

# American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



## The Massachusetts Chapter

June 12, 2017

### Executive Director

Cathleen Haggerty  
860 Winter Street  
Waltham, MA 02451  
781-895-9852  
Fax 781-895-9855  
chaggerty@mcaap.org

### Immediate Past President

Michael McManus, M.D., MPH,  
FAAP  
mmcmanus@mcaap.org

### President

DeWayne Pursley, M.D., MPH,  
FAAP  
dpursley@mcaap.org

### Vice President

Elizabeth Goodman, M.D., FAAP  
egoodman@mcaap.org

### Treasurer

Lloyd Fisher, M.D., FAAP  
lfisher@mcaap.org

### Secretary

Brenda Anders Pring, M.D., FAAP  
bpring@mcaap.org

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John Synder, M.D., FAAP

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E. James Gruver, M.D., FAAP

#### District 9

Walter Rok, M.D., FAAP

Governor Charles Baker  
State House, Room 280  
Boston, MA 02133

## Re: Reach Out and Read Program

Dear Governor Baker,

The Massachusetts Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (MCAAP) represents approximately 1,800 pediatricians across the Commonwealth. We are physicians dedicated to improving the quality of life for children by providing quality health care and advocating for them and their families. The MCAAP is committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental and social health for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

We are writing to urge you to support funding for Reach Out and Read in the FY 2018 budget.

Science has now clearly demonstrated that reading regularly with young children stimulates optimal patterns of brain development and strengthens parent-child relationships at a critical time in childhood. This, in turn, builds language, literacy, and social-emotional skills that last a lifetime and strengthen our citizenry. Beginning in infancy, pediatric providers are uniquely positioned to promote literacy and Reach out and Read is widely recognized as one of the most effective vehicles for this.

As you may know, Reach Out and Read was founded right here in the Commonwealth at Boston City Hospital (now Boston Medical Center) in 1989. It is based on a simple but sound idea and has grown to an international program with its own evidence-base of independent, peer-reviewed studies. The program effectively increases time that parents spend reading to their children and we now know that this subsequently results in higher receptive and expressive language abilities. We also know that modest investments in early literacy can significantly decrease later costs of special education.

Reach Out and Read is both effective and cost-effective, serving nearly 189,000 children in Massachusetts at 301 locations. Every public dollar is matched with private funds. A cut in this program will result in a shortfall of books and either suspension of the program or forced rationing of this research-proven intervention. Restoring funding will allow pediatricians and other medical providers to administer the program consistently across all Reach Out and Read practices and to grow new programs in our Gateway Cities.

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Two years ago, the American Academy of Pediatrics published a policy statement that, for the first time ever, formally recommends that pediatricians incorporate both books and advice about reading into every well-child visit. With funding, Reach Out and Read will be able to move towards fulfilling this mandate by serving many additional children who are growing up in poverty. There are few opportunities where so much permanent good can be reaped from so modest an investment. With funding, we can increase program quality in all current practices, bring on new locations, and work to recruit other remaining practices. I hope you will agree that our children deserve this.

The MCAAP would urge you to support funding for the Reach Out and Read program. Very truly yours,

DeWayne Pursley, M.D., MPH, FAAP

President, the ~~Chapel Hill~~ Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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Secretary Kristen Lepore  
Executive Office of Administration and Finance  
24 Beacon Street, Room 373  
Boston, MA 02133

**Re: Reach Out and Read Program**

Dear Secretary Lepore,

The Massachusetts Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (MCAAP) represents approximately 1,800 pediatricians across the Commonwealth. We are physicians dedicated to improving the quality of life for children by providing quality health care and advocating for them and their families. The MCAAP is committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental and social health for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.

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The MCAAP would urge you to support funding for the Reach Out and Read program.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "DeWayne Pursley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

DeWayne Pursley, M.D., MPH, FAAP  
President, the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics