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CONTACT:

Clinton Foundation: Mimi Reisner, [mreisner@clintonfoundation.org](mailto:mreisner@clintonfoundation.org), 646-775-9124

Next Generation: Anastasia Ordonez, [media@thenextgeneration.org](mailto:media@thenextgeneration.org), 415-523-8017

American Academy of Pediatrics: Susan Stevens Martin, [ssmartin@aap.org](mailto:ssmartin@aap.org), 847-434-7131

**Business, Medical, and Non-Profit Partners Launch New National Effort  
at CGI America to Help Close the Word Gap**

*American Academy of Pediatrics, Reach Out and Read, and Scholastic Inc. working with Too Small to Fail to equip parents with tools to promote early literacy and vocabulary development*

Denver— At the fourth annual Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) America meeting in Denver, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced a new collaborative effort of *Too Small to Fail*, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Scholastic Inc. and Reach Out and Read to raise awareness among parents about early language development. For the first time the AAP will promote early literacy—beginning from an infant's very first days—as an “essential” component of primary care visits. Through this commitment, the partners will ensure that doctors, parents and caregivers have the information, tools and books they need to promote reading out loud to children every day starting in infancy.

The effort takes a multi-pronged approach toward equipping parents with the best tools to ensure that their children are prepared to learn as they enter school:

- *Too Small to Fail* and the AAP—an organization representing 62,000 pediatricians—will share messages across their networks and media platforms about the importance of talking, reading out loud and singing to children from birth in order to build vocabulary and promote healthy brain development.
- To jump start the partnership, Scholastic has donated 500,000 new, age-appropriate children's books for distribution through Reach Out and Read, the non-profit organization that works with 20,000 medical providers nationwide to promote early reading and give books to families at pediatric visits.
- Reach Out and Read will also distribute a toolkit to be developed by the AAP, with support from *Too Small to Fail*, which will equip pediatricians with resources to educate parents on how to use everyday activities to improve communication with their infants and toddlers.

Research shows that the more words children hear directed at them by parents and caregivers, the more they learn, yet children from low-income families have significantly fewer books than their more affluent peers. In addition, researchers have found that by age four, children in poverty hear 30 million fewer words than their higher-income peers. These dramatic gaps

result in significant learning disadvantages that persist into adulthood. In addition, numerous studies have shown that when pediatricians advise parents to read together and provide the necessary tools, parents read more and come to cherish this child-centered time, and their children enter kindergarten with larger vocabularies and stronger language skills.

"By four years of age, children in lower income families tend to have heard more than 30 million fewer words than children in more affluent families. Thirty million. Because they hear fewer words, they learn fewer words. Therefore they begin school with smaller vocabularies and struggle to catch up," said Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton. "The word gap leads to an achievement gap that can have lifelong consequences. Now every child deserves a chance, a fair chance at success in school and that's what Too Small to Fail is all about."

"Reading with young children is a joyful way to build strong and healthy parent-child relationships, to foster early language skills and to promote children's development," said James M. Perrin, MD, FAAP, President of the AAP. "Yet, fewer than half of children younger than five years old are read to daily in our country. Pediatricians are taking a stand to spread the news more widely -- that early shared reading is both fun and rewarding. The benefits are so compelling, that encouraging reading at young children's check-ups has become an essential component of our care."

"Research shows that a child's brain develops faster between the ages of zero and three than at any other time in life, making this a critical time for babies to hear rich oral language which is the foundation for lifelong literacy," said Greg Worrell, President, Scholastic Classroom and Community Group. "Through Scholastic's Family and Community Engagement program, we've seen firsthand that parents and children who begin sharing read-alouds in infancy and continue through the elementary school years reap benefits that last a lifetime."

"We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with Too Small to Fail, the AAP, and Scholastic in an effort to help ensure that the next generation grows up with books in their homes and parents who read aloud to them," said Steven Dow, Co-Chair of the Board at Reach Out and Read. "For 25 years, Reach Out and Read's doctors and nurses have been incorporating literacy messaging into pediatric primary care nationwide by prescribing books to children at well-child checkups. We look forward to building on our model with these partners so that all children have the chance to start life with a strong language foundation to help them achieve future successes."

Secretary Clinton also announced today that *Too Small to Fail* is leading a partnership with Text4baby, Sesame Workshop, and Kaiser Permanente to use mobile phones and other targeted outreach efforts to help parents boost children's early brain and language development.

Text4baby is a mobile health service that has enrolled more than 700,000 pregnant women and new mothers, and provides them with text based-tips related to their baby's health, safety, and

development. These tips are free because of support from America's wireless carriers. In working with *Too Small to Fail*, Text4baby has committed to expand this service to include messages on early brain and language development. Sesame Workshop, the producer of Sesame Street, will provide the research-based content for a regular series of tips encouraging parents to talk, read and sing to their babies under one year old in everyday moments and routines. In addition to the text messages, Sesame Workshop will also be developing a "Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing" parent toolkit to be used with children up to age three in *Too Small to Fail*'s pilot cities—Tulsa, Oklahoma and Oakland, California.

Kaiser Permanente will ask its Oakland Medical Center pediatricians to distribute the Sesame Street *Talk, Read, Sing* Parent Toolkit to parents of newborns and parents of 18-month olds during well-child visits, along with information on how parents can sign up for Text4baby. Based on the results of this pilot program, Kaiser Permanente will consider expanding the toolkit distribution to their hospitals nationwide, where 100,000 children are born every year.

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### **About Too Small to Fail**

*Too Small to Fail*, a joint initiative of the Bill, Hillary and Chelsea Clinton Foundation and Next Generation, aims to help parents, communities and businesses take meaningful actions to improve the health and well-being of children ages zero to five, so that more of America's children are prepared to succeed in the 21st century.

In 2014, *Too Small to Fail* is focusing its work on closing the "word gap." Studies have found that by age four, children in middle and upper income families hear 30 million more words than their low-income peers. This disparity in hearing words from parents and caregivers translates directly into a disparity in learning words. And that puts our children born with the fewest advantages even further behind. Among those born in 2001, only 48 percent of poor children started school ready to learn, compared to 75 percent of children from middle-income families. The "word gap" is a significant but solvable challenge. *Too Small to Fail* is about parents, caregivers, other concerned individuals, and the private sector coming together to take small, research-based actions with big impacts.

Learn more at [www.toosmall.org](http://www.toosmall.org) and on Twitter @2SmalltoFail.

### **About American Academy of Pediatrics**

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization of 62,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults. For more information, visit [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) or follow @AmerAcadPeds on Twitter. For parent-friendly health information from the AAP, visit [www.HealthyChildren.org](http://www.HealthyChildren.org). This award-winning site offers more than 3,000 children's health and safety articles including specific information on [early literacy](#) and the importance of reading with children.

### **About The Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation**

The Bill, Hillary & Chelsea Clinton Foundation convenes businesses, governments, NGOs, and individuals to improve global health and wellness, increase opportunity for women and girls, reduce childhood obesity, create economic opportunity and growth, and help communities address the effects of climate change. Because of our work, 20,000 American schools are providing kids with healthy food choices in an effort to eradicate childhood obesity; 28,000 farmers in Malawi have improved their incomes by more than 500 percent; 248 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions are being reduced in cities worldwide; more than 5,000 people have been trained in marketable job skills in Colombia; 8.2 million people have access to lifesaving HIV/AIDS medications; \$200 million in strategic investments have been made, impacting the health of 75 million people in the U.S.; and members of the Clinton Global Initiative have made nearly 2,800 Commitments to Action to improve more than 430 million lives around the world.

Learn more at [www.clintonfoundation.org](http://www.clintonfoundation.org), and on Twitter @ClintonFdn.

### **About Kaiser Permanente**

Kaiser Permanente is committed to helping shape the future of health care. We are recognized as one of America's leading health care providers and not-for-profit health plans. Founded in 1945, our mission is to provide high-quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve. We currently serve approximately 9.3 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal physicians, specialists and team of caregivers. Our expert and caring medical teams are empowered and supported by industry-leading technology advances and tools for health promotion, disease prevention, state-of-the-art care delivery and world-class chronic disease management. Kaiser Permanente is dedicated to care innovations, clinical research, health education and the support of community health.

Learn more at [kp.org/share](http://kp.org/share) and on Twitter@kpshare.

### **About Next Generation**

Next Generation promotes solutions to two of the biggest challenges confronting the next generation of Americans: The risk of dangerous climate change, and the threat of diminished prospects for children and families. Through the use of non-partisan research, policy development, and strategic communications, we identify strategies that help deploy clean, advanced energy technologies; we also work to ensure a level playing field from which today's kids can build a brighter future.

Learn more at [www.thenextgeneration.org](http://www.thenextgeneration.org), and on Twitter @nextgen\_USA.

### **About Reach Out and Read**

Reach Out and Read is an evidence-based nonprofit organization of doctors and nurses who promote early literacy and school readiness in pediatric exam rooms nationwide by giving new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud. Reach Out and Read builds on the unique relationship between parents and medical providers to develop

critical early reading skills in children, beginning at 6 months of age. As a result of this literacy 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. Nationwide, Reach Out and Read's 20,000 medical providers serve 4 million children and their families annually at 5,000 pediatric practices, health centers, and hospitals with a focus on those that serve low-income communities.

For more information on Reach Out and Read, please visit [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org).

#### **About Scholastic Inc.**

Scholastic Corporation (NASDAQ: SCHL) is the world's largest publisher and distributor of children's books and a leader in educational technology and related services and children's media. Scholastic creates quality books and ebooks, print and technology-based learning materials and programs, magazines, multi-media and other products that help children learn both at school and at home. The Company distributes its products and services worldwide through a variety of channels, including school-based book clubs and book fairs, retail stores, schools, libraries, on-air, and online at [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com).

#### **About Text4baby**

Text4baby is the nation's only free mobile information service designed to promote maternal and child health through text messaging. A free service of the nonprofit National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition (HMHB), the Founding Sponsor is Johnson & Johnson. Founding partners include Voxiva, The Wireless Foundation and Grey Healthcare Group (a WPP company). Text4baby's public-private partnership also includes over 1,200 national, state and local organizations including the American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A special thank you goes to the carriers who support Text4baby so the service can be free to the end users. Those carriers are: AT&T, Bluegrass Cellular, Boost Mobile, Cricket Wireless, MetroPCS, Sprint Nextel, T-Mobile, TracFone, U.S. Cellular, Verizon Wireless and Virgin Mobile U.S.A. To learn more, please visit [www.text4baby.org](http://www.text4baby.org).