

Winter 2008

A Coalition of 201 ROR Sites and Satellites

Reflections from the Road

I grew up in a large family – seven kids – and about the only time any of us received individual attention from our hard-working father (besides when we did something wrong!) was at bedtime. He'd crack open the *Child's Garden of Verses* and nightly I'd hear poems that I either immediately loved (and still remember) or turned up my nose at. I basked in the time alone with a very busy parent, enjoyed the rhythms and alliteration, learned about very proper English boys and girls, and got to wonder how on earth a blackbird ever got stuck in a pie, of all places!

I'm sure this ritual partially explains my eventual fascination with words in general. (Confession: sometimes as a kid, I actually read the dictionary.) But, it also translated into enjoyment. As a toddler, my older sibs read to me; as a pre-teen, I'd burrow in some obscure corner of the library (far away from all those brothers and sisters); as a teenager, I'd keep myself busy in boring classes by patiently unearthing the many smaller words contained within some exquisitely lengthy word; in high school and college, I took pride in writing my essay and research papers; as an adult, I now pen poems of my own. And to this day, I still play spirited games of Scrabble with my younger sister!

How have books and reading affected *your* life? Why not share this information with your patients? Because as every

NEW PROGRAMS: Welcome to ROR!

We are pleased to note the addition of the following practices since our last newsletter:

Springfield Medical Associates, Springfield

Hertzig, Gerrity, Griffin, DeGrenier LLP, North Adams

MGH Everett Family Care Center, Everett

John F. Mulqueen, MD, Gardner

Tural Pediatrics, Fall River

Western Massachusetts Pediatrics, Holyoke

Eduardo Leonardo, MD, Inc., Fall River

ROR provider knows, ROR isn't about teaching children to read. New worlds are opened, imaginations soar, and vocabularies increase with every page turned and every story discussed. Encouraging families to read aloud and share books helps youngsters develop an attachment to, and maybe even a love of, books.

The magic of loving something is that it takes you where you're meant to go. And we want the kids of Massachusetts to go far, indeed.

– Gretchen Hunsberger
 ROR-MA Programs Director

Senator Panagiotakos visits Lowell Community Health Center

In January, children waiting for checkups in the bustling waiting room at the Lowell Community Health Center were treated to something special. They listened to stories read aloud by their State Senator, Steven Panagiotakos, an ardent believer in Reach Out and Read. Sen. Panagiotakos was visiting the ROR program there for the second time in three years.

As Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, Sen. Panagiotakos was there not just to witness the children's eager interest in books, but to speak directly with LCHC's pediatricians and administrators about the impact of ROR on the children and the community, and what it means to include literacy



Senator Panagiotakos reads to children at the Lowell Community Health Center in January.

promotion as a standard part of primary pediatric well care. LCHC is one of three ROR sites in his district participating in ROR that together annually provide books to nearly 11,000 children in Lowell. Because of his leadership, and the continued support from the legislature, ROR-MA is now funding 201 ROR programs and reaching close to 160,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers in low-income and underperforming school districts across the Commonwealth. This represents

almost a doubling of ROR programs within three years time.

"I commend the Lowell Community Health Center for
Panagiotakos visit continued on page 7

From the ROR-MA Medical Director...

This month I would like to share with you another compelling study recently published in the *Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine* (161:967-971) by Drs. Christakis, Zimmerman and Garrison.



All pediatric clinicians struggle to promote free play in young children – including book reading among the options – and trying to de-emphasize the role of other media such as television and video. As a “play” on the ROR theme, these researchers in Washington state embarked on a study to “reach out and play”. This pilot study was designed to test the hypothesis that playing with blocks (as an example of an interactive type of play) promotes language and attention development.

Children aged one and a half to two and a half years were eligible and were then randomized to either: treatment arm where they received two sets of molded plastic interlocking building blocks via the US mail, one set a week after enrollment (80 blocks) and one set (25 specialty blocks e.g. cars and people) approximately two months later. The blocks were large and were designed specifically for children in this targeted age range. In addition, intervention parents received two newsletters with “blocktivities”. Children in the control arm received the same number of blocks at the conclusion of the study.

Families were told they were participating in a study of child time use. Each child was enrolled for six months – during which time they completed a baseline questionnaire, and on two randomly selected weekdays and two random selected weekend days, they were asked to complete time diaries for tracking their child's activities over a 24 hour period. At the conclusion of the study they completed a follow-up questionnaire that included assessment of language (MacArthur Bates Communicative Development Inventory) and attention (Hyperactivity Subdomain of the Child Behavior Checklist).

They found that distributing blocks was associated with significantly higher language scores in a sample of middle and low-income children. The researchers hypothesized that perhaps block time replaced other non language promoting activities, specifically television viewing, based upon the parental logs.

Despite the limitations of this pilot study, as a ROR clinician I think this can add more furor to our fire concerning the importance of promoting play and parent/child activities (such as reading together) as an important message, noting for parents the positive impact of parent/child interaction versus the numbing effects of media.

– Marilyn Augustyn, MD
ROR-MA Medical Director

Priceless Waiting Room Ideas on a

CONSIDERING ENRICHING YOUR PATIENTS' waiting room experience? Don't think you have adequate funding to do so? An improved waiting room environment is absolutely attainable.

Read through the following financial scenarios to learn how you can create a literacy-rich waiting room on any budget and within a variety of spatial constraints. The following suggestions are a result of personal experience and intellectual thievery! Our fellow RORers in Massachusetts, and across the country, have very good ideas, indeed!

“ Families have more patience ... kids are entertaining themselves at our reading tables or looking at the mural of animals enjoying books. And, I find so many parents and kids reading together when I enter an exam room. It makes me feel like our efforts to promote literacy in our community are making a difference.”

– Laurel Scott, MD, Lowell Pediatrics

Waiting Room Ideas for Under \$50

- Collect donated used books for patients and siblings to bring home
- ROR posters and banners**
- Display questions around the waiting room that further children's thinking about stories they already love
- Multicolored milk crates from dollar store for used book storage/seating
- Black and white copies of pages from books that children may color, and volunteers can use to ask questions that expand on the text
- Child centered magazines, such as *BabyBug* (a board book magazine!), *Discovery Kids*, *Highlights*, *My Big Backyard*, *Cricket*, and *Wondertime*
- Eagle Scouts need community service projects: they can build bookcases, book shelves, re-paint your reading corner, organize book drives, etc.
- Write a grant for a muralist
- Create a Parent Resource Guide
 - ROR developmental milestones handout*
 - Reading aloud tips
<http://www.reachoutandread.org/FileRepository/ReadingTips.pdf>
 - Adult literacy resources
<http://sabes.org/boston/>
 - AAP pamphlets on developmental screening
<http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/stages.cfm#early>
 - Information on Early Intervention programs
 - Information on Parent Child Home Program
<http://www.parent-child.org/localsites/ma.html>
 - ROR age-appropriate bookmarks*

Budget

As Massachusetts Programs Assistant, I am available to you as a resource as you think about implementing your own ideas for your literacy-rich waiting room, from prioritizing equipment to seeking out sources of used books. So, please contact me – 617-455-0657 or nora.murphy@reachoutandread.org.

– Nora Murphy
ROR MA Programs Assistant and
Boston Medical Center Coordinator

Waiting Room Ideas for \$100

Everything above plus:

- Bean Bag Chair
- Bulletin Boards with Literacy Themes
- An Assortment of Puppets and “Big Books” for Volunteer Readers
- Laminated Color Copies of Classic stories for use with Dry Erase Markers (you make these!)
- Have reception staff wear ROR polos or T-shirts**
- Supply paint/supplies for art students to design/paint a mural

Waiting Room Ideas for \$350

Everything above plus:

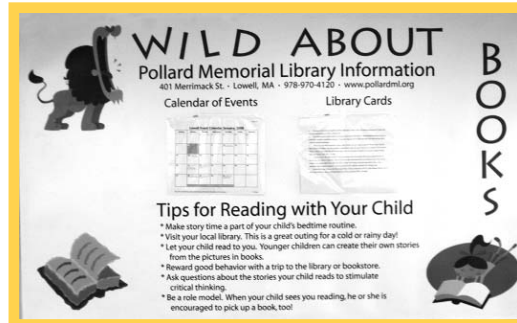
- Area rug
- Book Rack for children's books
- Rolling literacy cart (dry erase, big book holder, alphabet magnets)
- Grab and Write Dry Erase Kits
- Story Boards/Flannel Boards with felt characters (or laminated with Velcro as JACHO requirements allow)



In Western MA, all Riverbend Pediatrics waiting rooms are similarly equipped.



Above: The mural at Greater Lowell Pediatrics was created by artist Chris McDonald, a graduate of the University of Lowell. **Left:** Wall poster created by Laurel Scott, MD, of Greater Lowell Pediatrics.



Waiting Room Ideas for under \$800

Everything above plus:

- Large Area Rug
- Child size table and 4 chairs
- Front-facing Book case

Resources:

www.childrencarpets.com

Area rug supply company

www.lakeshore.com

Early childhood supplies, furniture, and activities

www.readingrockets.org

Literacy resources for children

www.childcraftededucation.com

Early childhood supplies, furniture, and activities

www.demco.com

Furniture supply (large bookcases)

www.cpcbooks.org

Early childhood literacy activities

www.ecmdstore.com

Early childhood furniture and equipment

www.pbskids.org

Early childhood literacy activities

* items can be ordered at the Resource Materials section of the online ROR Catalogue (go to Books tab at www.myror.org)

**items can be ordered through the ROR Store and Materials tab.

ROR Physician Profile

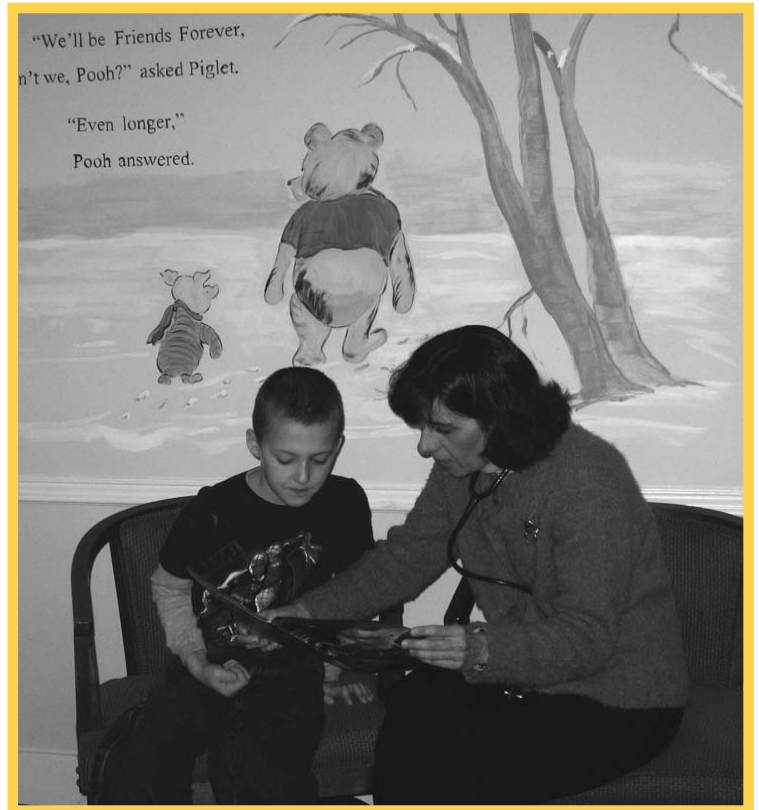
Deborah Buccino, MD

Walking into the waiting room at Macony Pediatrics in Great Barrington is like coming home (or maybe what we wish were home!) Located in a large, converted New England frame house, the waiting room feels more like a living room than an office space. With birch logs in the fireplace and willow baskets of picture books, a child-sized table and chairs, and racks of parenting and family magazines, plus stunning literary-themed murals on the walls, who wouldn't want to settle in for the afternoon?

Pediatrician Deborah Buccino, MD, is ROR Coordinator and Medical Consultant at Macony. She explains that the waiting room actually predates the practice's involvement with Reach Out and Read. "We wanted to take toys out of the office because of germs, and books seemed like the perfect alternative. Baskets of books replaced toys in the waiting room and exam rooms, and reading became the main activity. When it was time to redecorate last year, we realized that tying the theme to books was the perfect solution."

And perfect it indeed is. As a group, Macony decided to settle on the classics: *Winnie the Pooh* (the original Shepard illustrations), *Charlotte's Web*, and *Moby Dick* (especially appropriate given Melville's life in the Berkshires). Local artist, Lynn Eastman, then worked her magic! Images in exam rooms reflect the ages of the children who use them and quotes from Helen Keller and Samuel Johnson encircle the walls of the rooms used by adolescents.

While ROR is new to Macony, Dr. Buccino is no stranger to the program. A graduate of Harvard Medical School, Dr. Buccino heard Perri Klass, MD, ROR's Medical Director and President, speak in the formative days of ROR. Her training at Children's Hospital in Boston brought her into early contact with ROR in eastern Massachusetts. But eleven years ago, she moved to the Berkshires to enjoy its beauty and to practice in a setting with a wide cross section of patients. "I serve a number of families who do not have the time or energy to think about reading. Day-to-day existence is their focus. This program is so simple, yet it makes a huge difference. Giving a book and talking



Above: Dr. Buccino reads to a young patient. **Left:** A simple decorating touch for exam rooms or waiting rooms helps create a cozy, welcoming atmosphere.



about reading at every single check-up really does help introduce reading before a child enters school, and we know that is important. Plus, it is really nice to be able to give something to families, not just shots! They get so excited about the books."

Dr. Buccino introduces the book early in the visit and observes how the child interacts with it, using the book for surveillance. She finds that the age-appropriate books help parents realize

where their kids stand from a developmental standpoint. Her favorite book in the exam room is *Harold and the Purple Crayon*. "I remember it from my own childhood, and I love the creative way the words and pictures combine together."

When she is not working, Deb is enjoying the Berkshires, biking, cross country skiing, and of course, reading. She also periodically participates in a radio talk show on local access radio station, WBCR-LP. Tune in to 97.7 FM some Thursday afternoon or Saturday morning and you might just hear her on "Radio 2 Women" speaking about children's health issues. And hopefully at the end of one of her busy work days, Dr. Buccino takes a minute to relax in the Macony waiting room, surrounded by beautiful art and great books.

THANK YOU!

Bugaboo Creek restaurants throughout eastern Massachusetts collected thousands of used books for our ROR programs.

Borders Books at Logan Airport donated \$5,000 in new books to East Boston Neighborhood Health Center.

Foster Grandparents as Volunteer Readers

Grandparents, children, and books – it's a perfect combination.

Of all the possible elements of a Reach Out and Read literacy-rich waiting room, what element might have the largest impact? Volunteers modeling reading-aloud skills to parents. So, who better to do this than a seasoned grandparent? Several individual ROR programs at non-profit health centers in Western MA and Jamaica Plain have formed a solid collaboration with the Urban League's Foster Grandparents Program, an organization that integrates older, low-income residents into their neighborhoods to enhance the growth and development of children.

While not a ROR requirement, volunteer readers can be a vital addition to your literacy-rich waiting room. Not only does this activity model valuable skills, it helps keep children happy and occupied while waiting, for which your front desk staff and other patients might be very grateful! According to Maryann Wright, ROR Coordinator at Caring Health Center in Springfield, "Our Foster Grandparent is so good with the children. She makes a huge difference in the waiting room."

At the Martha Eliot Health Center in Jamaica Plain, ROR Coordinator Susan Paul reports that their Foster Grandparent, Rosa Juan, volunteers about 10-15 hours per week. In addition to reading aloud, she supervises and helps the children as they make arts and crafts, color, and play games. Rosa also helps maintain the waiting room, which features colorful displays about books and reading, and information on the times of their own, in-house English and Spanish language story hours. And because of an ongoing collaboration with the Waltham Public Library, a wide variety of books is always available.

In New Bedford, an upcoming grant from the Acushnet Foundation will soon support a similar collaboration (born at the Governor's Volunteer Expo in Bridgewater this past fall). Christine Voss of the Foster Grandparents program at Coastline Elderly Services and Dr. Nancy Langhans of the Greater New Bedford Community Health Center are working together to bring Foster Grandparents in to read there during after-school hours, when waiting rooms are busiest.

As with all volunteers, though, proper training is essential for them to understand how best to do their job and to meet your

expectations of them. This might include a brief refresher on reading aloud tips, a reminder of your health center rules (such as never giving children food or medical advice, etc.), and encouragement to use expressive voices, ask questions about what the children see on the page, or what might happen next in the story. In this way, your volunteer readers will be well-primed to succeed. Not only will friendships and fun ensue, but by demonstrating interactive reading

skills, volunteer readers will send home an important message: "Try this at home! You and your child can have a wonderful time sharing books together."

Wilda Griffin and Sulamita Al-Khatib, both based at the Urban League of Springfield, provide some important information about Foster Grandparents across the state:

What is the Foster Grandparents Program and where are chapters located?

The Foster Grandparents Program is a federal initiative that helps eligible seniors find volunteer opportunities in community-based, non-profit programs. Foster Grandparents programs are located across the Commonwealth and housed in different agencies in different communities. To locate your local Foster Grandparent program, visit the website at www.seniorcorps.org, or call 1-800-424-8867.

Who are the volunteers?

Foster Grandparents are seniors who are over 60 years of age. They are retired and volunteer an average of 15-20 hours a week. They must be income eligible and they receive a limited stipend and transportation costs, regular physical exams, background checks, and monthly in-service training to increase their volunteer skills with children.

What more should our ROR programs know?

Sites with a non-profit, 501c(3) status are eligible. The site completes a brief application, describing their specific needs and responsibilities of the volunteer. Once a volunteer is placed, a memo of understanding between the site and the Foster Grandparents program is signed. The site is then responsible for orienting the Foster Grandparent to the ROR model and day-to-day supervision.



Above: Lizzy Dickson, a foster grandparent reads at Caring Health Center in Springfield, reads to kids as they wait. Right: Book storage at Martha Eliot Health Center in Jamaica Plain.



Ideas from around the state...

...to inspire your own ideas for outfitting a literacy-rich area of your waiting room.

BAKE YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS!

Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates in Chelmsford holds an annual bake sale to supplement their Reach Out and Read funding. This year they topped \$550.00! Maybe it was the hand-made aprons, sewn by ROR Coordinator, Claudia Scott, with a pattern of books adorning the fabric. Claudia then machine stitched "Reach Out and Read" at the top of each apron. Everyone who mans the Bakery Table wears one, and that includes Dr. Laura Lee and Dr. Kim Tresch!



Mary LaCorte, Claudia Scott, and Dr. Laura Lee at the ROR Bake Sale at Harvard-Vanguard Medical Associates in Chelmsford.

They also received \$1,000 from Lowell General Hospital. With these donations, they were able to add a reading area for both parents and children and purchase the exact books they wanted from the catalog. Says Claudia, "This is a joint effort and one, I may say, that we have all enjoyed doing!"

HARNESS TEEN POWER!

Longmeadow, MA, teens Ben Cowan, Louis Katz, Jacob Webber, and Eric Weiss, spent their final days of summer vacation conducting a gently-used book drive for the Shriner's Hospital and Caring Health's Reach Out and Read programs. Targeting 250 houses, the four friends dropped off empty paper bags with a letter explaining ROR and their desire to collect gently used children's books for needy ROR programs in Springfield. The letter stated that they would return to pick up books on a specific date. Upon their return they found that approximately 12% of houses had responded and they collected over 1,000 books left on front porches and front doors! (Tip: This is an activity good for even younger children, with their parents' help.)

Shriner's ROR coordinator, Allison Rosendale, explained that they extend the ROR model to siblings and children older than five years by providing donations of used books in the out-patient waiting room where children can help themselves. "In fact, the day after this donation arrived, a



Eric Weiss, Jacob Webber, Louis Katz, and Benjamin Cowan show off their book drive donations.

Dad in out-patient said his child had to do a book report for school, so he and his daughter picked out a book from the donation for the book report. Not only did the child see the doctor that day but also she got a head start on her homework!"

DO YOU BELIEVE IN ANGELS?

The pediatric waiting room at the Greater Roslindale Medical and Dental Center is new and modern, with light-colored wood tables and chairs, and a wall of glass that looks out onto an urban streetscape. But the books that fill the bookcases, and lie scattered on the tables, are the legacy of generations who have received care here.

Grace McMann, PNP, Reach Out and Read Medical Consultant there, calls them her "angels," patients and staff who over the years have been inspired to add to the books that ROR funding provides.

Grace describes a woman whose children grew up coming to the clinic as patients; they are adults now, but several times a year she gives Grace a check to buy books for the older children, including teens, which fly off the shelf. "Just when I start to think I'm beginning to run out," says Grace, "she always turns up."

Ask Grace about such "angels", and the stories just keep coming:

- A long-time patient at the clinic, who has no children, would watch Grace giving out books and became inspired to donate to the program through her civic organization. Every year now they raise money to provide extra books for the waiting room or for siblings.
- The twins who collected books as gifts for their fifth birthday party, and brought them all to the clinic.

■ The clinic staff member whose children routinely collect books to donate.

■ Her Albanian speaking patients who return from their home visits with books in Albanian!

WASTE NO SPACE!

At Boston's Floating Hospital for Children they didn't just stop with murals on the walls. They hired someone to create "mini-murals" on their perforated ceiling tiles! To go with the Rikki, Tikki Tembo-themed mural in one waiting area, lovely Chinese dragons now adorn the ceiling.



The reading corner at Greater Roslindale Med. and Dental Cntr.



Our patients were so interested by our waiting room improvements that someone donated a bookshelf for adult “leave one/take one” books, and we now have patients who donate books not only for children, but for all ages.”

- Joely Edwards, MD, Outer Cape Health Services, Wellfleet, MA

WHAT'S NEW

ROR-MA Tele-Workshops

Following in the forward-thinking footsteps of ROR-California, ROR-MA held its first Telephone Workshops in December for programs in the western part of the state, and the first week in February for central and eastern MA programs. Given advanced notice via email invitation, interested ROR coordinators and doctors “met” via conference call with regional coordinators, Lee MacKinnon and Alison Corning-Clarke. Our first topic was ROR Progress Reporting. Importantly, while these workshops will focus on one topic, we’ll always try to leave enough time at the end to answer other questions, as well.

The feedback’s been great, especially from brand-new programs just learning the ROR ropes; but, they’re for all of you! We have long appreciated the need for regional meetings, but attendance can be spotty given geographic distances and the time constraints of your busy and varied work schedules. We see this format as a good answer. We hope you will, too!

Got a topic idea? Email it to gretchen.hunsberger@reachoutandread.org.

Panagiotakos visit

continued from page 1

responsibly prescribing a healthy dose of story time,” said Senator Panagiotakos. “Reach Out and Read has consistently worked with local medical professionals to ensure our communities maintain a healthy attitude towards literacy; reminding us all that reading is a cornerstone of developmental skill-building and later school success.”

“Senator Panagiotakos has been a terrific champion for Reach Out and Read for many years now,” said Barry Zuckerman, MD, founder and CEO of the program. “We’re grateful for his leadership on behalf of young children.”

“What makes our outreach so effective, whether in urban cities or rural pockets of the state, is our ability to help fund the books,” notes Gretchen Hunsberger, ROR-MA Programs Director. “Chairman Panagiatokos couldn’t be a more solid advocate for what is possible for all the children of Massachusetts. He understands that through ROR, doctors and nurses reach families at the beginning of young lives, when it matters most.”

Successful Inaugural CME Conference

On October 20, 2007, Reach Out and Read-MA practitioners and coordinators from across the state met at the Marlborough Best Western for the first ROR-MA CME Conference. There they heard topics that intersected with their interest in promoting literacy and dovetailed with other, related needs of modern day families.

Supporting Families in a Multicultural World: The Role of the Pediatric Clinician, featured Marilyn Augustyn, MD, Division Director, Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics, Boston University Medical Center and ROR-MA Medical Director, on bilingual education in the Commonwealth; Alison Schonwald, MD, Director of Developmental Behavioral Outreach at Children’s Hospital, compared three key developmental screens; Elisabeth Duursma, Ed.D., presented her research on the *Role of Fathers in Low-Income Children’s Language and Literacy Development*; and Trude Haecker, Chief of Pediatrics at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, discussed the wisdom of ROR and its success at an urban teaching hospital.

The evening before, this group of presenters, along with ROR-MA staff and physician trainers, including two regional ROR-MA Physician Champions, enjoyed dinner and a collegial discussion led by Dr. Augustyn about how to enhance ROR training of both new and experienced physicians.



Dr. T. Berry Brazelton and Dr. Barry Zuckerman chat with conference attendees.

The highlight of the conference, however, was the informal dialogue between pediatric icons Barry Zuckerman, MD, and T. Berry Brazelton, MD. Attendees listened raptly as the two doctors conversed like two old friends, sharing the unique personal visions and experiences that laid the foundation for their two programs. Both the ROR and Touchpoints models share common values: both directly address the needs of children to be seen as individuals, and the importance of acknowledging and responding to the needs of parents. As Dr. Brazelton says, “Our goal is that parents everywhere work with supportive providers, feel confident in their parenting role, and form strong, resilient attachments with their children.”

Afterwards, Dr. Brazelton, graciously shaking hands with all in line to do so, listened warmly as many attendees individually thanked him for his books and insights over the years.



Massachusetts

Reach Out and Read

56 Roland Street

Suite 100D

Boston, MA 02129

PLEASE PLACE
POSTAGE
HERE

Additional Legislative Visits

If you would like information about scheduling a site visit with your legislator, please contact Abbie Bloom in the ROR National Center at 617-455-0642 or abbie.bloom@reachoutandread.org.



Left: State Senator Coakley-Rivera reads to children at High Street Health Center in Springfield on September 28, 2007.
Above: State Senator Downing shares a story at Berkshire Pediatrics in Pittsfield on October 1, 2007.