Background
Research demonstrates that infancy and early childhood are critical times for brain development and vocabulary acquisition, both of which contribute to later academic performance, health and well-being. Studies also show that early language engagement among primary caregivers and infants and young children form important lasting bonds. (1, 2) Early language engagement may also promote brain development, school readiness or language acquisition. According to the Healthy Children Policy Group (3), researchers have found that early language engagement among primary caregivers and infants and young children form important lasting bonds.

Methods
This evaluation assesses the impact of the primary care intervention through interviews of parents and caregivers receiving the intervention. The chief purpose of the study was to measure the impact of the intervention on parents/caregivers' knowledge and practices. Eligible parents/caregivers included individuals living in Alameda County with infants and toddlers ages 2-24 months receiving a well child visit at the primary care clinic. Interviews were conducted just prior to well child visits during which the intervention took place to establish baseline, immediately following the visit to determine what was learned during that visit, and 4-24 weeks after the intervention to assess developmental changes since the last well child visit (not shown), one quarter learned that talking, reading and singing helps brain development and one in five learned that babies can comprehend and/or learn more than they knew. Weeks after the well child visit, nearly half of parents/caregivers recalled that the pediatrician previously told them that talking, reading and singing promotes brain development.

Results
New Information Learned from Doctor
- N=120
- Talking, reading, and singing helps brain development: 25%
- Taking, reading, and singing is important: 17%
- Baby can comprehend more than I knew: 17%
- Reading is important: 18%
- Talk, read, sing more often: 18%
- Other: 8%

What the Caregiver Recalls of the Doctor's Message from Last Visit
- N=158
- Talking, reading, and singing promotes brain development: 32%
- It's good to talk, read, and sing: 12%
- It's good to begin talking, reading, and singing early: 16%
- Other: 8%

Child's Developmental Changes Noticed by Caregiver
- N=182
- Child talks more/has larger vocabulary: 48%
- Child is more aware/interactive: 42%
- Child sings/speaks more: 14%
- Child enjoys reading: 11%
- Child reads more: 10%
- Child happens/smiles more: 6%
- Child likes to sing/dance more: 5%
- Child talks more: 5%
- Child understands more/learns more: 9%
- Child/caregiver bond strengthened: 16%
- Other: 15%

Caregiver/Child Relationship Changes Noticed by Caregiver
- N=150
- Child happier/smiles more: 10%
- Child more attentive/more communicative: 27%
- Child reads more: 6%
- Child talks more: 6%
- Child likes to sing/dance more: 11%
- Child/caregiver bond strengthened: 16%
- Other: 19%

Discussion and Conclusion
Early findings from an evaluation of Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing – Oakland suggest a positive effect of parent/caregiver exposure to messages about the value of early interactions delivered by pediatricians, along with the distribution of supportive materials. Of the 59% of parents/caregivers who reported immediately after the well-child visit that they learned new information from the physician (not shown), one quarter learned that talking, reading and singing helps brain development and one in five learned that babies can comprehend and/or learn more than they knew. Weeks after the well child visit, nearly half of parents/caregivers recalled that the pediatrician previously told them that talking, reading and singing helps brain development. Additional results are preliminary but suggest that pediatricians may be effective messengers of this important information. As early results from an ongoing study, these findings are forthcoming.

References

Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing – Oakland: Early Evaluation Findings
Dana Hughes, DrPH, MSUP; Jasmine Pettis, MPH - University of California, San Francisco
Dayna Long, MD, FAAP – UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital Oakland

Child is more aware/interactive
Child repeats words/talks back
Child is more aware/interactive
Other

Baby can comprehend more than I knew
Reading is important
Talk, read, sing more often
Other

It's good to talk, read, and sing
It's good to begin talking, reading, and singing early
Other

Child talks more/has larger vocabulary
Child is more aware/interactive
Child sings/speaks more
Child enjoys reading
Child repeats words/talks back
Child is more aware/interactive
Child sings/speaks more
Child enjoys reading
Child repeats words/talks back
Other