

Investments in early childhood help create a healthier and more robust community.





LITERACY IS CRITICAL TO HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.



**A**

**Rx**

BEN H.  
AGE 4

- READ ALOUD
- LISTENS LONGER
- LEARNING LETTERS
- RELATE THE STORY

MORE THAN 1800 HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

**B**

70,171 GENTLY-USED BOOKS DONATED

**C**

READING ALOUD IS A STRESS-BUFFER

"Goldilocks was hungry so she took a bite from the large bowl of..."

**Early childhood is a critical time to establish good health. Reducing exposure to chronic stress, increasing access to health care, and establishing quality relationships with health care providers during early childhood can all directly impact health outcomes later in life.**

**A ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE**

In 2017, Reach Out and Read Colorado partnered with more than 1,800 health care providers to prescribe brand-new, high-quality books to 120,158 Colorado children. This effort is unique because the book is utilized as an organic, and friendly, tool for health care providers to assess child development and provide interventions. We train providers to integrate the book into their conversation with parents and to prescribe specific books or instructions to each family based on their individualized circumstances.

The program model is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP).

**B QUALITY RELATIONSHIPS WITH MEDICAL PROVIDERS**

Positive experiences at health care facilities create a trusted relationship between the provider and families. Studies show that nicely furnished waiting rooms create the perception of greater quality of care. Gently used books are placed in waiting areas at our partner clinics to create literacy-rich environments, as well as given to siblings accompanying a child at check-ups. In 2017, 70,171 gently-used books were donated and distributed to Colorado families.

Long-term and robust partnerships with National book publishers and vendors ensures high-quality books are always accessible to our partner clinics.

**C REDUCE EXPOSURE TO CHRONIC STRESS**

Every day, more than 550 families leave health check-ups across Colorado with a prescription to read aloud and the tools to achieve success. This impact is especially crucial because reading aloud at home with their children acts as a stress buffer. Homes full of affection and serve and return interactions help develop good mental, social, and physical health.

# SOCIAL FABRIC



LITERACY CONTRIBUTES TO COHESIVE COMMUNITIES.



*"Leemos en inglés y en español, en chino y en navajo también. Leemos solitos o con un amigo..."*

**A**

BOOKS PRESCRIBED IN MORE THAN 60 LANGUAGES

**C**

VOLUNTEER

50,000 VOLUNTEER HOURS IN 2017

*"Mr. Rabbit trotted down the lane, his pink nose taking in the smells of nature around him..."*

**B**

READING TOGETHER PROMOTES SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

Fostering strong social fabric benefits the quality of life for everyone in a community. This starts early. Nurturing a sense of belonging during childhood fosters communication, confidence, and respect while establishing strong relationships between children and caregivers can reduce incidence of illness, injury, and premature death.

## **A** NURTURING A SENSE OF BELONGING

Research states that the physical environment of a health care setting, such as having signs and books in multiple languages, can signal welcome and belonging before a patient even meets a health care professional. **In 2017, Reach Out and Read Colorado provided books in 60+ languages and increased focus on military, refugees, expectant mothers, children with disabilities and other special populations, supporting and creating a sense of belonging for all Coloradans.**

Literacy-rich waiting room environments with Reach Out and Read Colorado signage, are physical spaces for parents to read with their children, where children can share and explore books with one another, and where relationships can be fostered.

## **B** RELATIONSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Reach Out and Read Colorado encourages the building of strong parent/child relationship because an early bond with another person helps set the stage for our lifelong emotional, social, and physical health. While we learn about our world, a strong attachment to another person promotes positive emotional and physical development.

## **C** VOLUNTEERS

**Reach Out and Read Colorado exists on such a large statewide scale due to the generous efforts of many individuals throughout the community, totaling more than 50,000 volunteer hours in 2017.**

Volunteers fulfill many diverse and important roles critical to the administration of the program. A family's first contact with Reach Out and Read Colorado often occurs in the clinic waiting room, hearing a story read aloud by a volunteer reader. The volunteer reader functions to engage children with serve and return interactions, encourage daily book sharing, model positive parenting behaviors, and to distribute gently-used books. More than 90 volunteers read to children in waiting rooms across the state.

# EDUCATION



LITERACY LEADS TO HIGHER RATES OF GRADUATION.



WORD OF THE DAY:  
**COMMUNITY**

## A LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

**In 2017, Reach Out and Read Colorado prescribed more than 225,000 brand new books increasing exposure to new words.**

The books are always thoughtfully selected and developmentally- and language-appropriate for each individual child. Levels of interest in and attitudes toward reading, the amount of time children spend reading in their free time, and the diversity and quality of the materials are closely associated with future literacy performance. Children participating in the program had higher receptive vocabulary scores and higher scores on the Home Literacy Orientation (measured reading to child and number of books in the home) than children not participating.

## B READING PROFICIENCY

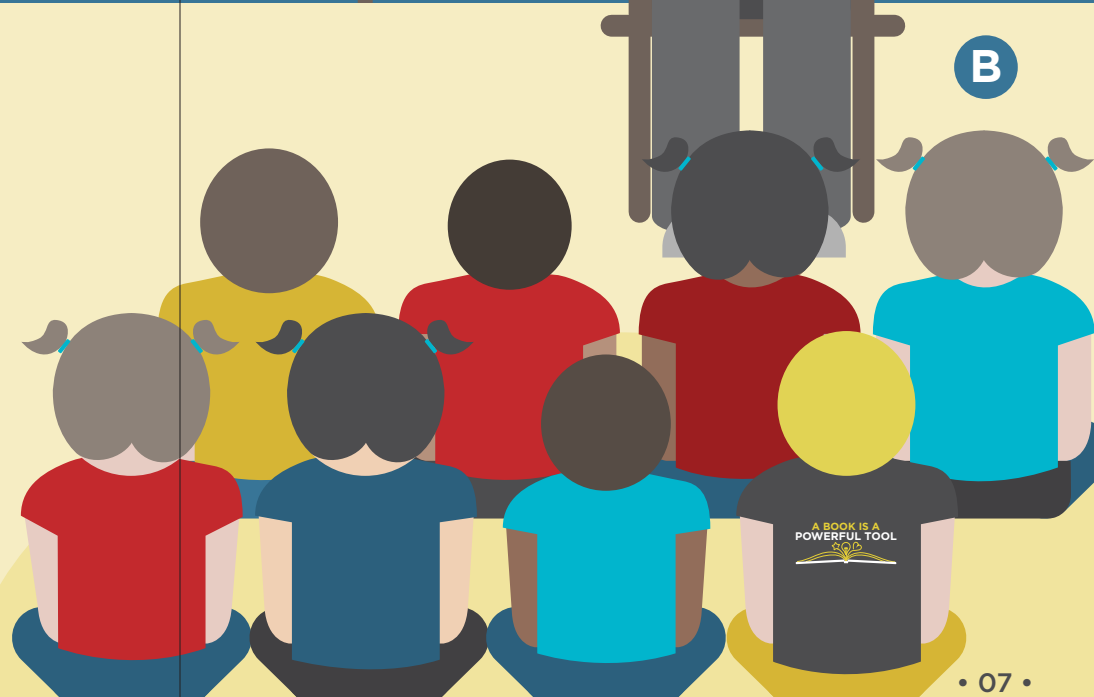
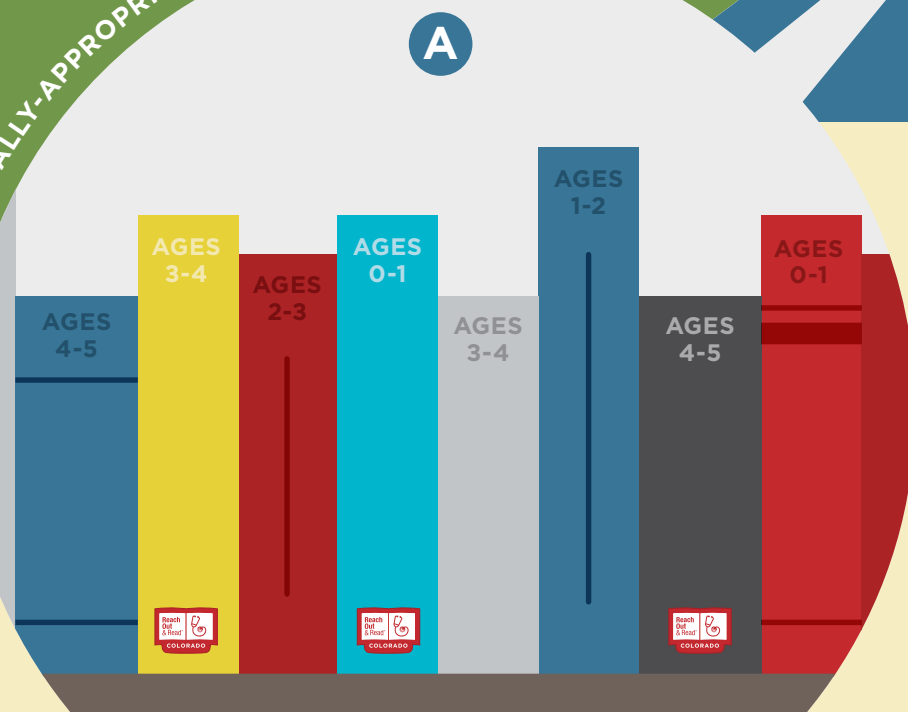
Families that participate in the program read to their children more often, sharing books two or more times per week, and their children enter kindergarten with larger vocabularies & stronger language skills. The single most important activity for building knowledge for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.

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**“The Reach Out and Read Program has always been a no-brainer! The sum of both education plus health always equals greater yields and successes for the children we serve. Improving literacy improves a key social determinant of health, allowing our kids better educational performance, better opportunities and better overall health!”**

—Larry Wolk, M.D., M.S.P.H., Founder, Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics, Executive Director and Chief Medical Officer of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

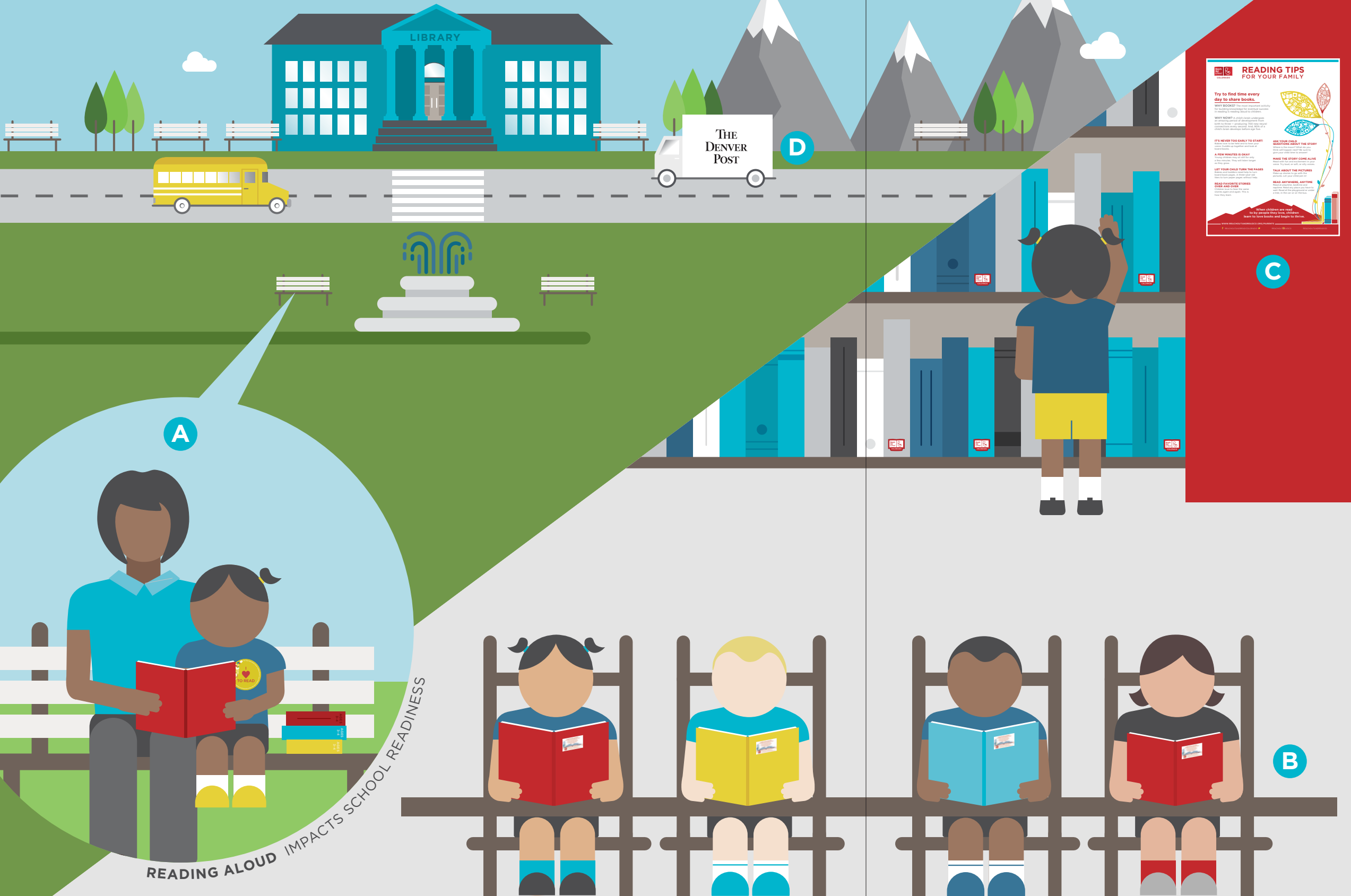
DEVELOPMENTALLY-APPROPRIATE BOOKS PRESCRIBED



# ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



LITERACY ENHANCES ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES.



A

D

C

B



READING ALOUD IMPACTS SCHOOL READINESS

Economic opportunity directly impacts health and education within communities. Thriving communities have access to resources including nutrition, parks and housing all which impact health, as well as families who foster learning at home through time, resources, and relationships.

## A SCHOOL READINESS & INEQUITY

Success in school leads to higher earnings, and this improves our living conditions. In low-income neighborhoods there is a book disparity, only one book is available for every 300 children. **In 2017, Reach Out and Read Colorado increased statewide saturation partnering with 328 clinics from 62 of Colorado's 64 counties.** Providing access to books and supporting families across Colorado to read aloud positively impacts school readiness which in turn influences an individual's long-term capacity to shape their own circumstances.

## B ACCESS FOR EVERYONE

Access to quality health care is a vital tool for healthy physical and mental development. More than 95% of children under the age of five visit their doctor at least once a year, giving health care professionals consistent and early access to families. **In 2017, 100% of Reach Out and Read Colorado partner clinics prescribed high-quality, language-appropriate books to low-income families at 300% of the federal poverty level.** The program requires no cost, allowing children of all socioeconomic backgrounds to participate and thrive.

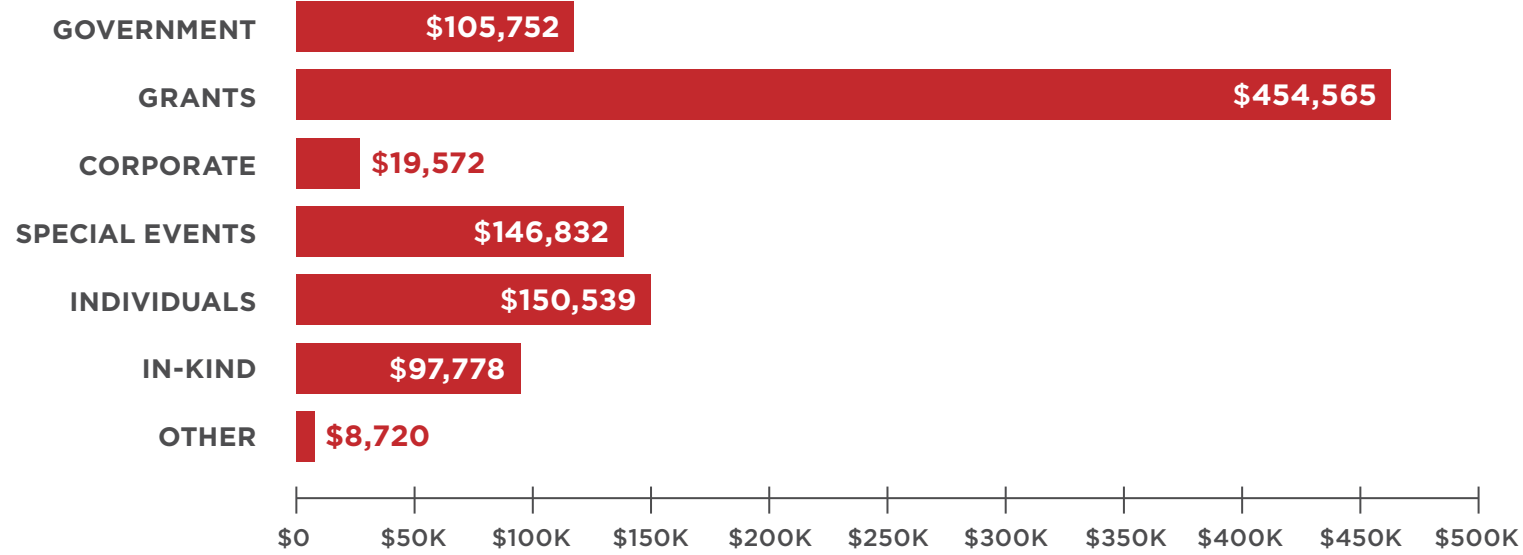
## C COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

In 2017, Reach Out and Read Colorado partnered with libraries, museums, preschool programs, clinics and other community partners to support early exposure to books, share consistent messages, and to create wrap-around services for Colorado families.

## D DENVER POST BOOK DISTRIBUTION

For more than five years, we have been partnering with the Denver Post Circulation Team to distribute thousands of gently used books to clinics across the state on a biannual basis. Over the years, the Delivery Drivers have developed friendships with our site coordinators on the receiving end. The Denver Post has proudly identified themselves as a key supporter of ours, facilitating connections with communities.

## REVENUE



## EXPENSES

Category	Amount
MGMT/GENERAL	\$52,276
FUNDRAISING	\$122,539
PROGRAM SERVICES	\$927,230

**“I prescribe books to my patients because literacy, social connections & healthy relationships are the foundations for which we achieve optimal health. Healthy individuals lead to healthier communities where I believe everyone has the right to feel connected & engaged in opportunities in which to continually improve and thrive.”**

—Ken Davis, PA-C, Reach Out and Read Colorado Board Member & Executive Director at Northwest Colorado Community Health Partnership



### LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Reach Out and Read Colorado had an exciting year providing local support to communities across the state in innovative new ways. In 2017, we focused on increased reach and access adding more than 10,000 new children, as well as, deepening our mission to enhance our impact. At our 2017 statewide conference in April, we joined forces with health care providers and community partners to initiate a powerful and necessary statewide dialogue on reading aloud as a tool to buffer toxic stress and literacy promotion starting a birth. New research continues to support the importance of investing in project and programs that work with children from day one. Professor James Heckman, a Harvard Economic and a leading mind in the research of early childhood’s return on investment, demonstrates in his latest research that high-quality birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children can deliver a 13% per year return on investment. Economic returns of this scale are profound but what drives our effort is the social returns, as illustrated throughout the pages of this report. To our volunteers and donors, thank you sincerely for your contribution of both time and talent to our mission over the past year. I am proud to be a part of this work every day. Onward!

**Meredith Hintze, MPA**

Executive Director, Reach Out and Read Colorado



### LETTER FROM BOARD CHAIR

As a pediatrician, I have always understood the power of promoting early reading with families, and of providing wonderful books for parents to read with their children. This is especially important for families who did not grow up in a literacy-rich environment themselves, and may not know the importance of reading with children from a very young age. Over the past years, research has shown us yet another important reason why Reach Out and Read and other early literacy programs are so important. We now know about toxic stress and the adverse events of early childhood, and how these can impact a child’s life trajectory, even causing epigenetic changes. And we know that family reading can help create resilience to toxic stress as a positive force for the child, the parents, and the family. In this way, investments in early childhood such as Reach Out and Read create a healthier and more robust community. I am proud of what Reach Out and Read Colorado has accomplished this past year: we have a true statewide impact, and are trying out programs targeted to parents with neonates and women in their last trimester of pregnancy. It’s never too early to promote childhood literacy! Thank you for all you do to help support this wonderful and important program.

**Simon Hambidge, MD, PhD**

Board Chair, Reach Out and Read Colorado

# 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

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**COLORADO**

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