



Reach  
Out  
& Read®



2014 ANNUAL REPORT

where great stories begin™





## OUR STORY

During the last nine years, over 300 medical providers in 67 practices and clinics have prescribed more than one million brand new books to Alabama's youngest and neediest children. These books are more than the stories inside...they are the key to unlocking the potential in every child in Alabama, and that is where Reach Out and Read-Alabama steps in.

Learning begins at birth, and the first five years offer a critical window for brain development. Frequent exposure to words through reading aloud, talking, singing, and rhyming helps young children develop language skills that serve as a foundation for all learning and fosters a love of books that will last a lifetime. By teaching parents to read aloud to their babies and toddlers, Reach Out and Read's doctors and nurses play a key role in ensuring the healthy development of Alabama's youngest children.

Over the years, the characters of our story have changed, but our message remains constant: **book are more than the stories inside**. They are the keys to helping engaged parents unlock the potential in every child.

**Reach Out and Read. Where great stories begin.**

## THE REACH OUT AND READ MODEL

Pediatricians, family physicians, nurse practitioners, and other medical professionals incorporate Reach Out and Read's evidence-based, three-part model into regular pediatric checkups:

- 1 In pediatric exam rooms, trained doctors and nurses speak with parents about the importance of reading aloud.
- 2 At each regular checkup from 6 months through 5 years of age, the child receives a new book to take home.
- 3 Parents become more engaged and read to their children more often.

When Reach Out and Read began as a national organization 25 years ago, the goal was to make literacy promotion part of pediatric primary care, so that children would grow up with books and a love of reading.

This June, through its strategic priority on early brain and child development, the American Academy of Pediatrics stamped its official seal of approval on the importance of early literacy by issuing a new policy statement recommending that pediatric practices counsel parents to read aloud and provide books to young children in poverty.

Thanks to your support, the dedication of Reach Out and Read-Alabama pediatric healthcare providers and volunteers, and the long-standing support of the Alabama Chapter-AAP, we are now reaching over 100,000 children each year, most of whom are growing up at risk. Together, we've changed pediatrics ~ and we've changed, and are continuing to change, the worlds of thousands of children and families.

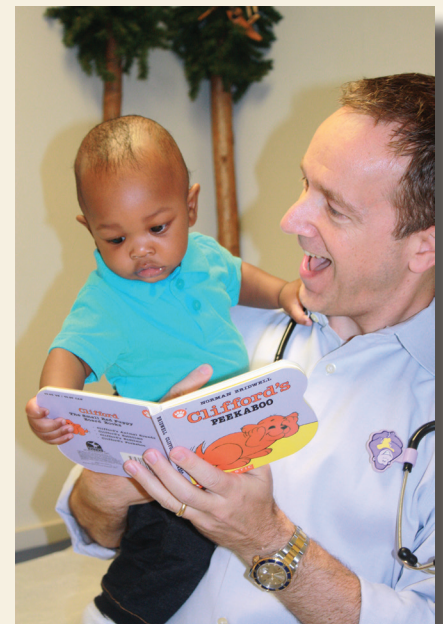
**The AAP recommends that pediatric providers promote early literacy development as an important evidence-based intervention at health supervision visits for children beginning in infancy and continuing at least until the age of school entry...**

But even with this success, we still have a long way to go. According to VOICES for Alabama's Kids Count Data Book 2013, 27.6 percent of Alabama's children live in poverty and 34 percent of them live in single-parent households. New books and advice to parents through the Reach Out and Read program may be the only chance for these children and their families to have access to books, starting at birth.

Together, we can ensure that Reach Out and Read-Alabama continues to change the lives and futures of Alabama children through the words, stories and pictures that our doctors and nurses offer families in exam rooms every day.



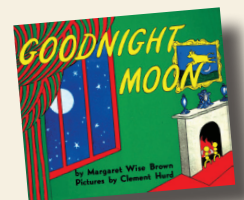
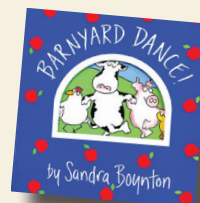
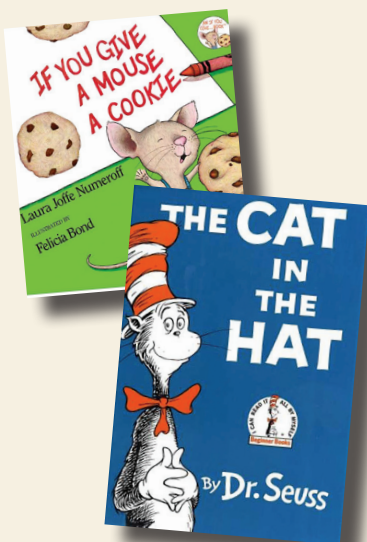
Michael Ramsey, MD, FAAP  
President, Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics



## BY THE BOOK

Reach Out and Read helps children become readers by filling home bookshelves with stories young children can relate to -- and will enjoy reading. It is when children see their own heroes and experiences reflected in the words on the page that stories truly come alive.

Our doctor-recommended book collection emphasizes developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive titles to ensure that children receive the right books at the right times in their lives.







## BOOKS BUILD BETTER BRAINS

### THE POTENTIAL

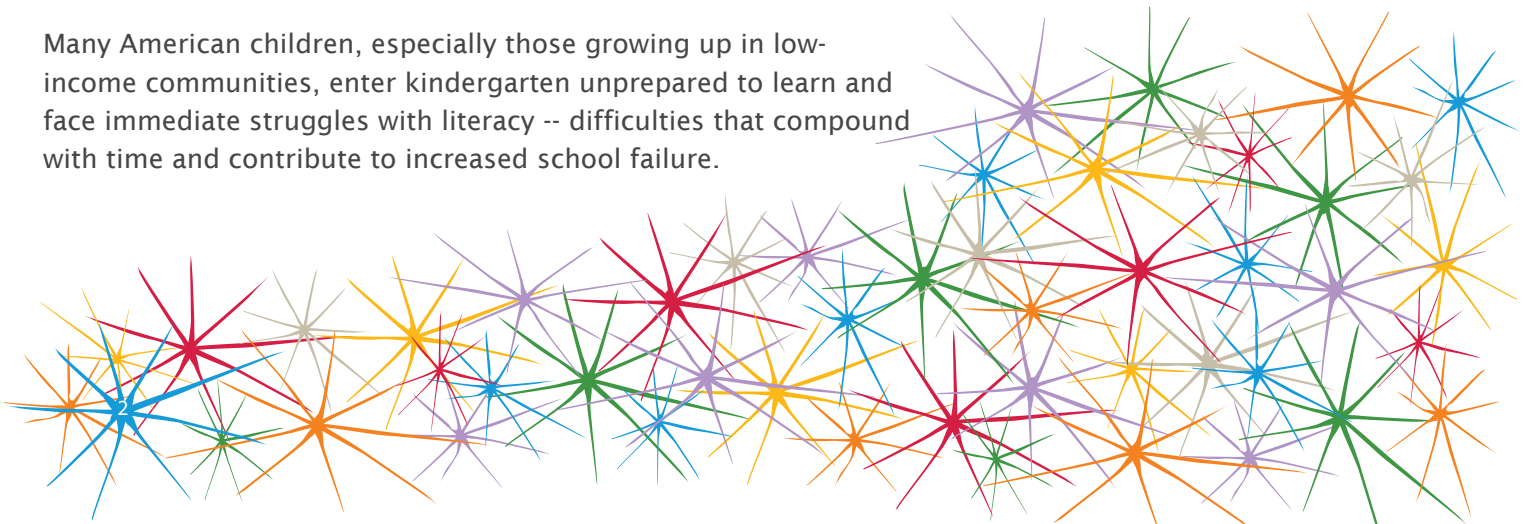
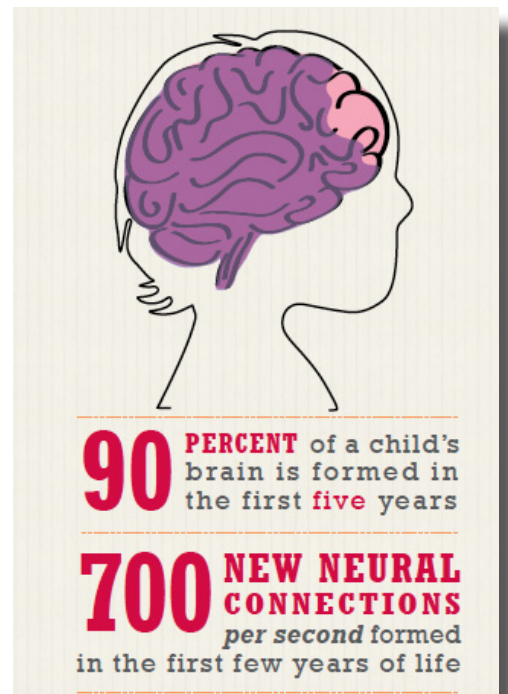
The first 2,000 days of a child's life matter. Rapid brain development during those first five years offers a critical window for learning.

A baby's brain forms up to 700 neural connections each second, and by age 5 -- the start of kindergarten for many children -- 90 percent of brain development has occurred. Learning begins at birth and every interaction, from smiles and laughs to bedtimes stories, helps grow neural pathways.

### THE OPPORTUNITY

Science has proven that early childhood experiences shape later learning, behavior, and health. Without enriching home environments and nurturing relationships, children miss the opportunity to develop language skills critical to unlocking their potential.

Many American children, especially those growing up in low-income communities, enter kindergarten unprepared to learn and face immediate struggles with literacy -- difficulties that compound with time and contribute to increased school failure.





## OUR SOLUTION

Reach Out and Read-Alabama builds on the unique relationship between parents and pediatric healthcare providers to develop early literacy skills, stimulating the optimal patterns of brain development and strengthening parent-child relationships. Building language, literacy and social-emotional skills, starting at birth, is paramount to success in school and life.

By prescribing books and encouraging families to read aloud together, beginning with children at 6 months of age, Reach Out and Read-Alabama doctors and nurses offer the guidance and tools necessary to create a language-rich, supportive home environment.



## OUR IMPACT

**Reach Out and Read creates readers -- and learners -- for life.**

By providing books and encouraging families to read together, Reach Out and Read-Alabama is helping children acquire early language skills, developing positive associations with books and helping to build a strong foundation for school success.

In June 2014, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a statement declaring literacy promotion -- from an infant's very first days -- to be an "essential" component of pediatric primary care. The statement specifically highlights the effectiveness and efficiency of our Reach Out and Read model.

**Investment in early childhood development for disadvantaged children provides (up to) a 10 percent annual rate of return through better education, health, and social outcomes.**

***Economist  
James Heckman***

## OUR RESEARCH

Research shows that when pediatricians promote literacy in exam rooms via the Reach Out and Read model, parents are more apt to read aloud and young children have stronger language skills. These effects have been found in ethnically and economically diverse families nationwide.

**15** independent peer-reviewed studies show that Reach Out and Read is effective in changing child outcomes and parental attitudes and practices, as well as improving the interaction between families and medical providers.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**1** million books prescribed in the last nine years  
**305,267** number of children in Alabama under the age of 5  
**117,928** number of children we serve  
**300** doctors and nurses prescribing books

# THE POWER OF PARENTS + THE INFLUENCE OF CHILDREN'S DOCTORS

## GREAT STORIES BEGIN INSIDE THE EXAM ROOM

### AT REACH OUT AND READ, BOOKS ARE THE FIRST STEP ON A CHILD'S PATH TO SUCCESS

Our powerful message extends far beyond the pediatric exam room, creating a positive influence on growing minds that lasts a lifetime. The stories of our children, families, pediatricians, and partners are perhaps the most important measure of our collective impact. Here are a few.



#### JAIME MCKINNEY, MD, FAAP | MEDICAL COORDINATOR

Affiliated with University of Alabama at Birmingham Department of Pediatrics and Children's of Alabama, UAB Primary Care Clinic is a general pediatrics clinic with doctors, nurses, and other staff specifically trained to care for anyone from birth to 18 years old. This clinic was one of the first Reach Out and Read program sites in the United States. Prescribing over 71,000 books since 1997, pediatric residents and staff have had the opportunity to impact the lives of the children and families, many of them from lower socio-economic situations, through the gift of a book with instructions to parents about the link between brain development and reading.

*I like the Reach Out and Read program because my three-year-old takes the book and pretends to read to my 15-month-old. It encourages my family to bond.*

*Mom of a three-year-old and 15-month-old*

#### GRANT ALLEN, MD, FAAP | MEDICAL COORDINATOR

When our practice first started Reach Out and Read in 2008, we had patients who received their very first book from us. Because of their excitement and hopes for their child's future, we saw many tears in the eyes of their parents. Those experiences continue to drive our passion for this program in our practice.

After six years of prescribing books, we now have children who ask for a book when they come for well-child visits. Even if they ask for a book at other visits, they'll get one because my patients know that I can't refuse their request for a book. "Let him eat the book; if he likes the taste of his book, he'll be a good reader" is just as much fun to say now as it was six years ago. These words build excitement and hope in their parents as they wish for a lifetime of success in school and life for their children. Not only are we helping them raise healthy children but we're helping their children develop a love of reading. That's more important than anything else I do.



## GREAT STORIES BEGIN WITH PARTNERSHIPS

### PROASSURANCE

Community partnerships are essential in helping to provide resources to prepare every child for success in their educational pathway and life. ProAssurance Group, a specialty writer of professional liability insurance and products liability insurance for medical technology and life sciences companies, and the fourth largest writer of medical professional liability insurance in America, was the first to join our Corporate Community Partnership program. As a Goodnight Moon sponsor, the ProAssurance Group provided 500 brand-new books to selected program sites throughout Alabama, personalized with their company's information.

We see this partnership as a perfect fit for community service opportunities for all of our employees. Providing new books for Reach Out and Read-Alabama gives us the opportunity to go beyond the work that we do with healthcare providers and make an impact on the communities in which they practice.

*Jeff Lisenby, General Counsel and Senior Vice President*

### PRIMROSE SCHOOLS

For the last three years, three Primrose Schools in Central Alabama teamed up with families to benefit area Reach Out and Read-Alabama program sites during a month-long book drive as part of their Helping Hands Curriculum. The curriculum gives children hands-on experience and a "happy heart" as they aid others in their local communities through simple, concrete, hands-on giving activities and projects. With a theme of "Share the Love of Reading," families were encouraged to donate new and used books during the month of February.

We all know that the first five years are critical for children's healthy development and future success. We're honored to partner with Reach Out and Read-Alabama and participate in this significant nationwide effort to impact education outcomes for children. We look forward to continuing to work together to improve childhood literacy in our communities.

*Jo Kirchner, President and CEO*

### HONDA-LOCK

At a volunteer training held in her office, Patricia Robinson, MD, FAAP, encouraged those participating to bring their favorite books and engage not only children, but also the parents who were there. In addition to these opportunities, HL-A, Selma has chosen the Reach Out and Read program in Selma as one of the community programs to be part of this year's charitable giving budget.

Reach Out and Read-Alabama is a perfect fit for the employees at HL-A, Inc. in Selma. There is a way for each person to participate in helping a child be successful in their educational journey, which will ultimately produce good corporate citizens and a quality workforce.

*Loren Allday, Human Resource Manager*

# 2014: A YEAR OF STORIES

What a year it's been for Reach Out and Read-Alabama -- filled with new partnerships, increased visibility, a renewed commitment to program quality, and recognition for our work as an organization of change.

## March

Primrose Schools and three Reach Out and Read-Alabama program sites celebrated Read Across America Day together! Abby Allen, MD, FAAP, and Maria Meyers, MD, FAAP, read to children at two Birmingham Primrose Schools.

## April

The inaugural Grand Pediatric Pentathlon was held at the 2014 Alabama Chapter-AAP Spring Meeting.



## May

"She Read to You at Bedtime," was our inaugural Mother's Day fundraising campaign, in which our donors were given the opportunity to honor their mothers by helping pediatric healthcare providers prescribe books to be shared at one of the most important routines of a child's life -- bedtime. David Glasgow, MD, FAAP, shared memories of his mother reading bedtime stories with books that he still has on his bookshelf that he has shared with his own children and now his grandchildren.



## June

The Eastern Shore Children's Clinic program was featured on al.com. "As soon as they walk into the waiting room, we want them to see books displayed there. It's one of the main reasons we don't have televisions -- and parents ask all the time for TVs! But we have plenty of books because we want the parents to read to their children, and we want the kids to look at these books and ask questions," Meg Moore, MD, FAAP, said. "Ideally, we don't want our patients and parents to wait at all (to see the doctor), but if they have to wait, we want them to be reading. If this program can promote just five minutes of interaction between a parent and a child, it's a wonderful thing."



## July

Wes Stubblefield, MD, FAAP, a pediatrician at Infants' and Children's Clinic in Florence, published a letter to the editor in the *Times Daily*. "The difference in the number of words a child hears in early childhood can be increased by millions if reading is a priority in a household. Television programs, although entertaining, do not show the same effect. The process of hearing words helps the brain mature through the process of pruning and shaping connections. And remember, this process slows and nearly halts as we age."



## August

Reach Out and Read-Alabama partnered with the Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation to expand the program in Dallas, Greene and Marengo counties. With almost half of the children under the age of 18 living in poverty in these counties, pediatric healthcare providers have a tremendous opportunity to assist families in preparing their children for success in school.





## READ AND ROMP

The fourth annual Read and Romp-Birmingham, an exciting, innovative family literacy event, reached over 300 families on the second Saturday in October at Railroad Park. Started as a signature event by the national Reach Out and Read organization in Boston, Read and Romp-Birmingham is unique in its collaboration of organizations that have early childhood literacy and family engagement as priorities.

While centered on books, 10 child-focused stations manned by organizations and businesses provided families an opportunity to learn about activities to enhance the development and education of their young children. By associating fun-filled activities with reading, parents learned ways to engage with their child on the life-long journey of learning at an early age, increasing success in school.

## SUMMER CAMPAIGN

*Nicky Goes To The Doctor* across the state this summer with Reach Out and Read-Alabama's fifth annual summer campaign -- **Read Together and Have a Healthy Family!** Using the book as inspiration, our pediatric practices and clinics encouraged families to visit their physician for scheduled well-child office visits, distributing copies of the books to their patients and their families and discussing the goals for optimum physical, emotional and developmental health for their children during these visits.

*The event was a great success and I hope that the book the children took home, Nicky Goes to the Doctor, will be encouragement for parents and children to read together and to visit their physicians for scheduled well-child office visits.*

*Rosemary Hanson, Reach Out and Read Program Site Coordinator at Charles Henderson Child Health Center*

## GRAND PEDIATRIC PENTATHLON

The Marriott Grand Resort Hotel provided a perfect venue for the inaugural Grand Pediatric Pentathlon -- a five-event activity for the whole family -- raising over \$10,000 for Reach Out and Read-Alabama. Over 75 physicians participated in a one-mile run/walk, 30 minutes of biking, 30 minutes of kayaking, one hour of swimming and an hour of reading for fun. For each event they completed, participants were entered into drawings for prizes, including a Regions Bank green cruiser, a kayak, a day at the spa, a photography session and many others.

## PIRATES, PRINCESSES AND TIGERS, OH MY!

"Pirate" hats and Auburn helmets off to two Reach Out and Read-Alabama program sites for innovative fundraisers to ensure that children and families served by their programs continue to receive brand-new, age-appropriate books at each well-child visit. Fairhope Pediatrics invited pirates and princesses of all ages to participate in an inaugural Pirate & Princess Fun Run for Reading at the Eastern Shore Centre in Spanish Fort, raising over \$5,000 for their program.

Pediatric Associates of Auburn teamed up with Auburn University Athletics for two fundraisers during the baseball and football seasons. Family-friendly activities such as photos with Aubie, tailgate games and snacks plus a book drive helped bring attention to the almost 1,000 children and their families served by this program site.

## SILENT AUCTION

Not only are the Chapter's board members engaged in the lives of the children and families we serve through prescribing books at well-child visits in their own practices, but they are also passionate about ensuring these children are prepared physically and mentally to be successful in school and life. Actively participating in fundraising activities such as the silent auction underscores their passion and commitment to do their part to make sure the program continues to grow and serve more children across the state. The auction raised almost \$3,000 that will allow more than 1,200 books to be prescribed to children six months through five years of age at well-child visits.



## 2014 DONORS

### GREAT STORIES BEGIN WITH GENEROUS DONORS

Reach Out and Read-Alabama gratefully acknowledges the following corporations, foundations, and individuals who generously contributed to our statewide efforts between November 1, 2013 and November 30, 2014.

On behalf of the children and families who discovered the transformative power of reading, we thank you for being committed partners in our mission to make literacy promotion a standard part of pediatric care so that children start school prepared to achieve their potential.

### CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS & BUSINESSES

2nd & Charles	Dothan Pediatric Clinic	Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation
Alabama Department of Public Health	Drs. Pua & Pua	Nick's Kids Fund
Aldridge Borden & Company, P.C.	Dr. Trey's Children's Dentistry	Pediatric Adolescent Medicine
Angell Foundation	East Alabama Medical Center	ProAssurance Indemnity Company
Bayou Area Health Development Board, Inc.	East Alabama Pediatric Dentistry	Red Elephant, Dothan
Books-A-Million	Fairhope Pediatrics	Sib and Addie Paul Foundation
Bryant Bank	Greater Brewton Foundation	Target
Business Council of Alabama	HL-A Company, Inc., Alabama Plant	United Fund of Brewton and East Brewton
Care Network of East Alabama, Inc.	James Martin Motor Company, Inc.	WalMart
Children's of Alabama	Jones Family Fund	Willingham Foundation
Community Bank & Trust	Junior League of Shoals	Wiregrass Foundation
Community Foundation of Northeast Alabama	hb&k Certified Public Accountants	
	Marriott Grand Hotel Point Clear Resort & Spa	
	The Medical Foundation of Alabama	



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Thanks to your partnership, Reach Out and Read is changing pediatrics -- and lives across the state. Working with the Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics, we have ensured that literacy promotion is an essential part of pediatric primary care for the past nine years. We are empowering parents with the tools and knowledge they need to make reading aloud a daily activity in their homes, creating a strong language foundation and a love of books in children from the start. Yet, our work is not done. Every day brings a new opportunity to reach more parents and children, and to show them the wonder and joys and benefits of reading aloud together. We are grateful to you for joining us on this journey, and look forward to sharing the love of reading with Alabama's children for many years to come.