Talk With Me Baby: Foster Care

Pre-Session Checklist
✓ Review and practice the materials to ensure that you are comfortable with all of the content
✓ Download the deck with videos to your computer – prior to the training
✓ Set-up room so participants can sit in tables of 4-5 foster parents per table
✓ Prepare Flip Chart Paper for small table discussions on Slide 14 and Slide 33
✓ Have a couple of spare pieces of paper on the tables for group discussions and for allowing folks to write on flip chart
✓ Prepare a nametag that you will be able to see so you can call on each participant by name
✓ Ensure videos and technology will work properly for training
✓ Print a copy of the The Talk With Me Baby Foster Care: READ Strategy and the Talk With Me Baby Foster Care Letters for foster parents attending the session
✓ Have enough envelopes and stamps for the Talk With ME Baby Letters
✓ Ask foster parents to bring their favorite books or ensure to have books available for foster parents to practice with

Welcome & Ice Breaker (10 Minutes) (Slides #1-4)

Slide #1
• Welcome everyone to the session and try to ensure that tables have an equal amount of participants

Slide #2
• TWMB is partnership of six lead organizations that are committed to ensuring that every newborn in Georgia receives essential language nutrition and has the opportunity to reach their full potential. Organizations include:
  ➢ Georgia’s Department of Public Health
  ➢ Marcus Autism Center
  ➢ Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta
  ➢ The Atlanta Speech School’s Rollins Center for Language and Literacy
  ➢ Emory University’s School of Nursing and Department of Pediatrics
  ➢ Georgia Department of Education
  ➢ Get Georgia Reading
• Initially, this partnership started with training nurses and WIC nutritionist on language nutrition strategies as they are often in direct communication with receptive new mothers.

Slide #3
• From this, Talk With Me Baby branched out to adapt the curriculum for foster parents and that initial work was funded by Amerigroup and they engaged Endurance Project Management to develop the curriculum and training module and Georgia Public Broadcasting who produced the videos.
• The Department of Child and Family Services wanted to make this content available to all of its foster families starting in March of 2018 – so they engaged Endurance Project Management to provide train the training sessions across the state.
Slide #4

- Introductions
  - Name:
    - Briefly discuss what made you interested in becoming a foster parent and how many kids/ages you are currently or have fostered previously?
    - What was your favorite childhood book or song OR what is/was your favorite book or song to read/sing to your foster child(ren)

- Thank all foster parents for their service to Georgia’s children.

Talk With Me Baby: Foster Care Training Agenda (2 Minutes) (Slide 5)

Slide #5

- TWMB: Foster Care Introductions (Already Completed)
- TWMB: Foster Care Agenda
- TWMB: Foster Care Curriculum Goals
- TWMB: Foster Care Training Goals
- TWMB: Foster Care Curriculum
  - A Framework for Understanding: Trauma, Toxic Stress & Traumatic Separation
  - The Science Behind Language Nutrition
  - Becoming a Talk With Me Baby Foster Parent
  - Becoming a Talk With Me Baby Coach
- TWMB: Foster Care Resources Available
- TWMB: Foster Care Letters
- TWMB: Foster Care Questions

Talk With Me Baby: Foster Care Curriculum Goals (2 Minutes) (Slide 6)

Slide #6

- Foster parents will increase their understanding of the critical role they play in their young foster child’s development and future school achievement
- Foster parents will increase their capacity to create supportive and responsive relationships with their young foster child through Talk With Me Baby strategies
- Foster families will use Talk With Me Baby strategies to help young foster children overcome challenges from exposure to trauma, toxic stress and traumatic separation
- Foster parents will develop the skills necessary to train biological and adoptive parents on Talk With Me Baby Strategies

Talk With Me Baby: Foster Care Training Goals (2 Minutes) (Slide 5)

Slide #7

- Foster Parents will:
Leave training with actionable skills and strategies to increase language and brain development
- Have the confidence to continue to or start to engage with biological families around language nutrition strategies
- Engage their foster child's community of caring adults to implement language nutrition strategies
- Create a safe space for foster parents to engage in dialogue with other foster parents, discuss challenges/successes around Talk With Me Baby strategies

A Framework for Understanding (15 Minutes) (Slide 8-10)

Slide #8

Start Video One: A Framework for Understanding (8:39)

Discussion Questions
- Have you seen any evidence of trauma, traumatic separation and toxic stress when working with foster children in your own home?
  ✓ There is no right or wrong answer here, some examples might be: development delay’s, failure to thrive, very little vocabulary, unable to express emotions
- Can you elaborate on how you adapted your parenting techniques to help children cope from exposure to trauma, traumatic separation and toxic stress?
  ✓ There is no right or wrong answer here, some examples might be: talk to other foster parents, try to be reassuring, keep routines/following through on statements, trying not to compare children to their own biological families etc.

Slide #9

- Georgia Specific Data 2015 – why children were removed from their how
  - 1,980 Children were removed because of neglect
    - 1,324 of those children were under the age 4
  - 1,558 Children removed because of drug abuse
    - 1,134 of those children were under the age of 4
  - 955 Children removed because of inadequate housing
    - 482 of those children were under the age of 4
- A child can be removed from their home for all three of these reasons, these numbers are not dependent on each other.
- These numbers come from the Department of Child and Family Services SHINE Data

Discussion Question
- What do these numbers say to you about the environments Georgia’s foster children are being removed from?
  ✓ Children who grow up in environments that require them to go into foster care are in environments that do not nurture brain development

Facilitation Tip #2: One of the most impactful elements to the curriculum is the dialogue had between foster families. Please encourage this and make sure to engage all foster families.
✓ More neural connects are formed in the brain during ages 0-3 and many of the children in Georgia are being placed in care during this pivotal time of brain development

**Slide #10**

**Review Key Concepts**

- 85% of neural connections are formed between the ages of 0-3
- The Three T’s (Allow participants to recall these)
  - **Trauma** can seriously disrupt important aspects of brain development that occur before the age of three
  - Exposure to prolonged **toxic stress** greatly increases the likelihood of developmental delays and later health problems in young children
  - **Traumatic separations** can occur when a child is removed from a primary caregiver or from a foster family
- Foster parents of young children have the opportunity to provide a living environment that nurtures brain development; helping children overcome exposure to trauma, toxic stress and traumatic separation

**Language Nutrition & 3rd Grade Reading Comprehension (20 Minutes) (Slides 11-15)**

**Slide #11**

Start Video Two: Language Nutrition & 3rd Grade Reading Comprehension (4:43)

**Slide #12**

- It is important to understand the current landscape of Georgia’s 3rd Grade Reading Numbers

**Discussion Question**

- On this pie chart, which color do you believe represents students in Georgia reading at a proficient level?
  - ✓ It is the pink, we know that 64% of Georgia’s 3rd graders lack the necessary vocabulary and reading comprehension skills
- The Milestones ELA assessment is the Georgia third-grade reading assessment that’s used in discerning grade-level reading proficiency. There are four possible performance levels: Beginning Learner, Developing Learning, Proficient Learner, and Distinguished Learner. The proficient and above level denotes a child who is ready to enter fourth grade reading at grade level.
- The 36% represent the students in Georgia who are recognized as a Proficient or Distinguished learner

**Slide #13**
Now let’s look at the graduation rates of students that either do not meet, meets, and exceeds 3rd grade reading scores. What does this information tell you about the importance of being on a path to look

- This content was found on the Get Georgia Reading Website

Discussion Question

- When looking at the numbers for all of Georgia’s students, where do you think foster children are? Why?
  - There is not a right or wrong answer for this question. It is mainly asked to get folks to think more in-depth about how environment

Slide #14

Small Table Discussion Questions (10 Minutes)

- Give each table a couple of pieces of paper for them to fill out their answers on and instruct them to answer question 1 or 2 and 3. Allow four minutes for them to discuss and then ask folks to write their answers on the appropriate flip chart. (5 Minute)
  1. What are components of creating a safe environment for young foster children?
  - There is no right or wrong answer for this question, examples of answers might be: healthy touch and affection, consistency, soothing environment, positive reinforcement and predictable schedule/routine
  2. What is necessary (environment/communication style etc) for a caring relationship between a young foster child and an adult?
  - There is no right or wrong answer for this question, examples of answers might be: Trust (predictability, consistency, follow through), Talk (explain what is happening), Touch (Healthy touch and affection)
  3. How can you increase the number of loving words a child hears?
  - Be intentional, narrate your day, use affirming words

- Allow for each group to share out their responses that they wrote on flip chart
- If there are multiple groups for one question, you can have them add anything to the existing list that might have been left off.

Slide #15

Review Key Concepts

- The quality of a child’s early environment and experiences robustly determine the strength of their brain’s foundation
- Without consistent exposure to language between birth to the age of three, babies may experience diminished potential to develop:
- A robust vocabulary
- Critical thinking skills
- Abstract thought
- Strong foundation for literacy

- Language Nutrition is received through language – rich adult-child interactions that are robust in both quantity and quality
- Providing a safe environment and using language nutrition can increase the potential of success in a child’s academic future.

**Video Three: Becoming a Talk With Me Baby: Foster Parent (10 Minutes) (Slides 13 & 14)**

**Slide #16**

Start Video Three: Parentese, Serve & Return, Conversational Partnership (4:32)

**Discussion Questions (5 Minutes)**

- How can foster parent increase the number of serve & return interactions with a young foster child?
  - ✓ Throughout different parts of the child’s routine (bath time, bed time, getting ready for the day etc.)
  - ✓ Remember that children that are non-verbal will use social cues as a form of social cues
- What social cues have you observed in your own foster child that has caused you to adapt your parenting technique?
  - ✓ There is no right answer for this question, we are mainly looking for foster parents to share examples of social cues.

**Slide #17**

**Facilitation Tip #6**: For these group of key concepts, ask the audience the questions and that confirm their correct answer. This should go quickly.

- What is Language Nutrition?
  - ✓ Early exposure to language sets the foundation for cognitive ability, literacy, school readiness & achievement
- What is Serve & Return:
  - ✓ Back and forth communication between a child and an adult; it allows for direct attention to a child and enables neural connections to form in their brain
- What is Parentese:
  - ✓ Child directed speech and includes speaking in short, simple and complete sentences, repeating words or sentences multiple time and using well-formed, elongated constants and vowels; it allows for communication with a child to be more meaningful than “baby talk”
- What are some examples Social Cues?
  - ✓ Facial expressions, body language, voice pitch and tone and personal space; it is important to recognize and respond appropriately to a child’s social cues

**Slide #18**
• The Center for Disease Control has great resources to help caretakers of children to understand various developmental milestones.
• The milestones that they have information on are Social and Emotional, Language and Communication, Cognitive (Learning, Thinking, and Problem Solving) and Movement and Physical Development.
• They have developmental checklists starting at 2 months an APP and tips for what to do if the child is behind.

**Video Four: Becoming a Talk With Me Baby: Foster Parent CONT. (35 Minutes) (Slides 15-27)**

*Slide #19*

**Video 4: Increasing the Number of Loving Words & How to Use Technology effectively (7:37)**

*Slide #20*

**Scenarios (10 Minutes)**
• Assign each table a scenario and have this discuss the way they would increase the number of loving words a child hears throughout the day. (5 minutes)
  1. Your 2-year-old foster child is getting ready for a bath; can you think through ways to increase the number of loving words the child hears?
  2. Your 10-month old foster child is sitting in their high chair while you prepare dinner for the family, can you think through ways to increase the number of loving words the child hears?
  3. You and your 4-year old child are on a nature walk, how can you increase the number of loving words your child hears during this adventure?
✓ We are looking for foster parents to be able to discuss how they would TALK, SING, READ, PLAY with their young foster child.
• Allow each table to present out their responses
• You can allow groups that worked on the same scenario to present after each other and just add additional ideas they came up with.

*Slide #20*

• There are some great resources on how to increase the number of loving words a child hears through Interactive Storytime. One approach is the READ Strategy that was created by the Atlanta Speech School. **This strategy allows foster parents to read with their foster child instead of to their foster child.**
• The READ Strategy:
  o Repeat the book
  o Engage and enjoy
  o Ask open-ended questions
  o Do More with the Book

*Facilitation Tip #7: Select a book that you know well to show examples of how you would use the READ Strategy*

*Slide #22*

• Repeat the Book
Read the book several times over the course of 3-5 days
- Repeated reads allow you to focus on different components of the story during each read
  - Key events or elements of story
  - Characters’ emotions/thoughts
  - Note: with some books (e.g., a board book about shapes), there might not be plot or character components to discuss. That’s OK! During repeated reads, you can hone in on specific elements of the book
- As appropriate, let the child tell the story using their own words

**Slide #23**
- Engage and Enjoy
  - Have fun with the book! Enjoy reading with your child and make it more engaging for them (e.g., use theatrics)
  - Be sure to point at or explain ideas and pictures as you read

**Slide #24**
- Ask Questions
  - Try to strike a balance between closed (e.g., “What color is the barn?”) and open-ended (e.g., “Why do you think the boy is sad?”) questions
    - Closed questions are the “what” and “who” types of questions that typically require a 1-2 word response, whereas open-ended questions are more often the “how” and “why” questions that encourage longer, language-rich responses
  - As appropriate, model responses to open-ended questions for children with less expressive language

**Slide #25**
- Do More with the Book
  - Connect ideas from the book to the child’s life
    - These can be simple connections:
      - For example: “That boy has a pet dog just you like you. What do you do to take care of your dog?”
  - Or more complex or extensive activities, such as a craft activity or going on a “field trip” related to book content

**Slide #26**

**Practice the READ Strategy**
- Ask participants to select a book, either one that they brought from home or one that was provided for them
- Ask participants to review the book for 2-3 minutes and identify a page where they can incorporate the READ Strategy and think how they would read with their foster child.
- After 3 minutes give tables a few minutes to practice their understanding of the READ strategy
As foster parents are practicing the READ strategy, look for evidence of the following:

- Appropriate inflection, tone, and animation
- Finding opportunities to ask open-ended questions
- Drawing attention to relevant vocabulary, including modeling more advanced Tier 2 words
- Consider appropriate extension activities

Provide an option for one or two participants to demonstrate the READ Strategy

**Discussion Questions**

- Ask foster parents to report out to the group by asking some of the following questions:
  - What was difficult about this process?
    - We are just looking for foster parents to talk about this experience and how it might be different than what they do at home.
  - How might this process look different for an infant, toddler, and preschooler?
    - There is not a right or wrong answer for this, but some examples might be
      - For an infant, it is important to have books that they can touch, hold, chew on etc.
      - For a toddler, it is important to remember that they don’t have to finish the whole story in one sitting
      - For a preschooler- let them tell you the story using the pictures

**Slide #27**

**Discussion Question**

- What characteristics might you look for when selecting books for interactive reading with young children?
  - There is no right or wrong answer here, we are just looking for foster parents to start thinking about age appropriate books

**Slide #28**

- Here are some things to look for when selecting books for children 0-2:
  - Bright, colorful illustrations that depict scenes or objects that interest the child
  - Books/pages the child can touch and hold (age-appropriateness)
  - Books with familiar objects, items, or actions that child and caregiver can relate to and discuss
  - Books about counting, the alphabet, shapes, or sizes that allow for caregiver to make connections to similar items/concepts in the child’s world

**Slide #29**

- And for children ages 3-5:
  - Topics or themes that interest the child
  - A range of both fiction and non-fiction selections
  - Engaging pictures that support the text and allow opportunities to discuss relevant vocabulary
Books that allow children to think about the experiences of others— their feelings, thoughts, and beliefs

Sophisticated story books that encourage readers to infer the problem in the story. These books often include more complex plots, settings, and characters that allow children to begin to understand these important components of story comprehension.

If a caregiver (birth or biological family member) is struggling to read the words on the page, it is important to remind them that they don’t have to read the story just as it is. You can tell stories from the photos on the page, that is just as impactful.

Slide #30*

Review Key Concepts

What are four of the key ways identified to increase the number of loving words your foster child hears?

- Talking: Greeting, Narrating, Telling Stories, Asking Questions, Discussing feelings and emotions
- Reading: Make it a part of your daily routine, Tie in themes from books into everyday life., Ask open ended questions and Allow the child to tell you a story based on photos
- Singing: Use songs to help establish bedtime routines and calm a child when they are upset throughout the day
- Playing: Spend time daily playing with young children and connect themes or objectives from the child’s favorite book

It is important to note that if a child’s biological or foster family speaks in a different language, you can speak to the child in the “home” language. It is important to speak in the language that the adult is most comfortable in.

Slide #31

Use media together:
- Talk about what you are watching,
- Ask questions to engage their thinking skills,
- Get the child moving whenever possible
- Make connections between the screen and the real world

Video Four: Becoming a Talk With Me Baby Coach (40 Minutes) (Slides 28-32)

Slide #32

Show Video Five: Building a Relationship with the foster child’s biological family (14:30)

Discussion Questions

- What are your experiences with building a relationship with the biological family?
  - There is no right or wrong answer for this. We are mainly looking for foster parents to share their experiences.
Small Table Discussions (10 Minutes)

- Give each table a piece of flip chart paper and instruct them to answer one of the questions below. Allow five minutes for them to discuss and write down answers (5 Minute)
  1. What are some additional ways to build a relationship/additional boundary that you could use with the biological family?

✓ We are looking for foster parents to list out additional boundaries and tools that they have used to build a relationship with the biological family examples might be: different phone numbers, email addresses, show up at the first meeting with a list of questions and ensure the biological family that you are there to support them etc.

2. What are some ways that you have or think that you could use teachable moments with a child’s biological family around Language Nutrition Strategies?

✓ During visitation, when talking about the child’s routine, allow for biological families to video chat or talk before bedtime etc.

- Allow for each group to share out their responses and hang their flip chart paper on the wall for everyone to see.
- If there are multiple groups for one question, you can have them add anything to the existing list that might have been left off.

Slide #34

Review Key Concepts

- Tips for building a relationship with the child’s family:
  - Assure the child’s family that you are there to support and work with them
  - Establish communication boundaries and know what information you are willing to share
  - Prepare for the first meeting with a list of questions
  - Update the child’s family on developmental milestones and successes
  - Allow the child’s family to provide input on medical and other major decisions

Slide #35

- What are some of the benefits of building a relationship with a birth parent?
  - Foster the families capacity to help the child grow and succeed in life
  - Become a natural mentor and model appropriate behavior
  - Increase the number of opportunities for teachable moments
  - Allow for additional visitations at doctors’ appointments, sporting events, fun outings etc.
  - Continue to engage with the family after reunification

- Additional Note: Just because courts say that children and biological families cannot communicate, it does not mean that the foster parent and the biological families can’t communicate.

Slide #36

Video Six: I do. We do. You do. (4:50)
Slide #37

**Review of Key Concepts**

- Use the I do. We do. You Do. Method to show the child’s family or adoptive parents how to:
  - Speak in Parentese
  - Use serve and return
  - Increase the number of loving words through talking, reading, singing and playing
  - Effectively use media and technology
- Encourage all adults in the child’s life to use Talk With Me Baby strategies to foster healthy brain development

Slide #38

- There are some great resources available to foster parents and parents to aid in building language and vocabulary.
- Two APPS that are available on both the Google Play and Apple store, they send you daily updates and reminders to Talk With Your Baby
  - Vroom
  - Hablame Babe
- Ready4KGA
  - Developed by educational researchers, Ready4KGA is an evidence-based text messaging program for parents of newborns, 1-, 2-, 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds provided at no cost that are customized for Georgia. Each week, you will receive fun facts and easy tips to boost your child’s learning.
- CDCs Developmental Milestones tools and resources
- READ GUIDE - Printed Resource that reminds you of how to use the READ Strategy

Slide #39

- In an effort to encourage and remind you to use the Talk With Me Baby: Foster Care strategies with your young foster child – we are going to have you write down your answer to three questions and then fill out the self-addressed envelope and we will mail these to you 30 days after the trainings.
- This is just a brief way to remind you of the strategies you learned today
- Three questions:
  - What strategies from the Talk With Me Baby: Foster Care are you going to implement with your young foster children?
  - What steps are you going to take to try and become a Talk With Me Baby Coach to your young foster child’s biological family.
  - What concept of the Talk With Me Baby: Foster Care training was most impactful to you?

Slide #40

**Discussion Questions**

- We have covered a lot of material today, is there anything that you have additional questions about?