

too SMALL
TO FAIL

SCHOLASTIC

**Meal Time is Talk Time:
Promoting Children's
Early Health
& Language Development**



What is your **favorite**
family memory involving food?

Please take a moment to close your eyes and reflect on this question.

What do you see? What foods are there? What do you smell? What do you hear? Who is there with you? What kinds of conversations are taking place?

Ask **volunteers** to share their memories.

Too Small to Fail

A Joint Initiative of the Clinton Foundation and The Opportunity Institute



A common theme from all the stories that we just heard is that these moments are anchored in COMMUNITY, FAMILY, AND CONVERSATIONS.

For children, exposure to rich conversations—from the moment they are born—is how they develop language and vocabulary. This is how their brain develops—through strong bonds and meaningful conversations with those who love and care for them.

This is why we at TSTF launched a new public awareness and engagement campaign called “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing.”

We are a joint initiative between the Clinton Foundation and The Opportunity Institute...Our goal is to promote the importance of early brain and language development and to empower parents with tools to talk, read, and sing with their young children from birth.

THE ISSUE

IF EVERY CHILD IS TOO SMALL TO FAIL...



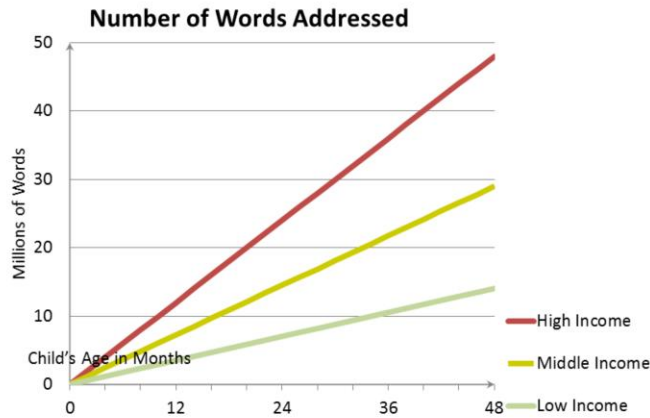
THEN WHY ARE SO MANY CHILDREN NOT READY FOR SCHOOL?



So why is this message critically important?

Today, almost 60 percent of children in the United States start kindergarten unprepared, lagging behind their peers in critical language, math, and social-emotional skills.

Research: The “Problem”



Source: Hart & Risley (1995)

SO SMALL
TO FAIL




We know that one of the most critical factors in preparing children for success in school and in life is their exposure to language during their earliest weeks, months, and years of life.

Yet, research shows that there is a word gap—which refers to the striking disparity between children’s language development between lower and upper income families. You have likely this study conducted by Hart and Risley from the University of Kansas, which revealed that by age four, children in lower-income families **have heard 30 million fewer words** than their higher-income counter-parts.


More recent research shows that this gap begins as early as 2-years old.

THE ISSUE

IT'S NOT JUST THE
NUMBER OF WORDS



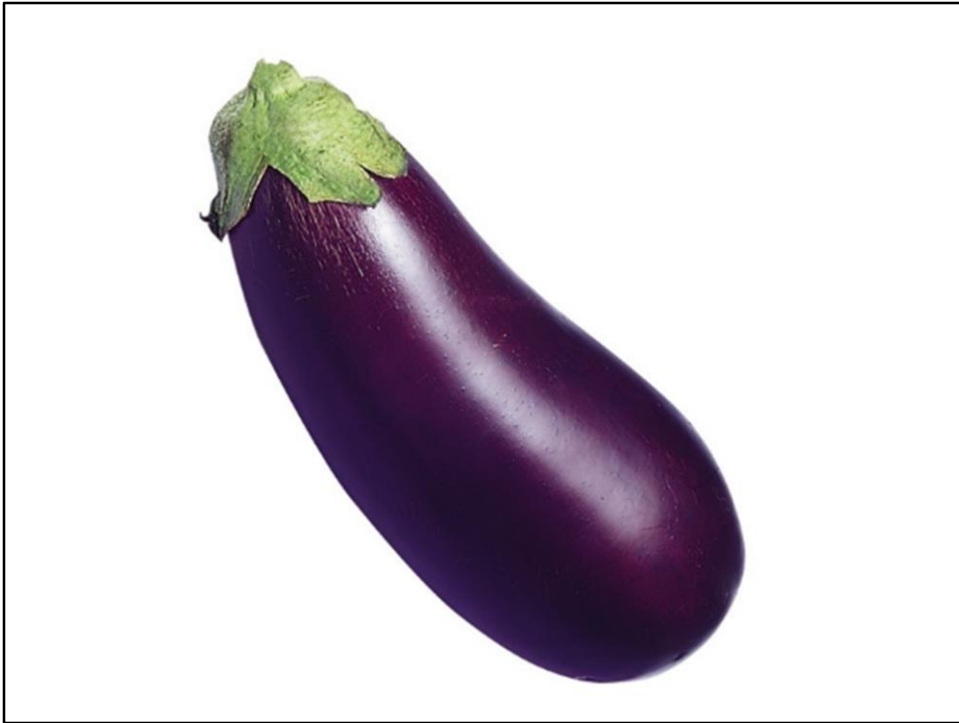
IT'S THE QUALITY OF OUR MOMENTS
TALKING, READING & SINGING



IT'S HOW OUR CHILDREN
LEARN HOW TO LEARN

So what makes a difference in building children's vocabularies? What's the magic sauce?

Research shows that it's not just the number or the quantity of words children hear. It's the QUALITY of the interactions. Children develop language through vocabulary-rich, back-and-forth conversations with their caregivers. So what does this look like?



We like to share the story of three mothers and an eggplant.

Imagine three mothers grocery shopping each with their young child. In the produce section, the first child sees an eggplant and asks, “What’s that?” The mother quickly tells the child, “I don’t know” and continues her shopping.

Soon another mother and young child pass the eggplant display. “What’s that?” the child asks. “It’s eggplant,” the second mother replies, “but we don’t eat it.”

Along comes the third mother-and-child. “What’s that?” the child asks. “It’s an eggplant, it’s a purple vegetables. Look! It’s smooth and shiny. You know, there’s a dish called eggplant parmigiana. It is like the chicken parmesan your aunt makes that you like. Let’s buy this eggplant, take it home, slice it open and see how it looks inside. What do you think it will look like?”

The third conversation is a language-rich interaction that research shows can really build children’s language and help them understand the world around them.

HOW DO WE MAKE THEM HAPPEN MORE OFTEN?

FOR FAMILIES, WE ARE MAKING
THESE SMALL MOMENTS BIG
(INCREASE VALUE)



FOR COMMUNITIES, WE
ARE CREATING THE SPACE
WHERE THEY CAN HAPPEN
(INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES)

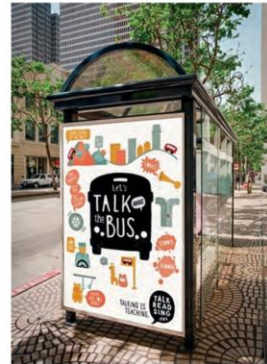
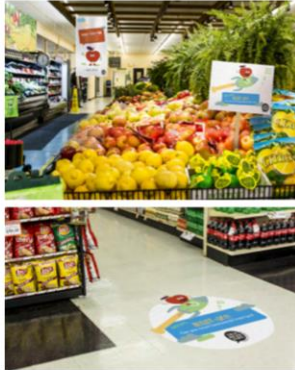


So how do we make these types of moments happen more often?

- For parents and young children, we are working to make small moments BIG.
- For communities, we're creating spaces where there can be greater opportunities to make these moments happen more often.

Meeting Families Where They Are

Transforming Everyday Places into Language-Rich Environments



Our goal is to engage families through multiple touch points in the everyday places they go together.

Families can see our messages in their local laundromats through our “Wash Time is Talk Time” initiative, in local grocery stores in Tulsa, or when a family in Oakland is waiting for their bus.

Faith-Based Strategy



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ztlah_KYFKw

TOO SMALL
TO FAIL



We also forged partnerships with over 20 faith-based organizations in Tulsa. They've been incredible partners in serving as trusted messengers for our TALKING IS TEACHING campaign.

Here's a short clip of our dear friend and partner, Dr. Ray A. Owens, pastor of the Metropolitan Baptist Church. He naturally weaves in messages about talking, reading and singing into a baby naming ceremony during Sunday service.

MEAL TIME IS TALK TIME

**TOO SMALL
TO FAIL**



NBCDI
National Black Child
Development Institute

SCHOLASTIC



Gerber
Nestlé



TODAY, we are so thrilled to launch a new initiative to reach families through another daily moment in families' lives—MEAL TIME!

Too Small to Fail, Scholastic, NBCDI and Gerber partnered together to encourage families to turn “MEAL TIME” into “TALK TIME”.

We know that everyday moments like grocery shopping or meal times present natural opportunities for families to bond and for parents to share meaningful and language-rich conversations with their children.

Our collaboration promotes this important message. Most of us are familiar with the research on the benefits of sharing meal times together but here are some highlights:

Children who engage in regular family meal times are:

- more likely to eat healthier foods
- less likely to be overweight
- less likely to get depressed, consider suicide, and develop an eating disorder.
- They're also more likely to report that their parents are proud of them.

Our goal is to promote family mealtimes as well as mealtime conversations and inform parents on how these moments can support children's early brain and language development.



As part of this partnership, we're also excited to distribute a nutrition themed children's book called AT THE FARMER'S MARKET to expose children to healthy foods, foster a joy of reading while promoting nutritious eating habits.

Scholastic was our wonderful partner in creating this book. During the early stages of our partnership, we reviewed Scholastic's rich library of nutrition-themed books and found that this was the perfect choice since it promotes BOTH healthy eating and language-rich conversations as parents and children read the book together. It's also bilingual—English and Spanish—so this allows to reach diverse audiences as well.

We plan to start distributing about 40,000 copies through NBCDI affiliates at the end of this month.

Let's Talk About Food!

Good nutrition combined with talking, reading and singing with young children supports their brain and language development. Here are some tips:

- TALK** about healthy foods. Sharing conversations during meal and snack time can help families bond. Use words to describe the colors, shapes, smells and tastes of foods. You can even make up fun food rhymes like *banana, zanana, fanana!*
- READ** together every day. Read words you see around you at the grocery store or farmer's market. At bedtime, cuddle and read books about healthy foods.
- SING** songs about fruits and vegetables like "Apples and Bananas" to help your child get excited about healthy foods.

For more tips and information, please visit:
www.talkingsteaching.org, www.scholastic.com/parents, www.nbcdi.org/good-for-me, and www.gerber.com/toddler.

¡Hablemos de la comida!

La buena nutrición combinada con hablar, leer y cantar a sus niños pequeños, respalda el desarrollo de su cerebro y su lenguaje. A continuación son algunos consejos:

- HABLEN** de los alimentos saludables. Conversar durante la hora de la comida o la merienda puede ayudar a unir más a las familias. Use palabras que describan los colores, las formas, los olores y el sabor de los alimentos. Puede hasta hacer rimas divertidas sobre los alimentos, como *banana, bobana, folana*.
- LEAN** juntos todos los días. Lean las palabras que vean a su alrededor en el supermercado o el mercado de granjeros. A la hora de ir a dormir, acurríquense y lean libros sobre la comida saludable.
- CANTEN** canciones sobre las frutas y los vegetales, como "Manzanas y bananas", para ayudar a que su niño se entusiasme de comer comida saludable.

Para más consejos e información, por favor visite:
www.talkingsteaching.org, www.univision.com/exitto, www.scholastic.com/parents, y www.gerber.com/toddler.







We also partnered to create this customized back cover with simple tips for parents on how they can TALK, READ, and SING to their children about healthy foods and share mealtime conversations together.

As you can see, the tips are in both English and Spanish—and includes web links for parents or providers to access additional info.

MEAL TIME IS TALK TIME

AT THE GROCERY STORE
OR DURING MEAL TIMES,
MAKE FUN FOOD RHYMES
LIKE "BANANA FANANA"!



#MEALTIMETALKTIME
TALKINGISTEACHING.ORG



MEAL TIME IS TALK TIME

TALK ABOUT HEALTHY FOODS!
USE WORDS LIKE "SWEET,
CREAMY, CRUNCHY" TO
DESCRIBE HOW FOOD FEELS,
TASTES AND SMELLS.



#MEALTIMETALKTIME
TALKINGISTEACHING.ORG



MEAL TIME IS TALK TIME

SHARE FUN CONVERSATION
DURING MEAL TIME.
ASK QUESTIONS LIKE: "WHAT
WAS THE SILLIEST
PART OF YOUR DAY?"



#MEALTIMETALKTIME
TALKINGISTEACHING.ORG



Books for the **WHOLE** Child

2011

started a special initiative
to create books that
nurture the whole child,
family, and community

100+ Books

since then, we've created
over 100 books for
children ages 0-5

Emphasis

on **social, emotional,**
academic, and **physical**
health and **wellness**

Literacy

is not *just* about reading:
it is about **the whole of**
who you are and will
become

This includes **nutrition** and **physical fitness**.

DOROTHY

At the Farmer's Market

CREATED WITH 3 MAIN GOALS...

1. Nurturing the Child



Did you know?

It can take an average of 10-20 exposures to a new food for a child to accept/eat it?

JANELLE

- **Introducing new, interesting, and complex vocabulary...**
 - ✧ The more words a young child hears, the better their brain is equipped to learn to read. Talking is teaching!
 - ✧ Some people may say *pomegranate* or *kohlrabi* are too difficult for a two or three year old to learn. But by that logic, so are *dinosaur* or *hippopotamus*. **If we give our children the gift of believing in**

them

and their amazing ability to learn, they will believe in themselves!

- **Promoting nutrition by exposing children (and families) to a variety of healthy foods...**

- ✧ Healthy bodies go hand in hand with healthy brains!
- ✧ The first step is seeing and hearing about a new food. This discussion creates interest and excitement that will go a long way toward building healthy, lifelong habits.

2. Nurturing the Family



According to Dr. Maya Adam of Stanford University, children who see their parents and role models express interest in and excitement about healthy foods are much more likely to eat them, too!



DOROTHY/JANELLE

Encouraging families to learn about and **try new foods...**

- ✧ As we know, many families do not have access to much fresh produce. Books are one way to provide exposure and knowledge about the many kinds of foods that exist.
- ✧ For those that are able, both the book and tip sheet encourage seeking out local farmers markets and trying new foods shown in the book.

Building parents' **literacy self-esteem...**

- ✧ Offers a wide range of familiar ideas and objects that parents can share and discuss with their child
- ✧ A “story-less” book invites **them to tell their own story** with the pictures (also suggested by parent-focused reading tips on the back).
- ✧ Illustrates that literacy is something **they can build in their child(ren) using their own everyday experiences and knowledge.**

...and perhaps most importantly...

Encouraging families to **talk, talk, talk...**



DOROTHY/JANELLE

- ✧ As we have heard, **meal time is talk time**. Books are great family tools for generating conversation. Food in particular is a great topic for families, because—as we saw in our opening exercise—food is **universal, often positively tied to family, culture, and memory**.
- ✧ Sharing books about healthy foods reinforces those positive messages and builds upon them in a healthy way.
- ✧ “Story-less” books such as *ATFM*, give readers freedom to broaden the discussion to include their personal experiences (culture,

memory), and empowers them to share their own narrative(s) about the topic.

- ✧ *At the Farmers Market*, and other books about nutritious food, reinforce the message that food and nutrition are **great topics for discussion** at home, on the go, while shopping, and during meals.

- ✧ *ATFM* illustrations also offer a broad e variety of other talk topics, including:

seasons, farmers/farms and farming, farmers markets, produce, growing food, shopping and prices, colors, shapes, numbers, textures, and more!

3. Nurturing the Community



JANELLE'S STORY

Promoting knowledge of local and seasonal produce...

- ✧ Good for the body: seasonal produce is fresher and thus healthier, packed with **vitamins and nutrients at their peak**.
- ✧ Good for the environment: local produce travels shorter distances, **using less gas**; it also promotes more widespread agriculture, which

supports the local ecosystem.

Promoting farmers markets, supporting local businesses and economies...

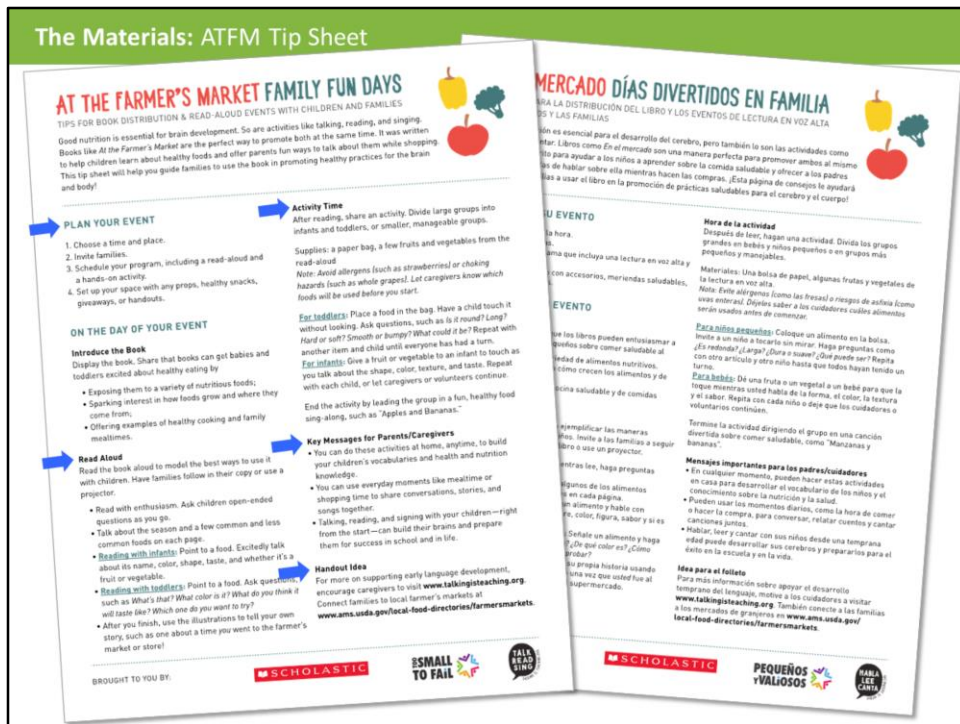
- ✧ Introduces (for those who may not be familiar) or reinforces (for those who are) the idea of a farmers market and all of the variety that can be found.
- ✧ Builds interest and excitement for family outings around a healthy theme.

How could you use
this book in your work
with your community?



DOROTHY

Take a moment to think and/or discuss.
We will ask for **volunteers** to
share their thoughts.



Bilingual English and Spanish

Information includes:

Event planning - Brief tips on organizing and holding an event

Read Aloud - Tips and best practices for conducting a group read-aloud

of *At the Farmer's Market*, including different strategies for working with infants or toddlers

Activity Time – instructions for an interactive small group activity, with differentiated instructions for both infants and toddlers

Key Messages –ideas to share with parents about the great importance of nutrition, talking, singing, and reading together

Handout Idea – suggestions for helping families access more information on literacy and local farmer's markets

Conducting a Read Aloud

Why is a model read aloud important?

- Some parents may not feel comfortable sharing a book with their child...
- However, as we know, every parent has **many unique, powerful tools**...
- Demonstration by a trusted and knowledgeable model can provide **empowerment and encouragement**.



Some parents **may not feel comfortable** about sharing books with their child...

- ✧ They personally have **low literacy self-esteem**, and this is hard to overcome.
- ✧ They aren't sure **what is "normal."** Should a baby be chewing on the book? (Sure) Should all toddlers be able sit still through a book? (No)
- ✧ They aren't confident about **what is helpful to do/share** at their child's age.
- **However, as we know, each has many unique, powerful tools...**
 - ✧ Their own language, culture, personal experiences, and everyday events

are amazing tools for sharing language and literacy with their child.

- ✧ It really is as simple as talking, reading, and singing together!

**Demonstration by a trusted and knowledgeable model
provide empowerment and encouragement.**

- ✧ They illustrate how simple it can be, showcase best practices, and provide a forum for questions.



JANELLE

Read-Aloud Demonstration...

- This child is approx. **16 months old**.
- Notice that sometimes **the parent initiates**, pointing things out. Then when the child shows interest or initiative, the parent **follows the child's lead**, focusing on what she points to or asks about.
- Either way, the parent always provides the name of the item, elaborates on its characteristics— packing in lots of **vocabulary** and **comparative features**—and relates it to the child's experiences.

Things the parent can talk about next time: **shapes, recipes, cultural significance, more stories and personal experiences**



JANELLE/DOROTHY

1. On your tables you will find a bag with some items inside.
2. Play the "game," having a volunteer reach in and guess what it might be – **OR** – take it out and discuss its characteristics among yourselves.
3. Check the book to find out what it's called, what it's season is, and any other information the book shows.

Enrichment & Extension

Here are a few additional ideas to share with families enriching and extending their reading and discussions.

More Ideas...

- ...for families to **share and talk about the book, *ATFM*.**
 - ✧ **Discuss** which items in the book the family likes to eat.
 - ✧ **Choose** a new fruit or vegetable to buy & try each week or month.
 - ✧ **Create** a family meal or menu and shopping list from foods in the book.
 - ✧ **Plan** a family menu/meal once per season and visit the farmer's market for items on the list.

What other ideas do you have?

DOROTHY/JANELLE

What are some **open-ended questions** parents can ask their children as they share a meal together?

JANE

Take a moment to think and/or discuss.

We will ask for **volunteers** to share their group's ideas.

(TSTF will be sharing these via **social media**!)

THANK YOU!



JANE

Take a moment to think and/or discuss.

We will ask for **volunteers** to share their group's ideas.

(TSTF will be sharing these via **social media**!)