Today’s piece was prepared by Katie Walz, MD, based on an NPR article [How To Spark Learning Everywhere Kids Go – Starting With The Supermarket](http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/10/03/494931608/how-to-spark-learning-everywhere-kids-go-starting-with-the-grocery-store)

This article discusses a study from Philadelphia published last year about a successful intervention to increase conversations between parents and their children under 8 years old. The author notes that the study was small, but with a low-cost intervention there seems to be a significant increase in conversation between parents and their children. The intervention, which was reported to have cost around $20, included putting signs up in grocery stores encouraging parents to ask their children questions about the things around them.

The article goes into a little bit of the background about differences between families and low-income neighborhoods and high-income neighborhoods in the sense of how their home environment influences how well they do in school. There is a brief mention of the “30-million word gap” study.

While the article focuses on some easy community interventions to get parents more involved as teachers of their children, there is no follow up or questions about how this actually impacts the children's knowledge or learning in the classroom, and whether the underlying difference in number of words heard is addressed at all with this study. The author does indicate that there are several other cities trying similar projects, so there may be a role for a bigger study to look at these questions.

**RESOURCES ON BUILDING COMMUNICATION SKILLS:**

[Children of the Code](http://www.childrenofthecode.org/Tour/index.htm) including [Meaningful Differences](http://www.childrenofthecode.org/Tour/c3b/differences.htm) *Features the original 30-million-word researcher (Todd Risley, formerly of the UW) describing the long-term importance of engaging young children in language-rich environments*. See also [The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3](http://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/periodicals/TheEarlyCatastrophe.pdf).

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!