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## **Reach Out and Read Announces Jessica Mortensen as New Executive Director for Washington State**

**Seattle, Washington (March 29, 2018):** Reach Out and Read is pleased to announce that Jessica Mortensen has been selected as the new Executive Director for Washington State.

Mortensen has over 15 years of experience leading nonprofit programs in the healthcare improvement space. She has served as the Acting Executive Director of Reach Out and Read Washington State since early 2018. A part of the organization since 2010, she previously served in the roles of Deputy Director (2015-2017) and Program Director (2010-2015). Mortensen received her bachelor's degree from Whitman College and a Master's in Library and Information Science from the University of Washington in Seattle.

"We're thrilled to have Jessica officially at the helm of Reach Out and Read Washington State," said Brian Gallagher, Chief Executive Officer at Reach Out and Read National. "She brings deft leadership and incomparable passion to the position. I know she will help Reach Out and Read Washington to continue to grow and increase its impact in the Northwest."

Mortensen began her new role on March 19, 2018. She succeeds Dr. Jill Sells, Reach Out and Read's Washington State's founding Executive Director who led the organization for 10 years. "I am incredibly grateful to Jill for her passion for the power of engaging doctors to support parents' as their children's first teachers," said Mortensen. "I look forward to leading the organization forward as we serve an even greater number of children and families across or state."

Since its founding in 2007, Reach Out and Read Washington State has distributed nearly 1.4 million books statewide. Currently 125,000 Washington families are served each year at over 220 program sites. Reach Out and Read Washington State recruits new clinics and provides services to help doctors and clinics implement high quality programs. They work with state and local, public and private partners to improve outcomes for children. They

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strive to reduce the opportunity gap, focusing first on children living in low-income families or who are otherwise at risk for poor educational outcomes.

**About Reach Out and Read:** Founded in 1989 at Boston Medical Center, Reach Out and Read is a national nonprofit organization that gives young children a foundation for success by incorporating books into pediatric care and encouraging families to read aloud together. Headquartered in Boston, MA, Reach Out and Read currently serves 4.7 million children and their families, reaching 1 out of every 4 low-income children in the US. The Reach Out and Read network brings together 32,000 medical providers at over 6,000 program sites in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. The Reach Out and Read model is endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Learn more at [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org); follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#). Reach Out and Read is a registered 501c3.

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