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FIRST LADY CHIRLANE MCCRAY, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON AND DEPUTY MAYOR RICHARD BUERY ANNOUNCE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

McCray and Clinton jointly launch City's 'Talk To Your Baby, Their Brain Depends On It' campaign, baby book bundle distribution in collaboration with Too Small to Fail

Health Department to send new parents weekly texts with coaching tips on supporting child language skills and emotional well-being

Partnership with Scholastic Inc. to donate \$1.5 million in books to be included in 200,000 baby book bundles to new families

NEW YORK—First Lady Chirlane McCray, former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Deputy Mayor Richard Buery today announced a collaboration between the New York City Children’s Cabinet and Too Small to Fail urging parents to talk, read and sing to their babies from birth. The “Talk To Your Baby, Their Brain Depends On It” initiative will feature major public awareness campaigns and a new partnership with Scholastic Inc. to distribute baby book bundles to hundreds of thousands of new NYC parents.

These efforts will focus on closing the “word gap.” Studies have found that by age four, children in middle and upper income families hear 30 million more words than their lower-income peers. This disparity in hearing words from parents and caregivers translates directly into a disparity in learning words. And that puts our children born with the fewest advantages even further behind.

“This is a conversation we want to have with as many people as we possibly can reach because everybody needs to be creative and smart about how we better prepare our kids for the future,” said **Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton**.

“It is truly a joy working with Scholastic to provide hundreds of thousands of families with a Baby Book Bundle,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “Some of my happiest memories as a mother involve reading Chiara and Dante a story, singing them a song, or just telling them how much I loved them. Now, thanks to modern science, we understand why these traditions are so important. When we talk, read and sing to our babies, we are building their brains and strengthening their bond with us. Now, in partnership with Scholastic and Too Small to Fail, we are helping families, parents and children across the city build the foundation for a healthy and happy life together.”

“On behalf of the 24 city agencies and mayoral offices that are part of the NYC Children’s Cabinet, I’m proud to support this administration’s focus on early childhood development in the Talk To Your Baby campaign,” said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives, Richard Buery**. “A baby’s brain grows so rapidly between birth and age 3 that what happens during those early years truly lays the foundation for future learning

and development. When we talk about how to reduce inequality and close the achievement gap – two priorities for this administration – our focus can and should start with birth.”

“As we strive to ‘Open a World of Possible’ for every child in New York City and around the globe, ensuring all children have access to books at an early age is a critical first step,” said **Greg Worrell, President of the Scholastic Classroom and Community Group**. “Scholastic is honored to work with leaders and organizations such as First Lady McCray, Secretary Clinton, Reach Out and Read, Too Small to Fail, and the City of New York to ensure parents not only know how important literacy is from day one, but they have their first book to read aloud to their child.”

“We are thrilled to be teaming up with Scholastic Inc. and Too Small To Fail on this important initiative,” said **Gabrielle Fialkoff, Director of the NYC Mayor’s Office of Strategic Partnerships and Senior Advisor to the Mayor**, “In partnership with Scholastic Inc., 200,000 of the newest and neediest New Yorkers will receive three books, helping them develop home libraries from a very young age. We are also especially grateful to include Too Small to Fail’s ‘Talking is Teaching: Family Moments – Talking Reading, Singing Together,’ family resource guide developed in partnership with Sesame Street to encourage early childhood language development.”

Secretary Clinton also announced the launch of Too Small to Fail’s “Talking is Teaching Community Campaign Guide,” a how-to roadmap for local leaders across the country to initiate and enhance on-the-ground efforts to help close the word gap and boost young children’s early brain development. The “Talking Is Teaching Community Campaign Guide” was developed by Too Small to Fail and is designed to inform local efforts underway across the country, as well as the one launched today New York City. The Guide is designed to help communities plan and implement community-level efforts. It draws upon the success of and lessons learned from Tulsa, OK, and Oakland, CA, where Too Small to Fail has launched local campaigns.

The “Talk To Your Baby, Their Brain Depends On It” public awareness campaign, aimed at promoting ‘attachment parenting’ and early brain development among children ages zero to three, will include online resources with information and tips for parents and caregivers, subway advertisements and digital outreach. Materials will promote a new texting program administered by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene that will provides parents and caregivers of young children with once-a-week texts with coaching tips and information relating to language development, attachment-encouraging behavior and socio-emotional health. This public awareness campaign is made possible through a book donation worth \$1.5 million contributed from Scholastic Inc., to be included in 200,000 Baby Book Bundles – to be distributed over the next two years to families with children ages zero to three through City agencies and the Reach Out and Read program – encouraging parents to talk, read and sing to their babies.

The Baby Book Bundles will be distributed through the nationally recognized Reach Out and Read program and at the Administration for Children’s Services EarlyLearn Centers. The Reach Out and Read program distributes books through registered pediatricians to visiting caregivers of babies under two years old, and serves 85 percent of children born in New York City whose parents received public assistance – comprising approximately 64,000 families. Book bundles will also be distributed to another 12,000 children ages two to three through the Administration for Children’s Services EarlyLearn Centers, which serve some of the city’s neediest children.

Learn more at: www.nyc.gov/talktoyourbaby

About Talk to Your Baby:

“Talk to Your Baby” Public Awareness Campaign will launch on April 1st:

- Advertisements will run in the NYC subway from April 6th through May 31st
- Public service announcements will run on Taxi TV from April 6th – 20th

- The Children’s Cabinet is launching a Talk to Your Baby website with educational films, information and advice for promoting early language development to parents and caregivers.
- The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene is launching a texting service. Parents and caregivers who sign up will receive weekly text messages with info and tips for promoting secure attachment and early childhood brain development.

200,000 free baby book bundles for new parents and caregivers in NYC:

- First Lady Chirlane McCray worked with Scholastic Inc. to develop an original baby book donated by Scholastic, called Love is NYC, specifically for NYC babies and infants.
- Bundles will include Too Small to Fail’s “Talking is Teaching” resource for families, created in partnership with Sesame Street
- In partnership with Scholastic Inc., two additional children’s books will be provided. These donated titles will supplement books distributed through the existing Reach Out and Read program.
- Parents and caregivers will also receive an invitation to sign up for NYC’s early childhood development text messaging campaign.
- All books and resources are available in English and Spanish.

Book bundle distribution:

- 80,000 book bundles each year will be distributed through Reach Out and Read and at NYC Administration for Child Services EarlyLearn sites
- Reach Out and Read is an evidence-based nonprofit organization of medical providers who promote early literacy and school readiness in pediatric exam rooms nationwide by integrating children’s books and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud into well-child visits.
- Reach Out and Read serves 85 percent of the children who receive public assistance at birth in New York City.
- An additional 20,000 books per year will be distributed through other City agencies.
- Toolkits will be distributed for the next two years, beginning in summer 2015.

About New York City Children’s Cabinet:

The public awareness campaign and toolkit distribution are programs of the New York City Children’s Cabinet with support from the Mayor’s Office for Strategic Partnerships. In April 2014, Mayor Bill de Blasio announced the creation of the New York City Children’s Cabinet, a multi-agency initiative to bolster communication among city agencies and develop strategies for a holistic approach to a child’s safety and well-being. The New York City Children’s Cabinet is chaired by Richard Buery, the Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives. The Cabinet is composed of commissioners and directors from 24 different city agencies and mayoral offices. The Cabinet’s structure provides a space for leaders of multiple city agencies to identify and analyze individual and common areas of work that impact children’s safety and well-being.

About Too Small to Fail:

Too Small to Fail, a joint initiative of the Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation and Next Generation, aims to help parents, communities and businesses take meaningful actions to improve the health and well-being of children ages zero to five, so that more of America’s children are prepared to succeed in the 21st century.

Too Small to Fail is focusing its work on closing the “word gap.” Studies have found that by age four, children in middle- and upper-income families hear 30 million more words than their lower-income peers. This disparity in hearing words from parents and caregivers translates directly into a disparity in learning words. And that puts our children born with the fewest advantages even further behind. Among those born in 2001, only 48 percent of lower-income children started school ready to learn, compared to 75 percent of children from middle-income families. The “word gap” is a significant but solvable challenge. Too Small to Fail is about parents, caregivers,

other concerned individuals, and the private sector coming together to take small, research-based actions with big impacts.

Learn more at www.toosmall.org and on Twitter @2SmalltoFail.

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