Opportunities for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program to Support Early Literacy Promotion in Pediatric Primary Care: A Spotlight on Reach Out and Read

Download Material

As a regular, trusted touchpoint for families, the pediatric primary care medical home can support early literacy and language development through programs like Reach Out and Read, an evidence-based model that trains medical providers to use children's books as a tool to connect with families at well visits.

Despite the benefits for families, Reach Out and Read is not consistently or equitably funded in pediatric care. Opportunities exist to leverage Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) for further investment in this model to help raise the standard of pediatric primary care for young children and address disparities in early literacy and school readiness by making these programs more accessible for families.

This policy brief—created in partnership with Reach Out and Read and authored by an interdisciplinary group of primary care providers, early literacy researchers, and policy experts—provides recommendations on how states could use Medicaid and CHIP to improve equitable access to Reach Out and Read. We also share examples for how this approach is already being implemented in several states.

This resource reflects PolicyLab's growing interest in equity-focused payment reform, and is part of a series of briefs that compile evidence and explore levers for sustainably financing pediatric delivery system innovations that advance health equity and support the health of all youth.

Authors: Katie Lane, Danielle Erkoboni, Rebecka Rosenquist

Related Content

- Supporting Early Literacy for Babies and Toddlers in Military Families With Recent Federal Action in 200 Words
  Blog Post
  Jul 06, 2022
- Turning the Page: How Shared Reading and Pediatric Partnerships Can Strengthen Early Literacy and Child Well-Being
  Blog Post
  Mar 25, 2025