

**Submission
Deadline:**
Monday, June 5 at
11:59 pm ET



CREATIVE STORYTELLERS, WE WANT YOU!
TALK WITH ME BABY
Book Competition

Don't miss your opportunity to win big!

Grady Hospital is teaming up with the Rollins Center for Language & Literacy and the Alliance Theatre to provide families with a book that celebrates relationships between very young children and their families, their cultures and their surroundings in the Greater Metro Atlanta.

You can play a major role in bringing this project to life! Participate in the Talk With Me Baby Book Competition by submitting a compelling narrative and visual story to be distributed by Grady Hospital and the Rollins Center for families in the Talk With Me Baby practices at Grady Hospital! To learn more about this opportunity, review the TWMB Book Contest Informational Page.

TOP PRIZE:
\$5,000 USD

TOP 5 FINALISTS:
\$250 USD

Rollins Center
for Language & Literacy

COX Campus
www.coxcampus.org

A Program of the Atlanta Speech School

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TALK WITH ME BABY BOOK COMPETITION: DETAILS

Summary:

Grady Hospital and the Rollins Center for Language & Literacy are excited to produce a book for children and their families. The book will celebrate relationships between very young children and their families, their cultures and their surroundings in Metro Atlanta. It will encourage conversation, observation and exploration.

Mayor Andre Dickens has committed to make Atlanta the best place to raise a child. Grady Hospital is the first hospital in the country to include language nutrition – abundant, positive, and language-rich interactions between children and their caregivers, teachers, and peers, that are critical for a child's social, emotional, and cognitive development, including the development of language – as part of their definition of a “healthy delivery.” Talk With Me Baby serves as the first step in helping families realize the Mayor's Promise.

Prizes:

- Top Prize: \$5,000.00 USD
- Top 5 Finalists: \$250.00 USD

*The top 5 finalists will be invited to pitch their narrative and visual component on **June 16th** (time and location to be determined). In being selected as a top finalist, each person agrees to their story and/or submission to being used in part or in full by the sponsors of this competition.*

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Entrant Information

- Entrants of all technical and educational backgrounds are welcome.
- Entrants may partner with others for their submissions.
- All submissions must be accompanied by the full names, contact information (email and phone number) and brief bio(s) (200 words or less) of the contributors.
- For your submission, please click [here](#) or visit <https://form.jotform.com/231235361296151>.
- Finalists will be notified by email and/or text by **June 8th at 8 pm Eastern**.
- Finalists must be available for an in-person or virtual competition showcase on **Friday, June 16, 2023**. The location for in-person presentations will be confirmed the week of. Instructions for virtual presentations will be provided to the finalists.
- Note about Collaboration: This is a highly collaborative project! The authors of the winning submission will work in collaboration with the team at Grady Hospital, the Rollins Center at the Atlanta Speech School and other selected writers/artists to integrate key principles and practices that support Talk With Me Baby. Entrants must be available for this collaboration from June 1 through September 30, 2023, virtually or in-person.

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Submission Format:

- Submission may be either a draft story narrative or a visual story (photographs/visuals) – and a combined approach with the story and photographs is also acceptable, but not necessary as we can connect writers to photographers.
- The submission documents may include PDF, DOCX, JPEG, PNG, or PPTX. Please note that if selected as a finalist, you must be able to share your original work via high-quality/high resolution/print quality files.
- All content must be licensable to Rollins Center for Language and Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School upon entry/submission.
- The submission should be a minimum of 20 pages and no longer than 40 pages, excluding the book cover and liners.
- Keep in mind the book will be printed on heavy weight/high quality paper. 3-D submissions will not be accepted.
- All submissions must be accompanied by the full names, contact information (email and phone number) and brief bio(s) (200 words or less) of the contributors.
- Upload entries to:

Note about Collaboration: This is a highly collaborative project! The author and photographer/artist selected will work in collaboration with the team at Grady Hospital, the Rollins Center at the Atlanta Speech School, and other partners.

Additional Background:

Every month, more than 200 babies are born at Grady Hospital. Through Talk With Me Baby coaching and support, families are prepared to provide “language nutrition” beginning in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy when auditory channels are forming through the first years of life. Language nutrition, like food nutrition, is critically important for early brain and language development and secure attachment through the first 3 years of life. Talk With Me Baby equips families with the knowledge, skills and resources they need to help ensure their babies are on the path to literacy and develop the agency to access all the opportunities life has to offer. ALL babies need and deserve language nutrition – all families can provide that!

Purpose of the Book:

This book will be used as a resource for families in the Talk With Me Baby practices at Grady Hospital, with the potential to be utilized in other area hospitals and across the nation. The book will support Talk With Me Baby coaching practices at Grady and will go home with families as one of the first books read with their newborns. We hope the book will be more than just a story to read aloud, but also a resource to remind families about good language nutrition practices and an outlet to help them write and tell their own stories.

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Key Elements to include in the Story Narrative and/or Visuals:

- Diversity, Inclusion & Representation – Grady is at the heart of Atlanta and serves a diverse community of expecting families. Race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender, language, religion – Grady serves everyone.
- “I am a Grady Baby” and “I wouldn’t be here without Grady” – please include Grady pride in the story that is, both Grady and the Greater Metro Atlanta are important to the story being told.
- Caring relationships are essential to healthy brain and language development – please consider all the ways babies relate to the world around them.
- Because we envision this book being used from infancy through age 3, we are open to a few stories within one book, like chapters, that add up to an engaging book over time as the baby gets older.
- Best practices for children’s books: rhythm, rhyme and repetition

Key Elements of Photographs / Illustrations:

- We are seeking innovative and engaging photographs as the primary visual element of the book.
- Photographs are preferred because of the real connection babies can make from the book to the real world, including but not limited to human faces representing diversity, as well as familiar objects, places, experiences etc. Stock images may be used provided they can be licensed for commercial use to Rollins Center for Language and Literacy.
- We welcome the combination of photographs and other mixed-medium elements (2-D).

Resources:

- [Talk With Me Baby – Short Overview Video](#)
- [Grady Healthcare CEO, John Haupt on Talk With Me Baby](#)
- [Talk With Me Baby @ Grady New Hire Orientation Introduction](#)

Click [here](#) to submit your story. For all other questions, please email info@coxcampus.org.



Talk With Me Baby (TWMB) Grady empowers parents to help their babies build a healthy brain and strong foundation for learning, reading and literacy through the use of good language nutrition. Grady is the flagship birthing hospital joining a larger network of Talk With Me Baby initiatives across Georgia.

THE OPPORTUNITY

High School graduation and post-graduation education/training correlate with gainful employment, better health and longer lives. In 2022, 36.5% of Georgia's children were reading on a proficient level or above by the end of the 3rd grade. In Atlanta Public Schools the percentages were 30.6% overall and only 14% of economically disadvantaged students. * That means that up to 86% of children in Grady's service area will struggle with learning and achievement in school from the 4th grade on. As a result, too many will drop out of or underachieve in school. We can do better!

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of Georgia Students
Read at Proficient
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THE EDUCATION – HEALTH CONNECTION

4 YEARS OR MORE OF COLLEGE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL IS CORRELATED WITH...

5-7 years Longer Life	5% less risk for Obesity	1.3% less risk for Diabetes
12% less risk for Smoking	2.2% less risk for Heart Disease	

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT, LANGUAGE, AND LEARNING TO READ

1. All of us come into the world with our brain architecture not fully formed. 80% - 85% of our brain development (neural connectivity) happens in the period from the third trimester of pregnancy to 3 years of age.
2. Just as we all need food nutrition for our bodies, we also need "language nutrition" for our brains. Language experiences that are frequent and of good quality during the first 3 years of life help make neural connections in the brain and build a stronger foundation for lifelong learning and learning to read.
3. Babies need to engage in many language rich-interactions each day for optimal brain and language development. We recommend about 15 minutes per waking hour (about 2,000 loving words/hour).
4. The type and quality of language used matters as much as the quantity. Using **Parentese, Serve and Return, Questions, Loving Words** and **Positive Affirmations** are great strategies to promote language learning. Babies' brains are built one word and one hug at a time!
5. Babies exposed to good language nutrition develop bigger vocabularies. Vocabulary size at age 3 is highly correlated with reading levels by the end of the third grade. In turn, a child's third grade reading level is one of the best predictors of high school graduation.
6. Talk With Me Baby informs families about the positive impacts of providing lots of loving language experiences for their babies and coaches them on strategies to optimize language interactions, brain development, learning, and eventually learning to read.



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. Need help? Check out these suggestions for starting conversations.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- **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 back to 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 get eye contact/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

FUNDING & PARTNERSHIP

Talk With Me Baby Grady was launched in 2017 with the generous support of the **James M. Cox Foundation** with the goal of developing a sustainable model for implementation in birthing hospitals. We continue to partner closely with the **Rollins Center for Language and Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School** to continually improve and expand this initiative.



FOR MORE INFORMATION: talkwithmebaby@gmh.edu

Rev. 12/15/2022