



Summer 2016

Preparing Colorado's youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with doctors to prescribe books and encourage families to read together.

In this Special Edition Newsletter, we share perspectives from Reach Out and Read Colorado community members on Nicolas Kristof's article *Too Small to Fail*, featured in the New York Times on June 2, 2016.

Perspective: Marian Greenway, BSN, RN, Tri-County Health Department



As a public health nurse, I am well aware of the cycle of generational poverty and failure in school. I am also aware of the neuroscience that describes the link between toxic stress and poor life outcomes, and the importance of ages 0-to-3 as a critical period for brain development. Taken together, these relationships point us in the direction of early childhood interventions that build strong emotional and cognitive foundations that support success in school and a healthy life trajectory, including socio-economic well-being.

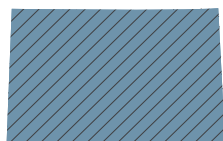
The Reach Out and Read program is just such an intervention. It is as ingenious as it is economical because it takes advantage of the influence that medical providers have to advise parents to read aloud to their very young children, ages 6 months through 5 years, every day. The emotional bond between

parent and child is thereby strengthened, and the child associates the experience of reading with the feelings of warmth and love. So that there are actually books in the home for parents to read to their children, Reach Out and Read gives children attractive new books of their own.

For the past 8 years, I have served as a Reach Out and Read Colorado Site Coordinator at a large health department that serves a predominantly low income population, a population that consists largely of families who were unfamiliar with reading to their children. In our immunization clinics, books are everywhere - gently used books are central to the colorful focal point of our waiting rooms, new Reach Out and Read Colorado books are displayed on the shelves in exam rooms, and when the nurses give books to children, they also give encouragement to parents to read with their children.

The benefits of Reach Out and Read are well documented by scientific research, and I leave this evidence to speak for itself. What I can speak for is the progress that we have made over the years in getting the message out to families: reading is fun and good for children. Because they know this, and because their children now have books of their own, parents are more likely to read to their children and give them a better start in life. For this, we thank Reach Out and Read Colorado.

Statewide Impact



Programs in 56 of Colorado's 64 Counties



295 Clinics across Colorado



Prescribing more than 500 books to families each day



In over 60 languages

Perspective: Meredith Hintze, Reach Out and Read Colorado Executive Director

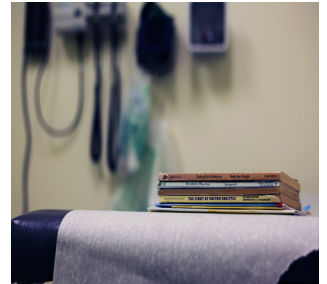


In his article, “Too Small to Fail,” Nicholas Kristof once again highlights the importance of early literacy promotion. His article underscores what any of us who interacts with young children—whether as parents, family members, medical providers or community partners—already knows: infants and young children are incredible, valuable and remarkable.

Throughout my tenure with the Reach Out and Read program, I’ve had the tremendous opportunity to learn a great deal about early brain development, early language acquisition and the importance of parent-child bonding. As Kristof notes in his article, it’s an exciting time for the study of the brain of a young child as researchers are now, more than ever, able to measure brain activity in a truly focused way. The research is supporting what we already thought to be true: kiddos are little sponges! In fact, as the article references, the most rapid brain development happens in early childhood. Which is one of the reasons that the Reach Out and Read program model is so effective.

Partnering with health clinics to prescribe books and reading to infants and young children is an honor. Our network of passionate providers has unparalleled access to Colorado’s youngest children AND their parents. By building on the relationship parents have with their health care provider—a trusted source of information—the Reach Out and Read program is able to deliver parents the techniques (the anticipatory guidance) and the tools (the books) to effectively look at books together at home each day. In fact, every day, Reach Out and Read Colorado prescribes more than 500 books. As the parent of a two-year-old, I know that the time she and I spend looking at books is the highlight of my day! Watching her learn new words or hearing what makes her laugh is so special. I’m proud to support health care providers around the state as they prescribe this interaction for all families.

One of my favorite things about Reach Out and Read Colorado is the unique and nimble nature of our program and organization. Working in early childhood, which Kristof notes is the “highest-return public investment in the world,” at an organization that also is streamlined and efficient, I leave work every day feeling confident and satisfied. We are doing everything we can each and every day to support children and families across Colorado.



Perspective: Trenton Jowsey, Third Grader at Green Gables Elementary



Yikes, that is bad. I’m surprised. French fries are an unhealthy food and 2 year olds can’t open a pop and drink it.

I like family reading because it’s fun. It’s important parents read to kids because it helps my brain grow so I can learn more when I’m older. Because my brain can’t just go by itself until I’m a teenager. When parents don’t read to kids they don’t learn to read when they’re older.

I think it’s a good rule that all kids go to preschool. I went to preschool. Kids get to learn a little bit before they go to kindergarten and parents don’t have to stay home all day with them. Yes, that’s a good rule.

That’s a good article. I would definitely agree. It’s important to be healthy as a kid to be healthy as an adult.

My parents and grandparents do a lot of things with me, and talk to me a lot, and read to me a lot. I know how to do things other kids can’t like build, gardening, keeping track of money because of what I learned. It makes me feel weird to know that kids can end up unhealthy and poor because their parents don’t talk to them. I feel unhappy for them.

Perspective: Bobby King, Reach Out and Read Colorado Board Member & Director, Diversity and Inclusion Center of Expertise, Kaiser Permanente



I grew up in a home with working parents, in a community where everyone was responsible for one another. While Kristof's primary position supporting the need for early childhood education rests on economic conditions and touches on privilege, I would point out that a much broader universe of

connected variables encompasses each person's destiny. That destiny is embodied by something more significant than circumstance (such as poverty) that has lead many people around the world to achieve great things and make an array of contributions regardless of their socio-economic status at birth.

There is no doubt that early childhood education is a differentiator in Western culture. As a supporter of this form of education and an advocate for programs like Head Start and Reach Out and Read Colorado, I agree that reading is fundamental to brain development in the early stages of life. Access to reading materials is a key ingredient to a parent's ability to engage in this form of enlightenment with their children. Time, on the other hand, is the competing factor. My mother raised six children by herself. While yet a college graduate and raised in a middle class family, we were considered by the larger society poor, marginal, and predicted by traditional American standards as Kristof's accounts, "the ones who would not make it."

"So give a mouse a cookie and he'll ask for a glass of milk..." My mother impressed upon all six of us that an education was the path to becoming a productive citizen. When we were all small she read aloud with us. However, when she could not, we read to ourselves, often staying in the local library until she returned home from work. We attended BTU after church where we read books like the Bible and other thought-provoking prose that stimulated our consciousness and opened our eyes to the world's possibilities.

I would say to any parent, and especially parents who are deemed to be ones living in poverty, to focus on the amazing upsides for your children. While you may have little economic resources, your personal wealth is your humanity, culture, dreams and aspirations. None of these factors are quantifiable; they have no boundaries or limits. Expose your children to things that are new and different, provide them a variety of experiences, allow them to learn about different cultures and encourage them to be curious about the world we live in.



KRISTOF'S CASE

The road to college attainment, higher wages & social mobility in the United States starts at birth.

James Heckman, a Nobel-winning economist at the University of Chicago

60% to 70%

achievement gap between rich and poor kids is already evident by kindergarten
Russell Sage Foundation, Too Many Children Left Behind



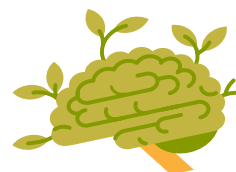
It's in early childhood that the roots of inequality lie.

Brain research in the last dozen years underscores that the time of life that may shape adult outcomes the most is **pregnancy through age 2 or 3.**

In the **first 1,000 days of life** the stage is set for fulfilling individual potential.



Roger Thurow, The First 1,000 Days



That's when the brain is developing most quickly.

Help for families beginning in pregnancy, increases the prospect that children will be raised with lots of play and conversation.



COLORADO



The best metric of child poverty may not have to do with income but with how often a child is spoken and read to.

Investments in early childhood now = less money spent later on juvenile courts, prisons, health care and welfare.





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Reach Out and Read Colorado
1660 S. Albion Street, Suite 905
Denver, CO 80222

P 303.623.3800

F 303.300.3801

reachoutandreadco.org
info@reachoutandreadco.org

facebook.com/ReachOutandReadColorado
twitter.com/ReachOutReadCO

||||| **SAVE THE DATE** |||||

Time for the Reach Out and Read Colorado Thirteenth Annual Benefit Breakfast

Our signature fundraiser takes place at the beautiful Denver Botanic Gardens, Mitchell Hall. The program features local celebrities, such as Governor John Hickenlooper and former first ladies of Colorado, enchanting guests with whimsical rhymes and smile-worthy charades, plus touching stories from local health care providers.



One hundred percent of net proceeds are used to purchase new books for low-income children under age 6.

Tuesday, September 27, 2016
7am Coffee is served
7:30am-9am Breakfast & Program
@ Denver Botanic Gardens

For more information, contact 303-623-3800
or info@reachoutandreadco.org.



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