



ALABAMA

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## **REACH OUT AND READ-ALABAMA KICKS OFF 17TH ANNUAL RX FOR SUMMER READING AT 53 SITES STATEWIDE**

*Statewide initiative encourages Alabama families to read together to build language, literacy and stronger relationships.*

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (June 5, 2026) – Reach Out and Read-Alabama is encouraging children and families across the state to “Grow With Us” this summer through its 17th annual Rx for Summer Reading campaign. Inspired by this year’s featured book, “*Lola Plants a Garden*,” the campaign celebrates growth in all its forms, from flowers blooming in a garden to the language, literacy, and relationship skills children develop through shared reading. From June 1 through July 31, participating pediatric health care providers at 53 sites statewide will distribute free copies of the book while encouraging families to make reading together part of their summer routines.

As summer schedules shift and children spend more time at home, Rx for Summer Reading provides families with opportunities to slow down, connect, and create meaningful moments together. Through books and conversations shared during everyday routines, families can help children build vocabulary, strengthen communication skills, spark curiosity, and develop a lifelong love of reading.

“Just as Lola’s garden flourishes with care and attention, children thrive when they’re surrounded by conversation, connection, and opportunities to learn,” said Salina Sowell, Communications Specialist at Reach Out and Read-Alabama. “Through Rx for Summer Reading, we’re helping families create those moments together while building the language, literacy, and relationship skills that help children succeed both in school and in life.”

Reach Out and Read embeds early literacy in pediatric care, providing books and guidance to help families make reading a meaningful part of their daily lives. Starting with the newborn well-child visit, clinicians work with families to emphasize the importance of reading aloud with their child, and the impact of the everyday moments they share.

Over the past 16 summers, Rx for Summer Reading has become a cherished tradition for families and health care providers alike. This year’s theme is especially fitting as Reach Out and Read-Alabama celebrates 20 years of serving children and families across the state. What began as an idea in 2006 has blossomed into a statewide network helping children and

families build a lifelong love of reading through the trusted relationship between health care providers and caregivers. Much like the garden at the center of this year's featured book, those efforts have grown steadily over time, creating lasting roots in communities across the state. Currently, 103 pediatric and family practices and clinics across 34 counties serve as Reach Out and Read-Alabama program sites, reaching 38 percent of Alabama's children under age 5.

"For 20 years, we've seen the incredible impact that a book can have when it's shared between a child and a caring adult," Sowell said. "Those quiet moments spent reading together help children feel seen, supported, and loved. We hope this year's Rx for Summer Reading campaign helps families create those moments together and grow, one story at a time."

To learn more about Reach Out and Read-Alabama, go to [roralabama.org](http://roralabama.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 FY25, Reach Out and Read served more than 4.8 million children and provided 9 million free books across 11.2 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.