

TALKING IS TEACHING: TALK, READ, SING  
COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN GUIDE



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**TOO SMALL TO FAIL** 

**TALK  
READ  
SING**  
TALKING IS TEACHING.ORG

# WELCOME

In 2014 Too Small to Fail, a joint initiative of the Clinton Foundation and The Opportunity Institute, launched “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing,” a public awareness and action campaign designed to share information with parents about the critical role they play in their child’s early brain and language development, and to support them with concrete tools to talk, read and sing with their young children from birth.

Today, almost 60 percent of children in the United States start Kindergarten unprepared, lagging behind their peers in critical language and reading skills.<sup>1</sup> Through partnerships with pediatricians, hospitals, faith-based leaders, community based organizations, businesses, entertainment industry leaders and others, Talking is Teaching is meeting parents where they are to help them prepare their children for success in school and beyond. Whether at the pediatrician’s office, the laundromat or the playground, Talking is Teaching makes small moments big by creating opportunities for meaningful family engagement anytime, anywhere. We have learned that the best way to accomplish this goal is by helping communities to intentionally integrate Talking is Teaching into existing local initiatives .

In collaboration with local partners, we started with two flagship campaigns in Tulsa, Oklahoma and in Oakland, California. As of June 2017, 12 cities in seven states have launched their own Talking is Teaching campaigns, with discussions with other cities underway. The flagship campaigns in Tulsa and Oakland have evolved into

models with ongoing sustainability planning underway. Dozens of other communities across the country are using Talking is Teaching materials to enhance their existing local work on early childhood.

Along the way, we have learned many valuable lessons on scaling and sustaining a local campaign from our community partners nationwide. In this guide, we include their advice and these lessons, along with an overview of the research and principles of the campaign.

This guide is intended for community leaders and stakeholders who want to start a new campaign or enhance their existing work in early childhood education. You know your community best and we want to emphasize that there is no “one size fits all” approach to this campaign. Part of the strength of Talking is Teaching is its flexibility—what works well in one community may not work in another. You are the architect of your campaign; we’re here to help. The resources in this guide and online at [TalkingIsTeaching.org](http://TalkingIsTeaching.org) are open-source and available at no cost. We are here for you as you plan a new campaign or enhance a current one, and **we invite you to reach out to us when you have questions or need help.**

Thank you for all the wonderful work you are doing on behalf of children and families. We’re thrilled you want to promote early brain and language development in your community and grateful you are considering starting or enhancing your own Talking is Teaching campaign.



Patti Miller  
Director, *Too Small to Fail*  
Clinton Foundation



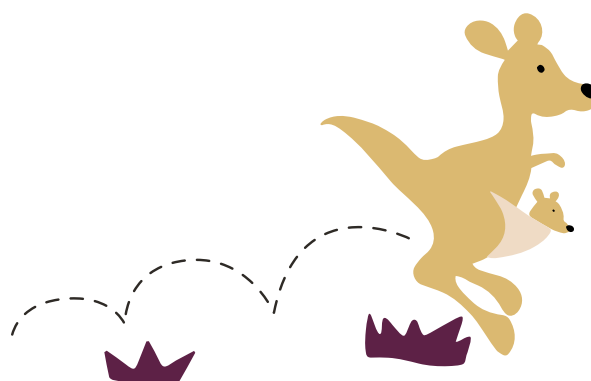
Kara Dukakis  
Director, *Too Small to Fail*  
The Opportunity Institute

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# INTRODUCTION



Across America there is a growing understanding of the importance of the first five years and the large impact that small moments in early literacy, math and social-emotional development can have on children over the course of their lifetime. Organizations like Reach Out and Read, ZERO TO THREE and the American Academy of Pediatrics are leading nationwide advocacy, parent education and research efforts, increasing awareness, and sparking positive change in parents and communities. At the local level, many health care providers, faith-based institutions, school districts, libraries, municipal agencies and nonprofits have been working to support early learning and early literacy for years.

“Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” operates an “air game” at the national level and a “ground game” at the local level. Our air game encompasses work with Hollywood and Univision and other national media. Our ground game relies on trusted messengers, high quality tools for parents and caregivers, and messages and media in community spaces where parents with young children often go. Our national partnerships sit at the nexus of the air and ground games. Partners range from corporations, like well-known book publishers and a playground manufacturer, to trade organizations to large non-profit membership organizations with local chapters. They generally originate at the national level but are implemented locally in communities. Much of our work transforming ordinary spaces that parents and caregivers go to with their young children into language-rich environments is connected to a national partnership.

Although this guide focuses on developing a local strategy, by partnering with us, you are part of a national campaign and will benefit from those relationships and resources, too.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As you read this guide and consider how to plan or enhance your own campaign, please keep in mind that there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach. For this campaign to succeed at the local level, it must meet the unique needs of your community and be intentionally integrated into your ongoing efforts to support children’s early learning and development.

## WHAT MAKES A TALKING IS TEACHING COMMUNITY?

While the details of every campaign will be different, there are three core elements of the ground game:

- **Trusted messengers**, such as pediatricians, home visitors, or faith leaders who have established positive, trusting relationships with parents and are conduits of information and tools
- **High quality materials and tools**, such as tote bags filled with tip sheets, baby clothing, age-appropriate books, CDs and technology
- **Messages in community spaces and local media**, ranging from grocery store signage to billboards and posters in and around public transportation to local radio ads and social media outreach.



Trusted messenger Dr. Amy Emerson shares the importance of talking, reading, and singing in Tulsa, OK.

Our experience in flagship communities has shown that the most positive results emerge when all three of these components are present. That said, there are multiple ways to start and scale a campaign based on what will work best for your community's specific needs; in other words, you choose which of these three elements to include, what they look like, and when to incorporate them. Additionally, while some spaces, such as health care settings and faith-based institutions will have trusted messengers, others, like playgrounds and laundromats, will rely on messaging and materials.

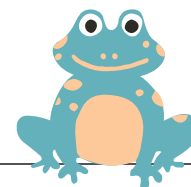
## THE COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN GUIDE

This guide provides an overview of the research on early brain development behind the campaign; how to plan a ground game by identifying goals and building partnerships; tips for evaluating, scaling, and sustaining your campaign; and an index of resources and tools to support your campaign.

We think you'll get the most out of the Community Campaign Guide by using it alongside our web resources. Throughout the guide, you will see many examples of hyperlinked text, most of which link to the rich resources available on our Talking is Teaching campaign website, [talkingisteaching.org](http://talkingisteaching.org). These resources range from a video series on planning a family engagement event to evaluation reports of our work and open-source creative design resources.

To access web-based resources, we strongly recommend registering for an account at [talkingisteaching.org/community](http://talkingisteaching.org/community) (if you haven't already) and logging in to the community website so you can easily access this guide's hyperlinked resources at your convenience.

# CHAPTER 1: UNDERSTANDING & USING THE RESEARCH



Making a strong case in your community for the need to focus on early brain and language development starts with an understanding of the research that demonstrates its value. How you communicate and translate the research is equally important. The tools we have developed for this campaign, from tip sheets to videos and other visual prompts, are intended to make this research accessible to parents, caregivers, trusted messengers, and other stakeholders, and to present it in clear, positive and empowering way.

This chapter provides an overview of this research on early brain and language development along with examples of how to leverage it to support your own campaign. We've been most effective making the case for the campaign by using a handful of research-based themes: **Starting at Birth, Approaching the Word Gap as Opportunity, Making Small Moments Big, and Expanding Beyond Early Literacy**. We've also developed a [PowerPoint presentation template](#) that you can use to present the campaign and the research behind it to potential partners and funders.

## STARTING AT BIRTH

**Research shows that the first years of a child's life have a profound effect on their long-term health and well-being.**

- Jack Shonkoff and Deborah Phillips synthesized current scientific knowledge of child development from birth to age five in the landmark study, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, and found that the most dramatic brain growth happens in the first five years of life<sup>2</sup>. Parents and caregivers can capitalize on the rapid growth of the brain at this stage—more than one million neural connections develop per second—to help their child build the critical foundation they will need later in life.<sup>3</sup>

**Further, research shows that quality early childhood programs are a wise investment.**

- Nobel Laureate and Professor James J. Heckman of the University of Chicago demonstrates that early childhood education programs yield an annual return of 13 percent per child through improved outcomes in health, education, crime, income and employment. This amounts to a \$7 return on investment for every dollar spent.<sup>4</sup>

## THE WORD GAP AS OPPORTUNITY

**Research clearly demonstrates that children who regularly engage in language-rich interactions with their caregivers from birth are better prepared for success—in school and beyond.**

- Betty Hart and Todd Risley identified a 30 million “word gap” between the number of words children from lower-income households hear when compared to their higher-income peers.<sup>5</sup> This translates into a gap in the number of words learned and later affects kindergarten readiness and what many know as the achievement gap.
- Psychologist Anne Fernald of Stanford University found that this vocabulary and language-processing gap is already evident in children as young as 18 months and can persist over time, leading to a gap in early vocabulary and kindergarten readiness.<sup>6</sup>
- The youngest children benefit enormously from talking, reading and singing with their caregivers starting at birth.<sup>7</sup>

While the “word gap” research (framed as a problem to solve) can be compelling to policymakers, researchers and business leaders have found that emphasizing the *positive* outcomes of talking, reading and singing with children every day from birth encourages parents and caregivers to make the most of this opportunity, instead of feeling overwhelmed that they may have missed a critical milestone.





Helping parents and caregivers seize everyday opportunities for quality interactions is at the heart of the campaign.

## QUALITY INTERACTIONS MAKE SMALL MOMENTS BIG

**Parents and caregivers have an incredible opportunity to impact on the growth and development of their child's brain—beyond just the number of words they speak, read, or sing with her.**

- Hart and Risley's original work emphasized the importance of quality interactions between parent and child, including tone, responsiveness to questions, and the use of parent affirmations (encouraging words) rather than prohibitions, as positive contributors to a child's vocabulary development.<sup>8</sup>
- Kathy Hirsh-Pasek and others have confirmed these findings in their research, noting the critical nature of both the quantity and quality of words. She found that indicators of quality back-and-forth conversations better predicted later language ability than simple quantity of words for low-income families.<sup>9</sup>
- Julie Gros-Louis and colleagues demonstrated that parental responses to infant babbling can influence a child's language development. Infants whose mothers responded to what they thought their babies were saying showed an increase in making developmentally advanced vocalizations.<sup>10</sup>

- Drs. T. Berry Brazelton and Joshua Sparrow have researched and written prolifically about the invaluable nature of bonding between parents and their children and their healthy relationship as fundamental to well-being. The positive relationship that is formed through quality moments snuggling with a caregiver, laughing, singing, or being comforted increases baby's brain growth and sense of security and attachment.<sup>11</sup>

The more time a parent or caregiver spends sharing a story with a child, responding to a baby's babble, singing a song and talking with the child afterwards about her response, or describing what they see together during a bus ride or trip to the grocery store, the stronger that child's language and social-emotional development will be. Supporting parents and caregivers to seize everyday opportunities for quality interactions during the first five years of a child's life is at the heart of the Talking is Teaching campaign.

## BEYOND EARLY LITERACY

**In addition to early literacy, early math and social-emotional development make significant contributions to a child's academic and life success. These areas of development are forever interrelated and interdependent.**

- **Early math:** Children learn language through relationships and in context with the world around them, so this campaign also seeks to highlight key concepts in early math to encourage families to incorporate activities and language-rich conversations about numbers, counting, shapes, spatial relations, and patterns into their daily lives. When families explore and talk about early math concepts with young children, they not only build important early math skills, but can also boost children's reading ability.<sup>12</sup>
- **Social-emotional development:** Similarly, a large body of research shows that children with a strong social-emotional foundation demonstrate stronger academic achievement, and are more likely to graduate high school, go to college, and fare better on overall wellness and other positive long-term outcomes.<sup>13</sup> The research also shows that responsive, nurturing caregiving, paired with activities like talking, reading and singing together strengthens those bonds and outcomes.

The resources we've developed for parents fall into these three categories of early literacy, early math, and social-emotional development.



Early math skills, like sorting, make significant contributions to a child's academic and life success.

## FURTHER RESEARCH & CAMPAIGNS

For additional information on the word gap and child development, we encourage you to explore our [complete list of research](#). For evaluation results of Talking is Teaching campaign interventions, [see these reports](#).





## CHAPTER 2: GROUND GAME: THE BIG PICTURE



We're thrilled you are considering bringing the "Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing" campaign to your community. Because there is no "one-size-fits-all" plan, you can choose the strategies, partners, and messengers that will work best for you. As a reminder, our goal is to help you address your community's specific needs and to intentionally integrate the Talking is Teaching campaign into ongoing efforts to improve children's early learning and development in your community.

Experience has taught us that campaigns achieve the most positive results when they use the three primary elements of the Talking is Teaching ground game. These three elements are (1) trusted messengers, (2) high quality materials and tools, and (3) parent-directed messages and media in community spaces. Campaigns benefit when they are using these strategies simultaneously as they are mutually reinforcing and provide the repeated "nudges" that are an important part of an effective behavior change campaign. While it's tempting to focus resources on public service announcements or paid media, we've found it's more effective to focus the bulk of your resources on hands-on messaging, and then to complement that with a broader public awareness campaign to reinforce the themes you're already conveying to parents, one-on-one.

This chapter provides an overview of each of these components along with examples of how different communities have successfully applied them locally. You can find free resources for each of the three elements of the ground game in Chapters 5 and 8, and hosted [on our website](#).

### TRUSTED MESSENGERS

When planning our Talking is Teaching campaign, we learned through focus groups that parents trust information from people they already have relationships with, and who routinely provide them with advice and support, like pediatricians, friends, relatives, and faith leaders. Hispanic families named Univision as a trusted source of information on their child's health and well-being.

It's important to identify who has already earned the trust of parents and caregivers in your community and to think about how you can work with them to deliver your campaign messages. A checklist that will help you identify partners and trusted messengers can be found in Chapter 3.

Another way to go about finding trusted messengers is to think of spaces in your community where parents of young children frequently go and consider who might already be working to promote early learning and literacy in those spaces, such as libraries, early childhood education programs or WIC centers.

### HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Many of our Talking is Teaching communities have strategically engaged parents by working with primary care clinics, pediatricians, and birthing hospitals to deliver campaign messages and materials. In addition to employing people parents trust, this strategy is based on strong data that show that 91 percent of young children receive a yearly well-child visit.<sup>14</sup> Learn more about [the resources available for hospitals and clinics](#) or take a deep-dive into [Oakland's hospital strategy](#) on our communities website.



Families read together at a faith based event in Tulsa, OK.

## FAITH-BASED LEADERS

In some communities, it will make sense to reach parents and caregivers through [churches and other faith-based institutions](#). The [Tulsa campaign](#) has worked closely with more than 20 churches to host family engagement events where parents can discuss early brain development and practice activities with early childhood professionals that will help them talk, read, and sing more with their young children. At the Metropolitan Baptist Church, Reverend Dr. Ray Owens integrates the Talking is Teaching message into [Baby Naming Dedications](#), where parents now take a pledge to talk, read and sing with their babies every day.

## EARLY EDUCATORS

Early educators and child care providers of all types - including family child care, center-based care, family, friend and neighbor care—have long been a trusted source of information for parents about their child’s early learning and development. We’ve created many [tools and resources for child care providers](#) that are used by cities from Napa to Minneapolis to help providers model early, quality interactions with children in their care and pass on messages and materials to parents.

## LIBRARIANS

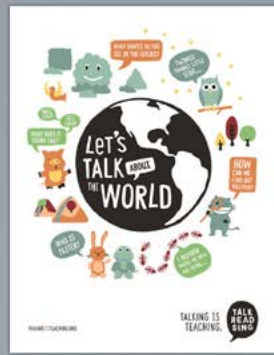
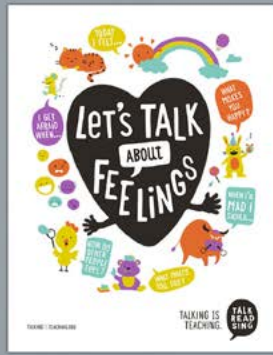
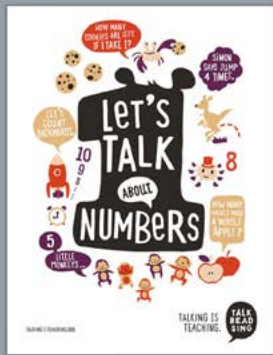
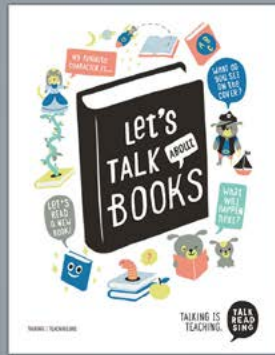
Librarians have a history of promoting early literacy, offering many resources and events for parents of young children. Our [tools for librarians](#) include tip sheets, creative resources, such as stickers and posters, and a training presentation. Similarly, libraries have a longstanding track record of encouraging parent-child interactions to promote early literacy. The San Francisco Public Library has incorporated Talking is Teaching messaging into a popular existing event—the Tricycle Music Fest—with great success, and the Miami-Dade County Library System is displaying “Let’s Talk About Books” posters and distributing bookmarks with Talking is Teaching messaging.

## HOME VISITORS

Home visitors play a critical role in many communities by offering direct support to families with young children or new parents in their homes. Home visitors provide valuable information on a child’s health, development and emotional well-being and are well-suited to integrate Talking is Teaching materials into their visits. In Los Angeles, we [partnered](#) with First 5 LA to integrate our messages and materials into their existing “Welcome Baby” home visiting program, reaching a total of 10,000 families.

## HIGH QUALITY TOOLS

At the start of the Talking is Teaching campaign, *Too Small to Fail* spent time researching and designing creative concepts to determine what materials would be most helpful to parents and build on their strengths. In focus groups with diverse, low-income parents of young children, parents stated that it was easier to appreciate the value of meaningful interactions with their very young children than it was to know what to talk and sing about and how to do it. This was especially true for parents whose children were pre-verbal. We also heard that parents of young children were extraordinarily busy, making it difficult to add one more thing for them to do.



Talking Is Teaching “Let’s Talk About” posters are available in a number of different themes in English and in Spanish.

Our team reflected on the importance of parents incorporating talking, reading and singing into their everyday routines and of providing them with specific ideas or prompts for what to talk or sing about. We identified moments like strolling to the bus stop, changing a diaper or giving a bath and paired them with fun questions and activities. We then worked with Goodby Silverstein, which created colorful “Let’s Talk About” designs that could be printed on t-shirts, blankets, towels, posters, billboards, bibs, bookmarks and more.

We also developed themes like [Diaper Time is Talk Time](#) and [Meal Time is Talk Time](#). And we were sure to include “why” messaging about the research on the critical window of opportunity between 0 and 5 years old and the powerful role of parents and caregivers in their child’s early brain development.

Using the “Let’s Talk About” creative designs and concepts as a starting point, we began to develop concrete materials, such as Talking is Teaching toolkits, tip sheets, posters and training PowerPoints. The basic components of a Talking is Teaching toolkit include a reusable tote bag, baby clothing or a blanket with prompts to talk, read, and sing, a Sesame Street Family Resource Guide, a bilingual CD to encourage singing, as well as an

age-appropriate book. We have additional materials on early math and STEM and social-emotional development. We also believe it’s critical to include information about technology-based interventions—like a texting service—given how frequently parents with young children use technology.

You may decide not to use all of the materials in these toolkits, or you may decide to modify the materials based on families’ needs and interests in your community. For example, we worked together with our partners in Arkansas and Minneapolis to design their toolkits from the ground up. Our Arkansas partners opted to include bibs instead of onesies for infants and placemats instead of t-shirts with Talking is Teaching creative designs. Our partners in Minneapolis developed toolkits with a Sesame Street Family Resource Guide, Talking is Teaching stickers, a developmental milestones chart, and, in honor of the many buses with Talking is Teaching signage moving throughout Minneapolis, a “Let’s Talk About the Bus” poster and lyrics to “The Wheels on the Bus.” Working with partners helps align local materials and resources with the campaign overall and ensure that the toolkits always include an explanation for parents on the ‘Why’ of early brain and language development.



Andy the Apple provides math and literacy prompts in grocery stores.

## PARENT-DIRECTED MESSAGES IN COMMUNITY SPACES & LOCAL MEDIA

In an effort to meet parents and caregivers and their young children where they are, the campaign also includes a range of materials for the built environment. The term “built environment” simply means any existing structure, like bus shelters, in and on buses, billboards, the walls of clinic waiting and exam rooms, the windows of a laundromat or the structures in a playground. Talking is Teaching conversation prompts and messages can be added to encourage and guide language-rich interactions in everyday settings. Our creative team has developed a large array of resources for the built environment, ranging from low-investment posters, stickers, and bookmarks to higher investment early literacy panels in playgrounds or grocery store installations that encourage parent-child interactions.

Messaging and media in the built environment are ideally not intended to independently prompt parental behavior change, but rather to reinforce messages the campaign or other early childhood development efforts in the community are already delivering to parents and caregivers directly on the ground. Some spaces, such as hospitals and libraries, may include trusted messengers, whereas others, like playgrounds and grocery stores, may not. Communities often pair messaging in the built environment with local media efforts. Please see our communications section in Chapter 8 for details.

## GROCERY STORES

A trip to the [grocery store](#) offers many opportunities for parents to make small moments big by engaging with their child. Our partners in Tulsa have turned this routine outing into a fun and educational experience for families by installing [early math and early literacy](#) signage in two grocery store chains. This messaging is designed to prompt conversations and fun activities between adults and young children while they shop together and is based on a study of a successful experiment originally conducted by Professor Kathy Hirsh-Pasek in Philadelphia.<sup>15</sup>

## PLAYGROUNDS

We’re also meeting families where they are with signs including our colorful, engaging designs and characters and [conversation prompts in playgrounds](#). Together with our partners, Landscape Structures (LSI) and Shane’s Inspiration, we’re [creating more meaningful play experiences](#) across the country by incorporating Talking is Teaching messaging into playground panels to spark conversations and language-rich activities on the playground.





Children reading at a Bay Shore, NY, laundromat launch event.

## LAUNDROMATS

Laundry time is a valuable, though often overlooked, opportunity for parents and caregivers to engage their littlest learners and to transform a tedious routine into a fun, educational experience. We've developed tips and activities for families as well as colorful posters with campaign messaging for laundromat owners to display to help [make wash time talk time](#).

## CASE STUDIES

Each community is different and we have learned so much from our partners in Talking is Teaching cities nationwide. For the latest news on other community campaigns, [sign up for our newsletter](#) or [visit our website for communities](#) where you can explore in-depth case studies on our flagship communities in [Tulsa](#) and [Oakland](#) and the [other strategies described above](#). We frequently add new resources and information and hope you share what you've learned from your own campaign with us!



## CHAPTER 3: PLANNING YOUR COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN



Now that you have a better understanding of the principles and structure of a successful ground game, it's time to think about how to identify your community's specific needs and map out possible partners, trusted messengers and community spaces and media. The planning phase of your "Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing" campaign may take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months. During the planning phase, you will need to take a "big picture" viewpoint at times, such as setting your goals or brainstorming ways to fund your campaign. At other times, you will need to spend time on minor details, such as choosing poster designs or ordering and distributing hundreds or thousands of toolkits.

In each Talking is Teaching community, there is at least one anchor agency that leads the campaign on the ground. Because you're reading this guide, you may be thinking of being the anchor agency in your community, or you might be working with one. Anchor agencies can be community-based organizations, public agencies, direct service providers, or others that are committed to ensuring the health and well-being of 0- to 5-year-olds in their community. For example, in several of our communities in California, including Los Angeles, Napa, and Oakland, an anchor agency is a county First 5 commission, which supports all kinds of organizations in a geographic area that serve 0- to 5-year-olds. In other communities, the anchor agency may be a Mayor's office (Minneapolis, MN) or a nonprofit agency (Miami, FL). An ideal anchor agency is one that knows the needs of local families, greatly values partnership and consensus-building, and is able to steadily and reliably lead an effort that integrates early brain and language development into the fabric of its community.

Again, *Too Small to Fail* is here to help you through this process in a way that works best for you and your community. Whether you prefer a light touch with occasional conference calls, or you'd like a Talking is Teaching team member to fly out to facilitate a planning meeting in your community, please **don't hesitate to reach out** for a brainstorming session or troubleshooting.

This chapter outlines major components of the planning process—from questions to ask before you start through planning logistics and budgeting for costs.

### GETTING STARTED: QUESTIONS TO ASK

At the national level, our mission is to give all children a strong start and a chance to succeed in school and in life. Our more specific goal is to increase the quantity and quality of interactions between parents and caregivers with their young children starting at birth.

We assume that you share these goals, but that yours will likely be more aligned with the needs of your particular community. Regardless, it's important to remember that goals should be SMART (Specific, Realistic, Agreed upon, Measurable and Time-based).

There are many questions to consider when you start planning your campaign, ranging from those that will help you determine your goals and get your campaign up and running to questions that will help you make plans for scaling and sustaining your campaign.

## START UP AND GOALS

We've developed a [planning document for prospective communities](#) that may help you generate goals for your campaign and identify ways you can integrate your campaign into existing community efforts. Some questions you may want to consider include:

- What do you hope to achieve through this effort in your community?
- Who are you most interested in reaching and why?
- Who in your community is already doing this kind of work and how could you leverage their strengths through a partnership?
- How much will your campaign cost?

If you're starting your own campaign, you will also need to consider what to name it. We recommend that you use our full name, "Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing", and refer to it as Talking is Teaching in the shorthand, so that it's consistent with our brand and creative materials. Talk. Read. Sing. is a trademark of First 5 CA's national campaign.

## DEFINING AND REACHING YOUR AUDIENCE

Parents and caregivers (such as grandparents, family members, neighbors, and child care providers) are our primary audience. The most effective messaging is tailored to its audience, but in order to do that, it's important to know who your audience is and to understand how to reach them.

- What are the demographics of your community, including how many parents with children (0-5) live there?
- In what part(s) of your community does your audience live?
- What language(s) do they speak?
- What services are they already using?
- Where do they spend time with their children?
- Whom do they trust and from where do they obtain information about the health and well-being of their young children?<sup>16</sup>

- What are some of the barriers parents face when it comes to engaging more with their young children?

Defining your audience and collecting this information will help you make decisions about which materials to include in your toolkits, who you should choose to be a trusted messenger, and even the best tactics to include in your outreach strategy (e.g., paid advertisements or social media—see our [online communications resources](#) and Chapter 8 for details).

Partners, including funders, trusted messengers, and business leaders, can be considered a secondary audience, along with members of the general public and other local influential individuals (elected officials, civic leaders). When planning your overall campaign communications strategy, it helps to be sensitive to the differences between your primary and secondary audiences. For example, if you were planning to write a social media post targeted at parents and caregivers, it might be written as a helpful tip, whereas a post aimed at acquiring new business partners might feature a positive press mention generated by an existing Talking is Teaching business partner for their work on the campaign.

## PARTNERS AND TRUSTED MESSENGERS

Finding the right partners is incredibly important because they will help you integrate your campaign into the existing early childhood landscape in your community. Moreover, choosing the right messengers, with assistance from these partners, ensures that parents and caregivers receive the Talking is Teaching messages and materials from a trusted source with whom they have a genuine connection.

We recommend engaging partners and trusted messengers (or even potential candidates) before advancing too far into the planning phase on your own. Many communities have reported that they gained valuable insights from their partners during the planning phase—some of which even influenced the roll out of their campaign.

## MULTIPLE ENTRY POINTS

As we've mentioned, part of the strength of Talking is Teaching is its flexibility. There are multiple ways to start your campaign, even if you don't have the resources for all three elements of the ground game (trusted messengers, messages and media in the built environment, and high quality materials and tools) when you first start.

You can base your campaign around a particular institution, like a children's hospital, or a space that is frequented by parents and caregivers with young children, such as a grocery store or playground. Another approach might be to target a certain population, like homeless teen mothers, or to focus your campaign geographically by saturating a particularly high-need neighborhood or set of zip codes. Choosing to start with a media strategy, with campaign messaging on billboards, bus shelters, and televised PSAs, is yet another option. And, of course, several of these elements can be mixed to develop an approach that will work best for your community.

What follows are three examples of how campaign leaders in Little Rock, Minneapolis, and Napa took different approaches to bringing Talking is Teaching to their community. You can also visit our community website for more information on how our two flagship communities, [Tulsa](#) and [Oakland](#), launched their campaigns.

### Little Rock, AR: Launched November, 2016

- *Anchor Agency:* Arkansas Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
- *Audience:* Low-income families with 0- to 5-year-olds in four zip codes in central and south west Little Rock.
- *Partners:* Arkansas Educational Television Network (AETN), Arkansas Department of Health WIC, Arkansas Home Visiting Network, Little Rock School District, ReadyRosie
- *Trusted Messengers:* Preschool teachers, home visitors, and WIC nutritionists
- *Tools:* Talking is Teaching tote bag with a "Let's Talk About Food" bib for infants and toddlers, a "Let's Talk About Food" placemat for preschoolers, tip sheets for parents and caregivers, a "Let's Talk About Numbers" magnet, and an age-appropriate book (the books included in bags with Spanish-language products are bilingual)
- *Media:* Public service announcement developed by AETN, Talking is Teaching billboards and signs on the sides of buses.





Minneapolis, MN, used public transit ads to share the Talking is Teaching message.

### Minneapolis, MN: Launched June, 2016

- *Anchor Agency:* The Office of Mayor Betsy Hodges; Mayor Hodges' Cradle to K Cabinet
- *Audience:* Parents and caregivers of children 0-3 years old in Minneapolis
- *Partners:* Reach Out and Read, Children's Hospital and clinics of Minnesota, Hennepin County Libraries, Landscape Structures
- *Trusted Messengers:* Pediatricians, early child care providers, faith organizations, staff of the YWCA, librarians
- *Tools:* Talking is Teaching tote bags and books
- *Media:* Big kick-off campaign event, featuring major public transportation signage (buses), multiple interviews with the Mayor by local television broadcasters; print media coverage; two videos produced the Mayor's communications staff for social media

### Napa, CA: Launched June, 2016

- *Anchor Agency:* First 5 Napa County
- *Audience:* All families with 0-5 year-olds in Napa county, both English and Spanish speaking
- *Partners:* Child Start, Community Resources for Children, Cope Family Center, Napa County Office of Education, Napa Emergency Women's Services, Napa Valley Community Housing, Napa Valley Early Learning Initiative, Parent University, ParentsCan, Queen of Valley Medical Center, Napa Parks and Recreation, Landscape Structures, family resource centers, Napa County Health and Human Services
- *Trusted Messengers:* Child care providers, home visitors, parent educators, early education providers, pediatricians
- *Tools:* Talking is Teaching tip sheets and posters, playground panels
- *Spaces:* Playgrounds, early education centers/preschools, family resource centers

## SCALING AND SUSTAINABILITY

Our partners have learned that asking the right questions can help you with everything from training trusted messengers to conducting evaluations as you implement your campaign. Our partners at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital shared that planning “where you want to be in six months, one year, five years” can help “build trust with team members” who might be reluctant to try something new. Assuming you will be including an evaluation component, many of these goals may also inform your evaluation design. See more ideas for scaling and sustainability in Chapter 7.

## EVALUATIONS

Evaluating your Talking is Teaching campaign ideally generates evidence of how families benefit from the information and materials they receive. Evaluations can also yield useful information about how to improve your campaign and can even help you make the case to funders and potential partners. Even simple counts of the number and characteristics of the families you are reaching, through what channels and with what messages and resources can be useful. If you’re writing a grant proposal to fund your campaign, many funders will require an evaluation component, as it shows your commitment to making a measurable impact in your community. For more information on evaluations, see Chapter 6 and review our [tip sheet on evaluations](#) online. The best time to plan for your evaluation is while planning your campaign.

## LOGISTICS

According to our partners and from our own experience, planning and handling campaign logistics is one of the most important aspects of launching a campaign or running an event. Not surprisingly, the more messengers, materials and strategies you use for your campaign, the more logistics you will need to manage. Our points below are most appropriate for a multi-pronged approach, but apply to any level of campaign intensity. Before you start ordering your Talking is Teaching toolkits in bulk, consider how you will handle:

- Storing and moving the heavy boxes containing tote bags, books, and other resources to include in the toolkits (we recommend plastic, waterproof boxes with lids)
- Assembling the toolkits and confirming that they contain the correct materials for the right age groups, in the right languages
- Delivering the assembled toolkits to your trusted messengers

You may want to consider handling the logistics yourself, but be sure to budget enough staff time and resources (including space) if you go this route. In Tulsa, the campaign hired an outside company to assemble, store and process orders, and distribute toolkits. While this saves on staff time, it may require a significant financial investment. It also may be possible to leverage in-kind services and corporate volunteers. In Oakland, UPS and Salesforce donated staff time to assemble and store toolkits.





## COST

Fortunately, many of the startup costs for Talking is Teaching, including designing resources and conducting and compiling research on [the need for and efficacy of the method](#), have been covered by the national campaign. However, you and/or local funders will need to cover the cost of toolkit materials (should you choose to use them), and the assembly and printing of resources. Remember that toolkits can be fully-stocked tote bags, including all or some of the items listed below, or they can be lightweight posters in community spaces and handouts.

The most significant investment many communities will make is in the high quality toolkits. The “fully loaded” toolkits, available in English and Spanish, generally cost between \$16 and \$25 and contain all or some of the following items:

- Reusable tote bag that can be co-branded with local partners
- Baby clothing and blanket with prompts to talk, read, and sing
- Sesame Street Family Resource Guide and storybook
- Age-appropriate CD or digital music information
- Age-appropriate books
- Information on free mobile technology service on early brain and language development

We support customizing these toolkits to meet the needs of your community—and your budget—and can work with you to decide which resources and materials will work best. You can save money when producing materials by printing in black and white or ordering in bulk or consider starting with the highest need populations in your community before expanding to others as funding allows. Additionally, in an effort to save money, you are welcome to source the materials yourself using our guidelines and branding. For example, the Arkansas campaign was able to produce their bags for roughly \$6 per child. You can always incorporate the toolkits into a later phase of your overall campaign strategy if you do not have the funding for them at launch, so we encourage you to not let the price point deter you from starting your campaign.

A final consideration on cost and budgeting relates to the human capital of your campaign. Small things like hosting a launch event for families and partners, training volunteers and trusted messengers over a meal, or hiring a part-time campaign manager (as Oakland did during its first year) to help coordinate everything can make a big difference when it comes to completing tasks and generating enthusiasm for your campaign.

# CHAPTER 4: BUILDING AND LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS



By now you have an idea of the principles behind a successful local strategy and the different ways other communities have chosen to launch their campaigns. You may even be thinking of potential trusted messengers who will help you deliver the “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” message to families in your community. Identifying and reaching out to potential corporate partners and tapping into the national partnerships that *Too Small to Fail* has established is another vital component of planning and implementing your campaign.

Corporate partners may be able to provide campaign funding, in-kind contributions (like advertising, books or supplies, logistical support or volunteers), assistance with earned and social media outreach, as well as a unique perspective on engaging with your community. It may seem intimidating to think about reaching out to potential corporate partners at first, but many organizations are interested in being “good neighbors” and want to support causes that are important to their community.

In this chapter, we provide some guidelines for how to identify and reach out to corporate partners in your community, as well as an overview of the national partnerships that *Too Small to Fail* has established. Even though you will be operating at a local level, as part of the national campaign you can lean into these existing partnerships and also

point to other Talking is Teaching cities, like Oakland or Tulsa, as case studies for your proposals to potential partners. You should feel free to use our promising [evaluation findings](#) from our efforts in Tulsa and Oakland.

## IDENTIFYING AND REACHING OUT TO POTENTIAL CORPORATE PARTNERS

### Match Your Goals with Your Partners’ Strengths

When brainstorming about potential partners, it’s a good idea to first consider the specific needs and goals of your campaign. Then, consider the assets that a potential partner could bring to help you solve that problem. Are they a large corporation with a strong culture of employee volunteerism that could be interested in donating time? Or are they a mom-and-pop store where families spend time that could be great for Talking is Teaching signage? Some questions that might help you include:

- What are some unmet needs (time or materials) in your budget that could be donated?
- If you were paying for a particular service—like advertising—what businesses are good (and trusted) examples of delivering that particular service?
- What resources does the business have that align with your needs?



### Featured Partner: QuikTrip

QuikTrip partnered with Talking is Teaching in Tulsa on two different video series for social media. As a result of this mutually beneficial partnership, more than 250,000 people from QuikTrip’s large follower base have seen the Talking is Teaching tips and learned about the campaign.

## Featured Partner: Salesforce

Salesforce is one example of a reliable partner for Talking is Teaching in the San Francisco Bay Area. The company has a strong culture of employee volunteerism. Since 2014, Salesforce employees have assembled more than 7,000 tote bags at its annual Dreamforce conference and other corporate events.



You may also want to look for organizations with corporate policies that are favorable to families and employees or those with a strong commitment to volunteerism (such as company ‘days of service’ or paid time off for volunteer work). A few questions to consider might be:

- How is this business perceived by others in the community?
- Do they already express a commitment to the community, or otherwise consider themselves a “good neighbor”?
- Is this an opportunity for them to enhance their bottom line, build (or rebuild) public relations, or expand on work they’re already doing in the early childhood arena?

## LEVERAGING TOO SMALL TO FAIL’S EXISTING NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

As part of the national Talking is Teaching campaign, here are a few of our leading partnerships you may want to tap into.

### Univision: Pequeños y Valiosos

Univision—the country’s largest Spanish-language media company—has partnered with us to create Pequeños y Valiosos (Young and Valuable), a multi-platform public awareness campaign that brings the Talking is Teaching message into Hispanic homes and communities nationally.

- ▶ **You can** encourage people to subscribe to Univision’s free text messaging service for parents by texting VALIOSOS to 262-62. Subscribers receive twice-weekly texts with tools, tips and resources from Univision that encourage the well-being and healthy development of their young children.

### Hollywood

*Too Small to Fail* has briefed television writers and producers about the importance of early brain and language development. As a result, eleven television shows have incorporated Talking is Teaching messaging into their programs, including *Law & Order: SVU*, *Jane the Virgin*, *Doc McStuffins*, *Grandfathered*, *Orange is the New Black*, *Days of Our Lives*, *The Fosters*, *Royal Pains*, and *Criminal Minds*. *Too Small to Fail* also produced four public service announcements with celebrity moms. These PSAs were shown on the Newborn Channel which aired in 1,000 hospitals and reaches 2.5 million moms each year.

- ▶ **You can** incorporate any of the [four public service announcements](#) we produced with celebrity moms into your campaign.

### Coin Laundry Association

The Coin Laundry Association (CLA) has partnered with us to engage families through 5,000 laundromats across the country to help families turn laundry time into meaningful opportunities to talk, read and sing with their children. The initiative, [Wash Time is Talk Time](#), includes the distribution of early literacy resources and books for parents through “free laundry day” events in diverse communities across the country.

- ▶ **You can** [download all of the Wash Time is Talk Time materials](#) to get local laundromats involved in connecting with families to promote children’s early brain and language development.

## Early Head Start and Family Child Care

Together with Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, the National Head Start Association (NHSA) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), we developed a free multimedia resource kit for early educators and child care providers focused on promoting early brain and language development. This bilingual (English/Spanish) professional development tool is being distributed to Early Head Start educators and family child care providers.

- ▶ **You can** [download all materials online](#) at no charge to educators and distribute it or the link to providers in your community through resource and referral agencies and family child care or center-based associations.

## Language-Rich Playgrounds

We've [partnered with playground developers](#), Landscape Structures (LSI) and Shane's Inspiration, to integrate Talking is Teaching creative content on panels and signage in playgrounds, featuring parent-child conversation prompts and our engaging creative designs. These panels are being [incorporated into playgrounds across the country](#).

- ▶ **You can** [learn more about our work with playgrounds online](#) and explore the designs available in LSI's standard playground equipment line for children ages six months to five years.

## Federal Departments of Education & Health and Human Services

The U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) and *Too Small to Fail* created a series of research-based tips for meaningful engagement from birth through age five between parents and caregivers and young children.

- ▶ **You can** download and distribute all tip sheets and resources for [social-emotional development](#), [early STEM education](#), and [early brain and language development](#).

## National Diaper Bank Network

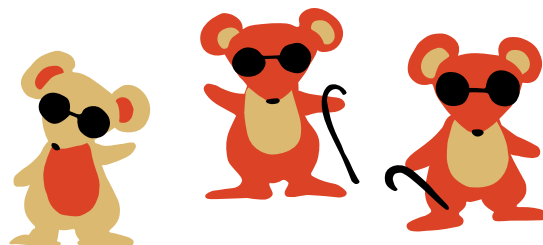
Together with the National Diaper Bank Network (NDBN), Penguin Young Readers and Huggies, *Too Small to Fail* launched [Diaper Time is Talk Time](#), distributing 100,000 new children's board books to underserved families through diaper banks across the country. In addition to the books, we created a tip sheet for parents to help boost children's early brain and language development during everyday moments like diaper time.

- ▶ **You can** provide parents with [helpful tips](#) on how to make the most of diaper changing time and consider partnering with [your local diaper bank](#) on the campaign.

## Spotify

To promote the importance of singing together, we've partnered with [Spotify](#) to create curated playlists themed around families' everyday routines and activities like bedtime, bath time, play time, or commute time. Each playlist features a celebrity narrator who introduces the songs and delivers prompts in between them to encourage parents to talk, read, and sing with their children. Current playlists include narration by Tyler Perry, Martina McBride, Fantasia, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Wiz Khalifa, Juanes, Diego Torres, Laurie Berkner, and Busy Philipps, among others. Read more about this effort in *Parents Magazine* [here](#).

- ▶ **You can** [share the playlists](#) with parents and caregivers in your community.



# CHAPTER 5: TRAINING TRUSTED MESSENGERS



Now that you have begun to plan your campaign and have a sense of who your trusted messengers will be, it's helpful to spend some time thinking about how you will mobilize them to deliver the "Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing" messages and the tools you have chosen. We believe that long-lasting behavior change is most likely to happen when trusted messengers deliver clear messages that demonstrate simple steps people can take to effect a change. A "warm hand-off" of information and materials can make an important difference. Our tools were designed to make current research accessible to parents and caregivers and to present it in a positive, engaging way. It's important that the messengers you choose to deliver these tools feel adequately prepared and motivated to engage with families.

One of the lessons we've learned from our community partners is that training trusted messengers takes a significant amount of time and is an ongoing process. Even the most thorough training may need to be adjusted or refreshed a few weeks (or months) into your campaign. It can help to check in with your partners or trusted messengers after they have spent some time engaging with parents and caregivers. You might learn that everything is going smoothly! If not, it will allow you to change course early and save you time and trouble down the road.

In this chapter, we share a few of the lessons we've learned on training trusted messengers since launching the Talking is Teaching campaign and review some of the tried-and-tested training resources that are [available on our website for community partners](#).

## LESSONS LEARNED

Our partners have emphasized the importance of dedicating staff time to the Talking is Teaching campaign, but training messengers might take more time and effort than you expect. We hope their lessons learned will help you moving forward.

### LESSON 1: BUILD TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

Building trust and obtaining buy-in from messengers *before* launching your campaign will make training and implementation much easier. Our partners at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital emphasized the importance of tying the Talking is Teaching campaign message to the core values of the organization. This helped their trusted messengers—pediatricians and pediatric residents—see the need to implement this campaign "because it's the best thing for our patients" instead of viewing the training and campaign implementation as additional work.

### LESSON 2: TAILOR YOUR TRAININGS

Our partners at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland have been training trusted messengers since Talking is Teaching launched in 2014. Over the years, they have learned that the most effective trainings are tailored to the knowledge level of the trainees. There, medical residents, who are more familiar with the science behind early brain and language development, receive an hour-long training, whereas hospital volunteers receive a more in-depth three-hour training. For cohorts of trusted messengers with high turnover (such as residents or hospital volunteers), it's important to offer trainings at regular intervals to accommodate new trusted messengers. Making the training a part of a lunch or social activity helps, too.





At UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland, physicians serve as trusted messengers.

### LESSON 3: WHENEVER POSSIBLE, TRAIN MESSENGERS (INSTEAD OF TRAINERS)

Training the people who will be delivering the message may seem like basic advice at first. However, as one of our partners in Little Rock, Arkansas learned, “we thought we were providing pretty clear guidance to supervisors, but the direct-line staff were very clear that their needs were different.” Some examples of their needs included additional Spanish-language materials and a review of step-by-step instructions about the process.

We understand it may not always be possible to train messengers directly, so we recommend frequent check-ins with your trainers. Role-playing can be a helpful tactic when training either messengers or trainers as it provides an opportunity to practice and receive feedback at the same time.

### LESSON 4: PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Finally, it takes time for messengers to become familiar with the talking points and comfortable using the tools to engage with families. For messengers who work in high-stress settings, such as pediatricians in a health clinic, it helps to be sensitive to the fact that they may only have 15 minutes to spend with a family to discuss everything—including Talking is Teaching. Our partners who work in the health care space have advised that it can take from six months to a year for the process to become second-nature, so be sure to include periodic training refreshers and opportunities for messengers to share experiences with challenges and successes.

### TRAINING AND RESOURCES

The [Training Presentation](#) and [Training Summary for Providers](#) both offer an overview of the training process. The [Sesame Street Talking is Teaching Community Provider Guide](#) includes concrete tips for messengers on how to engage with parents and caregivers one-on-one or in groups of various sizes. Our “Talk, Read, and Sing Together Every Day” handout contains tips for providers working with [infants and toddlers](#) or [preschoolers](#).

Once your trusted messengers understand the basics of how to use the tools you’ve chosen for your campaign, you can incorporate topic-specific tips into your strategy. We have resources for how providers can talk to parents and caregivers about [social-emotional development](#), [the benefits of being bilingual](#), or early STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) for [infant/toddler providers](#) and for [preschool providers](#).

Our partners at Tulsa Educare have developed an in-depth [video series](#) for hosting a family engagement event.



In Tulsa, trusted messenger Pastor Ray Owens reads with children at a church event.

## FAITH-BASED RESOURCES

Our faith-based community in Tulsa has developed several resources for engaging families of young children including the [Tulsa Faith Community Orientation Handbook](#) (available here as a PDF download) and a [one-pager](#). They also delivered a [webinar](#) we developed on engaging the faith-based community.

## HEALTH CARE RESOURCES

We have written talking points for [health care staff](#) and [for pediatricians](#) in addition to our [tips for pediatric professionals](#) developed with the American Academy of Pediatrics. Off-site, you can watch a new [series of training videos](#) developed by Reach Out and Read specifically for health care providers.

## LIBRARY RESOURCES

Librarians can read our [tip sheet](#) or review a [slide deck](#) developed by our partners in Miami for advice tailored to their unique needs.

## RESOURCES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS AND EARLY EDUCATORS

At [StriveForFive.com](#), trusted messengers can take a deep dive into the process of developing a literacy-rich early learning environment through a five week video curriculum.

# CHAPTER 6: EVALUATING YOUR CAMPAIGN



Evaluating your Talking is Teaching campaign is an important way to show how families benefit from the information and materials they receive. Evaluations can also assess the implementation of the campaign, identifying bottlenecks and allowing for course corrections along the way. Finally, evaluations can help you make the case to funders and potential partners, and yield useful information about how to plan for a new phase of your campaign. The most successful evaluations are those that are planned in tandem with the rest of your campaign. We know you're excited to help parents have more meaningful interactions with their children (so are we!). We also know, from experience, that one of the best ways to do that is to evaluate how your campaign strategies may or may not be meeting their intended goals.

Many of our partners have also learned important lessons about making evaluations a part of the planning process, like our campaign partner in Los Angeles, who notes "At first I got caught up in the logistics. Then it was time for the evaluation piece, so we tried to take a shortcut. Then I reminded myself that this is very important and I needed to work it out from the beginning. Figuring out the evaluation piece first is the biggest lesson I've learned and would like to tell someone else starting fresh."

## THE EVALUATION PROCESS

There isn't a "one-size-fits-all" guide for a community campaign, nor is there a generic guide for an evaluation strategy. However, the six steps<sup>17</sup> described below are common to evaluations in general. Whether you hire an external evaluator or conduct the evaluation in-house, you should expect to be involved with making decisions related to these six steps.

### 1. Define your campaign goals

All evaluations begin by clearly **defining your goals for the campaign**, both specific and overarching. For example, an overarching campaign goal is to boost early brain and language development in very young children. A more specific goal is that we hope parents will talk, read, and sing more with their children starting at birth. The evaluation questions you ask will depend on which goals you want to measure. We've found that SMART (Specific, Realistic, Agreed upon, Measureable and Time-based) goals work best.

### 2. Identify your stakeholders

Identifying your stakeholders early in the process ensures your evaluation will answer the questions that matter most to them. Stakeholders may include your target audience (parents and caregivers) as well as partners (other organizations, trusted messengers, funders).



### 3. Design your evaluation

Evaluation design includes determining the questions you will ask in addition to the method you will use for data collection and analysis. Evaluations can be as simple or as complex as you want them to be—from a three-question survey using images instead of words to a multi-step, comprehensive evaluation involving numerous divisions across a hospital. Good evaluation designs are closely linked to the goals of the campaign. For example, if your goal is to help parents at a local child care center talk, read, and sing more often with their children, it doesn't make sense to focus your evaluation on third grade reading tests in your community's elementary school. Instead, you might focus the evaluation on changes in those parents' knowledge, attitudes and interactions with their children. It's also important to acknowledge that because of funding or time constraints, you may need to focus on intermediary goals (like changes in parents' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors) rather than broad, longer-term goals (like increasing school readiness).

Evaluations can also be focused on *process* or on *outcomes*. At *Too Small to Fail*, we're primarily interested in *outcomes* (e.g., did the intervention increase parents' and caregivers' knowledge, attitudes and behavior?) because we want to use this information to scale and sustain our campaign based on impact. But *process* information can be useful when making important campaign strategy decisions. For example, in the midst of an evaluation in Tulsa, researchers discovered that the grocery store signage wasn't nearly as prominent as it needed to be. So, they stopped the data collection, developed and installed new materials, and started again. By being open to making a mid-course correction, they ensured that families would have a more meaningful experience in the grocery store and that their evaluation aligned with their strategy.

This is also a good time to consider things like the literacy level or home language of your target population, who will be responsible for collecting and analyzing data, as well as the technological needs of the evaluator, such as reliable internet access or other tools, like a laptop or tablet, for data collection.

A good evaluation design can serve as a roadmap for your campaign's evaluation, outlining your guiding questions, data sources, key responsibilities, and timeline.

### 4. Collect data

To collect credible evidence to address your evaluation questions, it's important to have a standardized process in place and to create questions for data collection tools (like surveys or questionnaires) that will answer your questions without imposing too much of a burden on the individual who is completing them. It is also essential to make sure that your materials are as "desert island-proof" as possible. This advice, from one of our evaluators, simply means that your surveys or questionnaires, along with the data input process, should all be able to be used by someone with limited training—helping to minimize human error.

Finally, there are many ways you can collect data, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, or observations. You can use tools as simple tallies to answer a yes/no question or sophisticated online tools such as [Survey Monkey](#) or [Google Forms](#). Our [data collection checklist](#) can help you plan the logistics of your evaluation, from figuring out which data collection methods will work best to determining how much support your team will need to conduct the evaluation. You can also review our [tip sheet on how to right-size your evaluation](#) based on the type of campaign activity you want to assess.

## 5. Analyze data

There are a variety of tools available for collecting and analyzing data, and many excellent tools are even free or low-cost. [SurveyMonkey](#) and [Google Forms](#) both have impressive features that require minimal effort on the part of the person collecting data. For example, Survey Monkey has built-in aggregate reports in addition to the ability to build a custom report, and you can access similar features in Google Forms via the “Explore” button. For those who are familiar with it, Microsoft Excel has equally advanced tools for the analysis and presentation of your data.

## 6. Report your findings

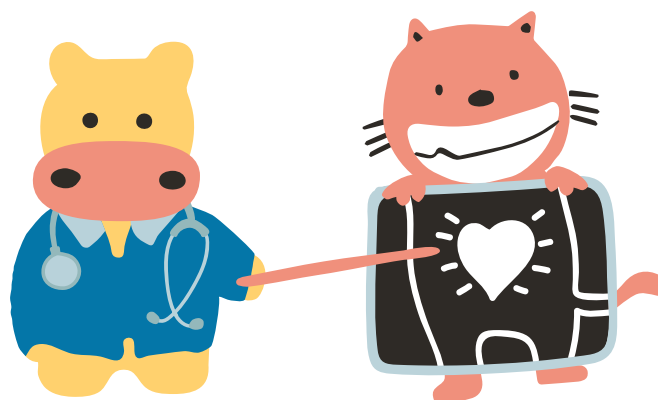
Once you’ve completed your analysis, it’s time to share what you learned with your stakeholders and to adjust your strategy accordingly. Perhaps you discovered that hospital visits were most effective in getting parents to change their behaviors. If so, you might want to consider scaling with a hospital-based strategy. You may have also discovered that something in your strategy didn’t work as well as you had hoped, which is an important lesson learned, too. Please don’t forget to [share your findings and lessons learned with us—with expected or unexpected results](#)—so that we can share them with other communities focused on this work. [You can find evaluation findings from Oakland and Tulsa’s campaigns here.](#)

## RESOURCES FOR EVALUATIONS

On our [website](#), you can find resources developed by our evaluation partners at Public Profit, including advice for aligning your campaign and evaluation strategies and this [data collection checklist](#).

Some external resources include the [Better Evaluation Planning Guide](#) and Western Michigan University’s [comprehensive collection of evaluation checklists](#).

If you’re looking to hire an evaluator, learn [how to write a good Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) that will attract seasoned professionals and visit the [American Evaluation Association](#) or the [American Educational Research Association](#) to find a professional evaluator near you.





# CHAPTER 7: SCALING AND SUSTAINING YOUR CAMPAIGN



It might seem a bit premature to be thinking of how to scale and sustain your “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” campaign before it’s up and running, but many of our partners have shared that they wished they had spent more time planning “the next phase” alongside the campaign launch. After all, once the campaign is underway, you may be so busy training (and retraining) messengers, managing logistics, and securing additional funding that you lose track of time and find yourself planning “phase two” just as it’s about to begin.

This chapter provides specific ways that our two flagship communities are scaling and sustaining their Talking is Teaching campaigns.

## SCALING & SUSTAINING FLAGSHIP CITIES

Our two flagship cities, Tulsa, Oklahoma and Oakland, California, have been running Talking is Teaching campaigns since 2014. Campaign leaders in both cities have had to make difficult decisions about how to scale and sustain the programs they have implemented.

### Tulsa, OK

The Tulsa campaign initially took a faith-based engagement approach to their Talking is Teaching campaign because of trusting relationships between parents and caregivers and faith institutions. Furthermore, participating in religious activities already encourages *talking* through prayer, *reading* through scripture, and *singing* through congregational chorus, making a faith-based strategy a natural fit for efforts to promote talking, reading and singing with babies from birth. Tulsa also led with a health-based strategy, comprised of a joint intervention in pediatric clinics and family practices with Reach Out and Read.

Since 2014 Tulsa has **scaled** the campaign by:

- Increasing attendance at family engagement events at five churches (with 82 adults and 100 children) in 2014 to hosting similar events at 23 churches (with 3,524 adults and 4,468 children) in 2016
- Expanding from clinics to another joint intervention with a local non-profit in all of the birthing hospitals in Tulsa, with nurse educators delivering messages and tote bags to all new parents after giving birth
- Expanding the intervention in the Tulsa birthing hospitals to a rural hospital outside Tulsa in Miami, Oklahoma
- Expanding to a grocery store strategy, with new designs created and installations completed in two chains serving low-income families by the end of 2016
- Placing Talking is Teaching panels in three playgrounds in Tulsa
- Solidifying a strong partnership with Oklahoma State University researchers to evaluate the strategy in birthing hospitals and grocery stores

Tulsa has also **sustained** their campaign by:

- Streamlining the process for training volunteers and trusted messengers by developing a website outlining the ‘curriculum’ for family engagement events
- Focusing on expanding to congregations that already have robust programming in place (e.g., serving federally-funded food to children in need in the summer) which could more easily add hosting a monthly family engagement event to their schedule
- Integrating Talking is Teaching into a new, bold “Tulsa Strategy” that will reach all eligible individuals in the Tulsa area from prenatal visits right up to kindergarten, touching families at multiple points in their child’s pre-natal and earliest years



A Talking Is Teaching playground in East Oakland.

## Oakland, CA

Meanwhile, in Oakland, the Talking is Teaching campaign started as a hospital-based strategy after research showed that 99 percent of babies in California are born in hospitals<sup>18</sup> and 90 percent of children receive a well-child visit before their fifth birthday.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, focus groups indicated that parents and caregivers trust people they already have relationships with, and who routinely provide them with advice. As a result, once we engaged UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital Oakland (BCHO) as a partner, it made sense to include all three elements of the ground game into the local hospital primary care clinic, offering parents an immersive experience from the waiting room through the clinic visit.

Since 2014 Oakland has **scaled** the campaign by:

- Partnering with First 5 Alameda on a community-wide strategy to reach families through pediatricians at community clinics, faith-based leaders, child care providers, librarians, home visitors, and others
- Adding conversation prompts to the built environment in playgrounds in two local Head Start centers as well as [at a public playground in an under-resourced area](#) (East Oakland)

Oakland has also **sustained** their campaign by:

- Targeting specific age groups to distribute messages and materials during well-child visits that are significant, when the information is particularly beneficial for parents to receive (child receiving shots, for example)
- Partnering with new organizations to develop creative ways to distribute the Talking is Teaching messages—such as a SupplyBank.org, which will include campaign designs and messages on diaper boxes, wipes and even diapers, that they provide to families at no cost
- Applying for and receiving joint funding from the local, public Oakland Fund for Children and Youth with Tandem, a local non-profit, that now delivers ongoing training on parent-child engaged reading and interaction for medical residents and volunteers and supports regular hospital based, early literacy events
- Applying for and receiving a modest grant to develop an “early literacy core of volunteers” who will be trained to read and offer language rich activities to children and their families in clinic waiting rooms
- Developing a small national informal learning community of health-based settings engaged (or potentially engaging) in Talking is Teaching and early literacy efforts

## CHAPTER 8: RESOURCES AND TOOLS FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN



In addition to the high-quality tools that trusted messengers give to parents (see Chapters 2 and 3), all of our resources for parents and families are available online, and many are free. We intentionally structured the Talking is Teaching campaign website to have two different, but complementary, sections.

The first section is the family-facing side of the website. This part of the site does not require a log-in and includes [resources](#) that were developed specifically for parents and caregivers as the primary audience. These resources are organized by topic ([early literacy](#), [early math](#), [early STEM](#), and [social-emotional development](#)) and can be sorted by content type (tip sheets or videos) and by age (infants, toddlers, or preschoolers).

The second section is the community side of the website. We've asked users to [create a log-in](#) to access the resources and materials available on this portion of the site. This part of the site includes a collection of [training materials for trusted messengers](#) (see Chapter 5); [case studies](#) on different community campaigns; information on each of our campaign strategies; [evaluation reports](#) of the efficacy of our work; all of the "Let's Talk About" [creative designs](#) available for download and placement on posters, billboards, clothing, stickers, magnets and more; [grocery store designs and materials](#); [communications resources](#), such as sample press releases and social media posts; and a sortable index of the [handouts for families](#).

### RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Consider the [goals of your campaign](#) when deciding which resources to distribute to families. For example, the Minneapolis campaign used buses as the primary way to integrate Talking is Teaching messaging into the built environment, so they included a "Let's Talk About the Bus" poster and other bus-themed materials in what they distributed to families.

### EARLY LITERACY

At the start of the Talking is Teaching campaign, we emphasized [early literacy](#) as a way for parents and caregivers to make small moments big. The [Talking is Teaching Sesame Street Family Guide](#) and [tip sheets for infants and toddlers](#) and [pre-schoolers](#) offer activities for talking, reading and singing. We also have tip sheets for [grandparents](#) and parents of [dual-language learners](#), and our [developmental milestones chart](#) is a favorite of both parents and trusted messengers.

### EARLY MATH & EARLY STEM

We developed other resources for parents to engage in fun [early math](#) and [early STEM](#) activities with their children. A good starting point is [this video](#) with Liz Simons, Linda Platas, and Deborah Stipek, who describe the benefit of early math skills for young children and illustrate some easy ways parents and caregivers can help children develop basic math skills that have a positive effect on other areas of learning.

Our “Let’s Talk About Math” Highlights guide is filled with activities and suggestions to help parents teach their little ones math skills and vocabulary. In addition, the “Let’s Talk About Math” and “Let’s Talk About STEM” series we developed with ZERO TO THREE features videos and tip sheets in English and Spanish on topics such as [counting](#), [spatial awareness](#), [shapes](#), [patterns](#), [measurement](#), [addition and subtraction](#), [science](#), and [engineering and technology](#).

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Our newest resources are on [social-emotional development](#) and include a [series of videos and tip sheets](#) in English and Spanish for understanding and managing your child’s behavior, and taking care of yourself during the challenging moments, too. We also developed a [research background fact sheet](#), [tips for families and providers](#), and [developmental milestones](#) specific to social-emotional skill development. For information on the evidence base on the importance of social-emotional development in young children, we created a [white paper and 2-pager](#) on Adverse Childhood Experiences, toxic stress and the importance of relationships in supporting children’s development.

## RESOURCES FOR TRUSTED MESSENGERS

As outlined in Chapter 5, the resources for trusted messengers are more targeted to professionals working with young children and families than those designed for parents. Our aim is to enhance the conversations between trusted messengers and families. You know your community best—consider the goals of your campaign, the partners you’ve chosen to be trusted messengers, and the spaces where they will be interacting with parents when choosing your resources.

## RESOURCES FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN

Finally, we have made a number of communications and creative resources available online to support your paid, earned, and social media efforts (see definitions below). These resources will assist you in raising public awareness about your local campaign while connecting it to the nationwide Talking is Teaching work, helping you to be as effective as possible at reaching parents and caregivers where they already are.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The [communications](#) page on our website contains several resources to demonstrate how you can engage local partners and provide value to your audience. It’s important to note that all paid, earned, and social media communications are intended to reinforce the messages the campaign is already delivering to parents and caregivers on the ground.

### Paid Media

Paid media encompasses paid advertisements of all kinds, including outdoor billboards, radio and TV Public Service Announcements (PSAs), and newspaper or magazine ads. Our partners in Arkansas developed a PSA for television with their regional PBS affiliate to promote their campaign. You can explore all of our paid media creative files [on our website](#).

### Earned Media

Earned media is publicity you gain through promotional efforts, such as hosting a press conference, pitching an idea for an article to a journalist, or writing an op-ed. In Minneapolis, partners successfully garnered earned media attention for the launch of their campaign by holding a vibrant event for parents, children and local government officials that provided great photo opportunities for local media outlets.



Talking Is Teaching - Talk, Read, Sing

talkingisteaching.org/communities/creative/overview

TALKING IS TEACHING COMMUNITIES

Places Spaces Resources Communications Creative

## CREATIVE RESOURCES

These designs are cute, but don't let that fool you! An incredible amount of science has gone into ensuring that they are effective tools to help parents talk, read, and sing to their children. We consulted childhood educators, scientists, and doctors to help us craft a system that works across different developmental periods—from the pre-verbal first few weeks of life to later on when children can hold conversations and understand more abstract concepts.

We've applied just as much time and effort to thinking through the graphic aspects of the creative design, developing not just a brand identity, but an entire style of illustration and communication unique to the campaign. By sticking close to the existing style, you'll help reinforce the Talking Is Teaching Brand, ensuring that each piece of creative you employ is as effective as possible in reaching parents and caregivers.

**For Designers**  
Quick access to graphic style guidelines and the creative assets directory

**Logos**  
Quick access to the campaign logos and guidelines on how to use them

**Fonts**  
Our one-of-a-kind hand drawn font, free to download

**Colors**  
Palettes for every occasion and how-to documents for working with color

**Templates**  
Easy to use Word and PowerPoint templates for tip sheets, flyers, and more

**Illustrations**  
A library of downloadable characters, speech bubbles, and props

## Social Media

Social media is indispensable for conveying your message widely and expanding your audience. You can use social media to promote your campaign as well as share tips and resources and engage with parents, caregivers and other members of your local community. Depending on your campaign goals and resources, there are many approaches to using social media, from leveraging your local partners' presence on social media to launching your own Talking is Teaching channel, like our partners in Syracuse and Minneapolis, or just sharing tips and resources to developing a robust social media campaign, like the [#iTalkReadSing campaign](#) in Tulsa.

Learn more about how to develop a social media strategy for your campaign, as well as download ready-to-use tip graphics and a customizable social graphics template in our [Social Media Toolkit](#).

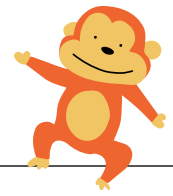
## Creative

The [Creative](#) section of our website is a comprehensive directory of the many graphic elements that comprise the Talking is Teaching brand, including all of the "Let's Talk About" designs for [posters](#), [clothing](#) and [blankets](#). It also contains our [templates](#), [fonts](#), [logos](#), [color palettes](#), [illustrations](#), as well as [other items](#) like stickers and a "prescription for reading" Rx pad. You can also explore all of the creative files we've developed for our space-based strategies, like the [grocery store](#), [playground](#) or [laundromats](#).

Feeling inspired to create new products for your campaign? Our partners have come up with innovative ideas ranging from custom bookmarks and placemats to baby bibs. Just be sure to [read these guidelines](#) before sending your design to the print shop!



# FINAL WORDS



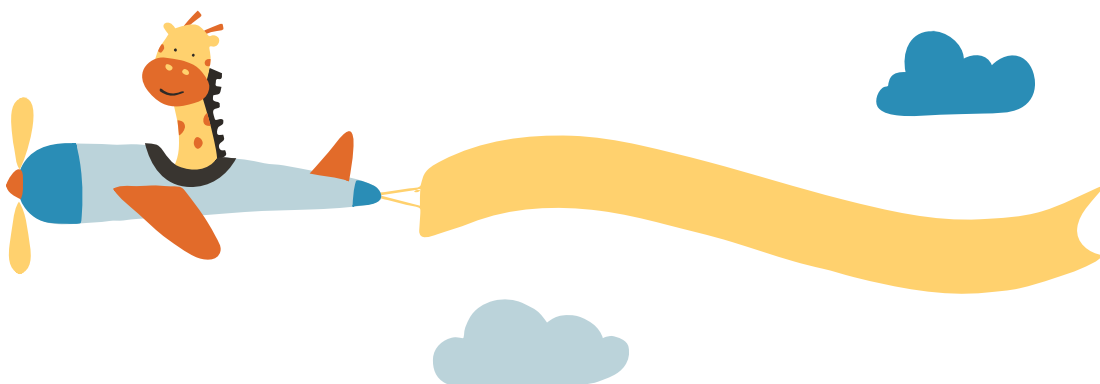
At its heart, the “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” campaign aims to increase meaningful interactions between parents and young children so that they happen as early and often as possible. To accomplish this, we share information with parents about the critical role they play in their child’s early brain and language development and support them with concrete tools to talk, read, and sing with their young children from birth.

A broad body of research has demonstrated that both the amount and quality of parent-child interactions matter—and that small changes can add up to make a big difference over a child’s lifetime. Through our evaluations we’ve shown that we can move the needle on parent knowledge, attitudes and behavior by reaching families where they already are through trusted messengers who deliver high quality tools in an environment saturated with Talking is Teaching conversation prompts and messaging.

Most importantly, we’ve learned that successful campaigns are driven by people like you, who are committed to making a positive, lasting change in the lives of children and families. Whether you decide to start a new campaign or enhance an existing initiative, we are confident that your community will benefit from giving the next generation the strongest possible start.

We’ve spent years developing and refining our tools for parents and trusted messengers and have learned many valuable lessons from our partners on planning, scaling, and sustaining a campaign. We use evaluations to validate our methods and adjust our strategy, ensuring that Talking is Teaching continues to be a data-driven model. We hope you will find these materials and resources helpful as you run and evaluate your own campaign and will continue to share the latest news with our community partners in our [quarterly newsletter](#) and [online](#).

Thank you for your interest in the “Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing” campaign!



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