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REACH OUT AND READ ALABAMA CELEBRATES 15 YEARS OF RX FOR SUMMER READING

This summer, Curious George's birthday parties will take place across the state

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (July 2, 2024) — Reach Out and Read Alabama's Rx for Summer Reading campaign has featured a hungry caterpillar, dancing barnyard animals, a big red dog in a storm, dinosaurs celebrating birthdays, a bunny visiting the doctor, a superhero kid, a sleepy tiger, a camellia-adorned black bear, a toddler at a well-child appointment, a cat that wears sunglasses, a young girl who worries, and a mouse that eats cookies! This year, Reach Out and Read Alabama celebrates 15 years of Rx for Summer Reading and a favorite monkey joins the fun with "Curious George and the Birthday Surprise," a sweet, funny story full of everything kids love: party decorations, presents, and a beautiful birthday cake.

Reach Out and Read Alabama integrates shared reading into pediatric care, providing books and coaching that helps every family with young children make reading together part of their daily routine. Starting with the newborn well-child visit, clinicians give a child a book and parents begin to understand the importance of reading together and the impact of the everyday moments the families share. Developing safe, stable and nurturing relationships that last a lifetime is the single-most important action parents can take to strengthen their child's resilience and support the critical development of their brain.

"As pediatricians, we believe strongly in activities that promote the overall social, physical, and mental wellbeing of children. An increasing body of evidence demonstrates that positive early childhood experiences improve outcomes in all of these areas - and reading together is just about one of the most positive childhood experiences there is! I am proud to support families reading together by sharing both books and education in my office," said Nola Ernest, MD, FAAP, PhD, President of the Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics, and Medical Clinician at Reach Out and Read-Alabama program site, Enterprise Pediatric Clinic. "And, as always, I am looking forward to our summer reading campaign as another opportunity to highlight how fun reading can be."

"Reach Out and Read has an incredible impact on Alabama's children and the patients I serve. Serving on the Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics Board allows me to see Reach Out and Read-Alabama's impact around the state. When you see a child and parent's face light up when you hand the child a book you see connection instantly. Reach Out and Read is an incredible resource for medical providers to promote strong relationships between

parents and children and promote early literacy skills,” said Elizabeth Dawson, MD, FAAP, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alabama Chapter-AAP and Medical Consultant for the program site at Troy Pediatric Clinic & Collegiate Health. “Children learn best when it is a part of connecting to their caregivers and Reach Out and Read helps families throughout Alabama connect and learn every day.”

Dawson continued, “The Rx for Summer Reading is a fun and effective way to put reading in the spotlight over the summer by having parties around the state featuring families and reading.”

“Curious George and the Birthday Surprise” activities and events, sponsored by Reach Out and Read Alabama program sites across the state, will run all summer long. The campaign provides a way for the clinics and practices to have fun with their patients and families while promoting the importance of summer reading. (*See the attached list of July and August dates and locations.*)

In addition to ongoing partnerships with the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education and the Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention, Reach Out and Read Alabama is partnering this year with All About Books, a second-generation, family-owned and -operated children’s book company that specializes in distributing high-quality affordable children’s books and collections to nonprofit literacy organizations in the United States. All About Books provided the book at a discounted rate and will be promoting the campaign through their social media and their blog.

The evidence-based Reach Out and Read program builds on the unique relationship between parents and clinicians to develop critical early reading skills in children beginning in infancy. With more than [30 peer-reviewed studies](#) and an endorsement from the American Academy of Pediatrics, Reach Out and Read is an effective intervention incorporating early literacy into pediatric practice and equipping caregivers with tools and knowledge to ensure their children are prepared to learn when they start school. During regular, one-on-one visits with the doctor, families grow to understand the significant role they play in supporting their child’s growth and development.

Reach Out and Read Alabama partners with clinicians in 74 pediatric practices and clinics across 27 counties, serving over 81,000 of Alabama’s children under five.

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About Reach Out and Read: As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, Reach Out and Read provides children with a solid foundation for achievement by integrating books into pediatric care and encouraging family reading time. Endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics as the sole evidence-based national pediatric program centered on emotional bonding, Reach Out and Read reaches children in every state across the U.S., delivering services through 6,200 clinics and leveraging the expertise of 36,000 clinicians. Discover more at reachoutandread.org.