Hello, my name is sample student and today I would like to tell you about premature babies. To start, I would like to share a true story.

On August 26th, I had my son at **32 weeks.** This is a picture of him in the NICU. You will notice he had an IV, but he was out of the incubator. He was two months early...and I don't know why it happened (I was healthy, ate right, didn’t drink or use drugs, etc.). I spend one month in the hospital as he had to learn how to regulate his body temperature, gain weight, and learn how to eat on his own. It was one of the hardest months of my life, but he survived because of the huge medical advances we have today. Staying in the NICU (neo-natal intensive care unit) helped him stay healthy and come home. So many people fail to realize that having a premature baby can happen to anyone. You might have been a preemie...you might know someone who has had a preemie...and someday you might have a preemie yourself...

I would like to move onto the research. I have a video that will help highlight some key facts about premature babies and labor. Just some background, the video was produced by a professor and doctorate student from the University of Minnesota named Jolene Pearson. We won’t watch the whole video, but here is about two minutes of some helpful research (start at 2.29)

I would like to stop it here and look at chart with you. Notice these stats…

Pearson mentioned that there are babies being born at 23 weeks that are able to survive. Remember, babies need 40 weeks to reach full term, so this is a huge breakthrough for science. You also heard her mentioned that babies can survive even if they are only 1lb. Compare that to the average size of 7.5lbs! I also found it striking that 12%, or 1 in 8 babies will be premature. Like I said in the introduction, I had a premature baby, and I myself was born premature at 36 weeks, so this happens a lot more than you think. Finally, it is important to know that having a preemie is such an emotional journey. Every day is filled with questions and a lot of waiting…waiting to see if your baby can go home and if there are any long term effects that could happen.

Now that you know the research, I would like to tell you my plan.

I want to have a "cutest baby" photo contest. The general rules are…**(read Weebly website)**
*Any student and teacher is invited to bring in their
baby picture. They will need to pay* ***$1.00 to enter*** *and will have their picture hung up in the window. Students and Teachers will be asked to vote on November 17th for the "Cutest Baby," "Best Outfit," and "Best Facial Expression."* ***Voting Cost $1.00***

**There are some other details to go over including where, when, and how much: (read Weebly website)**

***When and Where:*** *In October, I would like to announce (on the PA, HCTV news) the contest and get people to start bringing in pictures. I would ask Mrs. Roslund if we can use the library windows to hang the pictures. On November 17th, we would do the voting in the library. On November 18th, we would announce the winners...****How Much: Hopefully $:*** *We will need paper and time. I would like to ask Student Senate or Mrs. Roslund and her library aids to help us create construction paper frames and voting ballots. This would take time and volunteer hours.I would like to see if the paper can be donated by the school or recycled from other classrooms to eliminate the cost. This would also include the copies of ballots for people to vote.
I would also like to ask some local businesses to donate some prizes for the "winner" in the three categories: "Cutest Baby," "Best Outfit" and "Best Facial Expression." I could also ask Mr. Montange for money for possible gift cards, candy, etc. as prizes. We could do voting during lunches, after and before school, and encourage any teachers who want to, to bring their classes down to vote.*

**My** goals for this project is to try to earn $250 to donate to the March of Dimes. Hopefully I can get 50 baby pictures and 200 students to vote. This could be a fun way to discuss a very serious and sometimes sad topic.

To close, I would like to show you my soon now. He is 8 months old and healthy, he is 17lbs vs. the 5lbs when he was born. I believe that this is all possible because of the NICU, and organizations like the March of Dimes. I hope that Harper Creek can be part of that. Thank you and here is my contact info…