

Clínica Msr. Oscar A. Romero

Early Literacy Intervention

The National Center of Reach Out and Read provides Clínica Msr. Oscar A. Romero (CMOAR) funds for purchasing new books and distributing them to children between six months and five years of age during well child visits. At the time of these checkups, a primary care provider supplies guidance to parents about the importance of early literacy and reading aloud and offers them a selection of age-appropriate books for their child.

Illiteracy is a barrier to accessing healthcare and CMOAR staff work to overcome it by providing culturally and linguistically competent service. Staff is bilingual in English and Spanish and through our unique Maya Clinic, communication in Kanjobal, Quiche, and other Mesoamerican languages is provided even for matters beyond clinical concerns. A majority of our patients speak Spanish but many are monolingual and approximately 40 percent are estimated to be functionally illiterate.

This high percentage of patients unable to read is a major challenge in our community and it can impact patient health. Chronic disease self-management plans, directions for prescriptions, as well as background information on illnesses provided through health education materials all require a certain level of English-language literacy or verbal explanation. CMOAR staff spend significant amount of time with patients to ensure they comprehend health information and instructions throughout their clinic visit.

The Reach Out and Read program allows CMOAR an opportunity to intervene at a very early stage to ensure children grow up knowing how to read. We are appreciative of the continued support from the National Center of Reach Out and Read for making this possible.