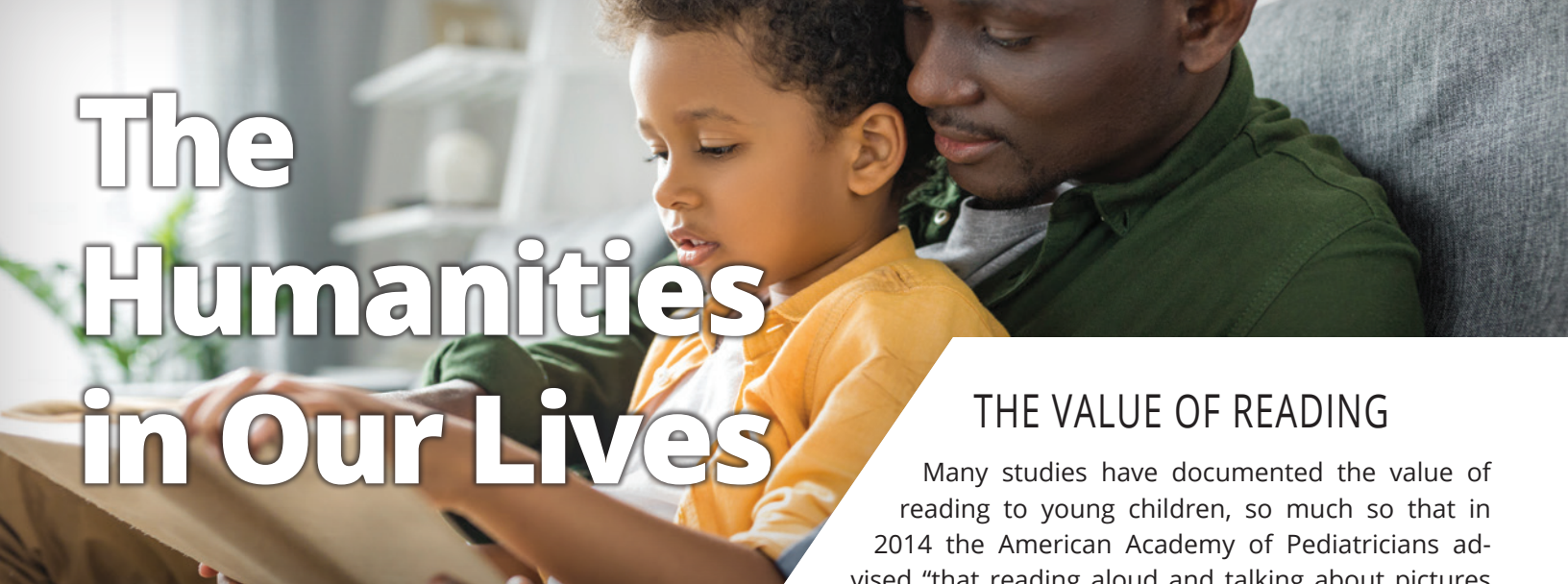


# The Humanities in Our Lives



## THE VALUE OF READING

Many studies have documented the value of reading to young children, so much so that in 2014 the American Academy of Pediatrics advised “that reading aloud and talking about pictures and words in age-appropriate books can strengthen language skills, literacy development and parent-child relationships.” Children who listen to family members read to them grow into better and more enthusiastic readers.

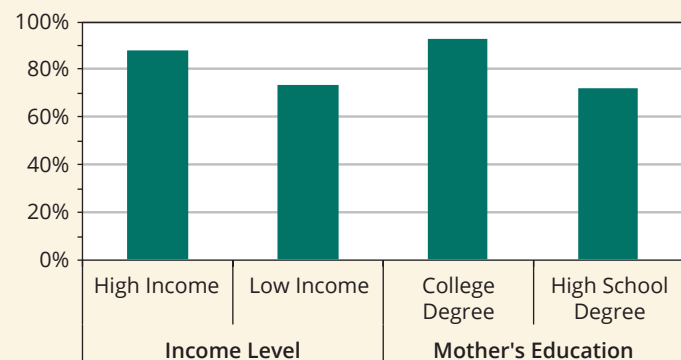
## READING TO YOUNG CHILDREN

From Dr. Seuss to *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, books touch children’s imagination and help them make sense of the world. Over 80% of parents read to their young children at least three times a week, a number that has not changed significantly since 1995.

### KEY FACTS

- Upwards of 90% of mothers with bachelor’s degrees read to their children at least three times a week.
- Children from lower income families were 16% less likely to be read to.

Share of Families Reading to Young Children, by Characteristic, 2012



## INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

**Reach Out and Read (ROR)** focuses on reaching young children when they visit doctors and nurse practitioners. ROR teaches parents about why reading to children is important—and hands out the books to do it. Last year, ROR provided services to 4.7 million children, 25% of whom were part of low-income families, at a cost of \$20 per child.

*“Families participating in the Reach Out and Read model read to their children more often (4.3 vs. 3.8 days/week), and their toddlers’ receptive and expressive vocabulary scores were higher, even when adjusting for parental education, foreign-born status, and language proficiency.”*

Studies of ROR’s outcomes have found that the program more than doubles the likelihood that parents will read to their children and that they will keep books in the home. These studies also indicate that for children involved in ROR, language development improves by an average of 3–6 months.

The Humanities in Our Lives series (#HumInOurLives) highlights the many and diverse forms of humanities activities in the nation, and key facts about the health of the field.

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For more on the broad trends that mark American engagement with various forms of the humanities, visit [humanitiesindicators.org](http://humanitiesindicators.org) or email [humanitiesindicators@amacad.org](mailto:humanitiesindicators@amacad.org).

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