and Spanish; and *Highlights Hello*™, a magazine for infants and toddlers. The company also has a children's book division (Boyd's Mills Press and Highlights Press), puzzle book clubs, and a variety of digital products.

Highlights early childhood publications encourage quality time between caregivers and young children. By supporting early language development and a love of reading, Highlights products help to fulfill our mission of helping to raise curious, caring, confident, and creative kids.



For more information and tips on reading to little ones, visit www.highlights.com or connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Instagram.

Produced in partnership with:



Too Small to Fail, a joint initiative of the Clinton Foundation and Next Generation, aims to help parents, communities and businesses take meaningful actions to improve the health and well-being of children ages zero to five, so that more of America's children are prepared to succeed in the 21st century.

Too Small to Fail is focusing its work on closing the "word gap." Studies have found that by age four, children in middle and upper income families hear 30 million more words than their lower-income peers. This disparity in hearing words from parents and caregivers translates directly into a disparity in learning words. And that puts our children born with the fewest advantages even further behind. Among those born in 2001, only 48 percent of poor children started school ready to learn, compared to 75 percent of children from middle-income families.

The "word gap" is a significant but solvable challenge. Too Small to Fail is about parents, caregivers, other concerned individuals, and the private sector coming together to take small, research-based actions with big impacts.

Learn more at www.toosmall.org and on Twitter @2SmalltoFail.

Generous support provided by:



Printed and assembled in Reynosa, Mexico
Mfg. 09/15
Printed by Highlights for Children, Inc.,
Columbus, Ohio
All photos © iStock
Item # HFC-CF-01



TALKING IS TEACHING: TIPS FOR TALKING WITH MULTIPLE CHILDREN

Talking, reading, singing, and counting with children from 0-5 years of age helps them learn because the more words and numbers children hear, the faster their brains grow. Using everyday moments to talk to your children can make a difference that lasts a lifetime.

Of course, talking to one child is easy, but it's a different story when you have two ... or three ... or five! You're not alone. For most parents and grandparents, it's tough to involve multiple kids of different ages in an activity at the same time. But you can do it!

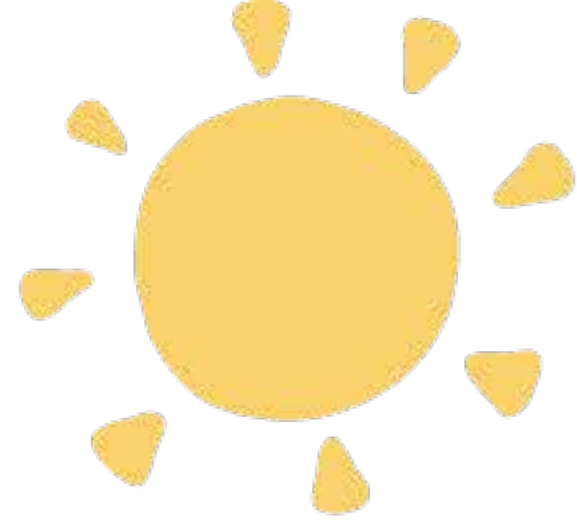
First, remember that older kids can be your partners in talking, reading, and playing with infants and toddlers, so make them part of your teaching team. Next, develop a routine. Reading a book before bed, playing after dinner, or singing in the car are all ways to fit learning activities into the day. In no time, children will begin to look forward to these moments.

Reading a book before bed, playing after dinner, or singing in the car are all ways to fit learning activities into the day.

Here are some more tips:

- Let older children lead the conversation by asking them to talk about what they see on a walk, in the grocery store, on a car ride, or while riding the bus.
- Encourage your older child to describe a favorite toy to your younger one. This is a great way to get him or her to talk about colors, shapes, and why the toy is a favorite.
- Designate one child the "Talk Team Captain," and let him or her help decide what the family will be talking about at any given time—like during dinner.
- Reading books aloud that are appropriate for older children helps keep them engaged. Don't worry that your infant won't understand. Help them hear as many words as possible during the first five years.
- Preschool-age children can help you engage your baby by pointing to and naming the pictures in a story book, or bringing you objects around the house to name.
- Practice counting blocks, objects in the kitchen, or socks in the laundry. Older children can point out colors and patterns.





WHAT COLOR ARE THE CARS?

MY FAVORITE PLACE TO GO IS ...



LET'S NAME PARTS OF THE CAR



Let's TALK ABOUT CARS

WHICH CAR IS THE BIGGEST?

VROOM!

VROOM!

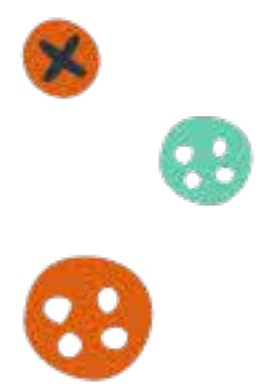
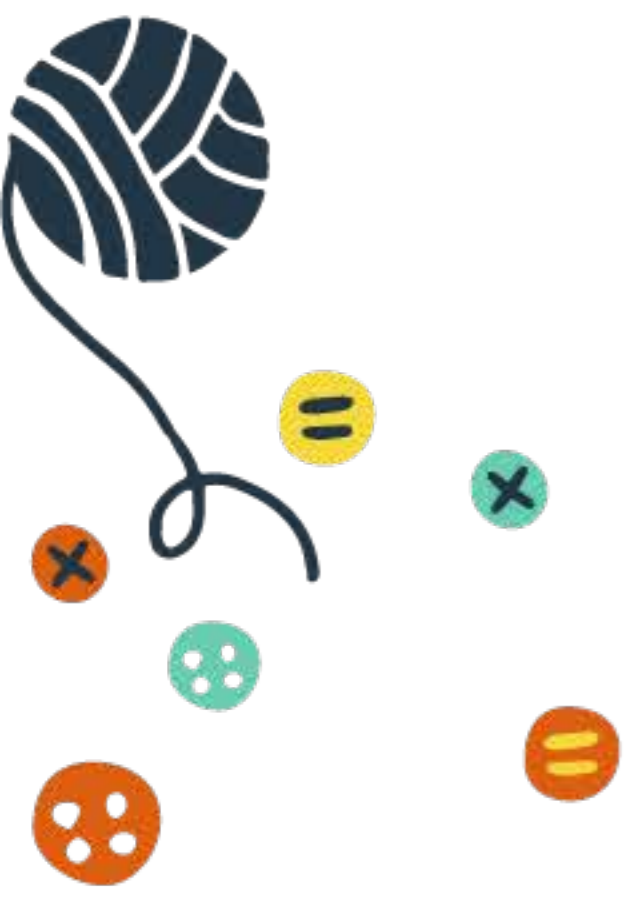


LET'S COUNT SOCKS.



MY FAVORITE SHIRT IS...

WHAT CAN YOU WEAR ON YOUR HEAD?



ON COLD DAYS I WEAR...

WHAT COLOR IS YOUR UNIFORM?





WHAT COLOR MEANS GO?

HOP ON!

LET'S TALK ABOUT the BUS.

VROOM!

VROOM!

THE WHEELS ON the BUS GO ROUND and ROUND

HONK!

WHAT COLOR IS the BUS?



My favorite character is...

What do you see on the cover?

Let's read a new book!

Let's TALK ABOUT BOOKS

What will happen next?

?

ABC

1
2
3



HOW FAR
AWAY IS THE
SUN?

YOU ARE MY
SUNSHINE

LET'S TALK
ABOUT the
SUNSHINE

WHAT
DO YOU
DO IN
THE
SUN?

HOW DOES
THE SUNSHINE
FEEL?



TALKING IS TEACHING: TALK, READ, SING
COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN GUIDE



BROUGHT TO YOU BY
**TOO SMALL
TO FAIL**



WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN GUIDE FOR “TALKING IS TEACHING: TALK, READ, SING”

Welcome to the Community Campaign Guide for “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing”—a grassroots effort to boost child brain development and early learning. We developed this guide after hearing from many communities around the nation that were eager to embark on, or enhance, a local campaign to tackle the problem of the word gap.

We launched “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” in 2014, as part of *Too Small to Fail*, a joint initiative of the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation and Next Generation to improve the health and well-being of children, ages zero to five. We began by conducting pilot campaigns in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and in Oakland, California, to build and test this model for a community word gap campaign.

For many years, dedicated organizations such as ZERO TO THREE, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, as well as academics, philanthropists and a few trailblazing states, have shown how significantly the first years of a child’s life affect long-term health and learning. More recently, researchers have established a clear connection between early brain development and the quality of a child’s interaction with a parent or caregiver. Today, thanks to decades of research about the “word gap,” we know that the words a parent speaks, reads, or sings with a child—beginning even before the child is born—can have a tangible impact on learning and later success, both in school and in life.

This campaign brings together community leaders, early childhood advocates, and businesses to leverage their resources and form strategic partnerships to improve children’s early development. Specifically, **Talking is Teaching mobilizes local medical professionals, religious leaders, child care providers and other partners to use well-baby visits, sermons, and other routine community activities as opportunities for inspiring parents to engage actively with their young children—talking, reading and singing—every day from birth.** Through these trusted messengers, Talking is Teaching imparts the science of early brain development, and conveys to parents the tremendous power they have, through simple actions, to expand their children’s lifelong capacity to learn.

Talking is Teaching is a unique campaign to build public awareness and change behavior. It rests on the idea that small acts can have a big impact. But before taking these small actions, parents and caregivers first have to believe that they have the power to make a real difference in their children’s lives from day one.

There’s evidence that organized drives to change behavior are most effective when they use “nudges” to remind people to make small changes in their daily routines that lead to larger changes. Kaiser Permanente launched a campaign called “Thrive,” in California, for example, under former chairman and CEO George Halvorson. That campaign emphasizes simple, everyday behaviors that can improve health. And its message is that setting small goals, like climbing stairs, rather than taking the elevator, can eventually become habitual, and improve health and well-being.

In the same way, we are aiming to reach out to parents and caregivers where they already are, and urge them to do more of what they may already be doing. Families, especially in low-income households, have an extraordinary balancing act juggling competing demands, and often holding multiple jobs. This campaign acknowledges those pressures, and demonstrates simple ways parents can interact and bond with their young children each day while going about regular activities, like cooking, changing or bathing a baby, or preparing a child for sleep.

This Campaign Guide is meant for a wide audience of community leaders—from city government officials, early childhood advocates and child care providers, to local hospitals and medical providers, faith-based entities, businesses, foundations and more. We believe it's necessary to have one lead agency or organization in a community spearheading the campaign, but also recognize that the most effective approach is one that is broad, inclusive and most importantly, collaborative. If your community already has a campaign like this in place, we hope this guide will help expand or enhance your existing effort.

There's no "one size fits all" approach to this campaign. Just as our Oakland and Tulsa partnerships have evolved to suit their communities and unique visions, your own town or city's population, culture, demographic profile and needs will dictate your local approach and priorities. This guide describes some of the promising practices and lessons we've learned so far in Oakland and Tulsa. It does not dictate strict rules or requirements, but emphasizes flexibility. Our interest is in helping you foster dialogue and collaboration. You can use this guide to design campaigns of varying levels of intensity, tailoring these elements according to the resources you have available. We also encourage you to check in regularly on toosmall.org and talkingisteaching.org, where we will have updated information and tools.

Early childhood experiences have a deep impact on the rest of a child's life. More broadly, America's future economic prosperity will ultimately be determined by the success of today's children. As you join us in helping prepare America's children to succeed in the 21st century—forging local coalitions and finding new, creative ways to deliver "Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing"—we hope this Campaign Guide will serve you well.

We are truly grateful to you for joining this effort.



Patti Miller
Director, *Too Small to Fail*
Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation



Kara Dukakis
Director, *Too Small to Fail*
Next Generation

TABLE OF CONTENTS



Introduction	2
Chapter 1: Understanding and using the research: brain development & early learning	3
Chapter 2: Defining & reaching your audience	6
Chapter 3: Identifying trusted partners & messengers	9
Chapter 4: Identifying corporate partners & funders	14
Chapter 5: Distributing toolkits & training messengers	15
Chapter 6: Using paid & earned media	19
Chapter 7: Sorting out the logistics	22
Chapter 8: Assessing the cost	23
Chapter 9: Evaluating your efforts	25
Final Words	27
Acknowledgements	28



INTRODUCTION

A parent is a child's first teacher. From the moment a child looks into her parent's eyes, she begins interpreting that gaze, and looking for cues to the world around her. The words that a parent speaks to a child and the moments a parent spends bonding with him early on help him build better relationships, encourage his curiosity and inspire his independence.

There's evidence that the words a parent or caregiver speaks, reads or sings with a child—as well as the relationship that develops during this back-and-forth communication—contribute heavily to the child's vocabulary and early brain development. The fewer words children hear, the fewer words they learn, and the more likely they are to experience an achievement gap through the school years. This can have a lifelong impact on their overall health and well-being. But just as important, the more quality moments a child spends snuggling with a parent or caregiver, making each other laugh, or having conversations (even ones that don't involve real words!), the more robust his early brain growth and sense of security and attachment.

We have focused the goal of our public campaign on closing the “word gap,” recognizing that by improving opportunities for increased communication with children, parents can improve their children's early learning and overall well-being. But this campaign is about much more than just the number of words a child learns. In the first part of this guide, we explain the research behind the word gap, and why it is important for parents and caregivers to engage in back-and-forth communication with their children starting from birth. In subsequent chapters, we describe details about the “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” campaigns in Tulsa, Oklahoma and Oakland, California, and share lessons learned on messaging to parents, policymakers and the general public about these issues.

In promoting this campaign's expansion to other communities, we want to reflect two important principles. First, the “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” campaign considers an individual community's needs, and so, not all approaches described in this guide will work for all communities. We want to share with you what has worked for the communities that have already launched this campaign—and what hasn't. And we hope that you will take those aspects that are relevant and meaningful for you, and either adjust or leave the rest.

Second, the Talking is Teaching campaign has been intentionally integrated into existing, like-minded efforts in our pilot communities. We believe that the campaign will be most effective when connected with existing efforts to improve children's early learning and development. So this campaign is intended to enhance, not duplicate or diminish, similar initiatives in communities.

THIS CAMPAIGN GUIDE OUTLINES:

- The latest **research** on child brain development and word acquisition, which will help you make a strong case to your community about the need for this kind of campaign;
- **Ways to mobilize messengers** parents trust—such as **pediatricians** and religious leaders—to talk directly with families and caretakers about the importance of early brain development, and how parents can help build their babies' brains; and, to provide information and resources to promote daily parent-child engagement;
- **Ways to strategically deliver your messages** through print and broadcast media, social media networks, billboards, bus advertisements, grocery stores and other public venues; and,
- **Lessons we have learned** about how to plan, launch, implement and evaluate this kind of grass-roots campaign.

CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING & USING THE RESEARCH: BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING

“Many parents are not aware of how much the brain is developing, and that they have such a critical role in building their baby’s brain. So this campaign is filling in that knowledge gap, and empowering parents to use that information.”

– Ann O’Leary, Next Generation

At the heart of this campaign are simple but staggering facts.

- **Children in low-income households hear 30 million fewer words spoken to them by the age of four than children in high-income households.**

This groundbreaking finding by researchers Betty Hart and Todd Risley, published in 1995,¹ is referred to as the “word gap.” The word gap affects a child’s development both immediately and in the long term. The fewer words an infant or toddler hears, the fewer words he or she learns.

Psychologist Anne Fernald of Stanford University and her team have shown that this vocabulary and language-processing gap is already evident in children as young as 18 months.² Additional research has shown that this word gap persists over time, and can contribute to an achievement gap later in life.

But this same research has also shown that early experiences shape the physical structure of a child’s brain, and don’t just impact the number of words a child acquires. Children who engage in more meaningful interactions with a parent or caregiver in a loving and nurturing environment not only learn more words, but also

develop better social, emotional and cognitive skills, which are critical to long-term health and well-being.

Hart and Risley’s original work emphasized the importance of quality interactions between parent and child, including tone, responsiveness to questions, and the use of parent affirmations (encouraging words) rather than prohibitions, as positive contributors to a child’s vocabulary development. More recently, psychologist Kathy Hirsh-Pasek of Temple University and others have confirmed these findings in their research, noting the critical nature of both the quantity of words and quality of interactions. Hirsh-Pasek’s research emphasized the importance of joint attention between parent, or caregiver, and child, shared rituals and routines, and fluid and connected conversations.

In other words, the more time a parent or caregiver spends telling a child a story and listening to the child babble in return; or singing a song together, and talking with the child afterwards about her response; or pointing out what they see together during a bus ride, the stronger that child’s emotional and cognitive development will be.³ A child whose parent or caretaker actively and creatively engages his mind, beginning at birth, is setting out with all the right tools to acquire words, and will be more ready to learn for years to come.

¹ Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children* (Baltimore: Brookes Publishing, 1995).

² Anne Fernald and Virginia Marchman, “SES differences in language processing skill and vocabulary are evident at 18 months,” *Dev Sci.* 2013 Mar; 16(2): 234-248.

³ Douglas Quenqua, “Quality of Words, Not Quantity, is Crucial to Language Skills, Study Finds,” *New York Times*, October 16, 2014.

- **In the first three years of life, the basic structure of the brain is developing. Parents and caregivers can help build their babies' brains during this critical period so children have a strong foundation on which to grow and thrive.**

The first three years of life offer an important opportunity for parents and caregivers to maximize brain development.⁴ Three years is more than one thousand days. That's a tremendous opportunity to make a difference in the way the brain's neural pathways grow and develop, if you can take small steps to tangibly improve the quality of each one of those days in a young child's life.

However, this doesn't mean that a child cannot continue to learn after the age of three; or that if a parent or caregiver hasn't fully engaged a child from birth, brain development is stunted. Mainly the research tells us that parents and caregivers can capitalize on the rapid growth of the brain at this stage—**between 700 and 1,000 neural connections develop per second, from birth**—to help their children build the foundation they will need later in life.

WHAT'S NEW IN RESEARCH ON THE WORD GAP:

For a closer look at the latest and most convincing evidence on early brain development, visit the following resources:

- American Academy of Pediatrics, Early Literacy Toolkit
- Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University
- ZERO TO THREE, Baby Brain Map
- The Heckman Equation

WHO'S WORKING TO CLOSE THE WORD GAP:

In addition to Tulsa and Oakland's Talking is Teaching campaigns, there are [many other communities across the nation](#) working to close the word gap. Here is a glimpse of some of the existing efforts:

- Providence Talks—Providence, RI
- Talk, Read, Play—Kansas City, MO
- Talk With Me Baby—Georgia
- Talk. Read. Sing.—California
- Thirty Million Words Initiative—Chicago, IL

“A lot of patients we see think it's not their place to teach their children—especially bilingual parents, who often think they *shouldn't* talk to their kids in their native language [for fear that they won't learn English]. We tell them how wonderful the immersion among languages is for the young brain, and that kids should feel secure, and happy, and hear as many words as possible from their families.”

– **Dr. Gena Lewis, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland**

⁴ We designed this campaign for families with children who are infants, toddlers and preschoolers, but it has relevance for older children, too. Also, we want to note that children learn language through relationships and in context with the world around them, so this campaign also seeks to highlight key concepts in early *numeracy* and *math acquisition*, to encourage families to incorporate math activities into their daily lives. When families explore math concepts with young children, they not only build important early math skills, but also boost children's vocabulary.

“Every adult should be empowered to have meaningful interactions with children during everyday moments. In Tulsa, we hope to support a community where every home is viewed as a preschool—an authentic learning environment where children are supported and nurtured.”

– Annie Koppel Van Hanken, George Kaiser Family Foundation, Tulsa

BEGINNING WITH PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

There is no expert, partner, advisor or collaborator in this mission who is more important than the parent or caregiver.

Parents universally want their children to succeed. They want them to show up to school ready to learn. They want them to graduate from school. And they want them to gain the skills they need to do well in their adult lives. Parents and caregivers work hard to provide their children with the best possible future.

Our most basic aim is to be of value to them—to acknowledge and support them in what they are *already* doing, and to support, inform and encourage them, if they need help and resources.

This campaign also aims to highlight a parent’s unique value in a child’s development. Parents and caregivers do not always identify themselves as “teachers.” They are often reluctant to give themselves this kind of credit, and in some communities, may even shy away from this analogy altogether. But still, studies show they have tremendous impact on a child’s early learning.

Talking is Teaching makes current research accessible by translating it into direct, simple messages about brain development, so that parents can help their children show up to school ready to learn, and to thrive in life. The success of this campaign depends on the messages delivered to parents and caregivers, and on the actions they take as a result.

WHAT PARENTS HEAR MATTERS, TOO

As you craft specific messages for parents and caregivers, consider the words and themes that will be most effective. We developed the messages for “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” with input from early childhood experts, behavior campaign experts and parents. Using focus groups and surveys with parents and caregivers, we discovered some central principles that may be of value to you as you design a local campaign:

- Keep campaign message(s) to parents simple, and avoid citing too much research information. Research is useful to policymakers, but too much can be confusing or even discouraging to parents.
- Parents respond to messaging that encourages and empowers them to promote their children’s brain development.
- Parents and caregivers say they trust information from pediatricians, friends and relatives.
- Optimism and positive messages work best; find words that do not blame or stigmatize.
- A message of urgency and hope can be effective, but highlighting deficits in messages to parents—like the 30 million word gap—can be overwhelming, and even create a sense of despair.
- Many parents respond well to aspirational language about wanting children to pursue their dreams.
- Many parents say they want reminders and aids, such as text messages or signage in grocery stores, and they appreciate ideas about how to incorporate talking, reading and singing into their daily routines.
- Men surveyed were less likely to talk, read, and especially sing with children on a daily basis.
- Political figures are not considered the most credible messengers, unless they have demonstrated experience with children or education.



CHAPTER 2: DEFINING & REACHING YOUR AUDIENCE

“One of the interesting lessons we learned in focus groups with parents across the country is about whom they trust the most to communicate messages, and where they seek information about health, education, finances and other matters. Many parents said, “*Univision*.” So we invited *Univision* anchors to participate in the campaign, and produced PSAs showing them talking to their own children.”

– Patti Miller, The Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation

“Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” aims to deliver messages about early brain development directly to parents and caregivers in order to effect behavior change. So, the **primary audiences** for this campaign are parents and caregivers, such as the grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, neighbors and licensed child care providers that care for children while parents are at work. Business and community leaders may be your **secondary audiences**, as many of these individuals will act as messengers or even funders in this campaign. Adapting your outreach and communications strategies for each audience will be important.

This campaign was conceived as an effort to narrow the word gap, targeting messages primarily to lower-income households. However, you may want to explore further how you define your primary audience of parents and caregivers.

Here are some questions that can help you pinpoint who should receive your message:

- What are the demographics of your community?
- Who are you most interested in reaching, and why?
- Where do they live?
- What language(s) do they speak?

For example, in Tulsa, the campaign has used zip codes to target audiences based on household income. The Tulsa campaign has likewise focused paid media, community touchpoints, and the distribution of materials in low-income communities within specific neighborhoods.

Even in the initial stages of your campaign, defining your audience and gathering this demographic information will dictate all sorts of decisions you will make later on, such as:

- Identifying “trusted messengers”;
- Translating handouts and other materials;
- Deciding where and how to engage parents and caretakers; and,
- Investing resources for PSAs, billboards and other paid media.

“In any community, customizing for your audience is key. So, if it’s feasible to do a focus group to assess where your parents are and what they already know, that will drastically affect the way you execute programming. Tulsa, for example, has a strong faith community, and that has a strong influence on the way parents behave. They care a great deal about what churches say about child-rearing.”

– Caleb Gayle, George Kaiser Family Foundation

FOCUS GROUPS

Together with our partners, we conducted focus groups to understand more fully what parents in various communities already know, or believe, about brain development, and the impact that small daily acts like talking, reading and singing could have on very young children. These focus groups yielded valuable insights in the initial stages of developing the Talking is Teaching campaign, especially about which messages parents find most compelling (see page 5). While it’s not realistic for every community to conduct focus group research, given the expense, it is helpful to have this kind of data if you have the resources to devote to it.

Oakland offers a good example of why it’s important to know your audience. The city of Oakland is one of the primary refugee settlement cities in the country with rich cultural diversity. As a result, the UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital Oakland serves a population that speaks many different languages.

“We are really focusing on making sure the campaign materials are as accessible as possible. We want people to talk, read and sing in their native languages. Our families speak English, Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin or Cantonese, so we have some messaging in all these languages.”

–Dayna Long, MD, UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital Oakland

REACHING PARENTS WHERE THEY ALREADY ARE

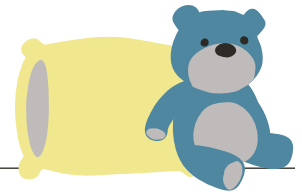
Think about your community. Where you are most likely to encounter expectant parents, or parents and caregivers of very young children? Where can you find them during a typical day?

That is where—and how—you can most effectively deliver your message.

WHERE PARENTS/CAREGIVERS ARE = HOW YOU'LL DELIVER MESSAGE

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Visiting doctor/clinic, labor/delivery, lactation groups | Engage pediatricians, family practitioners, OB/GYNs, birthing hospitals |
| • At church | Engage churches, pastors, etc. |
| • In voluntary home-visiting programs | Engage community organizations running programs |
| • At child care centers or family-run child care | Engage child care facility directors |
| • At preschools | Engage preschools |
| • At WIC or other public assistance offices | Engage local government agencies |
| • Waiting for subway/bus | Design and distribute posters; seek donated ad space; engage local public transit agency |
| • Sitting in traffic | Design and buy billboards; radio spots |
| • At gas station | Do outreach to gas stations/convenience store owners |
| • Watching TV | Create PSAs; seek donated airtime. |
| • Shopping | Engage supermarkets, other retailers, mall operators |
| • At libraries/playgroups | Engage libraries |
| • At playgrounds | Engage local Departments of Parks and Recreation |
| • At home, in public housing | Engage local public housing authority about posting PSAs in lobbies |
| • In laundromats | Design and distribute posters |
| • On mobile phones | Connect with parent app/texting services (such as Text4Baby) |

CHAPTER 3: IDENTIFYING TRUSTED PARTNERS & MESSENGERS



Your grassroots campaign to promote early learning and literacy has already begun. Strange as this sounds, it may have started years ago!

That's because **the organizations and networks that will be most essential to you are likely already in place, operating at full steam.** Some may become partners, who will work hand-in-hand with you to get your campaign to move ahead quickly. Others may be trusted messengers who already have the ear of parents and caregivers, and can be helpful in delivering campaign messages. In some cases, individuals and organizations may act both as messengers and partners to your campaign.

As early as possible in your organizing, it is helpful to identify who, in your community, is already doing this kind of work:

- Who are the major players already working in early childhood development, early literacy, health, or with expertise about children under five years of age?
- Who is passionate about literacy and school-readiness?
- Who is best-equipped, and most trusted, to communicate with parents?
- Which local elected officials, assembly leaders, and agency heads care about these issues?
- Who has a strong network of contacts and a deep history in this area?
- Which local businesses are civic-minded and support children's issues?

- Who already funds early childhood development and health projects locally?
- Who are influential leaders who may not yet know about these issues but are open to ideas to improve opportunities for children?

There are several reasons why this kind of brainstorming is important. When you thoughtfully and respectfully engage like-minded, on-the-ground experts, they can become your biggest champions. Furthermore, some of these individuals and groups may be ones that parents and caregivers already trust, and so they can effectively help bring your message home. Also, by opening up a dialogue with local groups early on, you may avoid potential conflicts with others who may be engaged in similar efforts.

As you form your own coalition—or join one that already exists—consider the full range of **grassroots partners and messengers** available to you, including any type of venue frequented by parents with young children:

- Healthcare providers⁵
- Religious leaders and faith-based institutions
- Child care providers
- Home visiting programs
- Libraries
- Municipal agencies and social service providers
- County education offices and school districts
- Like-minded nonprofits

“I think it's really important to find someone in the world of pediatrics who can be a big proponent, and a conduit into the medical community—and to identify local AAP branches or county medical societies, and find out who is active and passionate about early literacy.”

– **Dr. Amy Emerson, Educare and Reach Out and Read, Tulsa**

⁵ It's especially valuable to work with medical providers who are already trained through the *Reach Out and Read* network to distribute books to families through their practice.

MEDICAL PROVIDERS AND HOSPITALS

Doctors and medical providers have been among the most valuable messengers to date in the Talking is Teaching campaign. Parents and caregivers have told us in focus groups that they trust people they already have relationships with, and who routinely provide them with advice. So it's not surprising that parents overwhelmingly look to doctors and nurses for counsel on early brain development.

Consequently, in Oakland, a core mission of Talking is Teaching has been to mobilize healthcare providers at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital and Kaiser Permanente clinics to communicate with parents and caregivers about early learning. Campaign partners there are developing a model for how children's hospitals across the country can actively address the word gap as a health issue.

Both the Oakland and Tulsa partners are strategically targeting:

- Primary care pediatric clinics and providers
- Family practices
- Obstetricians and gynecologists
- Hospital labor and delivery
- Messaging and signage in hospitals and surrounding neighborhoods

The idea is to mobilize hospital providers to take a “full intervention” approach with families they counsel. Pediatricians⁶ and other medical staff are distributing toolkits⁷ and engaging parents and caregivers during well-child visits. The Oakland campaign is also doing an in-depth evaluation of how this messaging affects parent behavior. In addition, Oakland and Tulsa partners are placing posters in exam offices, waiting rooms and throughout hospitals and clinics, to remind parents and caregivers about the value of talking, reading and singing with their children every day.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS & FAITH-BASED INSTITUTIONS

Members of the faith community have also been key messengers in the Talking is Teaching campaign—especially in Tulsa, given its strong faith-based history and culture. Churches are trusted community conduits, and by disseminating information through faith-based messengers, you can reach a wide audience effectively to promote parent-child interaction.

The Tulsa campaign is working closely with eight megachurches—each with thousands of members, many of whom are from very low-income homes—to promote early language development. Faith leaders there are incorporating messages into sermons about what it means to be an engaged adult in a young child's life. Churches are also sponsoring Family Engagement Nights, with dinner and evening activities for families. The goal of these events is to talk about brain development and to model behaviors for parents on how to talk, read and sing with their children.

CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Child care providers of all types—home-based, centers, public and private—have long been a trusted source of information for parents about child development. They often interact with children as much as parents themselves, and can be effective partners in reaching low-income, working families. One way to connect with a large group of subsidized child care providers is through local resource and referral agencies.

Tulsa partners have thought creatively about reaching parents who may not be accessing traditional or high quality care. Through [Tulsa Educare's *Beyond the Walls*](#) program, the campaign is reaching out to parents in low-income neighborhoods around the centers—some of whom are on Educare waiting lists—to sponsor family dinner nights and distribute campaign materials and other information on early literacy.

⁶ The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a policy statement that calls early literacy promotion from birth an “essential” component of pediatric primary care. The AAP has been an important national partner with Talking is Teaching, and its local chapter may be a valuable resource to you, too, as you undertake or enhance a campaign in your community.

⁷ You can read more about these early learning toolkits in Chapter 5: Distributing Toolkits & Training Messengers (page 15).

“There’s a social justice underpinning to the profession of pediatrics ... pediatricians chose to go into a field working with and caring for children, so they are already natural advocates, and this early learning work is an extension of that.”

– **Jamie Poslosky, American Academy of Pediatrics**

HOME VISITING PROGRAMS

Home visiting programs, often administered by local departments of public health, are ideal campaign partners, as they connect with first-time, usually low-income, high-risk mothers. Although the most prominent home visiting models do not explicitly deliver messages about the word gap, they often encourage new parents to be more responsive to their babies, and emphasize the importance of the early years for long-term development and well-being.

In Tulsa, the George Kaiser Family Foundation forged a partnership with home visiting providers to distribute Talking is Teaching toolkits during home visits. It’s worth considering partnerships with providers like these, as you may be able to incorporate early literacy training materials into their existing trainings.

LIBRARIES

Libraries have a strong track record of encouraging parent-child interaction, offering regular story times and infant “lap sits,” as well as chances to consult with local experts and pediatricians about child development. The American Library Association currently sponsors an initiative called, “Every Child Ready to Read: Talk, Sing, Read, Write, Play,” with a mission similar to “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing.”

Tulsa Educare and other local partners have teamed up with local libraries to participate in family reading nights, and provide information to parents and caregivers about how libraries can be more inviting to families with very young children. The Tulsa library also sponsors a bookmobile, delivering books to low-income neighborhoods.

MUNICIPAL AGENCIES AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS, INCLUDING WIC

Your town, city or county may also run public programs aimed at low-income families with young children that would provide excellent opportunities for partnership. Similarly, federal programs administered at the local level, such as the nutritional program, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), serve large numbers of families and, like home visiting programs, can incorporate campaign messages and materials into their regular meetings with clients.

Other local programs, such as those offered through parks and recreation departments, or aimed at teen parents, may be strong potential partners. Even municipal agencies serving families—such as a city department of public records that issues birth certificates, or a local water department that sends monthly bills—can be valuable partners, just by including campaign information in materials they mail to families.

COUNTY OFFICES OF EDUCATION AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Many county education departments and school districts throughout the country operate preschool programs, and a few of those offer child care for younger children and their families. Even when educational institutions serve older children, it’s worth the effort to try to engage them as partners. Some of these schools may reach the audience you’re seeking to communicate with, as they serve families with school-age children who also have younger siblings. Also, school districts today are becoming more and more invested in encouraging family involvement in a child’s education long before kindergarten.

LIKE-MINDED NONPROFITS

Other valuable networks for distributing information to parents and caregivers include community-based organizations that focus on young children, such as child care resource and referral agencies, children's museums, public health entities and those sponsoring activities such as play groups. Both the Tulsa and Oakland campaigns rely on these key partners.

The Tulsa campaign is partnering with local providers who do outreach through a postpartum intervention program called “[Never Shake a Baby](#),” in visits to parents in hospital Labor and Delivery departments.

NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERS

While local experts will vary considerably from one community to the next, there's a wide range of national organizations devoted to early learning and literacy. With local chapters across the country, these national networks are key potential partners for your local campaign.

Here are some established organizations with infrastructure in place that may be ripe for collaboration:

- [Reach Out and Read](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics](#); see also [AAP's literacy toolkit](#)
- [American Library Association](#), and its [state and regional chapters](#)

- [Raising a Reader](#), [First Book](#), or [Imagination Library](#)
- [The Campaign for Grade-Level Reading](#)
- [Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors](#)
- [United Way](#)
- [Child Care Aware](#)
- [First 5 California](#)

One national partner that has been indispensable in reaching Hispanic parents and caregivers is the media company Univision. Hispanic children are one of the key target groups for the *Too Small to Fail* campaign for two important reasons. First, more than one-third of Hispanic children are growing up in poverty and in households with parents who don't have a high school diploma. Second, recent research shows that Hispanic parents talk, read and sing with their young children, ages birth to two, at rates lower than any other demographic group.

Univision is the primary source for news and entertainment among Hispanic communities. And with over 23 owned and operated stations, and 45 affiliate stations throughout the United States, it's a highly trusted community partner that viewers and listeners rely on for advice on many different topics, including parenting. Branded in Spanish as “*Pequeños y Valiosos*,” *Too Small to Fail* has established a strong national partnership with Univision that is a valuable asset to any community that wishes to engage a trusted media partner to distribute messages to Hispanic parents, and support local community events, such as book fairs.

OAKLAND'S COMMUNITY-WIDE STRATEGY

Too Small to Fail is also partnering with The Kenneth Rainin Foundation, the Bay Area Council, and First 5 Alameda to carry out a community-wide plan to engage families not served by UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland. The effort builds on a pilot project initiated during the summer of 2014, with initial funding provided by Kaiser Permanente, in which the Bay Area Council organized the distribution of clothing and tote bags, and secured billboards throughout the Oakland community, before the publicized launch of Talking is Teaching in Oakland. Key community distribution points include community clinics and private pediatric practices with Reach Out and Read programs, birthing hospitals, home visiting programs, libraries, child care centers and home-based child care programs. In addition to these community touchpoints, Oakland's full community-wide strategy includes plans to activate the faith-based community.

THE FRESNO EFFORT

Early in 2015, Fresno, in California's Central Valley, became the first community to learn from our pilots in Tulsa and Oakland, and incorporate the campaign's messages and creative materials into their community. The Fresno effort, supported by Granville Homes, a local "green developer" with a strong standing in the community, has engaged a broad base of partners, with the local County Office of Education and several school districts at the forefront. The campaign leveraged a pre-existing birth-to-third grade effort, which had already engaged superintendents and principals on the importance of children's early learning.

Fresno has also partnered with the local District Attorney, who will be incorporating the campaign into efforts with teen parents; and the Housing Authority, which will run PSAs on monitors in housing development lobbies, and deliver "Talking is Teaching" workshops. The community has even engaged Fresno State University's Athletics Department to display campaign messages during school sporting events. Since Fresno's kick-off press conference in January 2015, organizers have released PSAs on local television, and posted campaign billboards and signs throughout the community.

HIGH-PROFILE MESSENGERS AND LEADERS

Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has been the campaign's national champion, and appeared in person to launch "Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing" in Tulsa and Oakland. She has played a vital role as a high-level convener, bringing nationally recognized individuals and organizations to the table and inspiring them to make tangible commitments to the campaign. Secretary Clinton has also brought in effective, high-profile partners, including former United States Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist and businesswoman and philanthropist Cindy McCain, both of whom have long-standing commitments to health and children's rights, to ensure that the campaign—like the issue of early childhood—is non-partisan, and has as broad a reach as possible.

It's important to think about the champions in your community or region who can bring their leadership to bear to stimulate dialogue, draw public and media attention to the issue, and keep partners accountable for what they promise to contribute. A city's mayor is one possible choice for this purpose, but it's also worth considering a range of other high-profile individuals, local celebrities, sports figures and others who can

provide leadership for the campaign, or help you disseminate your message broadly and quickly.

In Tulsa, for example, businessman and philanthropist George Kaiser is not only funding the campaign through his family foundation, but also has been directly and deeply involved throughout the planning and implementation process.

In Oakland, Marc Benioff, the chairman and CEO of Salesforce.com, and his wife, Lynne, made a generous gift to fund the campaign. Dr. Bert Lubin, the president and CEO of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, Oakland, has devoted countless hours, empowered doctors and social workers on the hospital's staff to become involved, and has leveraged his own contacts throughout the local community to recruit additional partners.

Bernard Tyson, the CEO of Kaiser Permanente initiated a pilot of the campaign at four Bay Area Kaiser Permanente facilities. Depending on the outcome of the pilot, Tyson may bring the program to all of the 100,000 babies born each year at Kaiser Permanente hospitals nationwide.



CHAPTER 4: IDENTIFYING CORPORATE PARTNERS & FUNDERS

Corporate partners are vital to creating and implementing a campaign, and it's important to get them on board early. While it may feel intimidating to approach local businesses or national corporations for assistance with your campaign, they can be valuable and committed partners. To date, corporate partners across the country have provided campaign funding, in-kind contributions (such as books, advertising, volunteers, and logistical support), assistance with earned and social media outreach, and innovative thinking.

The Bay Area Council, a business-supported advocacy organization in the San Francisco Bay Area, mobilized Oakland's business community to help the local campaign through philanthropic support, as well as "thought leadership."

The Bay Area Council staff held multiple meetings with business and high-tech communities around Oakland to bring partners on board. They have also motivated local corporate partners by demonstrating the value of becoming involved in a campaign to shape parental interactions with young children. The organization's staff cited research to show that family-friendly investments by businesses can improve employee retention and reduce workforce turnover.

Local communities can also benefit by finding a corporate partner that may already be a champion of early learning. In Oakland, the Bay Area Council made a connection with the local head of Clear Channel, an outdoor advertising company, who volunteers in an Oakland school and is passionate about early childhood education. Clear Channel later donated billboard space for the Oakland campaign, among other valuable gifts.

The Bay Area Council also connected the campaign with the regional United Parcel Service (UPS) chapter, led by Rosemary Turner, a longtime supporter of early childhood causes. Working with the UPS Community Engagement Coordinator, the Talking is Teaching campaign received free shipping of campaign materials around Oakland, and countless hours of logistical support, including a full-day volunteer tote bag-stuffing drive.

More and more, large corporations support employee volunteer activities, which can be a great source of support for local campaigns. For example, Salesforce donated a high volume of volunteer hours to Talking is Teaching in Oakland, by assembling 3,500 tote bags at its Dreamforce conference and another volunteer event. It has also donated funding to support the assembly of an additional 1,500 tote bags at the company's conferences in Chicago, Washington, DC and Boston in 2015.

Your corporate partners need not be large businesses with national branches and thousands of employees, however. Local businesses—from corner stores to gymnasiums to laundromats (and anywhere else parents of young children spend time in your community)—can support your campaign by posting signs, distributing materials and even airing PSAs on closed circuit television.

Here are additional questions to consider when recruiting corporate partners:

- What would motivate a corporate partner?
- Is this an opportunity for them to enhance their bottom line, build (or rebuild) public relations, or expand on work they're already doing in the early childhood education arena?
- Do they already express a commitment to the community, or otherwise consider themselves a "good neighbor"?

CHAPTER 5: DISTRIBUTING TOOLKITS & TRAINING MESSENGERS



Once you have identified your partners, and you have a sense of what resources you'll have available, it's time to choose the actual elements of your campaign strategy.

Research on effective behavior change campaigns has found that long-lasting behavior change happens through clear messages that demonstrate easy steps people can take, delivered by messengers people trust.

While it's tempting to focus resources on public service announcements or paid media, we've found it's more effective to focus the bulk of your resources on hands-on messaging (for example, having medical providers and faith leaders counsel parents and caregivers, and distribute specially-designed early learning toolkits), and then to complement that with a broader public awareness campaign (billboards, media), to reinforce the themes you're already conveying to parents, one-on-one.

This section describes the strategies our Tulsa and Oakland partners are employing with each of these elements to deliver messages and tools to their target audiences.

A GLIMPSE AT THE TULSA & OAKLAND CAMPAIGNS

"Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing" is already underway in both Tulsa and Oakland, and those cities provide two distinct models for how you might go about developing a message, engaging parents, recruiting partners, and pursuing a local campaign. Here's a look at those two communities and campaigns:

TULSA

The George Kaiser Family Foundation (GKFF) in Tulsa has long been known for its leadership in early childhood education, through its heavy investment in Educare centers for low-income children from birth to age four.

"Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing" provided an opportunity to expand the foundation's leadership in this area. GKFF offered both generous philanthropic support and a robust on-the-ground partnership to develop a campaign for Tulsa that could be used as a national model.

CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE:

- One funder, planner and implementer: George Kaiser Family Foundation, working with local partners (the anti-poverty agency CAP Tulsa, the strategic communications firm Saxum, the faith community, local businesses and others)
- Strong faith-based component
- Medical outreach
- Grocery store outreach

BACKGROUND/DEMOGRAPHICS:

- Revitalized southern/midwestern city
- Urban population: 400,000; metro area: 1 million
- Predominantly white (60%); more than 15% African-American; 14% Hispanic; remainder largely Native American and Asian-American
- 16% living in poverty (as of 2013 in Tulsa County)⁸

⁸ Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

OAKLAND

A generous gift from Lynne and Marc Benioff drives the central piece of the Oakland campaign, which mobilizes healthcare providers at UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital Oakland to deliver messaging and tools to parents and caregivers. The goal is to build a model program for how children’s hospitals across the country can actively address the word gap as a health issue.

Kaiser Permanente is also testing the model in Bay Area clinics. In addition to the hospital strategy, the Oakland campaign includes a community-wide strategy that involves the Kenneth Rainin Foundation, the Bay Area Council and First 5 Alameda. It also builds on a strong, local literacy effort—Oakland Reads 2020—led by the Rogers Family Foundation. The Oakland community-wide effort involves community-based clinics and pediatricians (many of whom are already Reach Out and Read providers), labor and delivery hospitals, home visiting programs, churches and other faith-based institutions, libraries and early childhood providers.

CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE:

- Hospital-focused strategy, funded by Lynne and Marc Benioff and Kaiser Permanente, focused on UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital Oakland and Kaiser Permanente Oakland
- Community-wide strategy, funded by Rainin Family Foundation, First 5, the Bay Area Council, and other community/foundation partners⁹
- Local business engagement
- Partnership with creative advertising agency, Goodby Silverstein & Partners (GS&P), to design creative assets, which serve as prototype for campaigns nationally

BACKGROUND/DEMOGRAPHICS:

- Major West Coast port city
- Population: 400,000 (city alone)
- 34% White, 28% African American, 25% Hispanic, 6% Asian
- 20.5% living in poverty¹⁰

⁹ A unique feature of the Oakland campaign is that voters in the state of California passed an initiative in 1998 to invest in early development and health for children from birth to age five, using cigarette and tobacco tax revenues. That measure, Proposition 10, created a statewide entity called First 5 California, to educate parents and caregivers about the important role they play in their children’s early development. The measure also created First 5 commissions at the county level to support local early childhood health and development efforts. The local First 5 commission has provided Oakland with an existing infrastructure for undertaking this campaign.

¹⁰ Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

DISTRIBUTING TOOLKITS TO PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

To help messengers launch a dialogue with parents about the word gap, Talking is Teaching created a toolkit to distribute in specially-designed campaign tote bags. To date, the Talking is Teaching campaign has distributed thousands of tote bags through our on-the-ground messengers. If you choose to use, or adapt, these toolkits for your community's campaign, it may help to know how it was developed.

The tote bags, and several items contained in them, were designed by Goodby Silverstein & Partners (GS&P). The Bay Area Council and our Oakland partners worked closely with GS&P to come up with a campaign concept and designs, and several early childhood experts informed the early decisions for proper messaging.

The team brainstormed about everyday objects parents encounter in the course of their daily routines—such as dressing a child in the morning, or giving her a bath—that could provide fun reminders to use that time to talk, read or even sing about what is happening. They created dozens of colorful “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” designs for several clothing and paid media items, that include clothing for infants and toddlers (see toolkit materials below), as well as billboards and bus shelter ads.

All of these [creative designs are available free](#) as prototypes for you, if you wish to print and distribute these materials to your own audience.

The Oakland campaign worked closely with a local apparel company, [Oaklandish](#), to produce the branded clothing, blankets and bath towels. The tote bags and clothing items then became part of a larger kit, assembled through generous donations by several corporate partners.

TALKING IS TEACHING TOOLKITS INCLUDE:

- A reusable tote bag, branded with the Talking is Teaching logo and quote
- Infant and toddler clothing (onesies and t-shirts), branded with the Talking is Teaching logo and messaging
- A branded blanket and/or bath towel
- Age-appropriate book(s), provided by Scholastic and *Highlights*
- Sesame Street tools:
 - “Talking is Teaching” Family Moments Resource Guide
 - “Word on the Street” cards
 - CD
- A postcard to sign up for Text4Baby (a free text message service for pregnant mothers or parents with infants under one year of age, that offers three free text messages per week with tips relating to a baby's developmental stages).

Your community may decide not to use all of the materials in these toolkits. We do strongly encourage you to consider using as many as your resources will allow, however, as these materials provide exactly the kind of tools and reminders that parents say they appreciate having to prompt them to talk, read, and sing more with their children each day.

TRAINING MESSENGERS

Training partners to deliver messages to parents is another step that requires significant planning, organization and staff time. There's a lot that goes into explaining brain development and word acquisition to families, and the importance of parent interaction.

In Tulsa and Oakland, our partners held evening events or hosted lunches to train medical providers and faith leaders. At a lunch time training for medical residents in Oakland, for example, campaign organizers re-viewed the research on the word gap and early literacy, unveiled and described the toolkits, and prepared doctors to act as messengers with families. Similarly, Tulsa hosted an evening event, training medical providers to integrate Talking is Teaching into their clinic and office visits. That training included nearly 200 local physicians, together with a representative from the AAP, and members of the local health care agency.

Partners in both Tulsa and Oakland are prepping messengers using both PowerPoint presentations and a set of key talking points, [which you can also download and use in your community](#). Tulsa is working to expand existing "Read Out and Read" programs with medical providers. And in addition to the posters that both Tulsa and Oakland partners are providing for medical providers' offices, the Tulsa partners have also used specially-designed Rx pads that physicians can use to "prescribe" talking, reading and singing with children.

"You can't just give families a tote bag. Providers have to be trained and be passionate, and have talking points, and be careful about how they give these tools to families. The tote bag is a tool for talking about early literacy and attachment and a whole range of issues."

– Janis Burger, First 5 Alameda

CHAPTER 6: USING PAID & EARNED MEDIA



This campaign includes a range of traditional paid and earned media elements for raising public awareness, along with more recent approaches, such as social media. The paid public messaging elements are intended not to prompt parental behavior change alone, but rather, to reinforce messages the campaign is already delivering to parents and caretakers directly on the ground.

Examples of paid media efforts for both campaigns include:

BILLBOARDS

Finding corporate partners who can help defray the costs of paid media makes a big difference in conducting your paid media campaign. In Oakland, generous support from outdoor advertising company Clear Channel enabled partners to place dozens of billboards and eco-posters, using designs provided by Goodby Silverstein & Partners, in areas surrounding the UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland and Kaiser Permanente hospitals. Similarly, Tulsa worked with [Lamar Advertising](#), to place 21 billboards in target communities, and will be posting dozens more.

BUS SHELTER AND BUS/SHUTTLE ADVERTISEMENTS

With a generous donation of advertising space and installation costs from Metropolitan Tulsa Transit Authority, the Tulsa campaign is placing three different messages on city buses, as well as in city bus shelters. Similarly, the Oakland campaign is also placing ads on shuttles that run to and from public transit near the hospital.

POSTERS AND OTHER ITEMS

Both the Tulsa and Oakland campaigns contracted with local printing companies to produce posters to distribute throughout hospitals, medical offices, churches and libraries that promote talking, reading and singing.

RADIO SPOTS

The Tulsa campaign is airing radio PSAs on several local networks with diverse listenership, including stations that serve African-American and Hispanic audiences.

GROCERY STORES

The Tulsa partners are preparing to launch a collaboration with two small grocery store chains (in approximately 18 stores) that serve predominantly low-income, black and Hispanic families. The plan is to develop a range of creative materials—such as interactive branded signage throughout the stores (for example, “*Let’s Talk about Fruit,*”)—to stimulate conversation between adults and young children as they make their way through the grocery stores.

Tulsa plans to incorporate early math concepts into its grocery store strategy as well. Supermarkets provide an ideal venue for introducing early math concepts through activities like counting fruit, observing shapes, and discerning “big vs. small.”

TECHNOLOGY TOOLS

Technology crosses socioeconomic and cultural lines, and can serve to reinforce campaign messages and activities with parents. It can also be an effective lever for motivating action and changing behavior among parents.

TEXT4BABY

We chose to test [Text4baby](#) in the Oakland and Tulsa campaigns, among a number of other apps and technology services. It's a free, research-based tool, directed primarily at pregnant women and mothers with babies under the age of one year. It sends developmentally appropriate text messages three times a week, based on the baby's gestational or actual age.

As a result of a partnership facilitated by the Clinton Foundation through *Too Small to Fail*, Text4baby messages now include tips for moms to talk, read and sing with their babies, using links to Sesame Street videos that model this behavior. This is a new feature for all users, which supplements Text4baby's original messages focused primarily on health and safety. An additional fee for campaign organizers also enables Text4baby to "localize" these messages, providing parents with information about local service providers and events, including library story times, playgroups in local parks, and free or reduced cost tickets to local children's museums.

ENGAGING THE PRESS AND LEVERAGING SOCIAL MEDIA

Too Small to Fail has used a combination of approaches in its earned media strategy for the "Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing" campaign, and engaging the press will no doubt be an important part of your strategy, too.

Our initial mission was to engage the national press with a "big picture" narrative about the word gap—explaining the problem the country faces on a national scale, the research on child brain development, and the importance of parent-child interaction to help close the word gap and improve early learning. We garnered hundreds of media stories in national and international media outlets, such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *NPR*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *TIME*.

After drawing national attention to the issue, our goal now is to engage local media to highlight personal family stories, and the ways parents and caregivers are receiving important information and tools to help them improve their children's early learning. We have sought local press coverage of our launch/kickoff events to introduce the Talking is Teaching campaign. We have also described how the word gap affects communities, by drawing attention to local families interacting with the campaign and taking steps to improve their children's early learning.

Telling these personal stories can help you engage local partners. In Oakland, Bob Schmidt of Clear Channel read about the issue in the *Oakland Tribune*, and it prompted him to get involved. He later became a vital corporate partner. So earned media not only raises awareness of the issue and the campaign, but also brings important players to the table. It's essential to look for every opportunity—every media hook—to grab attention, get the press involved, and build interest and support for the campaign.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Talking is Teaching also takes advantage of a wide range of social media outlets for communicating with parents, funders and all of its local and national partners. [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) are our two main vehicles, but the campaign also has a presence on [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#), as well as a [Tumblr](#) page.

Social media is indispensable for conveying your message widely and expanding your audience. It's easy, inexpensive, and helps you connect with parents, caregivers, and other members of your local community, where they already are.

We've developed the following guidelines for conducting your campaign on social media, based on our experience:

- **Engage local partners**—Talking is Teaching uses social media to coordinate and cross-promote with local partners, and tap into their audiences. Here's the process we typically follow:
 - Prepare a message—keep it short and catchy;
 - Share message with partners;
 - Coordinate the timing of your posting to social media with partners' schedules;
 - Coordinate the hashtag (it's important to make sure everyone's using the same hashtag, so all of your messages will appear in one place); and,
 - Get your message out together (this helps you have the broadest possible impact).

Facebook and other social media platforms have tools that are designed to help businesses and organizations narrow their audience and target their social media advertising. Limiting your audience by location, age or other category can help you focus on one specific demographic group.

- **Providing value to your audience**—Social media audiences appreciate original content and tips on how to talk, read and sing with children every day. We have, for example, asked partners to work with us on Q & A's offering advice for parents, as well as blog posts that tell personal stories about families' experiences.
- **Creating buzz around local events**—When you launch a campaign locally, or hold events, you can use social media to generate interest and energy around those activities by live-tweeting at the event and posting photos or videos. For example, Oakland partners held a "baby shower" for over 2,000 families at a local children's park that generated great interest and coverage online.

Finally, in the interest of keeping track of your social media messaging, you can take advantage of [Storify](#) (a web-based tool to feature social media efforts or campaigns in a way that's easy and accessible, well-designed, and easy to share) and other applications to curate and assemble all of the messages in one place.





CHAPTER 7: SORTING OUT THE LOGISTICS

Perhaps the number one piece of advice our partners had for other communities building a campaign was: *logistics, logistics, logistics!*

If you decide to distribute Talking is Teaching toolkits and posters, it's important to **build in staff time and resources for planning and handling the logistics**. This is a challenging, yet critical, piece of the campaign.

PHYSICAL PACKAGING, STORAGE AND DELIVERY OF TOOLKITS

Even before you sharpen your message, sign agreements with your partners, order posters and clothing, or stuff items into thousands of tote bags, it is critical to focus on how you will handle the logistics. Whenever you're dealing with bulk items—in the thousands—you're talking about heavy boxes, and a large amount of storage space.

Some questions you'll want to ask early on include:

- Who is going to assemble the tote bags?
- Who is going to store them? At what cost?
- How are they physically going to be stored?
- What kind of boxes are the right size and weight to

hold thousands (or tens of thousands) of items of clothing, or books, or tote bags?

- Are they able to be stacked? How heavy/strong are the boxes?
- Who is going to deliver the boxes/toolkits to providers?

In Tulsa, the campaign solved many of these problems by hiring a company to assemble, store, process orders, and distribute the literacy toolkits. This local company fills the tote bags with toolkit items, stores them by the thousands and receives orders, on an ongoing basis, to deliver toolkits to local organizations when needed. This approach has the advantage of removing from the local partners the burden of managing complicated logistics, but it also requires a substantial financial investment.

In Oakland, partners took on these tasks themselves, and—as stated in the previous sections—it “took a village”!

Similarly, it's important to think about whose clearance you need at various steps, and to have leaders in the campaign who are in a position to make those things happen smoothly and quickly.

“A key set of questions to ask about logistics is how you plan to distribute toolkits – how many will fit in a box, how big the boxes are going to be, who's got enough storage capacity, and for how long? Also, how are you planning to keep track of what you've distributed? All of this can be hard, and even tedious, but it's really important to think through the logistics of distribution.”

– Susan True, Kenneth Rainin Foundation, Oakland

CHAPTER 8: ASSESSING THE COST



Your campaign's design and, ultimately, its success, will depend greatly on the resources and funding you have available, as well as the needs of your community. Some communities may engage in high-intensity campaigns that utilize paid media, including TV and radio ads; distribution of toolkits through community partners and trusted messengers; and community events with local press and special printed materials. A high-intensity campaign will require more resources than a low-intensity campaign, which may only use one or two campaign elements to deliver messages to parents and caregivers.

Because costs vary widely by region, time and leveraging opportunities, it's not practical to present a comprehensive budget for a community campaign to close the word gap. We do, however, cite costs for the high-quality toolkit materials below, so that you may factor this information into your campaign.

As noted earlier in the section on corporate partners, it helps to consider ways in which you can bring costs down by soliciting in-kind donations, or by getting corporate sponsors for materials, billboards or PSAs.

Here are a few other tips on how to keep costs down:

- Seek economies of scale, whenever possible
 - Look for deals (buy two radio spots and get third one free);
 - Print materials in bulk to bring down the numbers; and,
 - Opt for black & white printing on some materials, instead of color (such as tote bags).
- Consider alternatives
 - Choose only one of the three Sesame Street tools (Family Resource Guide, a CD and "Word on the Street" cards) if your budget is tight.
- Know where in the pipeline the costs are highest; clothing tends to be the most costly item in the tote bags¹¹
- Seek printer/clothing company discounts
- Create regional hubs for ordering in bulk with other campaigns in the area to jointly manage logistics and minimize costs

While toolkit materials can be costly, there are effective ways to lower the overall cost for local campaigns. Funders in local communities from both philanthropic and corporate sectors can help offset, or even fully fund, the cost of materials.

¹¹ Clothing costs reflect high-quality sourcing and production processes, with special attention to labor, environmental and child garment safety regulations. We strongly urge campaigns seeking to produce these materials for their own use to also observe these standards.

Here is a breakdown of toolkit item costs per unit, as produced for the Tulsa and Oakland campaigns (and based on current printing and production costs for 10,000 units). Note that per unit costs on certain items decrease when you order in bulk, so an additional way to lower costs is to establish partnerships with other entities in your general region that are also ordering materials so that together, you can order the largest—and therefore, least expensive—quantities.

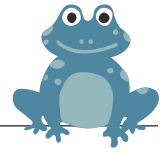
- Tote bag \$3 - \$5
- Clothing, per unit \$5 - \$8
- Blanket or Towel \$7 - \$9
- Book \$2 - \$3
- Text4Baby Postcard \$0.20
- Sesame Street Family Resource Guide Varies¹²
- Sesame Street “Word on the Street” Cards Varies
- Sesame Street CD Varies

You can find more information about our production guidelines and how to order materials [here](#).



¹² Price points for the Sesame Street Talking is Teaching Family Guide and Word on the Street cards will vary based on the quantities ordered. For more information on how to order these materials, please visit <http://toosmall.org/community/resources/production-guidelines>.

CHAPTER 9: EVALUATING YOUR EFFORTS



“Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing”, is intended to become a data-driven model. In other words, we need to know if what we’re doing is working. To do that, we need to generate evidence by evaluating our efforts.

Evaluation is most effective if it’s part of the planning process at the beginning of the campaign, and if it seeks to answer questions during, or at the end of, an implementation period. Even the act of generating these questions will help define your overall campaign strategy.

Following are some questions to begin with, along with answers based on our experiences in Oakland and Tulsa:

- **What are your goals for the campaign?**

In the long term, we want to boost early brain development and language acquisition in very young children, so they will be ready for school, and can succeed in school and in life. But gathering that data and conducting a subsequent analysis would take a significant amount of time; we’d want to see academic and life outcomes in school, and beyond. In the shorter term, we are hoping that parents will talk, read and sing more with their children starting at birth, in meaningful, regular interactions.

- **What do you want to learn and what questions do you want to answer?**

Ultimately, we want to learn whether this kind of public-health approach to early language development improves brain development and language acquisition among very young children, and as they grow older. But in the shorter term—which will give us information more immediately—the question is whether, and how, the approach can change parental behavior, improving the quality of interactions between parents and their children between birth and the age of five.

- **What data do you need to answer your questions?**

Basic data is helpful, such as:

- The parents’ level of knowledge about the importance of early brain development—including talking, reading and singing with their children from birth—before they receive any campaign messages or materials.
- Demographic information about, and number of, parents who receive messages, information and materials.
- The amount of time parents spend talking, reading, singing with their children before receiving campaign materials and being exposed to messages.
- Initial impressions from parents after receiving the messages and materials.
- Follow up reports on whether parents engaged in more language-rich interactions with their young children: What particular messages or tools motivated action the most? The least?

We also want more specific information, such as parents’ impressions about effective messengers; and, whether on-the-ground interventions are supported by paid media messages (bus shelter ads, TV or radio ads, print newspaper articles, billboards, etc.).

Finally, we want to know how the process of implementing the campaign worked. For example, we want to identify any bottlenecks or successes in planning for and conducting implementation, and obtain feedback from messengers about their experiences.

- **How will you collect data and how frequently?**

All of our partners and trusted messengers are collecting basic data and relaying it back to us. At this point, each site is using a different approach to data collection and evaluation.

In Tulsa, the George Kaiser Family Foundation (GKFF) has established a system where family coordinators in churches regularly log into a password-protected portal to report information on the number of children and families they serve at each event, and the number of materials they distribute. Family coordinators also use this portal to request new batches of materials. This way, GKFF has accurate data about the numbers of families reached.

In Oakland, where the Phillip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies at the University of California, San Francisco is conducting a formal evaluation, staff are collecting data through surveys immediately before and after doctor visits, and at the four to six month follow-up visit. Researchers are recording data in a computer system they'll use to conduct the analysis.

The Oakland evaluation includes three components:

- Documenting what took place during the implementation of the campaign at the clinic;
- Identifying what worked/did not work in implementation; and
- Measuring increased knowledge, impact on behavior change.

- **How will the data be used?**

We'll use the data focused on the *process* of the campaign implementation to inform our work, making course corrections and adjustments along the way.

In Oakland, for example, parents were concerned that there might be a hidden cost to signing up for Text4baby. So, together with Text4baby and hospital staff, we developed a document explaining that there is no charge to most users at any point during the service. The Tulsa partners reported similar concerns from parents, and shared that family engagement coordinators in participating churches have signed up for Text4baby themselves so that they can reassure families about the free service.

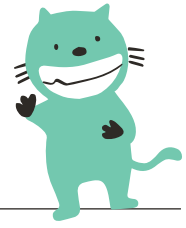
We're also heavily relying on the data that looks at *outcomes*. If we learn that specific tools or messages resonated more deeply with parents and led them to take action, we will likely emphasize those tools and messages over others. For example, if we learn that hospital visits prompted parents to talk, read and sing more with their children, we'll move towards scaling through hospitals.

We will also use the findings on outcomes as evidence to funders of whether the program is effective. This will help determine future investments in the campaign.

Finally, evaluation findings will be essential to additional scaling efforts—deciding whether the best strategy is hospital-based, faith-based, or whether to deploy messengers in other settings.

Regardless of the strategy you choose locally, we believe it's extremely valuable to incorporate evaluation into your campaign, so that you have feedback for yourself and your funders on what's working, and what needs improvement.

FINAL WORDS



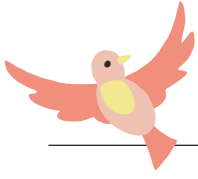
The “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” campaign is designed to magnify attention and motivate action. Based on decades of scientific research and study, this campaign aims to persuade community and business leaders, as well as parents and caregivers, to understand the importance of and take action to improve their children’s early brain development. But as numerous issue-based campaigns have taught us through the years, it is not enough to simply push out information—no matter how important or life-changing. In order to effect behavior change, target audiences must hear these messages from trusted sources, and have the appropriate tools and resources at their disposal to put a campaign’s messages into action. Additionally, a hearty communications effort through paid, social and earned media ensures that a campaign’s messages saturate the environment in which people work, play and live for maximum reach.

Talking is Teaching has been designed with these core principles in mind, and with carefully designed materials produced by early childhood experts and researchers. Even so, we don’t pretend to have all the answers on how to motivate action among parents and caregivers. We can only share what we and our partners have learned, and hope that these lessons help you in your own efforts.

As you consider the campaign you want to build, we hope that this Campaign Guide and the resources we have made available to you will serve as aids that can be integrated into similar efforts and spark new thinking. Your community may ultimately decide that the campaign’s materials don’t fit your needs, but then we hope you will find other resources and materials that do. In any scenario, the implementation of a ground campaign that combines trusted messengers, robust and energetic media efforts, as well as community-wide participation is sure to yield results and make change happen.

You are likely undertaking this campaign because you want to help improve the lives of children in your community from birth. At the end of the day, we all do the work we do because we want to ensure that the next generation is better than the last, and that our nation’s children enjoy brighter, more rewarding lives. To this end, we hope you will share your lessons with us and with other communities, and help us learn how to be most effective in this work. Evaluation of your efforts is invaluable in establishing a record of effective campaigns to improve early learning and positive outcomes later.

Finally, we will continue to share our lessons learned with other communities who are interested in this work. To find related resources, new research and other materials, check back often on our website, www.toosmall.org.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Community Campaign Guide has been developed with the gracious assistance of our many partners in Tulsa, Oakland, and across the country, who took part in interviews and collaborated closely with Next Generation.

We want to acknowledge the generous contributions of time and input by: Patti Miller and Jane Park Woo of the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation; Annie Koppel Van Hanken and Caleb Gayle of the George Kaiser Family Foundation; Houda Elyazgi of Saxum Communications; Dr. Amy Emerson of Tulsa Educare; Bert Lubin, Dr. Dayna Long, Dr. Gena Lewis, Mindy Benson and Susan Greenwald of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland; Matt Regan of the Bay Area Council; Susan True of the Rainin Foundation; Janis Burger of First 5 Alameda County; Michael Crain, Graham North and John-James Richardson of Goodby Silverstein & Partners; Jamie Poslosky and Mark Del Monte of the American Academy of Pediatrics; and Dana Hughes of the UCSF Phillip R. Lee Institute for Health Policy Studies.

At Next Generation, our contributors included: Ann O'Leary, Senior Vice President; Kara Dukakis, Director of Too Small to Fail; Anastasia Ordonez, Communications Director, Children & Families Program; Neda Habibi, Online Community Manager; and, Anne Hawke, our writing and editorial consultant.



