



Media Contacts: Agency Creative  
Susan Friedman  
[sfriedman@agencycreative.com](mailto:sfriedman@agencycreative.com)  
Cell: 214-674-2953

Suzanne Flodin  
[sflodin@agencycreative.com](mailto:sflodin@agencycreative.com)  
Cell: 214-500-4289

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## **DFW Hospital Council and City of Dallas Launch Initiative to Grow Little Minds**

*Unique program shares information to inspire parents, help babies*

DALLAS/FT. WORTH – Hospitals of the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council and the City of Dallas launched an initiative inspired by Dallas Mayor Mike Rawlings to encourage new parents to promote their child’s brain development. **Growing Little Minds** is a free program that highlights simple steps that can be taken at home during the child’s first 12 months of life to foster and promote brain development in infants and toddlers. Instruction is hosted on the initiative’s website, [www.growinglittleminds.com](http://www.growinglittleminds.com), and is also shared through social media and in local hospitals.

“We have an unprecedented opportunity to share information with parents that will impact North Texas for the better,” said Mayor Mike Rawlings. “These infants’ brains are the future of our city and our region. Let’s do everything possible to empower parents to make a difference in their kids’ lives.”

Through the 88 member hospitals of the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council, new parents can be connected to the free online resource that helps guide them in their child’s brain development. The web site provides recommendations from experts of what activities to do from zero to three months, three to six months, six to nine months, and nine to twelve months, as well as child development milestones for each age category.

“For more than 45 years, the council has served to unite North Texas hospital and industry leaders with the goal of advancing quality healthcare in our region,” said W. Stephen Love, president and CEO of the DFW Hospital Council. “Through a program like this, we have the opportunity to share vital information with thousands of new parents each year, and better the lives of North Texans by promoting infant brain development.”

[www.growinglittleminds.com](http://www.growinglittleminds.com)

Research points to the importance of infant brain development during the first 12 months of a child's life as being crucial in their growth and development. In fact, approximately 85 percent of a young infant's brain develops in the first three years of life. Natural interactions between young parents and their newborns have a huge impact on a child's mental and emotional progress. Such development will increase a child's chances for success in school, social activities and professional life. Growing Little Minds encourages parents by showing them how easy it is to help their children absorb knowledge.

"Babies truly are like little sponges," said Patty Miller, owner of the Power of Nurturing Care and professor at the University of Texas at Dallas. "We hope to encourage parents of new babies by showing them how easy it is to help their children absorb knowledge through normal, one-on-one interactions. Read to them. Talk to them. Play music for them. It is important to engage their growing minds."

The program includes an engaging video, in both English and Spanish, and other information for parents on the website, [www.growinglittleminds.com](http://www.growinglittleminds.com), and through the social media channels of [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). The program was brought to life by Agency Creative, a leading North Texas advertising agency that specializes in connecting brands to their customers. The program was created to be instantly understandable by those with a variety of educational and literacy levels, delivered through engaging content that is easily accessible and shareable.

In addition to Mayor Rawlings, key healthcare leaders attended the kick-off to show support of the program, including: Dr. Fred Cerise, president/CEO, Parkland Health & Hospital System; Steve Love, president and CEO, DFW Hospital Council; Cheryl McCarver, senior vice president, Children's Health System; Nancy Cychol, president, Cook Children's Health Care System in Fort Worth; Mark Bateman, senior vice president, Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children; Lori Dalton, senior vice president, Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children; Pam Stoyanoff, chief operating officer, Methodist Health System; Jeff Cellucci, chief operating officer, Kindred Healthcare; and Angie Buckmeier, chief nursing officer, Medical City Children's Hospital.

Organizations partnering for Growing Little Minds include: Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council, City of Dallas, Power of Nurturing Care, Juego Conmigo (Play with Me), CHILDREN AT RISK, Commit 2 Dallas, United Way Dallas, United Way Tarrant County, YMCA Dallas, YMCA Tarrant County, Los Barrios Unidos, AVANCE, Hispanic Families Network, Infant Development Program, Child Care Group and DFW Child.

### ***About Growing Little Minds***

Growing Little Minds is an Early Brain Development initiative launched by the Dallas-Fort Worth Hospital Council and the City of Dallas. The goal of the initiative is to inform new parents of the intellectual and psychological value of spending meaningful time connecting with their newborns. More information is available at [www.growinglittleminds.com](http://www.growinglittleminds.com).

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