

Issued December 2024

The Rollins Center for Language & Literacy, a program of the Atlanta Speech School, is delighted to publish this RFP. Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis and should be emailed to rollinsrfp@atlantaspeechschool.org. With support from The Goizueta Foundation, the Rollins Center, building on the work at Grady Hospital, will be seeking five qualified partners to scale Talk With Me Baby (TWMB) over the next five years.

Literacy is a social determinant of health, and today in America, nearly two-thirds of children are denied access to literacy and a pathway to a life of self-determination.

Through this opportunity, we seek to expand the standard of care for healthy delivery in America to include language nutrition for every baby. We are seeking partners who are ready to integrate the practices and principles of Talk With Me Baby throughout their perinatal and prenatal ecosystems, and to be national models in the healthcare field.

I. Overview of Talk With Me Baby

Talk With Me Baby is a research-informed healthcare intervention for patients in perinatal, neonatal, and pediatric practice environments designed to enhance early brain and language development that ultimately supports better health outcomes. Healthcare professionals, including providers, nurses, and medical assistants are trained and supported to integrate language nutrition education and coaching into their daily interactions with patients and documentation practices. Language Nutrition is a term used to describe high-quality, abundant language exposure through responsive social interactions that is closely linked to future literacy, academic achievement, and overall health.

The scientific foundation for Talk With Me Baby is clear: robust early language experiences stimulate brain development, laying the foundation for cognitive abilities that are crucial for health, including decision-making, reading, literacy, and stress management. The most prolific period of brain development occurs from the third trimester of pregnancy to the age of three, when more than one million synaptic connections form each second. Essentially, this critical period of exponential growth represents our best opportunity to recruit the power of rich language environments to maximize the quality of a child's brain development, cognitive abilities, and future health trajectory.

In America, literacy is a necessity to unlock life's potential, and yet, less than 35% of children can read proficiently (NAEP, 2022). The persistent American literacy crisis affects all children across every demographic. This crisis – like all societal inequities – impacts our Black, Brown, poor and multilingual children the most. Less than 18% of Black children and

less than 21% of Hispanic children read proficiently. Literacy denied is access, equity and justice denied. We must all do better. Literacy is a social determinant of health and is related to health outcomes through several key pathways:

- Access to Health Information
- Health Behaviors
- Chronic Disease Management
- Access to Healthcare Services
- Mental Health
- Health Disparities
- Generational Impact

Promoting literacy can therefore play a significant role in improving both individual and population health outcomes.

Utilizing the sciences of early brain, language, and social emotional development, TWMB equips families with the information and skills needed to help ensure their children develop strong foundations for learning and lifelong health. The natural cadence of repeated interactions with mothers and babies throughout the prenatal and postnatal experience strengthens learning and retention of the concepts. Once trained, health care professionals overwhelmingly agree that it is a necessary and vital component of care.

Talk With Me Baby is a public-private collective impact initiative born in Georgia in 2013 to ensure that all children are on a path to literacy and self-determination. In 2017, Grady Hospital joined the TWMB Coalition as the first birthing hospital to embed the practices and principles of TWMB into their standard of care starting in the third trimester of pregnancy. Their leadership in this ground-breaking approach has implications for enhancing the standard of care for maternal, neonatal, and pediatric practices.

Since 2017, Grady Hospital, in the heart of Atlanta, has partnered with the Rollins Center to become the first Talk With Me Baby Birthing Center in the nation and expand their standard of care to ensure that all children leave the hospital in the arms of families prepared to nourish them with language. Each year, approximately 3,000 Grady Babies are welcomed into the world, surrounded by a language-centered ecosystem built on the practices and principles of early healthy brain development.

Findings from the Brazelton Touchpoints Center

In 2023-24, the Rollins Center engaged Brazelton Touchpoints Center in a multi-year evaluation of TWMB at Grady Healthcare to determine the short- and long-term impact of training clinical and nonclinical staff and coaching families in language nutrition across several perinatal service departments (prenatal, labor and delivery, neonatal and NICU). The results of the study concluded that in both the short- and long-term, children whose parents engage in serve and return language practices, after receiving coaching through Talk

With Me Baby, are exceeding developmental language outcomes in the first few months of life and sustaining developmental language outcomes over several years.

Further, Grady healthcare professionals had very positive attitudes about brain and language development and had very positive attitudes about TWMB. This finding demonstrates that healthcare professionals implementing TWMB strongly believe in its importance and support its integration into their patient care practices. 92% reported TWMB is an important part of their role as a healthcare provider and 98% reported TWMB deepens families' knowledge of child language development.

Scaling Opportunity – Expanding the National Standard of Care

Talk With Me Baby is ready for further replication and expansion into other healthcare institutions. The move to major replication is supported by more than six years of incubation and full implementation at Grady Hospital and the considerable converging findings from staff, families, and children that point to impacts on attitudes, beliefs, and practices that support children's language and brain development. (Brazelton Touchpoints Center, 2024)

With support from The Goizueta Foundation, the Rollins Center for Language & Literacy, building on the work at Grady Hospital, will be seeking five qualified partners in the medical field to implement Talk With Me Baby over the next five years. Qualified partners can include hospitals, healthcare systems, health centers, pediatric practices, and other healthcare-oriented community organizations. We recognize each organization's network and footprint is different, but we encourage any organization committed to sustainably integrating TWMB and being a catalyst in expanding the national standard of care to apply.

Beyond scaling Talk With Me Baby, the goal of the grant is to expand the standard of care for healthy delivery in America to include language nutrition. We are seeking partners who are ready to integrate the practices and principles of Talk With Me Baby throughout their perinatal, neonatal, and pediatric ecosystems, and to contribute to the development of national models in the healthcare field.

II. Project Goals/Objectives

I. Integration Plan & Measurable Outcomes

In partnership with the TWMB Team at Grady Hospital, the Rollins Center created a complete integration plan to guide new hospital and healthcare partners throughout the process. [The guide, found here on Cox Campus](#), outlines a customizable approach to each phase and step necessary for integration of TWMB in your practice. The guide includes guidance for the creation of measurable outcomes and a feasible timeline for each hospital partner. Below is a summary of the guide:

- 1) Build Knowledge and Prepare Key Stakeholders – The hospital's/organization's executive leadership will lead an orientation/kickoff and goal setting. See Integration Plan, Steps 1-3.

- 2) Build Integration Team – The hospital /organization will identify/hire a team to lead and guide the implementation on an ongoing basis, determine what resources are needed and commit resources to the implementation. See Integration Plan, Steps 4-6.
- 3) Design & Share Hospital/System Integration Plan – Using the TWMB Implementation Plan, each hospital will fine-tune the plan to the unique setting, team and resources of the partner. Key to this step is integrating TWMB into the hospital ecosystem. Further, the plan must include cross-department collaboration and a system-wide internal communication strategy – setting clear expectations, staff training, coaching families, documentation etc. See Integration Plan, Steps 7-13.
- 4) Launch Integration Plan – Engaging broad internal and external stakeholders, TWMB is implemented with fidelity/integrity to the plan. See Integration Plan, Steps 14-17.
- 5) Monitor, Sustain and Continuously Improve Integration Plan – Develop and implement a strategy for continuous progress monitoring, evaluation and improvement. See Integration Plan, Steps 18.

II. Sample Timeline

Project Aspect	Timeline
Information Session-Registration link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81206600592	January 9, 2025
RFP Deadline	Rolling Deadline
Selection (sample timeline below)	March
Project Kickoff	Spring 2025
Grant Funding (\$50,000)	Spring 2025
Grant Funding (\$50,000)	Fall 2025
Data Integration Begins with TWMB Staff	Fall/Winter 2025
Y1 Evaluation, Year End Site Visit & Debrief	Spring 2026
Grant Funding (\$50,000)	Spring 2026
Ongoing Integration	Summer 2026
Grant Funding (\$50,000)	Fall 2026
Ongoing Integration	Winter 2026
Y2 Evaluation, Year End Site Visit & Debrief	Spring 2027
Sustain Integration	2027-2028
Y3 Evaluation, Year End Site Visit & Debrief	Spring 2028
Sustain Integration	2028-2029
Y4 Evaluation, Year End Site Visit & Debrief	Spring 2029
Sustain Integration	2029-2030
Y5 Evaluation, Year End Site Visit & Debrief	Spring 2030

III. **Data Agreement**

Implementing effective and efficient documentation and data systems that yield valid and reliable data for all patients/families is central to successful integration and scaling TWMB. Through this partnership, the hospital will develop a timeline for data collection, cadence, analysis and data sharing with the Rollins Center for each year of partnership.

Further, as part of this partnership, the hospital agrees to work with the Brazelton Touchpoints Center (or another approved third-party evaluator) throughout implementation for an external evaluation of training, family coaching and child outcomes.

III. **Scope of Services**

I. **Startup Grant to Hospitals**

Through a generous investment from The Goizueta Foundation, the Rollins Center has allocated start-up funding to the amount of \$100,000 for each of the first two years of implementation, totaling \$200,000. These funds are designed to allow the hospital to invest in a staff person, or other critical implementation efforts aligned to the TWMB integration guide. Funding will be distributed based on a partnership agreement once selected to scale TWMB and will include measurable outcomes, timelines for deliverables and a data sharing agreement. Prior to grant disbursement, the organization will develop a two-year budget in partnership with the Rollins Center. Annually, the organization will provide budget to actual, year-end financials for the grant funding. Additionally, the Rollins Center is required to report to The Goizueta Foundation each year in September and will work closely with the partner organization on both the financial reports, as well as report narratives about scaling TWMB.

II. **Rollins Center and Grady Hospital Support**

The Rollins Center, in consultation with the TWMB Team at Grady Hospital, will provide guidance, training and coaching to hospital leadership, the TWMB implementation team and others within the healthcare ecosystem aligned to the integration guide. The Rollins Center, through The Goizueta Foundation grant, has two dedicated team members who will support the hospital/organization throughout the implementation process.

III. **Cox Campus**

The Rollins Center's free, online [Cox Campus](#) fully democratizes the sciences of healthy early brain development, language acquisition and literacy so that all children are on a path to a life of self-determination. Cox Campus hosts the TWMB

integration guide, training videos and resources that will support scaling TWMB. Further, through this funded partnership, it is our shared expectation that more resources, training videos and other lessons learned will be added to the Cox Campus for free, consistent with the purpose of advancing the standard of care for all children.

IV. **Data Sharing**

As outlined in Section II Data Agreement, the partner hospital will work collaboratively with the Rollins Center to outline a data collection, analysis and reporting plan for each year of implementation and will engage in third-party evaluation for the grant period. The purpose of data sharing is to 1) support the effective implementation of TWMB; and 2) evaluate the short- and long-term impact TWMB has on clinical providers, families and children. The goal of this scaling effort is to expand the standard of care for all babies born. The Rollins Center is required to report to The Goizueta Foundation each year in September and will work closely with the partner organization on both the financial reports, as well as report narratives about scaling TWMB.

- V. **Sustainability:** The work of the Rollins Center and our Cox Campus is to build the knowledge, skills and agency alongside partners in a sustainable way. As such, the goal of this grant is to create a pathway to sustainability for TWMB. After two years of funded support, the Rollins Center will continue to provide leadership guidance and TWMB team support through coaching at no cost to the partner. It will be the hospital's responsibility to financially support any positions or direct costs associated with TWMB after the two-year grant funding. As ongoing partners, the Rollins Center and the healthcare system will set and revisit goals and benchmarks. We will also work together, and with the Brazelton Touchpoints Center, to collect data and monitor integration progress. Please refer to the five-year timeline in Section II.

IV. Application

I. Organization Overview (500 words)

Please share a brief history and overview of the organization.

II. Hospital/Organization Profile

Please include the following information in a table and attach a PDF organization chart so the Rollins Center team can review the service departments, roles and overall staff structure. *If this does not directly apply to your organization, please revise the chart to include your employment and impact/service numbers.*

Hospital/Organization (answer all that apply)

Total number of hospital/organization employees	
Total number of inpatient beds	
Total number of admissions/visits system-wide	
Number of OB/prenatal patients/yr	
Number of perinatal patients/yr	
Number of live births/yr	
Number of neonatal/NICU patients/yr	
Number of pediatric patients/yr (0-8 years of age)	
Number of clinical staff in the prenatal practices	
Number of clinical staff in the perinatal practices	
Number of clinical staff in the neonatal /NICU practice	
Number of clinical staff in the pediatric practices	
Number of Clinical Educators/Staff Development employees supporting the prenatal to pediatric practices	
Number of Data Analyst employees supporting the prenatal to pediatric practices	
# of OB Outpatient Practice locations	
# of Pediatric Practice locations	

III. Readiness Criteria (750 words or less)

Please address each question in your response.

- I. How does TWMB support the strategic objectives of the hospital/organization for the next ten years?
- II. How does TWMB align to the goals of Women & Infant Services?
- III. Can the hospital/organization commit to TWMB implementation over the next 3-5 years? Please speak to the feasibility of implementation TWMB over 1.5 years and then sustaining the program, measuring impact and refining implementation for another 3-5 years.
- IV. Is the hospital/organization willing to dedicate an individual to lead the TWMB integration process? Please describe the qualifications and

experience of the team member you believe is ideal to lead integration at your hospital/organization.

- V. How would the VP of Women/Infant Services and Chief Nursing Officer support the implementation of TWMB? **Please use whatever leadership titles are accurate for your context.*
- VI. Can the hospital/organization commit to TWMB implementation in Prenatal/Perinatal services? Would the hospital/organization consider TWMB implementation in the NICU and Pediatric services?
- VII. How would the hospital/organization work as a collaborative partner with the Rollins Center and Grady Hospital? What does true partnership look like at your hospital?

IV. Connection to Current and Related Initiatives in Perinatal/Pediatric (500 words)

Please address each question in your response.

- I. What initiatives, related to TWMB and/or that support the same population, has the hospital/organization already implemented, is currently implementing or planning to implement?
- II. What competing priorities might inhibit the integration of TWMB?
- III. From the two questions above, which are in-house initiatives, and which are partner initiatives?
- IV. For any past or current initiatives, please share a brief summary of the outcomes.

V. Data & Documentation (750 words)

Please address each question in your response.

- I. What Patient Documentation System is used? How long has this system been in place? Are there currently any challenges with the system?
- II. Are you willing to enter into a data sharing agreement with the Rollins Center for Language & Literacy?
- III. Are you willing to add fields for data collection based on TWMB within the Patient Documentation System? Are there any structures within your hospital/organization that would prohibit or inhibit the use of the documentation system to collect TWMB data? How long does it take to make changes to the Patient Document System?
- IV. Do you have a data team available to support data collection, analysis etc.? Can the data team support custom report development?
- V. Do you agree to an external evaluation with Brazelton Touchpoints Center (or another approved third-party evaluator) over the course of the 2 years of funded implementation and in the 5-year grant period?

VI. Accountability (500 words)

Please address each question in your response.

- I. From the start of implementation in your hospital/organization when would you expect your team to begin coaching families using TWMB practices and

- principles? (E.g. Assuming an implementation start in April 2025, what would be the date by which you'd expect coaching to commence?)
- II. How would you hold hospital/organization leadership and staff accountable for implementation, documentation and sustainability of TWMB in the short- and long-term?

VII. Training & Coaching (500 words)

Please address each question in your response.

- I. What does training and coaching look like now within your hospital/organization?
- II. How would you create and protect time for in-person training for staff over the TWMB integration period?
- III. How would you onboard new employees into the practices and principles of TWMB who were hired after the TWMB integration?

VIII. Financial Stability (500 words)

Please address each question in your response.

- I. Please attach the FY26 and FY27 Budget Summary as a PDF.
- II. How would you plan to financially sustain TWMB over the long-term after the startup grant funding ends in two years?

IX. Letters of Support

Please attach PDF letters of support from the following leaders. Letters can be co-written and co-signed.

- I. Chief Executive Officer
- II. Chief Medical Officer
- III. Chief of OB
- IV. Chief of Neonatology
- V. Women/Infant Services Director/VP
- VI. Chief Nursing Officer
- VII. President of the Hospital Foundation

V. Selection Criteria

The Rollins Center will use a rubric aligned to this RFP to evaluate each proposal.

VI. RFP Timeline

- December 2024 – RFP Issued. Please submit any questions to rollinsrfp@atlantaspeechschool.org
- January 9, 2025 at 1:00pm EST – Information Session 1. Q&A shared with all interested parties following the Information Session. Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81206600592>
- January 21, 2025 at 1:00pm EST - Information Session 1. Q&A shared with all interested parties following the Information Session. Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81206600592>
- January 31, 2025 – Proposals are accepted on a rolling basis.
- ALL Proposals should be sent to rollinsrfp@atlantaspeechschool.org
- February 2025 – First round of discovery calls.
- Spring 2025 – First round of partner selections announced.