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California Chapter 3

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Program Description Reach Out and Read San Diego (RORS) seeks to make early literacy a standard part of pediatric primary care. Pediatricians encourage parents to read aloud to their young children and give books to their patients to take home at all pediatric check-ups from six months to five years of age. Parents learn that reading aloud is the most important thing they can do to help their children love books and to start school ready to learn. Unlike traditional childhood literacy programs the Reach Out and Read (ROR) model is designed to take advantage of the access that pediatric primary care providers have to children who are in their critical years of cognitive and language development –six months to five years old. By reaching children at this age and their parents, ROR delivers a full dose of early literacy support. ROR reinforces the parent's role as the first and most important teacher, and gives parents the tools needed to help their children succeed. Books are new and carefully chosen to be developmentally and culturally appropriate. Reach Out and Read focuses on low-income and underserved communities, who have less disposable income, more barriers to accessing books and who may not realize the importance of books and reading for their youngest children. Trained volunteers read stories to children while they wait for their appointments. These readers show parents by example that their children enjoy listening to books read aloud.

Program Background Reach Out and Read was founded in Boston 15 years ago and is now in more than 3,500 sites throughout the United States and has been recently expanded to other countries. RORS is the local version of this program. There are currently 40 sites in San Diego County, serving over 50,000 children, and distributing over 68,000 books a year. A body of published research shows that the ROR model of literacy-promoting intervention, by the pediatrician, coupled with a book for the child to take home, has a significant effect on parents helping children to embrace early reading concepts upon entering school. There is an association between the ROR intervention and improvements in preschool language scores, a good predictor of later literacy success. More recent studies have shown that through ROR, children have shown increased ability to express themselves verbally, increased listening vocabularies, and have less frequent concerns of language delay upon entering school. Preventing school failure and increasing parental involvement in early childhood development are ROR program strengths

Organizational Structure The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), California Chapter 3 (AAPCA3), a 501c(3), is leading RORS. Unique amongst professional medical organizations, the AAP is a mission-driven organization built as an advocacy group that focuses on children, children's issues, and programs, rather than only on physicians. Pediatricians who participate in this specific program do so because of a commitment to helping the community and their patients. They give their own time and resources, and implement ROR within the structure of their existing clinics or practices. As often noted, the AAP is the American Academy of *Pediatrics*, not *Pediatricians*. ROR fits with the AAP goals and vision for children in San Diego County. RORS has a strong network of volunteer pediatricians, child advocates, literacy champions, and community clinics volunteering their time to steward the program. Through AAP-CA3, the RORS staff includes 1 full time and 1 part time staff member to help with fundraising, community awareness, technical assistance to sites, coordination of media and public events, training, and capacity building. We are looking to increase our number of sites, garner more resources for books, build our infrastructure for growth, and inject the message of the importance of early childhood literacy throughout San Diego County, through programs and dialogue with community members. We look forward to having you join us at RORS, and help us in "*making books part of a health childhood*" for the children of San Diego.

Contact: Tara Milbrand, Program Director (858) 361-4644 or tmilbrand@aapca3.org.
Visit our website at www.rorsd.org.