

# Why Reach Out and Read?

**Reach Out and Read** gives young children a foundation for success by incorporating books into pediatric care and encouraging families to read aloud together. Before the age of 5, a child's brain makes one million new neural connections every second, with early experiences shaping brain architecture. By providing advice and guidance on book-sharing with clear-cut advice on active reading that can be easily modeled in the exam room, clinicians can play an important role in helping families develop a more nurturing, supportive home environment.

## The Reach Out and Read Model



- In the exam room, pediatric primary care clinicians trained in the developmental strategies of early literacy **encourage parents to read aloud** with their young children and offer age-appropriate tips and guidance.
- During well-child visits, the medical provider prescribes every child from age 6 months through 5 years a **new, developmentally appropriate book** to take home and keep.
- Displays, information, and gently used books create a literacy-rich environment in waiting and exam rooms.

## The Evidence

Research shows that when pediatricians promote literacy readiness according to the Reach Out and Read model, there is a significant effect on parental behavior and attitudes toward reading aloud, as well as improvements in the language scores of young children who participate. These effects have been found in ethnically and economically diverse families nationwide.

- Parents are more than **2X as likely to read** to their children
- Children's language development accelerates by **3-6 months**
- Families are **2.5X more likely to enjoy reading together** or have books in the home
- Participating primary care sites see **higher levels of patient satisfaction**
- Participating sites have **increased compliance with well visit attendance**
- Reading is a **positive child-caregiver interaction that mitigates the effects of ACEs and toxic stress**

## Why Doctors?

Reach Out and Read doctors and nurse practitioners have the greatest access to families with children in the early years, when it counts.

- More than **97% of children** visit their medical provider each year
- **Parents trust** their child's medical provider
- Medical providers use **books as tools** during checkups to assess developmental milestones
- ROR is a two-generational intervention that sits at the intersection of health and education, designed to foster intentional skill-building in parents, resilience in families, and positive bonding between children and families

