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BOSTON, MA – Reach Out and Read and the Academic Pediatric Association have announced the creation of a new Young Investigator Award Program for Primary Care Strategies for the Promotion of Early Literacy and School Readiness.

The award will provide financial support for young investigators whose research projects focus on interventions in primary care intended to support the early stages of literacy development and school readiness among children at risk for reading problems or school failure.

The Young Investigator Award Program may grant up to $15,000 to one selected project annually, beginning in 2011. For complete details on the Program, click here. To apply for the award, click here.

"Pediatricians and other primary care providers can play a critical role in helping parents help their young children grow up with books and reading and truly ready for school," said Dr. Perri Klass, National Medical Director of Reach Out and Read. "We believe that this new award will stimulate new explorations of the potential power of that primary care encounter, and encourage new investigators to launch exciting new explorations in literacy research."

The Academic Pediatric Association is a leading child health professional organization that promotes education, research, and advocacy.

Reach Out and Read is the evidence-based, national nonprofit organization that promotes early literacy and school readiness, working through pediatric primary care providers who give new books to children and advice to parents about the importance of reading aloud at regular medical checkups. The model includes providing a carefully-selected, new, age-appropriate book for each child to take home from every checkup from 6 months through 5 years.

Along with the free book for every child, doctors and nurses also provide guidance to parents about the importance of reading aloud with their children every day. More than 27,000 medical providers nationwide currently participate in Reach Out and Read, serving nearly 4 million children and families nationwide.

Fourteen peer-reviewed, published research studies demonstrate the efficacy of the Reach Out and Read model. This simple intervention results in children entering kindergarten with larger vocabularies and stronger language skills.