



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MEDIA INFORMATION
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Hamilton Medical Center participating in national Talk With Me Baby program

DALTON, Ga. (April 2, 2021) – Beginning this month, all parents of babies born at Hamilton Medical Center (HMC) will take home a “Talk With Me Baby” book.

HMC is participating in Talk With Me Baby, a national program designed to help young parents and family members understand the importance of talking and communicating with their newborn babies. The hardcover books show families in various everyday settings interacting with their children – while folding clothes, during bath time, out on a walk or other activities.

Hamilton is the first hospital system in Georgia to have its staff fully trained in Talk With Me Baby and the first to distribute books to parents.

“Parents of babies born at Hamilton need to know that their baby’s brain begins to develop and grow from the moment they arrive,” said Suzanne Harbin, director of the Early Childhood Initiative in Dalton. “The first three years of life are most important – babies’ brains are developing faster at that point than at any other time in their lives.”

Reading, talking and singing to a child are some of the best ways to assure that a baby’s brain develops to its fullest potential. The stronger a baby’s brain is developed, the easier it is for that child to learn and be ready for school at age 4 and 5.

“When babies are born at Hamilton, it is our first and often only chance to talk with the parents,” Harbin said. “We lose touch with the children until they arrive for school at age 5. By making sure that families leave Hamilton with the tools and knowledge they need to help their babies grow, we put them on the road to healthy, vibrant lives. It is so important for families to gain this knowledge early, before they even leave the hospital!”

This awareness program is made possible by HMC in collaboration with the Community Foundation of Northwest Georgia and the Early Childhood Initiative.

This is part of the community’s overall Get Georgia Reading efforts, with a goal to have all children on the path to reading on grade level by the third grade.

“We know that parents want their babies to be healthy,” said Melinda Edgeman, director of Women’s Services. “To grow a healthy brain, babies need a lot of loving words. That’s what we’re encouraging through the Talk With Me Baby program. We’re excited to partner with the Community Foundation of Northwest Georgia and the Early Childhood Initiative in leading these efforts for our region!”

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Photo:

- 1) Hamilton Medical Center (HMC) is the first hospital system in Georgia to have its staff fully trained in the Talk With Me Baby program. From left are Suzanne Harbin, director of the Early Childhood Initiative in Dalton; Melinda Edgeman, director of Women's Services at HMC; Terri Woodruff, executive director of the Anna Shaw Children's Institute; and David Aft, president of the Community Foundation of Northwest Georgia.
- 2) From left are Julie King, RN; Melinda Edgeman, director of Women's Services at HMC; Cilene Boyzo Diaz, mom; and Suzanne Harbin, director of the Early Childhood Initiative in Dalton.



