

# BabyTALK

Baby TALK was “born” in Decatur, Illinois in 1986, the result of a collaboration of Decatur’s hospitals, schools, libraries, health department, community health center, and colleges. This headquarters program continues to be an active demonstration site, serving all families of young children in the Decatur area through a variety of programs and services. Local families are encouraged to call the Baby TALK office at 217.475.2234 if they have questions about programs or needs related to raising their children. Baby TALK services to families are divided into two categories: Personal and Group Encounters

## personal encounters

Hospital Obstetric Units: Baby TALK meets every family with a baby born in a Macon County hospital immediately following the birth of their baby. Time is spent sharing the celebration of the birth, talking about typical newborn behavior and issues, discovering families' needs and providing information about available services. Families are connected to additional community resources as needed. Each family is given a number of materials, including a board book, an original CD, Babies and Books A Joyous Beginning, (a book for parents) a handout about newborns and flyers about programs.

Warmline: Every family is given a magnet with the Warmline phone number (475-BABY) during the Hospital OB visit, and encouraged to call with questions, concerns or the need for referrals. Outgoing calls are made by Baby TALK staff when the baby is around 3 weeks of age.

[www.babytalk.org](http://www.babytalk.org)

Community Based Home Visitation: Families with risk factors and in need of additional support are enrolled in the Home Visitation program. Families receive 2 home visits per month and participate in group encounters. Children's development is monitored as well as families set goals according to the Individual Family Service Plan.

Prenatal Clinics: Baby TALK meets low-income parents receiving services at prenatal clinics each week at Decatur hospitals. Baby TALK staff interacts with parents throughout pregnancy, assisting them in making homemade toys for their babies, discussing parenting and family dynamics and connecting families with community resources and additional services.

Clinic Encounters: Baby TALK staff meets families in the waiting room in clinical settings including the WIC office and the pediatric clinic for those on a medical card. As funding allows, paperback books are given to children who participate. Parents receive information specific to their child's development and are screened for additional services appropriate to the need of the family.

Developmental Newsletters: Parents receive newsletters which address development and parenting issues specific to the age of their child. These come at the following ages: 2, 4, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 30 and 36 months.

# group encounters

**Lapsits:** Baby TALK staff hosts Lapsits at community sites including the library and schools. At these programs, parents and children interact with each other around a theme, including books and activities. The focus is on parent-child interaction.

**Baby TALK Times:** Baby TALK Times are small parent-child groups designed for families with children birth to three to share parenting questions and concerns, to celebrate babies' achievements and to have fun with books, toys, songs and fingerplays. Baby TALK Times take place in a variety of community sites.

**STEPS:** Baby TALK STEPS (Success Together Experiencing Play and Stimulation) is a program which provides family-centered service designed to meet individual needs of the children enrolled in the early intervention and/or the Macon County Family Literacy program. STEPS provides a blend of educational and therapy services within the context of a developmentally appropriate curriculum as families are supported in building nurturing relationships with their young children. This program includes physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy (provided by a local hospital) as well as developmental therapy and parenting provided by Baby TALK.

**Family Literacy:** Through a community collaborative effort, Family Literacy classes are provided for families with parents who did not finish high school and are working on their GED or who are learning English as a second language. Five key components are provided to every family: Adult Education, Early Childhood education, parenting, parent-child interaction and library services. Transportation and home visits are provided.

Teen Parenting Alternative Education: Decatur Public Schools and Baby TALK's Phoenix 2 Teen Parent Program provides a multi-support program for junior high and high school students who are pregnant or parenting. Baby TALK provides a daily parenting class for parents and child education for their baby birth to four years in child education classes while the parent attends their academic classes. Parents participate in Interactive Classroom where parents spend time in their child's classroom. Additional support for teen parents is provided through home visitation and transportation.

Early Head Start: (BTEHS) is designed to support families parented by teenagers in the hopes that they will continue their education, as well as develop skills and confidence to better parent their infant. Participating families receive excellent care and education for children less than three years of age, wrap-around services, encouragement and support. Families participate in the center based or home based program.

Come Sign with Me: Baby TALK offers sign language classes for babies 6 months to 24 months where the babies learn to utilize "sign language" to communicate with their parents or caregivers before they are able to communicate through verbal speech.

Kindermusik: Baby TALK offers parent-child music and movement classes using the Kindermusik curriculum.

Special Connections: Baby TALK offers a parent-child playgroup/meeting for parents with children with special needs birth through 5 years. The group is facilitated by a Baby TALK Developmental Therapist. Home Visits are available to participating families with a child birth through age 3 years.

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