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Contact: Ashley Pontius | National Strategies Public Relations
Phone: 813-409-4091 | Email: apontius@nspublicrelations.com

SOUTH CAROLINA REPRESENTATIVE NEAL COLLINS NAMED TO REACH OUT AND READ NATIONAL HONOR ROLL

State leader recognized for advancing early literacy, caregiver-child connection, and statewide investment in pediatric care

COLUMBIA, SC. (Feb. 2, 2026) – [Reach Out and Read South Carolina](#) is proud to announce State [Representative Neal Collins \(District 5\)](#) was named to the Reach Out and Read National Honor Roll, a national recognition celebrating leaders who champion early literacy, caregiver-child connection, and early relational health through pediatric care.

The Reach Out and Read Honor Roll recognizes policymakers and partners whose leadership helps integrate early literacy and relationship-building into pediatric care, reaching families at moments of trust and connection. Members are nominated by Reach Out and Read staff and medical leaders for sustained and meaningful impact through advocacy, partnership, funding, or community leadership. Rep. Collins is one of just 23 honorees nationwide named to the 2025 class.

“Representative Neal Collins has worked tirelessly to advocate for Reach Out and Read during his tenure in the South Carolina House. He has been, and remains, a valuable thought partner in advancing our work across the state,” said Emily Bartels, State Director of Reach Out and Read South Carolina. “Representative Collins values the importance of relationships and connection during the early years of life, and the important role Reach Out and Read plays during that crucial time. He advocates for our youngest citizens as they grow and learn and understands the overall benefit to our state when families and children are healthy and thriving.”

Reach Out and Read’s evidence-based model leverages the pediatric well-child visit as one of the earliest and most trusted opportunities to support a child’s development. During visits from birth through age 5, clinicians provide families with new, age-appropriate books and model shared-reading practices that strengthen caregiver-child bonds, support early language development, and promote school readiness.

“I’m truly honored to receive the Reach Out and Read Honor Roll Award. This recognition isn’t just about me — it’s about the belief that every child deserves a strong start and every family deserves the support to help their child thrive,” said Representative Neal Collins. “Literacy is the foundation for opportunity and Reach Out and Read shows us how powerful it is to use the existing structure of medical well-visits to educate and empower families that something as simple as sharing a book can build stronger bonds, support healthier families, and create brighter futures. I’m grateful to support a mission that meets families where they are and makes early literacy part of a child’s care from the very beginning.”

In the past year, Reach Out and Read South Carolina supported 343,940 well-child visits, reaching 126,919 children and distributing 308,859 books to families across the state.

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About Reach Out and Read South Carolina: 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. Around 72 percent of the children Reach Out and Read South Carolina serves are Medicaid eligible or depend on non-private insurance. 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.