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**Aspen Institute Names Reach Out and Read to National Network of Partners**

*Organizations Use Two-Generation Approaches to End Poverty and Create Opportunity for Families*

**Boston, MA (April 29, 2014)** – National early literacy nonprofit Reach Out and Read was announced today as a member of the Aspen Institute [Ascend Network](#), a new network of leading organizations using two-generation approaches to disrupt poverty and create economic mobility for families.

Reach Out and Read is one of the initial 58 organizations, selected from 24 states and the District of Columbia, that represent the leading edge of a national movement around two-generation approaches. [Two-generation approaches](#) look at the whole family's needs and provide opportunities for children and their parents together.

"We are honored to be part of such a powerful, impactful network of organizations working improve opportunity and outcomes for families nationwide," said Reach Out and Read's Acting Executive Director Brian Gallagher. "We look forward to collaborating with our partners and the Aspen Institute to develop and implement new policies and programs that effect change for parents and children."

Reach Out and Read is the evidence-based, national nonprofit organization that promotes early literacy and school readiness by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud at regular pediatric checkups. The model includes providing a new, age-appropriate book for each child to take home at checkups from 6 months through 5 years and advice for parents about the importance of reading aloud.

The Aspen Institute identified Reach Out and Read through a highly selective national competition. More than 250 organizations applied to join the Network and receive funding from the Aspen Institute Ascend Fund. The selected organizations ranged from community colleges seeking to better serve student parents and their children, to early childhood centers engaging parents in pathways to employment, to two-generation partnerships spearheaded by Promise Neighborhoods, United Ways, and women's foundations.

"These leaders are fueling change for America's families," said Walter Isaacson, president and CEO of the Aspen Institute. "As we reflect on the 50th anniversary of the 'War on Poverty,' the Aspen Institute is proud to invest in transformational ideas to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty."

In the United States today, nearly 45 percent of all children live in low-income families. Almost

25 percent of today's college students are parents. Yet our education and human services systems have not kept up with the needs of 21st century families. Together, Reach Out and Read and the Ascend Network are redesigning programs and policies to create a legacy of opportunity that passes from one generation to the next

Reach Out and Read builds on the unique relationship between parents and medical providers to develop critical early reading skills in children. Nationwide, Reach Out and Read doctors and nurses serve 4 million children and their families annually at 5,000 hospitals, clinics, and health centers in all 50 states, with a focus on centers that serve low-income communities.

As a result of the intervention, Reach Out and Read families read together more often, and their children enter kindergarten better prepared to succeed, with larger vocabularies and stronger language skills. During the preschool years, children served by Reach Out and Read score three to six months ahead of their non-Reach Out and Read peers on vocabulary tests.

*To learn more about Reach Out and Read, please visit [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org).*

*To learn more about the Ascend Network, please visit <http://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/network>.*

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