

2025 ANNUAL REPORT





BabyTALK

connect • engage • strengthen • reflect

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear Baby TALK Community,

As I reflect on 2025, I am filled with gratitude, humility, and hope for the future of Baby TALK. This year has been one of transition, growth, and continued commitment to the children and families we serve each day.

While I joined the Baby TALK team in September of 2025, it did not take long to recognize the incredible heart behind this organization. Stepping into the role of Executive Director has been both an honor and a responsibility that I do not take lightly. From our dedicated staff and volunteers to our partners, donors, board members, and the families who place their trust in us, I have witnessed firsthand the passion and purpose that drive this mission forward every day.

Throughout 2025, our team continued to show resilience, innovation, and compassion. Together, we strengthened relationships with families, expanded meaningful partnerships, supported our community through challenges, and remained deeply focused on our mission of positively impacting child development by nurturing healthy and responsive relationships during the critical early years.

This year also marked continued growth and success within our statewide and national Baby TALK training efforts. Through our Learning Institute and training partnerships, we had the opportunity to support organizations across Illinois and throughout the country as they work alongside families to build, strengthen, and cultivate healthy relationships. It is inspiring to see communities embracing relationship-based practices that empower parents, caregivers, and children alike. As more organizations seek meaningful ways to support families during the earliest years of life, Baby TALK continues to serve as both a trusted model and a collaborative partner in that important work.

What gives me the greatest hope for the future is the people behind this mission. I see a team that cares deeply. I see communities willing to come together to support children and families. I see opportunities to continue growing our impact locally, statewide, and nationally. And most importantly, I see children thriving because caring adults chose to invest in them.

As we look ahead, I am excited about what is possible for Baby TALK. We remain committed to innovation, quality, relationship-based support, and ensuring every family feels seen, valued, and supported. There is important work ahead, but I am confident that together, we will continue building a stronger future for children and families in our community and beyond.

Thank you for believing in our mission and for being part of the Baby TALK story. Your support, encouragement, and partnership make this work possible.

With gratitude and hope,


Rachel Strode
- Executive Director

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MISSION AND FOUNDATION



Purpose: Relationships in the earliest years matter and community systems are key to providing opportunities for all children and families to reach their full potential.

Mission: To positively impact child development by nurturing healthy and responsive relationships during the critical early years.

Vision: We envision a society in which all families are engaged in trustworthy relationships to ensure child well-being and positive outcomes for families.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Amy Malone
Baby TALK, Inc.
Decatur, IL
(Ex-Officio Director)

Jennifer Beals
FORVIS
Decatur, IL
(President)

Paul Willis
Decatur, IL
(Vice President)

Dan McGuire
McGuire, Yuhas, Huffman &
Buckley PC
Decatur, IL
(Treasurer)

Rae Reed
Refugee One
Decatur, IL
(Secretary)

Michael Karunas
Decatur, IL
(Past President)

MEMBERS

Julie Bilbrey
Decatur Memorial
Hospital Foundation

Adelicia Brienzo
Illinois Resource Center

Kim Carlson
Decatur Earthmover
Credit Union

Miriah de Matos
AAP-CA3

Jaime Garibay
Birth to Five Illinois

Katie Gross
Retired, Decatur
Public Library

Rachel Power
Empowerment

Melissa Ridenour
ADM

Dr. Tricia Scerba
Crossing Healthcare

Trevon Sylvester
Michael Best Strategies

Chidiebere Wachukwu
Wachukwu Law, LLC

Melverta Wilkins
Sista Girls & Friends

Briana Wright
Lu Rocha Counseling
Services

Rebekah Zuniga
EnRich Healthcare



EARLY HEAD START POLICY COUNCIL

Policy Council is a group of Early Head Start parents and community members who help lead and make decisions about the Baby TALK Early Head Start Program. **THANK YOU POLICY COUNCIL.**



PARENT POLICY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Rachel Power - Parent - Rm. 10
(Policy Council Parent Liaison for the Board of Directors)
James Olsen - Parent - Rm. 11
Sherri Wood - Parent - Rm. 7
Sam Selvey - Parent - Rm. 8
Dorris Jones - Parent - Rm. 10
Kasey Holt - Parent - Rm. 12
Kira Sarver - Parent - R. 10 & 14

COMMUNITY POLICY COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES

Paul Willis
Chairperson

Daciena Simmons
Dove/Homeward Bound Children's Specialist

Robbie Rawls
Foster Grandparent



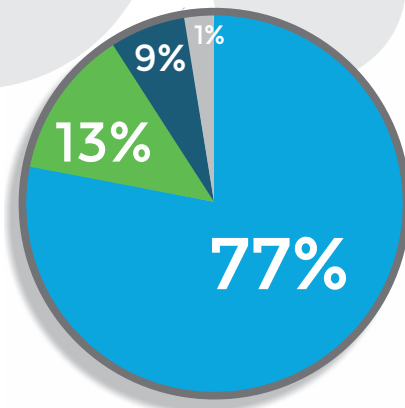
FINANCIAL SUMMARY FY 2025

Baby TALK, Inc. proposed a \$6,147,048.00 budget for FY25. Baby TALK successfully raised \$4,074,943 from available federal, state, local grants, investments and contributions from community partners. Baby TALK Learning Institute brought in \$179,259 through training and membership revenue.

Prevention Initiative funding through the Illinois State Board of Education remained level-funded (since 2018) and will continue through the spring of 2027. There may be opportunities to expand center-based services, however, no additional money has been awarded for currently funded slots.

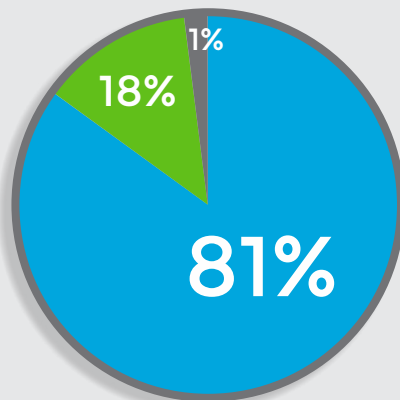
Decatur local programming submitted the new Early Head Start baseline grant in 2025. The grant was approved for a five year cycle. Baby TALK was awarded \$3,008,473 for calendar year 2025. No cost of living adjustment was awarded by the Department of Health & Human Services.

Baby TALK's fiscal year 2025 financial audit had no material weaknesses identified. Baby TALK qualifies as a low-risk auditee.



GRANT UTILIZATION

■ Salaries & Benefits 77% ■ Supplies & Materials 9%
■ Occupancy 13% ■ Staff Development 1%

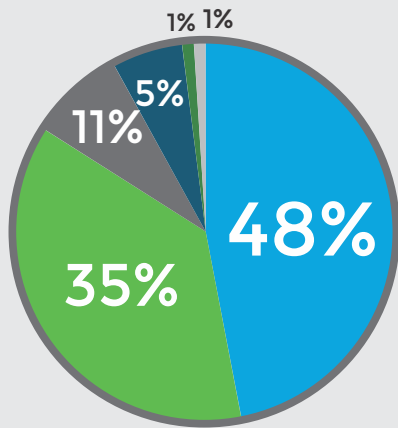


SALARIES

■ Program Services 81%
■ Management and General 18%
■ Fund Raising 1%

COMMUNITY, CORPORATE & FOUNDATION GIFTS

MAJOR FUNDING SOURCES & COMPOSITION OF BABY TALK, INC



Baby TALK receives funding from various sources every fiscal year. Out of the total 3.83M, over 48% of the funds were received from the Early Head Start Program, over 35% from the Illinois State Board of Education, and 9% from the Start Early partnership.

In addition, Baby TALK received support from the Illinois Secretary of State for Adult Education and Family Literacy program, as well as from the Illinois Department of Human Services for our early intervention program.

- Early Head Start Program 48%
- ISBE Early Childhood Prevention Initiative 35%
- ISBE Early Childhood Training & Technical Assistance 11%
- IL Secretary of State 1%
- IDHS Early Intervention 1%
- Other 5%

In addition to the Federal and State funds, Baby TALK also thanks our community partners for monetary donations. Baby TALK received donations from United Way of Mid-Illinois, Decatur Memorial Health, as well as private community donations.



COMMUNITY IMPACT

OUTREACH

- Baby TALK Times
- Community Parades
- Community Trunk or Treat
- Wellness Fairs
- Momma TALK
- Newborn Encounters
- Warmline

CHILD'S HEALTH

Screenings

225 Vision and Hearing

97 Dental



CENTER-BASED PROGRAMMING

Early Care & Education

159 Children

Family Literacy

30 Adults

23 Children

1 Graduates

Foundations

14 Teens

11 Children

6 Grads

STEPS

34 Children



Home Visiting

12 Early Head Start Families

159 Prevention Initiative Families

COMMUNITY IMPACT

AVERAGE MONTHLY EARLY HEAD START ENROLLMENT

January	84	August	86
February	80	September	79
March	77	October	83
April	74	November	82
May	74	December	79
June	81		
July	79		

**100% of the 104 children served in Early Head Start were eligible*

2025 PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

- Policy Council Meetings
- Family Fun Times
- Socializations
- Surveys
- Parent Committees
- Celebration Walks
- Parent Appreciation Event
- Block Party
- Pumpkin Patch
- Volunteer Week

SCHOOL READINESS GOALS

- Children will demonstrate positive approaches to learning
- Children will regulate their own emotions and behaviors
- Children will listen to and understand increasingly complex language
- Children will use language to express thoughts and needs
- Children will remember and connect experiences
- Children will use images and symbols to represent something not present
- Children will demonstrate fine motor strength and coordination
- Children will demonstrate balancing skills
- Children will demonstrate knowledge of print and its uses

Baby TALK'S LEARNING INSTITUTE

4406+

CHILDREN SERVED

4065+

FAMILIES SERVED



Coming Alongside
families who speak...

English, Spanish, Arabic, Swahili, Japanese, Catoneese, Urdu, Malayalam, Telugu, Portuguese, Russian, Assyrian, Bulgarian, Polis, Nepali, Bengali, French, African, Amharic, Turkish, Hindi, Urdu, Persian(Farsi), Haitian Creole, Lingala, Rohingya, Burmese, Kinyarwanda, Dari, Pashto, Malayalam, Mandingo, Yoruba, Cantonese, Pashto, Q'anjob'al (Kanjobal) Farsi, French, Hindi, Indonesian, Kache, Kanjobal, Pashto, Tamil, Urdu, Uzbek, Burnese, Yoruba, Korean and Bosnian.

TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

50

Programs Achieved Baby
TALK's Home Visiting Quality
Confirmation Status

645

Training Participants



INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

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Decatur, Illinois 62526-9344
PH: (217) 875-2655
FAX: (217) 875-1660
www.mckcpa.com

The Board of Directors
Baby TALK, Inc.
Decatur, Illinois

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Baby TALK, Inc. (a nonprofit organization), which comprise the statements of financial position as of June 30, 2025 and 2024, and the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Baby TALK, Inc. as of June 30, 2025 and 2024, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of Baby TALK, Inc. and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Responsibilities of Management/or the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair representation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Baby TALK, Inc.'s ability to continue as a going concern within one year after the date that the financial statements are available to be issued.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards* will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and *Government Auditing Standards*, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Baby TALK, Inc.'s internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about Baby TALK, Inc.'s ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Supplementary Information

Our audit was conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The accompanying schedules of revenues and expenditures - Early Head Start grant, consolidated year-end financial report, and schedule of expenditures of federal awards, as required by Title 2 U.S. *Code of Federal Regulations* Part 200, *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards*, are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the information is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with Government Auditing Standards, we have also issued our report dated January 21, 2026, on our consideration of Baby TALK, Inc.'s internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of Baby TALK, Inc.'s internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering Baby TALK, Inc.'s internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

MCK CPAs & Advisors

Decatur, Illinois January 21, 2026

THANK YOU!



Baby TALK thanks our 57 volunteers who gave over 2037 hours of their time and talents over the past year. We also thank our generous donors and sponsors. We truly appreciate your support in providing high-quality programming in support of our children and families.

You are making a Difference in a child's life!





BabyTALK
connect • engage • strengthen • reflect

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