

SUMMARY OF FINAL REPORT
(Healthy Tomorrow Partnership for Children Program Grant)

1. PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Project Title: Improving School Readiness in Washington State through Reach Out and Read

Project Number: H17MC11287

Project Director: Jill Sells MD, FAAP; Executive Director, Reach Out and Read Washington State

Grantee Organization: Reach Out and Read, Inc.

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Project Period: March 2009-February 2014

Total Amount of Grant Awarded: \$250,000

1. PURPOSE OF PROJECT AND RELATIONSHIP TO MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

(MCH) PROGRAMS: The primary purpose of this project was to integrate Reach Out and Read into Washington's state and local school readiness efforts so that vulnerable children are better prepared to learn when they enter kindergarten. Reach Out and Read (ROR) is an evidenced based school readiness program which addresses all aspects of early childhood comprehensive systems: it is implemented within the medical home, promotes nurturing parent-child relationships; educates and supports parents; and enhances early literacy skills. This project was created to harness the enthusiasm for Reach Out and Read and implement it as a community-based, collaborative strategy to enhance school readiness in Washington State. About half of children in Washington arrive at

kindergarten with the skills they need; and children who arrive behind rarely catch up. Early brain and economic research demonstrate that effective interventions in early childhood enhance individual school and life outcomes, and benefit society. This project partnered with the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant and other projects at Washington's MCH program. The Director is a member of the state AAP chapter, co-chairs the Early Learning Committee, and the Chapter has supported Reach Out and Read through advocacy for state policy. Many AAP members participate in Reach Out and Read.

2. **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:** (1) Access: Increase access to Reach Out and Read programs throughout Washington State, raising the total annual number of individual family visits from 80,000 to 130,000 over 5 years (revised to 170,000 during the project). (2) Quality: Enhance the quality of Reach Out and Read programs across Washington State by piloting, implementing, and sustaining an effective training and technical assistance program to support quality within ROR programs. (3) Integration: Facilitate the integration of Reach Out and Read into early childhood systems, and early learning initiatives, so that by the end of five years ROR is a standard part of early learning services and systems in Washington State at the local and state levels. (4) Sustainability: Assure the sustainability of Reach Out and Read programs and supports, so that ROR Washington State is an effective and ongoing part of local and state early learning systems in Washington State.
3. **METHODOLOGY:** This project was designed to use the evidence-based, proven Reach Out and Read program at the practice, community, and statewide level as a preventive, collaborative school readiness strategy which helps children reach kindergarten ready for success in school and life. State and local school readiness partnerships help increase access to Reach Out and Read for low-

income children ages 6 months through 5 years in Washington State. Within the medical home Reach Out and Read doctors (1) talk with families about reading and promoting literacy at each checkup; (2) give families developmentally, linguistically, and culturally appropriate new books to keep, and (3) have literacy rich waiting rooms. Reach Out and Read reinforces the parent's role as the first and most important teacher, and gives parents the knowledge, skills, and books to help their children succeed.

4. **EVALUATION:** We evaluated the access and quality goals related to Reach Out and Read program delivery through online semi-annual reports from the medical practices coupled with direct observation during sites visits and other communications by our staff. Data included number of Reach Out and Read well-child visits provided by the program, number of books given to families, and demographic information about the families served; as well as the number of medical providers participating. Quality metrics included the development of a monitoring, assessment, and quality improvement process embedded in a new statewide technical assistance system. Evaluation of integration and sustainability objectives was based on the direct activities and outcomes of project staff partnerships and other efforts.
5. **RESULTS/OUTCOMES:** (1) **Access:** We vastly exceeded our goal, growing from approximately 80,000 well-child Reach Out and Read visits with families per year at baseline to 183,651 visits in 2013! We are now serving an estimated 100,000 children and their families, about 20% of Washington's population of children birth through 5. Of those we serve 65% are living in low-income families, 45% are children of color, and 28% have a home language other than English.(2) **Quality:** We implemented an effective training and technical assistance program to assess, monitor, and support quality within local ROR programs. All programs now have quality ratings, and

quality improvement plans are in place where needed. In the last year we increased the number of programs with our highest quality rating by 35% and reduced the number with the lowest rating by 46%. (3) Integration: Reach Out and Read is now embedded within major state policy and planning documents, particularly the Washington State Early Learning Plan, used by state and local leaders. Early Literacy including Reach Out and Read has been identified as a priority Early Learning Plan strategy for the state every year. (4) Sustainability: Since Reach Out and Read Washington State launched in 2007, we have raised over \$3.6 million dollars, including \$1.1 million in public funding. We continue to partner with state government and major private funders at the state level; and with local Early Learning Coalitions and United Ways.

6. PUBLICATIONS/PRODUCTS: Major products include our website, Facebook page, electronic newsletters, a video, and a report: The Power of Parents and the Influence of Children's Doctors: Reach Out and Read in the First Five Years.
7. DISSEMINATION/UTILIZATION OF RESULTS: We created a project website in the first year. We have a monthly e-newsletter both for our programs, and another for our broad partnership audience. We have a Facebook page. We attracted media stories in print, radio and TV, and we have shared these by posting on the web, in our newsletter, and on Facebook.
8. FUTURE PLANS/SUSTAINABILITY: This project has become a Regional Office of the national Reach Out and Read organization. The work is embedded in Washington's state and local systems work, and supported by public and private funding. Our goal is to take the project to full scale and embed it within Washington's health care and early learning systems as part of a comprehensive early childhood system.