



20 Million Kids' Books Distributed,
25% of U.S. Children in Poverty Getting Books,
50,000 Doctors Trained:
Three Key Milestones for Reach Out and Read

(BOSTON, MA) More than 50,000 doctors have given 20 million free books to America's youngest children living in poverty, thanks to Reach Out and Read. Partnering with doctors to give free books to children and literacy advice to their parents at check-ups, Reach Out and Read now reaches 25 percent of low-income U.S. infants, toddlers and preschoolers. The children's literacy program recently reached all three milestones.

Proven to improve school readiness, Reach Out and Read focuses on those children at greatest risk – children age 6 months to 5 years living at or near poverty -- during the critical years before they enter kindergarten.

Through Reach Out and Read, doctors distribute carefully selected new, developmentally- and culturally-appropriate books, starting with board books for babies followed by more complex picture books for preschoolers. Bilingual books are available in 12 languages. Each child who participates in Reach Out and Read starts kindergarten with a home library of up to 10 books and a parent who has heard at every well-child visit about the importance of reading.

Research shows Reach Out and Read works. Studies find that parents who get books and literacy counseling from their health care provider are more likely to read to their young children, read to them more often, and provide more books in the home. Low-income children who participate in Reach Out and Read score significantly higher on vocabulary tests and show improved language development -- the single strongest predictor of school success.

Co-founded in 1989 by Dr. Barry Zuckerman, who serves as CEO and Board Chairman, Reach Out and Read is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. The only American literacy program featured at the White House Conference on Global Literacy, Reach Out and Read is one of only two organizations worldwide to win the 2007 UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy.

This year, American doctors will give 5.4 million new books to 3.3 million low-income families in all 50 states, Washington D.C., Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. International programs have been started in Africa, Italy, Israel, the Philippines, England, and Canada. For further information, visit www.reachoutandread.org.

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