



The Importance of Reach Out and Read During the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 is creating unprecedented disruptions and uncertainty in all of our lives and, at Reach Out and Read, we're very eager to arrive back—when families are able to routinely return to in-person well-child checkups—at the sturdy point of delivering our early literacy prescription to nearly 5 million children and families a year. While we cannot control the point at which that will happen, we're doing everything we can to adapt and remain strong until we resume our baseline in-person pediatric systems.

While we fight to remain whole and while we prepare for an eventual return to distributing nearly 8 million books a year in the context of well-child checkups, we're simultaneously concentrating on our children confined to home. Many of them are experiencing some amount of fear, and all of them are faced with long, unexpected time, completely unique and unprecedented. Now more than ever, our commitment to supporting parents in being their child's first and most important teacher is clear. Among other actions, we have created and are continually updating a robust [online resource-library](#) for families that are spending unparalleled time together. These free resources support secure environments and present fun and important opportunities for one-on-one engagement with a loved one.

We're also supporting and applauding our colleagues and the health community that are focused on reckoning with the coronavirus pandemic. They are truly heroes in this work, and we are humbled and honored by their commitment and dedication to the health and well-being of our communities.

We will return, sooner or later, to our lives and it will no longer be the same as before. But by supporting and enriching the time families with young children spend together right now, we are helping to ease anxiety and support love and endurance during this difficult time. As our Board Member Doctor Perri Klass recently wrote in [The New York Times](#), "We need to tell the people we love how much we love them, and tell them often. We need to thank the people who are taking risks to keep us safe. Our children will see all of this, and they will remember it, I promise."

Especially now, support during this time of global crisis assists us in navigating the financial and logistical challenges ahead. It supports us in keeping our 34,000 health care providers and staff engaged with our model—particularly during early childhood immunization checkups which continue to take place—until we can continue our work to its highest fidelity.