



NYS AAP, District II

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American Academy of Pediatrics Endorses New York City Council City's First Readers Initiative

New York, NY – Leadership of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), including leaders of AAP NY Chapters 2 and 3 and AAP President-Elect Benard Dreyer, MD, together with childhood literacy organizations, New York City Council Members Stephen Levin (D-Brooklyn) and Antonio Reynoso (D-Brooklyn), and other stakeholders gathered at City Hall this afternoon for a press conference to announce AAP support for the New York City Council City's First Readers early literacy initiative.

The AAP's endorsement of City's First Readers follows its 2014 policy recommendation that early literacy promotion be routinely integrated into pediatric primary care for all children, together with a strategic plan that includes child poverty as a critical area of focus. The impact of early literacy promotion programs during pediatric check-ups has been demonstrated by clinical trials funded by NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), underscoring the importance of City's First Readers for the AAP. Pediatricians have regular and trusted access to our youngest learners, and this endorsement reflects pediatricians' investment in promoting children's healthy development including early literacy.

The American Academy of Pediatrics is an organization representing 64,000 pediatricians committed to the physical, mental, and social health and well-being of all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. In addition to Dr. Dreyer, AAP endorsement for City's First Readers was provided by Chapters 2 and 3 Executive Director Elie Ward, MSW; Chapter Presidents Mark Lashley, MD and Maida Galvez, MD, MPH; Chapter Vice Presidents Joseph Abularrage, MD and Lori Legano, MD; District II / New York State Chairperson Danielle Laraque, MD; and National Council on Early Childhood Chair Dina Lieser, MD.

The City's First Readers initiative, adopted in last year's budget, is sponsored by Council Members Antonio Reynoso and Stephen Levin under the leadership of Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. Through a collaboration of eight local nonprofits already working to turn young children into accomplished readers, the initiative provides parents, early childcare providers, and teachers with the resources and services needed to ensure children enter school ready to read and achieve educational success.

The City's First Readers partnership includes two pediatric primary care based programs - Reach Out and Read of Greater New York and the Video Interaction Project, which are linked through the initiative with community based programs (Literacy Inc., Brooklyn Public Library, New York Public Library and Queens Library), and programs based in the home (Parent-Child Home Program) and in preschool (Jumpstart). The creation of such partnerships between the pediatric "medical home" and community settings represents an important priority of the AAP, and has tremendous potential to help New York City's children.

"The AAP is excited to support the NYC Council City's First Readers Initiative," noted Benard Dreyer, MD, FAAP, President-Elect of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Professor of Pediatrics at New York University School of Medicine. "The AAP's recent policy highlights the critical role of pediatricians for early literacy promotion during the period of early brain and child development in the first five years of life. I strongly believe that this innovative multi-sector program can serve as a model for cities and communities across the country."

"On behalf of AAP District II, representing all of New York State, I strongly endorse this innovative and incredibly important program," noted Danielle Laraque, MD, FAAP, Chair, AAP New York State District II, and Chair, Department of Pediatrics, Maimonides Medical Center. "In linking together the pediatric medical home – through Reach Out and Read and the Video Interaction Project – to programs in the community, home and preschool, City's First Readers provides a strong foundation for the AAP's 2014 recommendation that early literacy promotion be routinely integrated into pediatric primary care for all children. Today's endorsement by the AAP reflects the pediatric community's investment in promoting all aspects of child health including early development and educational achievement."