

March 16, 2017

Senator Monroe, Co-Chair  
Representative Smith Warner, Co-Chair  
Members of the Ways & Means Joint SubCommittee on Education  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Co-Chair Monroe, Co-chair Smith Warner, members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Maria Sleeman. I am the Program Director of Reach Out and Read in Oregon. Reach Out and Read Oregon is an evidence-based program promoting early literacy through primary care, beginning in infancy. We partner with primary care providers, who volunteer their time to “prescribe books” and educate families about the importance of establishing early literacy skills.

During well-child visits from ages 6 months through 5 years, primary care providers provide guidance to parents on the importance of reading aloud daily and give the child one new book per visit. By the time a child turns five, they'll have a small library made possible by Reach Out and Read.

Currently, we serve approximately 75,000 children and 112,000 parents and caregivers through 150,000 well-child visits. We have 121 program sites and utilize nearly 1200 volunteer medical providers and staff. With \$100,000 in funding this biennium, Reach Out and Read Oregon can continue to support the existing 75,000 children served, with the additional goal to increase the number of children served by at least 5 percent annually. As you know, when we invest in our youth, we invest in our future.

I am happy to take any questions.