Supporting Early Literacy by Reaching Families Beyond the Exam Room Walls in 200 Words

Family & Community Health

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March marks the celebration of National Reading Month! At PolicyLab and Reach Out and Read Greater Philadelphia (RORGP), we champion the role of shared reading in supporting early literacy and language development, strengthening caregiver-child bonds, and profoundly impacting children's overall health and wellness.

Reach Out and Read (ROR) is an evidence-based intervention in which pediatric clinicians integrate books into well-visits as a tool for providing guidance around shared reading and early relational experiences. Families take home a new, developmentally appropriate book that reflects their family and community and builds their home libraries.

At RORGP, we have taken ROR guidance beyond the walls of the exam room and into communities. We partner with early childhood education centers and community-based organizations to co-design and facilitate events guided by local pediatric care providers. Families leave not only with books, but with tools to talk, sing, read and play with their young children.

We feel strongly that events like these and the ROR model in pediatric medical offices can be leveraged as a standard of practice to equitably promote healthy development for children and families. PolicyLab researchers continue to add to the evidence base highlighting the impact of ROR and to inform policymakers about available levers to support the sustainability and expansion of ROR in Pennsylvania.

Through these efforts, we hope to ensure all families have access to early literacy supports to help children thrive during National Reading Month and all year round.

Visit RORGP's Instagram for examples of ROR guidance in action!

This post is part of our "____ in 200 Words" series. In this series, we tackle issues related to children's health policy and explain and connect you to resources to help understand them further, all in 200 words. If you have any suggestions for a topic in this series, please send a note to PolicyLab's Communications Manager ***Laura Cavello****.*

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