

# READING ACROSS THE NATION: *A Chartbook*

*Reading Across the Nation* is designed as a resource for policymakers and professionals who are working to optimize the early language and literacy experiences of young children. Drawing on data from the National Survey of Children's Health (2003), National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2005), and Reach Out and Read (ROR) National Center this chartbook presents "reading snapshots" for each state, with comparative rankings on key literacy indicators.

## What do the data show?

- Across the nation just under half of children between birth and five years (47.8%) are read to every day by their parents or other family members.
- The percentage of families reading to their children every day varies by state and by race/ethnicity and family income within states.
- In virtually every state, minority and low-income children are less likely to be read to every day than their non-minority and higher SES peers.
- If a family member has some college education, 55% of children are read to every day, compared with 31% of children from families where no one completed high school.
- Only 30% of children from households where the primary language is not English were read to daily compared with 51% where the primary home language is English.
- Patterns of daily reading show a strong income gradient, with 59% of children from families with incomes >400% Federal Poverty Level read to daily compared with only 36% with incomes below the Federal Poverty Level.

## How do the findings vary by state?

- Reading varies significantly by state ranging from 67.6% of young children read to daily in Vermont compared with just 38.1% in Mississippi.
- The top 5 states for rates of daily reading to young children (Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, Connecticut and Massachusetts) are all in the Northeast. The bottom 4 states (Alabama, Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi) are all in the South.
- Similar geographic patterns are observed for 4th grade reading proficiencies with Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Connecticut at the top, and Louisiana and Mississippi ranking 49th and 50th.
- The proportion of children served by ROR varies from almost 80% in South Dakota to less than 1% in Wyoming.

## What are the policy implications?

These data will help states determine targets to increase the number of parents reading aloud to their children daily. While some progress is being made in early literacy, there is clearly much more that can be done. Review of state profiles will assist policymakers to determine whether acting now to increase investment in effective evidence-based programs such as Reach Out and Read could improve their state's reading profiles. To find out how your state is doing, download a free copy of the chartbook, or just print out your state's page from [www.healthy-child.ucla.edu](http://www.healthy-child.ucla.edu) or from <http://www.reachoutandread.org/>.

Reach Out and Read  
National Center

UCLA Center for  
Healthier Children, Families,  
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