

Dear Hospital Administrator,

The single strongest predictor of a child's academic success is not socioeconomic status, level of parental education, income, or ethnicity, but rather the quality and quantity of words spoken to the baby in the first three years of life. The more words a baby hears by age three, the more likely he is to read on level by the end of third grade. Third graders who cannot read at grade level are four to six times more likely to drop out of school before high school graduation, which has lifelong negative health, academic, and economic implications. Unfortunately, only 34% of Georgia's third graders can read on level. This is unacceptable. We are failing our children.

One of Governor Deal's top priorities is to increase the number of students who are able to read at a third grade level by the completion of third grade. You, as a hospital administrator, can play an important role in achieving this goal.

We have convened a public-private partnership called the Brain Trust for Babies—a multi-disciplinary statewide collaborative with a special emphasis on early brain development and language acquisition in children ages 0-3.

Babies learn language from their parents and caregivers, which is important for the neurological and physical development of their brain. When they hear words repeated over and over again, this creates and strengthens pathways in their brain. If words are not repeated, neurons in their brain shrink and die, decreasing the child's ability to learn. The importance of this early exposure to language is why the Brain Trust for Babies is acutely involved with, and supportive of, Talk With Me Baby.

Talk With Me Baby is a public action campaign aimed at coaching parents and caregivers on the primacy of language and language nutrition—or the rich language interactions between caregivers and infants—in the earliest stages of a child's development. A lack of early language exposure has life-long consequences. Coaching caregivers to provide language nutrition to their children at an early age could drastically improve a child's lifelong trajectory, and we believe that nurses are a very important workforce for delivering this coaching.

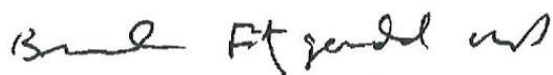
The Brain Trust for Babies Advisory Board is championing Georgia's birthing centers to embrace Talk With Me Baby by encouraging their employees to participate in the Talk With Me Baby continuing nursing education program. The continuing education program is designed to inform obstetric, neonatal, and pediatric nurses, including nurse practitioners and midwives, of the primacy of language for a child's health and educational trajectory. It is designed to train and equip nurses to educate parents about the importance of early language exposure and to develop the capacity of parents to increase the quality and quantity of words spoken to their child.

As members of the Brain Trust for Babies Advisory Board, our ask of you is to support Talk With Me Baby in your hospital and truly become a champion around early brain development and language nutrition. Together we can change the trajectory of these children's lives.


For more information about Talk With Me Baby and the continuing nursing education program on language nutrition, or to schedule someone to speak about the program with your hospital leadership, please contact Eileen Kaiser with the Marcus Autism Center/Children's Healthcare of Atlanta at Eileen.Kaiser@choa.org.

Sincerely,

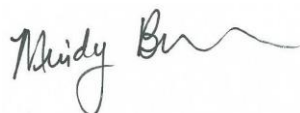
The Brain Trust for Babies Advisory Board



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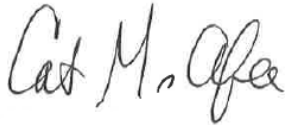
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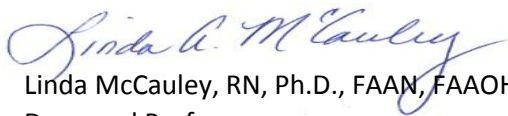
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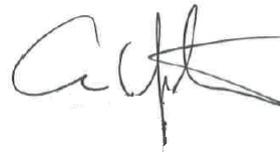
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