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Reach Out and Read to Extend Support for Maine Children and Families

*National Nonprofit to Expand Evidence-Based, Early Literacy
and Childhood Health Program to Clinics Statewide*

PORTLAND, MAINE (Oct. 17, 2023) — Reach Out and Read plans to expand its national program, which promotes healthy children and stronger communities, in Maine! Reach Out and Read's regional Northeast Affiliate — currently comprised of Connecticut, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Upstate New York, and Vermont — is planning an expansion into the state, which is home to more than 60,000 children under age 5. Maine's 23-year-old early-literacy program, Raising Readers, has announced it will wind down operations in 2024.

A national, family-focused nonprofit, Reach Out and Read's medical providers offer guidance to parents/caregivers about how shared reading with young children builds important family bonds. During routine well-child visits from birth to five years old, trained Reach Out and Read clinicians not only give age-appropriate, culturally responsive books to families, but they also discuss with parents how to use those books to engage with their infants and young children. This approach helps improve children's language and literacy skills while also strengthening parent-child relationships and mitigating adverse childhood experiences.

Reach Out and Read, which already has a clinical presence in the state, is collaborating with a variety of local stakeholders on outreach as it plans the gradual rollout of its evidence-based program. Raising Readers will serve in an advisory capacity.

"This expansion means that clinics and children who relied on Raising Readers could benefit from the nearly 35 years of experience, research, and training Reach Out and Read brings," said Marty Martinez, CEO of Reach Out and Read. "Evidence shows Reach Out and Read is having a transformative impact on millions of families across the country, and we're excited to further our efforts in Maine."

As the only [evidence-based](#) national pediatric model focused on emotional connections endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Reach Out and Read serves 4.2 million children through more than 6,000 clinics and 33,000 clinicians. Reach Out and Read's program, which [recent research](#) has again shown effective at changing caregiver behavior and increasing the frequency of daily reading, has the potential for near-universal, equitable, nationwide access to families with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

“We are thrilled to bring the impact of Reach Out and Read to the children and families of Maine,” said Alex Chu, regional executive director of Reach Out and Read Northeast. “As we expand our footprint over the next several years, we are committed to ensuring that every young child, particularly in Maine’s most underserved communities, gains the lifelong benefits we know come with access to strong literacy and relational health supports.”

Reach Out and Read’s national office and Reach Out and Read Northeast will collaborate on growth and transition with local stakeholders starting in 2023-2024.

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About Reach Out and Read Northeast: Reach Out and Read Northeast is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that promotes early relational health and language development at well-visits in clinics throughout Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Upstate New York. The organization has partnerships with medical providers at 528 program sites in the region serving 435,000 children and their families. To learn more, please visit reachoutandread.org/affiliate/Massachusetts.

About Reach Out and Read: Reach Out and Read is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that gives young children a foundation for success by incorporating books into pediatric care and encouraging families to read aloud together. As the only evidence-based national pediatric model focused on emotional connections endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Reach Out and Read serves children in all 50 states through 6,000 clinics and 33,000 clinicians. For more information, visit reachoutandread.org.