

**Dear Reach Out and Read Providers and Coordinators:**

**Boston Children's Museum is collaborating with Reach Out and Read and Houghton Mifflin Harcourt to support adult-child engagement through play and promote collaboration, creativity, and literacy for children and their families in Boston and throughout Massachusetts. Our core message? *Play is an essential foundation for all of children's learning: especially through adult-child conversations that facilitate literacy.***

In recent clinical reports, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends play as the most important way that children engage with peers and adults and build curiosity. The empirical research is clear: children's learning is optimized through vocabulary-rich experiences with caring adults. Many of these experiences evolve during play, but in a world full of mixed messages about what is most important for children we professionals must advocate for play explicitly and translate recommendations for parents.

**With your help, we can spread the word about the importance of play for children's healthy development, wellbeing, and school success.** Fortunately, the most powerful play and learning experiences are typically free, involving classic games and materials like cardboard boxes. **We are providing posters you can use to encourage playful adult-child interactions.** These posters can support you as you model engagement for children and adults before, during, or after an exam.

**Please help us relay the following messages to adult family members:**

- **Play is very important for children's brain development, health, and school success.**
- **Watch and listen to your child when he or she is playing.** Just watching children play helps you understand what they care about most.
- **Ask questions to show children you are interested in their play.** *What are you doing with those blocks? That is so interesting.* Children practice what they are learning through play.
- **When possible, play along!** Play can mean many things and adults can find their own ways to rediscover the joy of play. Here are a few ideas:
  - **Talk with your child about what *you* see around you – what are you curious about?**
  - **Play "I Spy" games on the bus or train or when waiting in line.**
  - **Make up stories with your child! What can you imagine together?**

Please contact us anytime to learn more about our collaboration with Reach Out and Read, our *Prescription for Play* initiative, or to share your experiences using Boston Children's Museum's *Power of Play* posters in your offices.

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