

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## How will our clinic benefit from becoming a ROR site?

Thousands of doctors and nurses across the country, in large urban hospitals and small rural clinics, tell us that Reach Out and Read has become an essential part of their pediatric practices. By introducing a beautiful new book at the beginning of a well child visit, providers find they can better engage and calm the child, provide strong and helpful positive messages to the parent, and build connections with the family. Using the book in the exam room opens up the opportunity to talk about other issues—healthy routines, sleep issues, and even school readiness, and also offers providers a new and valuable tool for assessing the child's development. Becoming a ROR site will mean that your clinic offers new and valuable benefits to your patients and their families—important developmental guidance, beautiful age-appropriate books, enrichment in the waiting room—and also gives your providers new ways to strengthen their relationships with the families of young children.

## What is the ROR Model for pediatric literacy intervention?

The ROR model for pediatric literacy intervention has three key elements:

- Primary care providers (doctors and nurses) are trained to deliver early literacy guidance to parents of children six months to five years of age during each well child visit. This guidance centers on age-appropriate strategies, including: how to enjoy looking at board books and naming pictures with infants, the importance of rhyme and repetition to toddlers, and asking open-ended questions when reading with preschoolers.
- During the well child visit, in the exam room, the provider gives the child a new, developmentally appropriate children's book to take home, building a collection of ten new books in the home before the child goes to kindergarten.
- Many ROR programs also choose to create literacy rich waiting rooms, including providing gently used books for waiting room use or for siblings to take home. In many of these waiting rooms, ROR volunteers model for parents the pleasures and techniques of reading aloud to very young children.

## How do we know ROR is effective?

ROR is an evidence-based intervention. Peer-reviewed and published studies show that literacy promoting interventions by the pediatrician, using the Reach Out and Read model, have a significant effect on parental behavior, beliefs, and attitudes toward reading aloud. Studies also show that parents who get books and literacy counseling from their pediatricians are more likely to read to their young children and provide more books in the home. Several studies also show improvements in the expressive and receptive language scores of young children receiving this intervention. The ROR website has additional information on ROR-related research.

## Who pays for the books?

It costs approximately \$5.50 per year, per child to deliver ROR in your clinic. Each new ROR program receives a start-up award from the National Center, when the application is approved, to cover the cost of books for up to the first six months of the program. This is matched by ROR Colorado providing a start-up award equal to 40% of the remaining funds needed to buy books in the second 6 months. After the first year, ROR programs are eligible for additional funding for book purchases-usually 25% or more of their annual book costs from ROR National Center. ROR Colorado provides up to 65% of annual funding needed. Each clinic is responsible for funding 10% of their annual book budget.

## How much money will we need for books?

The “ROR annual book budget calculation” is generally based on an average of two books per year for the total number of participating children – that is, one book for every well-child visit between six months and five years of age at about \$2.75 per book.

### Calculating a ROR Annual Book Budget

620 visits x \$2.75 per book =  
\$1,705 annual book budget

## Is this program for everyone?

We at the ROR National Center and ROR Colorado feel strongly that this message about the importance of reading aloud is important for every young child and every family – and, of course, that books are important for every child. We are eager to work with any clinic or

practice which wants to implement the program. However, because our funds are limited, and because our federal funding in particular is designated for children at-risk, we are more limited in our ability to provide start-up funding to those

**“I think the program has inspired me to get more books for him.”**

– ROR mother of a nine month-old

practices which serve mostly affluent children. We are often able to help – but not necessarily to provide a full six months of books – and we have worked with many such practices which have found ways to pay for their own books. In any case, we welcome inquiries from all practices – but acknowledge that our first priority, and the recipients of the majority of our funding, are the clinics and practices which serve a substantial number of children growing up in poverty.

## What kind of staff do we need to run a ROR program?

Each ROR program has a ROR Medical Consultant – a doctor or nurse who is responsible for the job of training medical colleagues, connecting with the executive leadership of the clinic, and generally serving as the medical “face” of the program. The Medical Consultant is supported by a Program Coordinator who is responsible for the administrative aspects of running the ROR program (i.e., ordering books, stocking exam rooms, coordinating volunteer readers). The ROR Program Coordinator can be any interested staff member familiar with the clinic, the staff, and the patient population. Both roles are most often voluntary in nature and take very little time each month. The Medical Consultant and Program Coordinator are supported by ROR Colorado staff.

## What are the BASICS we need to get started?

### We want to become a ROR program – what steps should we take now?

- Review information about the ROR model at [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org)
- Identify an on-site ROR Medical Director.
- Talk to your clinic’s administration and pediatric staff to engage their support.
- Begin to gather demographic information on your clinic population – ages six months to five years. (You will also need to determine a rough approximation of the percent of families living at or near 200% of the poverty level, or give us other demographic information to indicate whether you serve a substantial number of children who should be considered at-risk.)
- Brainstorm about how you will pay for books beyond the money ROR provides.

**“The look on the child and parents face when they realize the book is especially for them makes giving the book so worthwhile for me.”**

– Devin Flaherty, MD  
Monfort Children's Clinic, Greeley, CO

## How will our doctors and nurses get trained in the ROR model?

ROR training for pediatric primary care providers offers practical, concrete, and effective strategies for talking to parents about books and for using books in the well child visit. All participating ROR providers need to complete the ROR training before they begin implementing the program. For new sites with more than five providers, ROR Colorado can arrange an on-site training session shortly after the application is approved. Both a training video and a one-hour on-line CME course on pediatric literacy promotion are available as training options for clinics with fewer providers.

A one hour on-line orientation for new ROR program coordinators and volunteers is also available on the ROR website.

## What books should we purchase for participating ROR families?

The ROR model calls for the provider to give a new, age and culturally-appropriate book in the exam room at each well child visit. There are a number of ways that you can purchase books for your program.

ROR publishes a book catalog available exclusively to approved ROR programs, with hundreds of carefully selected children's books from more than 25 publishers, at substantially discounted prices. The catalog is organized by child's age, to make the book selection process easy. Many ROR programs also choose to purchase high quality children's books from other local or national sources that offer discounts to literacy programs. You can also solicit new book donations from individuals or businesses in your area.

The ROR Program Manual, available on the website, has a chapter devoted to identifying good children's books for use in the program, as well as suggestions for ordering, tracking, and storing your book supply.

Many ROR programs also like to have "gently used" donated books available in the waiting areas for siblings, for sick visits, or for long waiting periods.

**"Giving a book to a young child, along with age-appropriate advice about sharing books for the parents, may be the only concrete activity a pediatrician can routinely do to promote child development."**

*– Barry S. Zuckerman, MD  
ROR Co-Founder, CEO, and Board Chair*

## How do we create literacy rich waiting rooms and recruit volunteers?

ROR recognizes that children and parents often spend a fair amount of time in the waiting room. To take advantage of this time, the ROR model recommends using the waiting room to promote the joy of reading aloud and to provide information for parents about how to read to their young children. In many ROR waiting rooms:

- Volunteers provide children with positive reading experiences and help parents understand that a picture or storybook is an easy, portable way to keep a young child engaged in almost any situation.
- Volunteers can model read-aloud techniques that show parents by example that reading with children is a vigorous, enjoyable process.

Not all clinics have waiting rooms or wait times suitable for volunteer reader programs. However, all ROR sites can develop a waiting room component of the program. For example, ROR programs can:

- Ask volunteers to collect gently used books, sort them, and put them out on shelves in the waiting room so children of all ages can read them in the waiting room and take them home if they choose.
- Develop displays of short poems, stories, and laminated posters to display in the waiting area.
- Provide posters and pamphlets about health literacy and family literacy opportunities available in the community.

## How Does a ROR Site Find External Support?

### How do we find Financial Support?

A funding partnership between the ROR National Center and ROR Colorado leaves each clinic only responsible for 10% your annual book budget (this percentage may vary if your clinic doesn't serve a majority of low-income families). Clinics are generally able to raise these funds from local service organizations or within the clinic itself. ROR Colorado is available to help identify funding sources.

**"I had a mother tell me that her three year-old son loves his books, carries them wherever he goes and loves to show them to Grandmother. He is so proud of the books that he gets from the ROR program."**

*– Margaret LaTourette, MD  
Denver Health Mariposa Family  
Health Center, Denver, CO*

The kind of fundraising plan that you need will depend on the size of your population and your budget. ROR Colorado can help you identify funders.

### How do we find Community Support?

Collaborations can help your program with local fundraising for books, volunteer recruitment, community visibility, and publicity. There are other people in your community working to promote literacy, and there are many service organizations that might want to link up with you locally. ROR programs often work with the following groups:

- Libraries
- Faith-based organizations
- High school and college community service leaders
- Civic groups (e.g., Rotary Club, Kiwanis, Junior League)
- Municipal literacy initiatives

Contact ROR Colorado for help identifying local funders.

## How do programs contact the National Center and ROR Colorado?

The staff at the ROR National Center and ROR Colorado provides ongoing technical assistance to our programs. We like to keep in touch – whether through our newsletter or our monthly email to share fundraising tips.

**“... When I talk with parents about preparing their child for success in school, they listen very carefully. This is something that they know they need advice on. Many of our parents have not finished high school, and some have not finished elementary levels. They are relieved that they can ‘read’ books just by telling a story about the pictures. I feel great satisfaction in helping them to help their children. Everyone’s confidence goes up: the parent’s, the child’s and even mine.”**

*– Carolyn Shepherd, MD, VP of Clinical Affairs, Clinica Campesina Lafayette, Colorado*

Each ROR program files a progress report with the National Center twice a year. Brief on-line report forms are submitted in January and August, from the time a new program has been up and running for six months.

The forms can be completed in about 20 minutes and are crucial for us to understand the size and scope of ROR nationwide, as well as to help us identify our strengths and also the problems that need attention at a local or national level. The progress reports also provide the data we need in order to make our semi-annual

“sustainability awards” for book funding from the National Center and ROR Colorado to high-quality active ROR sites.

This on-line report typically includes contact updates and brief questions pertaining to program activity: how many books were distributed and children served in the previous six month period; how many providers are actively participating in the program; and how many volunteer hours have been donated.

## Can we submit an application to the National Center?

You can complete your application on-line, or request an application by mail or email. The ROR website is a comprehensive source of information about ROR. When you begin an online ROR application you will be offered a password for access to information about how to begin and sustain a program. The ROR website home page is [www.reachoutandread.org](http://www.reachoutandread.org), and you will find additional information in our “Starting a ROR Program” section. Once again, thank you for your interest in Reach Out and Read. We hope to help you provide this intervention, with all its benefits, to the children and families for whom you care.

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The ROR Colorado and ROR National Center program support staff is eager to help. Contact us:

### ROR COLORADO

**By phone:** at 303-623-3800 or fax at 303-300-3801

**By mail:** at Reach Out and Read Colorado, 4105 E. Florida Ave., Ste. 204, Denver, CO 80222

**By email:** at [info@reachoutandreadco.org](mailto:info@reachoutandreadco.org)

### ROR NATIONAL CENTER

**By phone:** at 617-629-8042 or fax at 617-629-8842

**By mail:** at Reach Out and Read, 56 Roland St., Ste 100D, Boston, MA 02129.

**By email:** at [startup@reachoutandread.org](mailto:startup@reachoutandread.org)

**In a comparison study, children at an urban clinic with ROR scored significantly higher on standardized vocabulary tests—8.6 points higher for receptive language and 4.3 points higher for expressive, both large, meaningful effects.**

*– Mendelsohn, A., et al, Pediatrics, 2001*

## Resources

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You will find some very useful resources on the ROR website as you consider implementing a ROR program in your clinic or hospital, either to begin a new program application, or to access current resources available. You could begin by looking at these pages:

- Begin a new program application online at:  
[www.reachoutandread.org/program.html](http://www.reachoutandread.org/program.html)
- View a sample of the ROR program application in PDF (Acrobat) form at:  
[www.reachoutandread.org/program\\_app.html](http://www.reachoutandread.org/program_app.html)
- Download a one page summary of the peer-reviewed research on ROR at:  
[www.reachoutandread.org/press\\_kit.html](http://www.reachoutandread.org/press_kit.html)
- Contact Reach Out and Read Colorado for program support, resources, and more information at:  
[www.reachoutandreadco.org](http://www.reachoutandreadco.org)

**“I saw a 4 year-old foster child who was brought to the clinic for an initial evaluation. I introduced myself to the little girl and handed her a book that I told her was for her. As I began to look at the book with the child, the foster mother began to tell me how delayed she was – she did not talk much, screamed a lot to get her way, etc. As I looked at the book I asked what color things were and what the children were doing in the book. The girl answered me back in short sentences. Using the book truly opened up communication with the child and developed a relationship between us. Had I just listened to the foster mother, I would have had a very limited view of the development of this child.”**

*– Marnie Harden-Klein, PA  
Rocky Mountain Pediatrics, Lakewood, CO*