



Dear FIRST Program Community Partners,

The FIRST program is a community outreach of the JMU Speech-Language Clinic for *typically developing* infants ages 6-12 months and their caregivers. Families join us for a series of visits that focus on discovering new ways to engage babies in communication using a few key strategies called the **3Ts: Tune In, Talk More, Take Turns**. Families are empowered to use these strategies through large group interactive discussions, small groups with other parents and in individualized one-on-one sessions with graduate student coaches. Topics relevant to the first year of life, such as feeding, sleep, attachment, and motor development, are included with a focus on using the activities of everyday life as opportunities for enriched communication with infants.

The FIRST research team is excited to share with you our plan for offering a new round of FIRST programming in April and May 2023. We hope to enroll participants with infants **6-12 months old** who specifically meet our criteria for low socioeconomic status. Eligible families must have **less than a 4 year degree post high school and qualify for some form of public assistance** (ex. Medicaid, WIC or FAMIS). Over our four years of offering the FIRST Program we have obtained promising data about the impact of this initiative on children, caregivers, and our graduate clinicians. We are focused in this programming year on building our research base specifically for low SES families.

This program is entirely FREE and families are provided with meals, diapers, age-appropriate children's books, childcare for older siblings during the program, and gift cards for participation. Additionally, each family who completes the program will have the chance to win an iPad. These incentives are in addition to developmental evaluations at 3 different time intervals, education regarding best practices for interaction with babies, and a chance to practice these skills with graduate clinician coaches.

At this time, we continue to require families to be proficient with spoken English although use of interpreters is another primary goal as we expand in future years.

Families should enroll by contacting the FIRST research team at:
540-255-0881 or harbicsc@jmu.edu

We are happy to answer any questions or receive any feedback you might have to help us enroll families in this program. Thank you for your interest and support!

Sincerely,
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