







Adult Learning Principles



Integrating adult learning principles into TWMB coaching helps to increase positive early childhood experiences that are important determinants of health, learning and well-being. Below are ways that TWMB coaching follows adult learning principles.

	Adults are internally motivated and self-directed	Approaching families from a strength-based perspective is identifying what they do well and building upon it. For example, if they value storytelling, encourage them to continue to use and expand that practice.
	Adults bring their life experiences and knowledge to learning	We believe all families want the best for their babies. Relate the hopes and dreams families have for their babies to the way language nutrition can help them to achieve them.
	Adults are goal oriented	Getting to know each family's values and experiences will help to connect with them and motivate them to provide good language nutrition for their child.
	Adults are relevancy oriented	Helping families to understand the "why" behind coaching is instrumental in building capacity and supporting a child's early brain and language development.
	Adults are practical	Understanding the daily routines of families can help you work collaboratively with them to integrate language nutrition into their daily routines.
	Adults like to be respected	Families are very diverse. They come from a variety of different family structures, cultures, languages and ethnicities and have varying levels of experience interacting with babies. Honoring those differences and building from their experiences are important to establishing good rapport.

Created through partnership between the Rollins Center for Language & Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School and the Division of Women & Infant Health Services at Grady Healthcare, Atlanta, Georgia.



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SAMPLE

Grady Babies are TWMB Babies

Talk With Me Baby (TWMB) Grady helps families give their babies the best start in life with good language nutrition to build a healthy brain and strong foundation for learning, reading and literacy. Grady joins a network of TWMB initiatives across Georgia as the flagship TWMB birthing hospital.



The Opportunity

High School graduation and post-graduation education/training correlate with gainful employment, better health and longer lives. Research shows that a student's reading ability by the end of 3rd grade is related to high school graduation. In 2019, only 29% of Atlanta Public School students overall and 15% of APS students receiving free and reduced lunches were reading at a proficient level of above.* That means up to 85% of children in Grady's service area will struggle with learning and academic achievement from the 4th grade on and are at risk of dropping out. We can do better.

4 YEARS OR MORE OF COLLEGE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

5-7 years Longer Life

12% less risk for Smoking

5% less risk for Obesity

2.2% less risk for Heart Disease

1.3% less risk for Diabetes

Brain Development, Language And Learning To Read

1. All of us come into the world with our brains not fully formed. 80% - 85% of our brain development happens from the third trimester of pregnancy to 3 years of age.
2. Just as we all need good food nutrition for our bodies, we also need good "language nutrition" for our brains. Early language experiences build babies' brains and sets a strong foundation for lifelong learning and learning to read.
3. Talk with babies early and often to support their optimal brain and language development. We recommend about 15 minutes per waking hour (about 2,000 loving words/hour).
4. The quality of their language experiences matters as much as the number of words they hear. Use **Parentese, Serve and Return, Questions, and Loving Words** to promote language learning. Babies' brains are built one word and one hug at a time!
5. Talk With Me Baby Grady coaches families about the importance of providing lots of loving language experiences for their babies and how to make the most of their conversations with babies.

Get Involved

The nursing staff on the Women & Infant Health Services Units are educating, coaching and modeling appropriate language nutrition from prenatal to birth with families and babies at Grady. In addition, all Grady staff members are encouraged to participate in this initiative simply by engaging families and babies in conversation.

* National Assessment of Educational Progress, The Nation's Report Card, 2019.

Why Literacy Matters

Reading is not a natural act. While reading must be taught, the foundation for reading begins being built at birth, as a baby hears loving words from their mother in the womb. From there, the journey to language becomes intertwined with the pathway to reading – which is the foundation for living the life of our own choosing.



FEEL: With stories, we cross over into characters and develop empathy, improve decision making and ability to process emotions, and we learn how to self-reflect.



THINK: Through deep relationships, we fully engage our brains. Language promotes growth from infancy and through it we develop imagination, knowledge and wisdom.



THRIVE: Those who cannot read face poor health outcomes. Literacy enables us to live longer. It allows us to read prescriptions, understand instructions, select recipes, and take in general information about our health.



We read to become who we are meant to be.



PROVIDE: Literacy opens us to economic opportunity. We can read job descriptions, apply for and secure jobs with living wages and participate in economic decisions.



ENGAGE: A literate community contributes to its growth, acts as informed citizens and works to protect the needs of the community and its members.

Every person deserves the power to seek and pursue opportunities, to become their best self, and to make the most difference in the lives of others.



*For more information
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TALK With Me Baby!



Tune in

Enter the baby's world

- Notice what baby is looking at or doing
- Comment on what you noticed
- Wait for the baby's response

Ask questions

Invite baby to participate and model turn-taking

- Ask a question related to what you noticed and commented on
- Wait for the baby's response
- Answer for the baby based on their response

Lift language

Model language

- Narrate everything you or the baby is doing, seeing, hearing or feeling
- Use interesting words and well-formed sentences
- Use qualities of serve-and-return conversations: parentese, loving tone, eye contact, facial expressions, gestures and gentle touch

Keep it going

Carry on with the conversation

- Keep the focus on what the baby is interested in
- Continue to tune in, ask questions and lift language, taking turns over and over again

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Babies are born with a desire to communicate. From coos to cries, they are eager to connect. The more we respond, the more we bond and continue building on their foundational skills.

How Babies Communicate



Birth – 3 months



- Reacts to loud sounds
- Coos and makes pleasure sounds
- Stops or starts sucking in response to sound
- Makes eye contact and looks at things in field of view
- Recognizes familiar voices and smiles or calms down when spoken to

4 – 6 months



- Follows sounds with eyes
- Reaches for things and people
- Vocalizes excitement and displeasure
- Looks towards caregiver when name is called
- Babbles in a speech-like way and uses many different sounds

7 months – 1 year



- Uses simple gestures
- Babbles using groups of sounds
- Turns to look towards direction of sounds
- Enjoys games like peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake
- Begins to respond to requests and simple directions

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By talking with, listening to, singing with and playing with your child, you are forming the deep, loving connections that help to build their language skills – and build their brain for reading and all learning.

How Young Children Communicate

1 – 2 years old



- Saying more words every month
- Using some 1 – 2-word questions (“where’s kitty?” “go bye-bye?” “what’s that?”)
- Using many different consonant sounds at the beginning of words
- Putting 2 words together (e.g., “more cookie,” “no juice,” “mommy book”)

3 – 4 years old



- Talking about activities at school or at friends’ homes
- Usually talking easily without repeating syllables or words
- Using a lot of sentences that have 4 or more words

2 – 3 years old



- Having a word for almost everything
- Using 2-3 words to talk about and ask for things
- Often asking for or directing attention to objects by naming them

4 – 5 years old



- Using sentences that give lots of details (e.g., “I like to read my books.”)
- Communicating easily with other children and adults
- Using the same grammar as the rest of the family
- Telling stories that stay on topic



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Conversation Starters



Ever wonder what to say when you're trying to strike up a conversation with a baby and his/her caregivers? Try these conversation starters and talking strategies:

Conversation Starters for Baby

- "Hi, Baby! How are you feeling this morning?"
- "What a nice (bow, outfit, hat, etc.) you're wearing! Is that your favorite color?"
- "I see you smiling! Are you happy today?"
- "I hear you talking! Are you trying to tell us something?"

Conversation Starters with Parent/Caregiver

- "Have you heard that talking and reading with your baby a lot helps him/her be a better learner?"
- "Did you know that when you use a high-pitched voice, your baby really tunes in and it helps them to learn words?"
- "See how your baby responded when he heard my/your voice? That's his/her way of talking with us."

What to talk with babies about

- Describe what you or the baby are doing, seeing, feeling, smelling, etc.
- Describe what is happening around you
- Tune in to what the baby/child is attending to/doing and talk with them about it

Strategies to keep in mind when talking with the baby

- Try to make eye contact/get at eye level with the baby
- Keep your interactions positive and upbeat – smile!
- Vary the pitch and tone of your voice
- Pause when the baby is initiating conversation with you
- Pause after you say something to wait for their response
- Use facial expressions and gestures to express emotions
- Use real words and complete sentences

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Benefits of Multilingualism



Cognitive

Multilinguals switch between language systems. This makes their brains very active and flexible.

Research shows that multilingualism facilitates:

- *understanding math concepts and solving word problems (Zelasko and Antunez, 2000);*
- *using logic (Bialystok and Majumder, as cited in Castro, Ayankoya & Kasprak, 2011);*
- *focusing, remembering, and making decisions (Bialystok, 2001);*
- *thinking about language (Castro et al., 2011);*
- *learning other languages (Jessner, 2008).*



Socioemotional

When children learn multiple languages, they learn multiple cultures. Multilingual children are able to maintain strong ties with their family, culture, and community.

Children can very effectively learn to navigate different cultures, the one at home and the one at school:

- *Multilingual children maintain their expressive ability in their home language which is critical to their bond with family (Wong Fillmore, 1991).*
- *Ties with family and culture are important in the development of children's identities (Zelasko and Antunez, 2000).*
- *Children raised in multilingual households appear to have better self-control (Kovacs and Mehler, 2009), and are very able to get along with others, both very important indicators of success in school.*



Learning & School Readiness

Mastery of the home language can be very beneficial for multi-language learners' school readiness.

Multilingual children benefit greatly when they have a solid foundation in their home language. Here are some benefits:

- *More flexible approaches to thinking through problems.*
- *Ability to think and read in different languages promotes higher levels of abstract thinking, which is very important for learning (Diaz, 1985).*
- *Multilinguals are better able to ignore irrelevant information, a benefit that may exist as early as 7 months of age (Kovacs and Mehler, 2009).*
- *Children who learn to read in their home language have a strong foundation to build upon when they learn a second language. The knowledge acquired in one language transfers to other languages (Páez and Rinaldi, 2006).*



Global & Economic

Over half of the world's adults speak at least two languages. In our growingly global society, speaking multiple languages is a very valuable skill:

- *Multilingual adults have more job opportunities around the world than monolingual adults (Zelasko and Antunez, 2000).*
- *Multilinguals develop in two or more cultural environments with multiple sets of cultural behaviors and ways of thinking and interacting. This provides them with more skills in adapting to different expectations (Genesee et al., 2004).*
- *Multilingual individuals can participate easily in the global community and have access to information from many more sources.*

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Benefits of Multilingualism

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Multilingual Words & Phrases for Casual Conversation



One way to show linguistically diverse families that communicating with them is important to you is to use simple words and phrases in their language during casual conversation. Use these translations to help them feel more comfortable talking with you.

English	Spanish	Amharic	French
Hello	Hola	Iwi selami newi	Bonjour
Goodbye	Adiós	Behina huni	Au revoir
My name is...	Mi nombre es....	Yenē simi...	Mon nom est...
What is your name?	Cómo te llamas?	Semeh/semesh man new?	Comment t'appelles-tu?
baby	bebé	hits'ani	de bébé
mother	Mamá/madre	inati	mère
father	Papá/padre	Ābati	père
family	familia	Bētesebi	famille
beautiful	hermosa/hermoso	k'onijo	belle/beau
handsome	guapa/guapo	melike melikami	belle/beau
cute	linda/lindo	k'onijo	mignonne/mignon
happy	feliz	desitenya	heureuse/heureux
yes	sí	āwo	oui
no	no	āyi	non
thank you	gracias	āmeseginalehu	merci
you're welcome	de nada	minimi āyidelemi	de rien
talk	hablar	mewirati	parlez
read	leer	ānibibi	lire
sing	cantar	zefeni	chanter
play	jugar	ch'ewata	jouer

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The Not-So-Secret Recipe for Supporting Families



Ingredients:

- Knowledge of the Science
- Mastery of Language Skills
- Coaching Approach

Directions:

Share: Share your knowledge of the science with families

Practice: Practice talking with babies and model behaviors for families

Collaborate: To adopt a coaching approach, work collaboratively with families, acknowledge their strengths and build upon them, recognize and respect diversity, draw on the families' hopes and dreams for their babies, and tailor your coaching to the individual needs and perspectives of each family

Combine: Combine all ingredients and sprinkle throughout your interactions with families

Coaching Approach:

- Partner with Families
- Use a Strength-based Perspective
- Recognize and Respect Diversity
- Connect Back to Families' Hopes and Dreams

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Lightning Coaching Moments



Your day is filled with opportunities to share the practices and principles of Talk With Me Baby with families. Lightning coaching moments are an easy way to coach families during your routine care.



Model a Language Skill:

Demonstrate how you do it

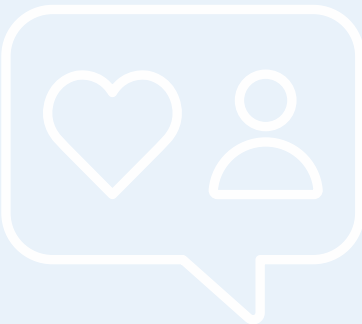
- Talk with babies directly in front of their families, demonstrating the actions you want them to take.
- Be responsive: tune in, use child-directed speech, gestures, touch, and facial expressions.
- Take turns, ask questions, use lots of language, narrate your actions and the child's actions.



Share an Educational Message:

Explain how to talk with babies and why it matters

- Reinforce key messages to help families understand the importance of talking with their baby.
- Mention how talking impacts brain development.
- Describe and explain how you talk with babies.
- Praise parents you see talking with their babies and call out the specific skill they are using.



Encourage Practice:

Use a strength-based approach

- Encourage parents and families to practice the skill with you.
- Point out their baby's response and how they're trying to communicate.
- Give lots of supportive feedback. Highlight the great things you see them doing and offer support.

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Key Messages to Share with Families



Families are their baby's first and best teachers.

Use these simple key messages in your Lightning Coaching Moments to empower families to talk with their babies early and often.

1

You have the power to help your baby become a better learner and a strong reader, even if you struggled in school or with reading.

6

Talk, Read, Sing & Play with your baby early and often. Try to engage your baby in conversation at least 15 minutes every hour they're awake.

2

Your baby's brain grows rapidly early in life. From the third trimester of pregnancy to 3 years old, your baby's brain grows to 80-85% of the size of the adult brain.

7

Language nutrition is good in any language, but best in the language you know best. Babies are perfectly capable of learning more than one language at a time.

3

Even before your baby can talk, they have lots of ways to communicate. Eye contact, head turns, coos, body movements, and crying are some of the ways your baby tries to talk with you.

8

Your baby will not learn language from watching television or interacting with electronic devices. When it comes to learning to talk, there is no substitute for conversations they have with you.

4

Back-and-forth conversations with lots of language nutrition strengthens your baby's brain, early language skills and relationships. It's as easy as T-A-L-K!

9

Anything can be a conversation. Comment on something they're doing, seeing, or feeling, share your favorite stories, tell them what you're doing, or use a book to start a conversation.

5

Research shows that it is impossible to spoil your baby. Responding to their cues helps them feel safe and lets them know they can count on you to fill their needs.

10

Practice. Practice. Practice. It may feel weird at first. The more you practice, the more natural it will feel and the easier it will be to notice your baby's cues.

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Take Home Messages



Congratulations on completing the Talk With Babies, Make a Difference course on Cox Campus. The take home messages below and the other course resources will help you become every baby's conversational partner and every family's coach. Visit Cox Campus for even more tips and strategies for talking with babies and coaching families.

1. Literacy is an important skill needed to ensure all children can reach and achieve their hopes and dreams.
2. When you talk with babies and coach families, you are an important part in making sure all babies leave your care on a path to literacy and self-determination.
3. Language Nutrition nourishes a baby's developing brain. All families have the capacity to provide rich language nutrition for their babies. It's free and always available.
4. Families who create loving, language-centered home environments help their children become better learners and readers.
5. Talking *with* babies is as easy as T-A-L-K!
 - Tune in
 - Ask Questions
 - Lift Language
 - Keep it Going
6. Babies love parentese! It grabs their attention, keeps them engaged, and helps them learn the sounds of their language.
7. Emphasize having quality over quantity. When adults have *quality* conversations with babies using the TALK strategy, babies will hear more than the recommended 2000 words/waking hour babies need every day.
8. Babies learn language through conversations with responsive adults, NOT from technology. Be sure to limit the use of technology with babies, including *your* use of technology.
9. Language nutrition is good in any language but best in the language you know best and babies can learn more than one language at a time.
10. Coaching families is as fast as lightning and can easily be included in the routine care you provide. Empower families to provide rich language nutrition with Lightning Coaching Moments:
 - Share educational messages about language nutrition
 - Model language skills for the families
 - Encourage families to practice and give them feedback

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SAMPLE

Grady Is a Talk With Me Baby Hospital

S

Speak with families & baby using back-and-forth conversations.

M

Mention the brain grows 80-85% from the third trimester to 3. Language is best for brain development and learning to read.

A

Advocate for Talking, Reading, Singing and Playing with baby using lots of loving words.

- 2000 words or 15 minutes talking per waking hour
- Use home language
- Refrain from using harsh words and limit screen time

R

Rehearse Parentese and Serve-and-Return conversations early and often.

T

Tell parents they are baby's first and best teachers!

Tips for Good Language Nutrition

- Your Baby is Your Conversational Partner
- Use Loving Words
- Describe What Is Happening
- Get and Hold Your Baby's Attention
- Tell Your Baby Stories
- Ask Your Baby Questions
- Soothe Your Baby
- Sing To Your Baby
- Read To Your Baby

REMEMBER:
You Can't Spoil Your Baby!



Ask me about SMART Babies!

Patient Discharge Instruction Example



Conversation and relationship building is the foundational core of the TWMB approach. TWMB emphasizes embedding family coaching during routine care activities through conversation using the Model, Share, Encourage (or I do, We do, You Do) approach. Incorporating TWMB into discharge instruction ensures all families receive critical information and guidance on being their baby's conversational partner. This example script was developed by the flagship hospital to provide guidance for staff during discharge instruction and helped staff get more comfortable sharing key messages with families.

For Healthy Brain And Language Development, Talk, Read, Sing And Play With Your Baby Often



Talk



Read



Sing



Play

Babies need good food for healthy bodies and LOTS of loving words for healthy brains. Spend about 15 minutes talking, reading, singing, and/or playing with your baby every hour they are awake. This helps prepare your baby for learning language and learning to read, and also builds a strong bond between you.



The easiest way to engage your baby in conversation is to talk about what is going on in the world around you as it is happening. Bathing, dressing, feeding times and trips outside the home are great times to engage your baby in conversations. Here are a few more tips about how to develop your baby's brain and language:

- Talk with your baby every day using the language you are most comfortable with. Babies are quite capable of learning more than one language – what's more important is that they are exposed to as many words as possible!
- Get the whole family involved!
- Use real words and sentences; avoid using “baby talk” and harsh words.
- Read and tell your baby stories using picture books or your imagination.
- Sing your favorite songs.
- Use and repeat lots of different words with big facial expressions and gestures to emphasize what you are saying.
- Show your baby pictures, letters and words.
- Pause after you talk with your baby to give your baby a chance to respond with a smile or gesture, and then continue the conversation with more words and gestures.
- Remember that babies learn best from interacting with people, so be careful to limit use of screens (i.e., smart phones, tablets, television) to times when you are playing together. Babies under the age of 3 should not use screens unsupervised.
- Follow up on orders for hearing tests (if you have one) as soon as possible. Contact us at the email address listed below if you need assistance.

Lots of loving words and conversations with your baby help them learn to talk and read.

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SAMPLE

Parentese vs. Baby Talk



- Research demonstrates that regardless of the home language, babies are more responsive to Parentese than any other language style.
- Parentese works because it's a social hook for the baby's brain — its high pitch and slower tempo are socially engaging and invite the baby to respond (I-LABS @ University).
- Using exaggerated gestures and expressions help to hold baby's attention and helps them process sounds and meanings of language.



Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.

Parentese, or child-directed speech, activates baby's brain, gets and holds their attention and helps them learn language.

Coaching Parents

- *Parentese is using a "sing-songy" tone, higher pitched voice, elongated vowels and exaggerated gestures and facial expressions.*
- *Parentese helps get and hold baby's attention.*
- *It's best to use real words, talk in complete sentences and avoid babbling, like saying "goo-goo, ga-ga," to build your baby's vocabulary.*
- *Practice using short, simple and complete sentences.*
- *Repetition is good!*
- *Coupled with Serve and Return, Parentese creates a conversational exchange between parents and babies that promotes language development.*

The Big Picture

- *Model Parentese whenever you talk with babies.*
- *Encourage your co-workers and support staff to use Parentese and explain why.*
- *AIDET Tip: Introduce yourself to babies at each encounter and use Parentese.*
- *Congratulate and celebrate parents and co-workers when Parentese is being used when talking with babies.*
- *Document your parent coaching, and Parent/Caregiver use of Parentese in Epic:*
 - *Coaching Concepts Taught: Explained and Demonstrated Parentese.*
 - *Mom is Observed Talking to Baby on Her Own? (Add a note about her use of Parentese.)*

Developed in Georgia, Talk With Me Baby (TWMB) is a collaborative initiative that supports families and caregivers to talk, read, sing and play with their babies to promote healthy early brain development and advance language skills.



Want to learn more? Contact us at talkwithmebaby@gmh.edu.



SAMPLE

Use AIDET for happy families & SMART babies!

AIDET is a perfect way to engage families in conversation about their baby's brain and language development, increase compliance and improve clinical outcomes overall!

A	Acknowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greet by name, make eye contact, smile and acknowledge EVERYONE in the room.• Be sure to have a conversation with the baby at every contact.• Talk about the baby's reaction to conversation.
I	Introduce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduce yourself with your name, role and experience.• Share your experience helping parents with their baby's brain and language development and how that will help set them on the path to being good readers, starting now.
D	Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give an accurate time expectation for your visit with them and what they can expect next.• Be sure to allow time for demonstrations or questions about early brain and language development.
E	Explanation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain step-by-step what to expect next, answer questions and let the patient know how to contact you.• Explain that LOTS of language is best for early brain development, share techniques for getting baby's attention, and point out the signs that baby is listening and responding.• Encourage them to speak with baby in their home language and that face-to-face interaction is best (avoid screens).• Use your TWMB SMART Badge Tag for additional coaching suggestions.• Share available resources for language development (e.g., apps, videos, books, etc.)
T	Thank you	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank the patient and/or family members and express gratitude for choosing Grady and for their attention and cooperation. Thank family members for supporting Mom & Baby.• Express confidence in them in their role as their baby's first and best teacher!

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SAMPLE

Building Resilience and Secure Attachment

Resilience is the ability to overcome serious hardship. Resilient children most often have at least one secure caregiver relationship.

Three types of stress:

- Positive stress is a normal and essential part of healthy development; the body's stress response is mild in association with occasional and brief trying situations, i.e., getting immunized or adjusting to a new caregiver.
- Tolerable stress involves greater activation of the body's alert system in response to moderate, longer-lasting hardship, i.e., loss of loved one, natural disaster or frightening injury. Baby's brain and other organs can recover from moderate stress with responsive adult relationships.
- Toxic stress activates the body's alert system in response to severe, frequent and/or prolonged hardship, i.e., physical or emotional abuse or chronic neglect. Toxic stress disrupts development of the brain and other organ systems.



Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.

Families are equipped to raise resilient and secure children. Show them how!

Coaching Families

- *Model and encourage loving, serve & return conversations to help babies feel secure & calm*
- *Teach parents to recognize and acknowledge baby's cues - responsive interactions help baby cope with stress, keep calm and develop resilience*
- *Encourage parents to frequently talk, read, sing, and play with baby - everyone calms down!*

The Big Picture

- *To document coaching parents on resilience in Epic, choose: Greeting baby with every encounter; Serve & Return; Use of Loving Words; and/or Refrain from using harsh words*
- *Reference the TWMB Parent Information Sheet in the discharge packet*
- *More info on Toxic Stress:*



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Want to learn more? Contact us at talkwithmebaby@gmh.edu.





SAMPLE

Early Brain Development and Learning

- At birth, a baby's brain has 100 billion neurons.
- By the time a baby turns 3, their brain is 80-85% the size of an adult brain!
- Rapid brain growth occurs because the cells in the brain talk with one another (using synapses) to create brain circuits.
- Babies' interactions within their environment, helps to create synapses and circuits, which forms the foundation for all future learning!

Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.



*Babies' brains change the most in the first 3 years of life.
Quality interactions using lots of words are the best catalysts for growth!*

The Big Picture

- Make a habit of recognizing all the coaching moments you have throughout your daily interactions with families.
- Use TWMB resources to enhance and structure conversations (e.g., Bulletin Boards, Badge Tag, etc.).
- Include the TWMB AVS with every discharge packet.
- Be specific when you document what you share with families and how they respond.



For a deeper dive, check out this 2 min video: *"Experiences Build Brain Architecture"* at www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNNsNgIjkw5

Coaching Parents

- Using lots of language nourishes baby's brain health, social attachment and language development.
- Talking, reading, singing and playing with babies help accelerate their brain development.
- Talking with babies as early as the 3rd trimester helps families get comfortable doing it. Encourage families to practice early & often.
- Engaging in quality conversations take care of quantity. Loving conversations increase the number of words babies experience.
- Remind parents that they are their baby's first and best teacher! They've got this!

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SAMPLE

Nourish Baby with Loving Words

Babies showered with loving words and interactions form more secure attachments and know more words by age 3. Loving words can be:

Acknowledgements: recognize the baby is present and an important part of your world, e.g., 'I hear you talking with me', 'I see you smiling' or making eye contact with and/or soothing baby

Encouragements: support and inspire babies to be active agents in their world, e.g., 'What do you want to talk about?', 'Keep trying!' or with a big smile say, 'That's my amazing baby girl!'

Discouragements: deter babies from doing something, e.g., 'Don't do that', 'Be quiet', 'Come back' or turning away from/ignoring baby. **Harsh Discouragements** use angry voice, gestures or foul language to limit baby while **Loving Discouragements** use attention-getting voice or gestures to keep baby safe.

Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.



Use loving words, phrases and gestures to keep baby feeling safe, nurtured and loved.

The Big Picture

- *Knowing many words by age 3 gives babies more ways to express their thoughts and feelings and better prepares them for school and learning to read.*
- *Encourage support staff to acknowledge the baby at each encounter.*
- *Document coaching on using loving words in Epic. Consider: Greeting baby with every encounter; Use of Loving Words; and/or Refrain from using harsh words.*

Coaching Families

- *Encourage families to acknowledge baby at every encounter.*
- *Coach families to use acknowledgements and encouragements more than discouragements as they shower baby with loving words – it will not spoil them!*
- *Teach the difference between harsh and loving discouragements; share the dangers of the sustained use of harsh words on brain development.*

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SAMPLE

Serve and Return Interactions: Asking Questions

- Responsive interactions are full of serve and return (back-and-forth) exchanges using both verbal and nonverbal communication.
- The number of conversational turns (switching from one speaker to another) a baby experiences helps develop their vocabulary. A child's vocabulary at age 3 is a key indicator of future language and literacy achievement.
- Asking questions helps to get baby prepared to engage in multiple conversational turns.
 - Closed questions: can be answered with one or two words and teach turn-taking and cadence of conversations, e.g., 'Did you see what daddy did?'
 - Open-ended questions: need more than one or two words to answer and help children think critically and express their own thoughts, e.g., 'What is making you so happy today?'



Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.

Asking questions shows children that their thoughts and feelings are important and helps strengthen their foundation for all future learning.

The Big Picture

- Try to engage everyone in the room in serve and return conversations with baby.
- To document coaching parents on serve-and-return in Epic, choose: 1) Explained Serve and Return Interactions and/or 2) Mom observed talking with baby on her own.

Coaching Families

- When interacting with baby, ask questions, pause for response (sounds, movement, eye contact), then answer the question.
 - 'Are you ready to eat? <pause> I see you sucking on your fist! Let's get you back to mom so you can eat.'
- Coach families to use loving words, facial expressions, eye-contact, gentle touch, movements and parentese when having conversations with baby.
- Teach families the importance of asking questions and using more open-ended questions as baby's language develops.

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SAMPLE

Recognizing Baby's Cues More Serve & Return

- **Responsive Interactions** are back-and-forth verbal and nonverbal communication and are critical for children's brain, language and socio-emotional development.
- The way children communicate their needs, wants and dislikes change as they grow and develop new skills.
 - Newborns mainly use crying, cooing, body posture and eye-contact to communicate
 - Infants also use facial expressions like smiling and movements of the arms, legs and head
- Early intervention is crucial for children who show delays in normal communication development.



Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.

Noticing and responding to babies' cues lets them know they can count on you and that they are loved!

Coaching Families

- *Notice, acknowledge and respond to baby's signals at each interaction with the family*
- *Show how to tune-in and respond to their baby's communication*
- *Use exaggerated facial expressions, parentese, eye-contact and gentle touch*
- *Explain the importance of following-up on hearing screening recommendations*
- *Encourage families to contact their physician immediately if they ever suspect their child is not showing good growth in communication skills*

The Big Picture

- *Engage everyone in responsive interactions with baby*
- *Have a few video examples of responsive interactions ready to share with families from social media*
- *To document coaching parents on recognizing baby's cues in Epic, choose 1) Explained Serve and Return Interactions and/or 2) Mom observed talking with baby on her own*

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SAMPLE

Parents are Baby's First and Best Teachers

- The quality and quantity of words baby hears in their first 3 years of life correlate to their vocabulary at age 3, which is a strong predictor of their future academic success
- The neural circuitry responsible for hearing begins functioning during the 3rd trimester of pregnancy; babies often appear to recognize their parents' voices soon after birth
- Babies learn best through responsive interactions; talking, reading, singing and playing with babies often are the best lessons anyone can provide!

Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.



Families who engage baby in conversation early and often help build baby's brain and language skills and set them up for lifelong learning and success!

Coaching Families

- *Encourage pregnant moms to practice reading, singing and talking aloud to baby as early as they are comfortable; babies begin to hear in the 3rd trimester*
- *Teach families that early talking, reading, singing and playing with baby supports early learning and preparation for success in life*
- *When interacting with young babies, parents can start teaching them by responding to their cues, telling them what is happening and asking questions*
- *Coach families to invite others to engage baby in conversations that will further support healthy brain and language development and learning*

The Big Picture

- *When parents and other loving caregivers engage baby in learning about their new world and help them develop language skills early in life, they are setting them on a path to academic success*
- *Epic documentation choices include: 80-85% brain growth by age 3; Language is best for brain growth and learning to read; Talk, Read, Sing & Play; Use lots of loving words; Limit screen time; Parents are baby's first and best teacher; and Mom observed talking with baby*

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SAMPLE

It's Storytime!

- Babies learn best through responsive interactions and conversational turns.
- Storytime is a great way to have meaningful conversations with children that introduces new words, opens their minds to new ideas and helps them to learn about emotions.
- Getting in the habit of reading and telling stories to babies will help enhance secure attachment and create a fun way to continue to bond for many years to come.

Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.



Storytime with or without books is not just for bedtime, it's a great way for parents and caregivers to connect with babies and to help them learn language any time of the day!

The Big Picture

- *Encourage parents to read and tell stories to their babies beginning in the prenatal period*
- *Encourage parents in the NICU to take advantage of the lending library and Shared Reading program*
- *Engage others in the room to help tell the stories*
- *Epic documentation choices include: Language is best for brain growth and learning to read; Talk, Read, Sing & Play; Use lots of loving words; Parents are baby's first and best teacher; and Mom observed talking (reading) with baby*

Coaching Families

It is easy as R-E-A-D!

- *Repeat the Book or Story: Children love listening to a story over and over again*
- *Engage & Enjoy: Make story time exciting by using different voices, using lots of facial expressions and gestures*
- *Ask Questions: Ask questions during the story to increase engagement and encourage conversational turns*
- *Do More: Extend the conversation (and the learning) by doing or saying something that connects baby to the story*



Scan for more info on the READ strategy

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SAMPLE

Do You Hear What I Hear?

- Approximately 3-4 out of every 1,000 babies born in the U.S. have some level of hearing loss, making it one of the most common health conditions at birth.
- More than half of the babies born with hearing problems are otherwise healthy and have no family history of hearing loss.
- The most critical period for developing speech and language is between birth and three years. Delays in detecting hearing loss delay speech and language development.

Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.



Early identification of hearing issues can open the door to communication and learning!

The Big Picture

- *YOU are the first step in helping families of babies who refer for additional hearing screening find out if their baby has hearing loss! **What you say matters!***
- *There are several reasons babies may not pass their screening. However, it is very important that you do not minimize the importance of families following up as soon as possible.*
- *It is easy to overlook hearing problems. Infants who are deaf or hard of hearing may respond to some sounds while not hearing spoken language clearly.*
- *Epic documentation choices include: 80-85% brain growth by age 3; Talk, Read, Sing & Play.*

Coaching Families

3 Important Things to Remember about Hearing:

- **Hearing helps baby's brain grow.** Hearing builds connections in the brain called neural pathways, which drive brain development.
- **Hearing is a foundation of learning.** When you talk, sing, read, and interact with your baby, you help prepare your baby for a lifetime of learning.
- **Follow up on recommendations as soon as possible.** Although children learn and grow throughout life, 80-85% of brain development occurs by the age of three, so do not delay!

Contact Sherri Nighbert at snighbert@atlantaspeechschool.org for more information about hearing, hearing screening and early intervention options through the Access to Language program.

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SAMPLE

Babies Are Citizens of the World!

- Children who speak more than one language often have cognitive and social advantages at school, work and in the world. They tend to do better with
 - Math, problem-solving skills and logic
 - Focus, memory and making decisions
 - Flexible thinking
 - Learning other languages
 - Self-control
 - Social interactions
 - Maintaining family culture and connections
- People who speak more than one language often have more job opportunities, earn more and are better able to adapt to diverse cultures.

Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.



Babies are born with the ability to learn multiple languages!

The Big Picture

- When communicating with families who speak a language you do not understand:
 - Use Interpretive Services; Google's Translate app can also help in a pinch.
 - Use simple words and shorter sentences; talk slowly and clearly.
 - Include facial expressions, gestures and visual aids to reinforce what you're saying and confirm their understanding.
 - Learn simple phrases in your patient's language to make them more comfortable and have a better relationship with you.
- Epic documentation choices include: use home language; talk, read, sing and play; use lots of loving words; and parents are first and best teachers.

Coaching Families

- Children can learn several languages at one time.
- Talk, read and sing to your child in your home language – you will use more words and become a better teacher for your child.
- Learning more than one language will help your child's brain become even better at learning.
- Learning multiple languages will help your child become more comfortable and successful in our global society.
- Knowing more than one language might be one of the best gifts a family can give their babies.

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SAMPLE

Conversations vs. Digital Media Use

- Recent studies continue to support the finding that the number of conversational turns – or back-and-forth exchanges – that babies experience is a reliable predictor of language development and future learning outcomes.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents refrain from allowing young children to play alone with digital media devices. Why? The use of digital media impedes the development of social skills, language acquisition and learning. Overuse of digital media is also associated with the development of habits that promote poor sleep, obesity and behavior problems.



Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.



No technology can replace the brain-building conversations babies have with adults.

Coaching Families

- *Share with your families the urgency of developing the habit of conversation with their babies from the start*
- *Spending a lot of time in conversation with your baby is one of the best things you can do for her and your relationship together*
- *While your baby is awake, put down the digital media and talk out loud about everything that is going on around you, sing songs or read a book*
- *Encourage your baby by observing, acknowledging and responding to your baby's reactions to conversation*

The Big Picture

- *Do your part to motivate and engage your coworkers and support staff to make it a habit of having conversations with babies and families and encouraging them to put the devices away*
- *Document your coaching using the Talk With Me Baby Flowsheets in Epic*
- *Remember, YOU have the power - **each and every day** - to make a positive and long-lasting difference in the lives of our Grady babies and their families!*

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SAMPLE

New Year, New Resolve: What Will You Do?

- The TWMB Parent Coach Training is offered virtually on the third Wednesday of every month from 12:15 to 2:00 pm. Supplemental classes can be arranged by the unit leaders to fit your schedule. 2.6 CEUs awarded!
- Everyone has a role to play to maintain a healthy TWMB ecosystem!
 - Coach parents on what to do and why it's important for their baby's brain development and learning to read
 - Model and encourage others to talk with the babies at every opportunity
 - Document your coaching on every shift
 - Participate in unit activities to continuously improve and keep TWMB alive on your unit!



Visit the TWMB Grady Health Professionals YouTube Channel for more information.

"Newborns are our future, and I am so proud that Grady offers this resource."

Coaching Families – What YOU Said:

- "TWMB is a key part in development, and I am beyond excited to share these concepts and tips with my patients and their families"
- "I am inspired to teach others about the power of communication to babies the importance of it all."
- "I recommend to everyone to do it."
- "I will definitely be implementing TWMB in the care that I give to my patients!"
- "I am able to take the information learned and apply it during my shift to not only my babies but the parents as well."
- "Good information and techniques that I can use with our families in the NICU. I will apply this research to my everyday practices."

The Big Picture

- "I thought I was only documenting whether I greeted my patient but now I know there is so much more to TWMB"
- "...my role is that I will remember to engage baby and family together in conversation even 'just when rounding' and remind/encourage team members to model the serve and return behavior as well."
- "I think that it is great to have the visual reminders on the floor to remind everyone the importance of talk with me baby."
- "This is one of the most interactive, engaging training courses I have attended. The intent and dedication of the trainers was palpable. THANK YOU for your enthusiasm and rigor. Excellent, motivated 120%."

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Babies need lots of loving words.

All families want the best for their baby. And we know healthy food helps grow a healthy baby.

But to grow a healthy brain, babies need more. Research shows babies need lots of back-and-forth conversations with you.



Why it matters

Children's brains grow super fast in the first three years of life. And research shows that the number of loving words a baby hears is the best predictor of success in school and in life.

85%

of brain growth
occurs in the first
3 years of life.



Talk



Read



Sing



Play

What families can do

Families are a baby's first and best teacher. It's important for family members to engage with their baby. Ask questions. Wait for a response. Read out loud. Sing songs. Narrate your day. And get everyone involved.

Learn more and spread the word

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to receive useful tips and reminders about how to talk to your baby. Learn more, watch videos and spread the word.

Los bebés necesitan oír muchas palabras cariñosas

Toda familia quiere lo mejor para su bebé.

Los alimentos saludables promueven un desarrollo infantil saludable. Pero para desarrollar un cerebro saludable, los bebés necesitan algo más. Las investigaciones demuestran que los bebés necesitan tener muchas conversaciones de “ida y vuelta” contigo.

HÁBLAME
BEBÉ



ALIMÉNTAME
CON
PALABRAS

¿Por qué es importante?

El cerebro infantil se desarrolla rápidamente en los primeros tres años de vida. Las investigaciones demuestran que mientras más conversaciones amorosas los bebés tienen con adultos responsivos, mayor éxito tienen en la escuela y en el futuro.

85%

del desarrollo
cerebral ocurre en
los primeros tres años de vida



Habla



Lee



Canta



Juega

¿Cómo puede ayudar la familia?

Las familias son los primeros y mejores maestros de los niños. Por eso es importante que tú y otros miembros de la familia compartan con el bebé. Hazle preguntas. Espera su respuesta. Léele en voz alta. Cántale canciones. Nárrale los eventos del día. Y estimula a otros a participar.

Aprende más y corre la voz

Síguenos en Facebook, Twitter e Instagram para recibir consejos útiles y recordatorios sobre cómo hablar más con tu bebé. Aprende más, mira los videos y corre la voz.