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Reach Out and Read Launches “Summer of a Million Books” Campaign
*Pediatricians in Greater Philadelphia join nationwide effort
to put one million books in the hands of children*

(Philadelphia, PA) June 21, 2011 -- Reach Out and Read, the nationwide school readiness program, today launched its second annual summer campaign to give a brand-new, age-appropriate book to one million children in need before International Literacy Day.

The *Summer of a Million Books* campaign unites Reach Out and Read pediatricians and family physicians at more than 4,600 hospitals and clinics across the country in their mission to prepare America’s youngest children to succeed in school. Reach Out and Read Greater Philadelphia is leading the effort in our region.

“Research shows that if you intervene in the first five years of life and partner with parents, you can dramatically improve the early literacy skills of a child, putting them on the track for success in school and in life,” said Reach Out and Read CEO Earl Martin Phalen. “Childhood development experts tell us that the most important thing that parents can do to prepare their children to succeed in school is to read aloud to them every day. That’s what the *Summer of a Million Books* is all about.”

According to recent National Assessment of Educational Progress testing, 63% of our state’s fourth graders cannot read proficiently.

If it succeeds, the *Summer of a Million Books* campaign will provide one million families with the tools and the guidance they need to prepare their children to succeed in school. In order to accomplish that goal, Reach Out and Read’s doctors and nurse practitioners must distribute 25,600 books every day between Monday, June 21 (First Day of Summer), and Thursday, September 8 (International Literacy Day).



Reach Out and Read is an evidence-based, national nonprofit organization that promotes early literacy and school readiness by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud at regular pediatric checkups. The model includes providing a carefully-selected, new, age-appropriate book for each child to take home from every checkup from 6 months through 5 years.

Along with the free book for every child, doctors and nurses also provide guidance to the parents about the importance of reading aloud with their children every day. The research proves that families served by Reach Out and Read read together more often, and their children enter kindergarten with larger vocabularies, stronger language skills, and a six-month developmental edge.

Nationwide, Reach Out and Read doctors and nurses serve 3.9 million children and their families annually at 4,688 pediatric practices, hospitals, clinics, and health centers in all 50 states, targeting those centers which serve children at socioeconomic risk. The 45 Reach Out and Read Programs in Southeastern Pennsylvania serve a total of 39,000 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers annually.

Reach Out and Read is asking for all Americans to join the campaign and help ensure that every child arrives at kindergarten ready to read and prepared to excel.

How can I help?

1. Donate a book or sponsor a child online through Reach Out and Read's [Virtual Book Drive](#).
2. [Organize a book drive](#) for the Reach Out and Read Program in your community.
3. Most importantly, [read to the children](#) in your life every day.

Learn more about the *Summer of a Million Books* campaign here:

<http://www.reachoutandread.org/summer/>

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