

With New CEO, Reach Out and Read Poised to Transform Early Learning, Healthy Relationships for Millions of Families

35-year-old nonprofit taps national leader Dr. Lynette M. Fraga to accelerate mission, scale impact, advance equity, and strengthen families

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, September 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Reach Out and Read](#), the nationally recognized nonprofit redefining pediatric care and strengthening families through early literacy, has named Dr. Lynette M. Fraga, Ph.D., its new Chief Executive Officer. Her leadership marks a defining moment for the organization as it accelerates its mission to ensure every child has the resources and relationships they need to learn, grow, and thrive. With more than three decades of leadership at the intersection of early childhood development, health equity, and mission-driven innovation, Dr. Fraga brings a rare blend of vision, strategy, and lived experience to the role.

Dr. Fraga has dedicated her career to promoting the well-being of children and families, holding leadership positions in nonprofit, corporate, and academic institutions. As CEO of Child Care Aware of America, she doubled federal funding, increased philanthropic support by 3,500 percent, and established the organization as a national thought



Dr. Lynette M. Fraga, Newly Appointed CEO of Reach Out and Read



leader on child care policy. At ZERO TO THREE, she promoted the importance of early childhood development and learning through programs like Early Head Start, spearheaded initiatives to support military families in the wake of 9/11, and reimagined child welfare through the nationally recognized Safe Babies Court Teams. She also served as Vice President of Special Populations and Nonprofit Relationships at Care.com, developing strategies for supporting military families, veterans, and individuals with special needs. Most recently, she founded Fiercely Forward, LLC, where she coached nonprofit executives, particularly women and leaders of color, through periods of transition and transformation.

As a second-generation Mexican American, a child who grew up across countries and cultures in a military household, and the first in her family to earn an undergraduate degree, Dr. Fraga also brings deep, relevant lived experience to her new role. Sixty percent of the communities Reach Out and Read serves are Black, Indigenous, People of Color.

Dr. Fraga's passion for this work began early in her career as the director of a child development center. "I fell in love with early childhood education the very first day I stepped into a toddler classroom," she said. "In that moment, I saw the incredible possibility of those earliest years, and that sense of wonder never left me. From supporting military families through long deployments to building national programs rooted in brain science, I've seen how early relationships can make or break a child's path. That is why I have dedicated my career to this work and why Reach Out and Read feels like home. The organization is taking the science of early childhood and putting it into practice in ways that truly change lives."

Dr. Fraga emphasized that her first priority as CEO will be to listen and learn from the Reach Out and Read community, including clinicians, families, Affiliates, and partners, while building on the organization's strong foundation.

"We're not starting a new book; we are beginning a new chapter, continuing an extraordinary story," she said. "Reach Out and Read is ready to make an even greater difference because the science is clear, the model is proven, and the need has never been more urgent. Together, we can ensure every child can grow, learn, and thrive."

Dr. Fraga earned her Ph.D. in Family Life Education and Consultation from Kansas State University, her M.S. in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma, and her B.S. in Special Education and Rehabilitation from the University of Arizona.

With more than 6,500 clinics, 39,000 clinicians, and a reach of 9.3 million well-child visits annually, Reach Out and Read is uniquely positioned to change the trajectory of children's lives. Across all 50 states, Reach Out and Read and its network of Affiliates are transforming pediatric care by equipping families with the tools, guidance, and support needed to build strong foundations during a child's earliest years. Through strategic partnerships and a focus on quality, the organization is expanding its impact in communities nationwide.

“Dr. Fraga is the kind of leader who transforms what’s possible. Whether testifying before Congress, shaping federal policy, or forging community partnerships that center children and families, her commitments to equity and social justice have been a hallmark of her leadership,” said Dr. Trude Haecker, M.D., Chair of Reach Out and Read’s National Board of Directors. “Dr. Fraga’s career is a testament to what happens when bold vision meets compassion, courage, and persistence. With Dr. Fraga, the Board, and our senior team leading the way, Reach Out and Read is poised to deepen its impact, scale its proven model, and shape the national conversation about early childhood, equity, and healthy early relationships.”

In fiscal year 2024 alone, Reach Out and Read served 4.6 million children and families and shared 7.7 million books — nearly two-thirds of them to children from low-income families.

“I know the power of investments that create lasting impacts for children, families, and the communities they call home. Reach Out and Read is one of them, and this work is more crucial than ever,” Dr. Fraga said. “This program has the potential to reach 90 percent of children under 5 through well-child visits, and decades of research show it works. The time is now to improve the health and well-being of millions more children nationwide.”

To learn more about Reach Out and Read and the programs offered, go to ReachOutAndRead.org.

Lori Brooks
Reach Out and Read
+1 813-865-3093
[email us here](#)

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