

TO: ALL COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

*Please route to
Children's Services, too!*

FROM: Gene Hainer, State Librarian

RE: New Early Literacy Partner—Reach Out and Read Colorado

The Colorado State Library is pleased to announce a new partner in our work for early children's literacy.

Reach Out and Read Colorado, this state's affiliate to the national non-profit organization, promotes early literacy by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud, at well-child exams.

By making literacy promotion a primary part of early childhood healthcare, children grow up with books and a love of reading.

Over 100 Colorado clinics participate in **Reach Out and Read** and distribute over 90,000 books to 60,000 children annually. Over 700 healthcare providers have been trained in the Reach Out and Read model, and there are over 50 volunteer readers in waiting rooms across the state. (See www.reachoutandreadco.org for more information.)

As you know, many of Colorado's public libraries are implementing early literacy activities on site, through literacy-enhanced storytimes and training and modeling for adults. But to really impact at-risk families, the early literacy message must come from multiple sources.

How can this collaboration be effective for all? **Reach Out and Read Colorado** can match their local affiliates to local libraries. They'll contact you over the next few months. Or initiate a relationship from your library's side.

- Libraries can provide library card forms, tours, and storytime flyers to ROR's clients.
- ROR can reach out to the community with posters and information in libraries.
- Library staff may host guest read-alouds or storytime training to ROR volunteers.
- Joint activities, like parent literacy nights or a read-aloud festival, can be considered.
- Donate weeded children's books or sponsor a book drive for ROR.

Attached you'll find some information about Reach Out and Read. For more information, contact Melissa Elgersma, ROR CO Program Coordinator, 303.623.3800, melissa@reachoutandreadco.org; OR Patricia Froehlich, Public Library Consultant, Colorado State Library, 303.866.6908, Froehlich_p@cde.state.co.us



Reach Out and Read Colorado

Reach Out and Read Colorado is a nonprofit organization dedicated to making literacy promotion a standard part of the provision of pediatric primary care.

A national program enacted at a local level

- Reach Out and Read is a national pediatric early literacy program founded in 1989 at Boston City Hospital (now Boston Medical Center).

The program model:

- **Anticipatory guidance.** Pediatric providers are trained by ROR staff about the processes of early literacy development and specific strategies to promote literacy in children. During the eight to ten well-child visits in the first five years clinicians use this knowledge to give parents guidance about the importance of language development and sharing books with their children.
- **Age- and language-appropriate books.** Providers give children a new, high quality book to take home at every check up from six months to five years. These books are carefully chosen based on language, developmental and cultural appropriateness. Children participating in the ROR program will start school with a library of eight to ten books in their homes at a total approximate cost of \$27.50 per child.
- **Literacy Rich Waiting Rooms.** Reading corners and literacy themes are prevalent in clinic waiting rooms. In some cases, trained volunteers read books to children in the clinics as the families wait for their scheduled appointments, role modeling for the parents the pleasures and techniques of reading to their children.

In Colorado

- Increasingly since 1997, children ages six months to five years old have gone home with a new book at each well-child visit and their parents have learned from the provider the importance of sharing books.
- Statewide, Reach Out and Read **serves 60,000 kids and their families and distributes 90,000 new books** annually.
- To date, over **700** pediatricians, family physicians, physicians' assistants, residents and nurse practitioners have been trained in the ROR strategy of early literacy guidance.
- Reach Out and Read is in **97 clinics** statewide with more being added monthly
- There are over **60 community volunteers** reading aloud in clinic waiting rooms.

Reach Out and Read Colorado

- Provides up to **65% of the money needed annually to purchase new books** (matched by 25% funding from ROR National)
- Provides **training and continuing education** for pediatric primary care providers
- Manages program **quality** to ensure that children build a personal library of 8-10 new books and parents engage in book sharing with their children

For more information:
www.reachoutandreadco.org
303.623.3800

