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**REACH OUT AND READ AND NURTURE CONNECTION TO HOST
NATIONAL SUMMIT IN WASHINGTON, D.C., ELEVATING THE POWER
OF CONNECTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD HEALTH**

Gathering will unite leading pediatric, policy, and early childhood voices to strengthen the communities and systems that help families thrive

BOSTON (Oct. 22, 2025) – As children’s health, family well-being, and social connection are under increasing strain, Reach Out and Read, the national nonprofit redefining early childhood health and literacy by integrating reading into pediatric care, is joining forces with Nurture Connection to bring together health care and early childhood leaders, policymakers, and parents for a National Summit. The convening will be held Nov. 5-6 at the historic Watergate Hotel in Washington, D.C.

In partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the two-day event will unite systems and stakeholders from across the country to advance a shared national agenda, making Early Relational Health — the emotional well-being that grows from strong, nurturing connections between young children and their caregivers — a public health priority. Through facilitated conversations, storytelling, and collaborative learning, participants will help design a framework to guide future research, inform policy, and strengthen the systems that support families from birth onward.

“At a time when families are facing extraordinary stressors, this Summit is both a call to action and a celebration of what we know to be true: Reading together strengthens relationships, and relationships foster healthy children,” said Dr. Lynette M. Fraga, CEO of Reach Out and Read. “By bringing together leaders across health care, early childhood, and community systems, we’re amplifying a simple but powerful message — every story shared and each moment of connection helps lay the foundation for a healthier, more hopeful future for all children.”

For more than 35 years, Reach Out and Read has turned pediatric checkups into one of the nation’s most powerful tools for equity and connection — helping parents and children build trust, strengthen language skills, and nurture emotional health from birth. Rooted in robust research and the science of early brain development, Reach Out and Read shares 7.7 million books and guidance about shared reading through 39,000 trusted clinicians nationwide. The program supports 9.3 million well-child visits across 6,500 medical sites each year.

Nurture Connection also champions the life-changing power of positive emotional bonds between young children and their parents and caregivers. In partnership with parents and families, the organization is building a networked movement to advance Early Relational Health and ensure every child is cared for and valued, every family is supported and heard, and every community is made stronger through positive and enduring relationships.

The National Summit brings these two organizations' work to a national conversation, exploring the science, systems, and stories that demonstrate why connection itself is a cornerstone of lifelong health. Sessions will spotlight cutting-edge research on Early Relational Health, community collaboration, and innovative policy approaches that can change the trajectory of children's lives.

"Early Relational Health is foundational to flourishing because young children develop in an environment of relationships. By supporting strong, positive, and nurturing relationships, we can build healthier, happier children, families, and communities," said David Willis, founder and director of Nurture Connection. "This Summit is an opportunity to further turn Nurture Connection's work as a catalytic network into action, gathering health care, policy, and community partners to imagine what's possible when we make Early Relational Health the foundation of how we help families thrive."

By convening the nation's leading early childhood voices, the Summit aims to spark lasting change, turning research into policy, and policy into practice. The conversations and connections forged in Washington will extend far beyond the event itself, shaping a unified vision for how communities, clinicians, and caregivers can work together to ensure every child grows up with the physical, social, and emotional support that leads to successful futures.

For more information about the National Summit 2025 and to see a full list of speakers and panels, visit ReachOutandRead.org/summit.

To learn more about Reach Out and Read, visit ReachOutandRead.org. To learn more about Nurture Connection, visit NurtureConnection.org.

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About Reach Out and Read: As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, Reach Out and Read leverages the near-universal reach of the pediatric well-child visit to support caregivers in fostering healthy relationships with their young children through shared reading. In FY24, Reach Out and Read served more than 4.6 million children and provided 7.7 million free books across 9.3 million well-child visits. Around 70 percent of the children Reach Out and Read serves are from low-income families. The only national pediatric literacy model endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Reach Out and Read serves children in every state across the U.S., through 6,500 clinics and the expertise of 39,000 clinicians. Recent research in a [peer-reviewed study published in Academic Pediatrics](#) confirms the program's effectiveness in increasing the frequency of parental reading, which builds early language and literacy skills and strengthens family relationships.

About Nurture Connection: Nurture Connection promotes the life-enhancing impacts of positive emotional connections between babies and toddlers and their parents and caregivers. The national catalytic impact network works to advance Early Relational Health so that all families can experience the joy and lifelong health benefits that come from strong, positive, and nurturing relationships in early childhood. Our work is in service to build a society where emotional connection is universally promoted so all children have the strongest start in life and are able to achieve their unique, boundless potential. By nurturing early positive relationships, we can provide a powerful road map to healthier, more connected communities.