Reach Out and Read
Research Collaborative for Early Literacy and Brain Development
Request for Proposals

Background

The Research Collaborative for Early Literacy and Brain Development, a new initiative of Reach Out and Read, is seeking to develop research within a pediatric practice-based network to build on the current evidence base related to promotion of reading aloud and early literacy.

Planning for the collaborative took place at the Pediatric Academic Society meetings and the ROR Leadership meeting this May. A good deal of time was spent discussing the name. While “Research Collaborative for Early Literacy and Brain Development” precisely reflects the nature of the effort, the acronym RCELBD is unwieldy. Henceforth, we’ll refer to the project as “LitNet”. The present RFP represents the first tangible achievement of that planning process.

Purpose

The purpose of this RFP is to elicit proposals for studies that can be conducted across multiple ROR sites, using the resources of the APA Continuity Clinic Research Network (CORNET). Initially, the collaborative will select one to two studies and work together to offer support from design to funding to implementation. In particular, we are seeking small pilot projects that can be completed with minimal or no external funding.

Support provided through this RFP will include:

- Design: An advisor from the Collaborative leadership will work with the study leader(s) to refine the study question and develop the study design
- Implementation: The Collaborative leadership will work together with CORNET leadership to operationalize the study plan utilizing the resources of the CORNET network.
- Identification of funding sources: The ROR National Center will work with the study leader(s) to identify sources of funding, and apply for this funding as necessary.

Please note that the purpose of this RFP is to provide in-kind technical support for design and implementation as described above only. While we will work with the recipient(s) to identify funding sources, we will not be providing any funds or direct costs of any kind through this RFP.

Projects suitable for this support will include:

- A champion, who will commit to seeing the project through to completion;
- A research question that is important and likely to lead to a publishable manuscript;
- A feasible plan for answering the research question.
The present RFP is a two stage proposal:

In this initial stage, we invite you to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to LitNet. In the LOI, please answer the following questions:

1. What question or questions do you seek to answer? If possible, specify the group under study and the hypothesized relationships (e.g., “Among primary care doctors in ROR practices, the degree to which literacy support is perceived to be central to clinical care will be inversely related to the number of years in practice.”)

2. Why is the question important, from a practical, programmatic, policy, or theoretical standpoint?

3. What methods do you propose? What kind of data do you need to collect (e.g. records reviews, surveys of doctors, parent surveys, observation, or testing)? What specific processes will be involved in collecting the data? What analysis do you propose?

4. What needs for support do you envision (e.g., help recruiting practices, help collecting the data, etc.)

5. Tell us about yourself, including: a) your prior experience with ROR; b) your prior experience with research more broadly; and c) how this work would fit with your goals (both short-term and long-term).

We are particularly interested in identifying a doable first project. Most likely, this will mean a project based on data collected either from records reviews, or from surveys of clinicians. Collecting data from parents, or direct observations of children, is likely to be more demanding, and so might best be left for later, once the Collaborative is established. A useful research question might provide pilot data for a later larger study; for example, it might provide normative data about clinician attitudes on a particular aspect of ROR. It should lead to a publication.

Submission
Deadline: November 1, 2016
Process: Submit a Word document electronically to Nikki Shearman at Nikki.Shearman@reachoutandread.org. See below for required format.

Eligibility
For this first LitNet project, in order to maximize the chances for success, applications are open to physicians or other professionals who have academic training or a record of publication that gives evidence of competence in clinical research. Trainees are welcome to participate, but the lead proposer should not be a trainee.

Required Format:
1. Cover page with:
   Title of project
   Your Name
   Professional title
Institution (if applicable)
City, State, name of ROR program
Email
Preferred telephone
Names/titles of other members of team if appropriate

2. The LOI (as described above): Please limit to 2 single-spaced pages.

3. A CV or bio sketch (any format is ok)

Review Process
All LOI’s will be reviewed during the 2-4 weeks following submission. Following this review process, we will let you know if you have been selected to submit a full proposal. We will endeavor to provide useful feedback for all applicants.

Thank you for reading this RFP and giving it some thought! We hope that this process will lead to creative, exciting, publishable, useful research!

--Tom DeWitt, Perri Klass, Alan Mendelsohn, Robert Needlman, Iman Sharif, and Nikki Shearman, for the LitNet Steering Committee.