**Talk With Me Baby:**

Georgia’s Language Nutrition Strategy to Bridge the Word Gap

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**Background**

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

**3rd Grade Literacy in Georgia**
- Third grade literacy is an important indicator of future academic success.
- Third grade marks a time when students transition from learning to read to reading to learn.
- Students who cannot read proficiently by third grade are more likely to drop out of school before high school graduation.

**Thirty Million Word Gap**

**Early Vocabulary Gap**

- **Words (in millions) HEARD by Age 3**
  - Preschool: 500
  - Kindergarten: 1,100

**By the age of 3, high-income children have double the vocabulary of low-income children.**

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**Language Nutrition Intervention**

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

**Wide-Reaching Integrated Strategy**

**Population Level**
- Increase public awareness
- Website, phone, apps, videos
- Resource kits for all babies born in 13-country metro Atlanta area

**Community Level**
- Design and implement a curriculum to train nurses, WIC dieticians, and early childcare providers to educate parents
- Help preschool educators teach language and vocabulary

**Individual Level**
- Educate parents why they should talk with their babies
- Coach parents how to talk with their babies

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

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**Collaborative/Collective Impact**

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**Evaluation**

**Logic Model**

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

**Indicators**

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

**Activities**

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

**Randomized Control Trial**

**Implications**

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