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Heising-Simons Foundation Awards Reach Out and Read \$150,000 Grant

Funding Will Be Used to Develop and Pilot Integrating Early Math Concepts into Pediatric Literacy Program in California

Boston, MA (April 28, 2014) – The Heising-Simons Foundation has awarded Reach Out and Read a \$150,000 grant to develop and pilot an early math initiative in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, California.

This new initiative will incorporate early math concepts into Reach Out and Read’s evidence-based school readiness intervention. The pilot will focus on strategies that help medical providers integrate early math concepts into well-child visits for young children, and field testing of the initiative.

During field testing, doctors and nurses at regular medical checkups will introduce early math themes as part of their family engagement efforts around literacy. Families will be given books that include early math concepts, from numbers and counting to comparing, spatial concepts, and repeating patterns. Doctors will talk with parents about the vital importance of regular shared reading, and suggest ways that they can help children understand age-appropriate early math concepts, using books that they are already distributing through the Reach Out and Read program.

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.

Development of the Heising-Simons-funded early math effort is underway. In San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties, California, Reach Out and Read currently serves nearly 60,000 children and their families via 30 health centers, hospitals, and pediatric clinics. Starting in the fall, Reach Out and Read will work closely with a handful of program sites to begin field testing this initiative.

“By leveraging the Reach Out and Read intervention, medical providers can play a key role in introducing early math concepts to parents of young children,” said Reach Out and Read’s Acting Executive Director Brian Gallagher. “New research has shown that early math is a key predictor of later school success. Through Reach Out and Read, medical providers can demonstrate to parents the powerful impact that early exposure to math concepts can have on their children’s futures. Together, Reach Out and Read and the Heising-Simons Foundation are working to ensure that children enter school with the foundational skills needed to excel.”

Based in Los Altos, California, the Heising-Simons Foundation is dedicated to sustainable, research-based solutions in education, environment, science, and policy. Like Reach Out and Read, the Heising-Simons Foundation understands the critical importance of early education in setting the stage for future achievement.

Headquartered in Boston, 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.

To learn more about the Heising-Simons Foundation, please visit www.heisingsimons.org.

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