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REACH OUT AND READ, MIDWEST DAIRY LAUNCH PARTNERSHIP TO STRENGTHEN EARLY LITERACY, NUTRITION ACROSS HEARTLAND

*The Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds initiative will deliver 22,000 new books to families
at nearly 800 clinics across 10 states*

BOSTON (Dec. 8, 2025) – [Reach Out and Read](#), the national nonprofit redefining pediatric care and championing early literacy and healthy early relationships, is partnering with Midwest Dairy to launch Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds, an initiative providing thousands of families across the Midwest with both books and healthy eating guidance during pediatric well-child visits. Through a \$150,000 investment, Midwest Dairy will help deliver 22,000 new books to pediatric clinics in Arkansas, Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Eastern Oklahoma, and South Dakota. Clinicians will share these books with families, offering resources on literacy, bonding, and nutrition, and reinforcing routines that nurture both strong bodies and strong minds.

Research shows that healthy eating and shared reading in the first five years of life boost brain development, strengthen parent-child bonds, and lay the groundwork for long-term academic success. This collaboration brings those two critical building blocks together, empowering families to create daily habits that will support their children for a lifetime. **Across the Midwest Dairy region, nearly 800 clinics and more than 6,400 medical providers implement the Reach Out and Read model, collectively supporting more than 1 million well-child visits each year.** That scale gives the collaboration the potential to reach families in both urban centers and rural communities, with a footprint that stretches from the plains of Kansas to the neighborhoods of Chicago and the rural communities of Minnesota.

“Each time a clinician gives a child a book and offers a family guidance on shared reading, we’re doing far more than supporting language development. We’re sparking curiosity, nurturing empathy and resilience, and empowering caregivers to build healthy habits that last,” said Dr. Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D., Reach Out and Read’s CEO. “By pairing literacy with guidance on healthy eating, our collaboration with Midwest Dairy ensures families are supported in raising children who are ready to thrive in every sense of the word.”

It’s a vision Midwest Dairy proudly shares.

“Our dairy farmers are deeply invested in the health and future of our communities,” said Lela Fausze, Vice President, Trust Partnerships at Midwest Dairy. “The first five years of life shape a child’s growth, learning, and well-being, and nutrition plays a vital role in that journey. By partnering with Reach Out and Read, we are uniting the strength of wholesome food with the power of books to give every child the foundation they need to succeed.”

Midwest Dairy’s investment will be distributed strategically based on the number of well-child visits Reach Out and Read clinics perform in each state. **Minnesota**, which sees more than 343,000 annual visits, will receive approximately **7,000 new books**. **Illinois** will receive more than **6,000 books** to serve over 260,000 annual well-child visits. **Missouri** will receive **2,600 books**, **Iowa 2,000**, and **Nebraska 1,800**. Clinics in **Arkansas, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and South Dakota** will also benefit, ensuring that families across all 10 states are reached equitably. Books will begin arriving this fall and will be given to families during their child’s regular checkups, turning routine doctor visits into opportunities for connection, learning, and healthier futures.

“At the heart of this partnership is a simple idea: Every child deserves the chance to grow up healthy,” Dr. Fraga said. “When families leave a well-child visit with both a book and meaningful tips for nourishing their children — body and mind — we’re giving them more than resources. We’re strengthening relationships and offering hope for a brighter future.

To learn more about this initiative go to ReachOutandRead.org/HealthyReaders.

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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 Midwest Dairy: Midwest Dairy® represents 3,600 dairy farm families and works on their behalf to build dairy demand by inspiring consumer confidence in our products and production practices. We are committed to *Bringing Dairy to Life!* by giving Consumers an Excellent Dairy Experience and are funded by farmers across a 10-state region, including Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma. For more information, visit MidwestDairy.com, and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).