

## **1. Title and Introduction:**

### **Raising Readers: Partnering with Primary Care to Improve Literacy**

Forum: Purging Harm from Children's Healthcare

Since the year 2000 Raising Readers has created an opportunity for Primary Care Providers (PCP's) and parents to discuss literacy throughout the State of Maine. PCP's receive education and support from Raising Readers concerning the critical nature of early literacy activities. Primary care providers participating in Raising Readers use the gift of a high quality book to discuss literacy at every Well Child Visit from birth through age 5. In this way, the value of reading can be discussed and reinforced at each Well Child Visit.

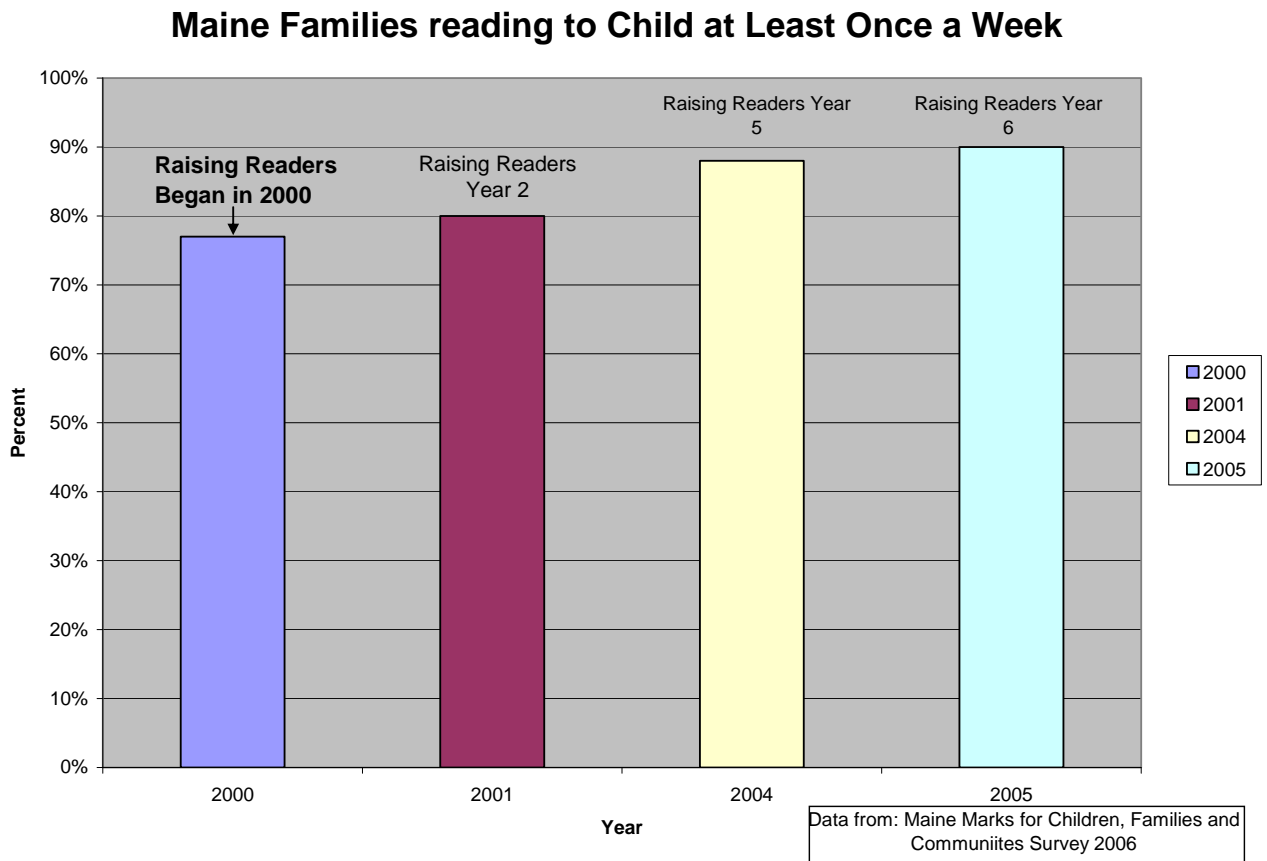
A PCP initiating a literacy discussion with a parent and child is integral to improving health, and social outcomes for all children. (Kuo, 2004, High 2000, Golova 1999) The inequality in achievement of reading for children in the USA is staggering. (Hart and Risely 2003) Self reported overall health has also been significantly correlated with low health literacy. (Institute of Education Science 2006) There is an increasing body of evidence indicating that reading to children early and often has astounding positive effects on a child's reading and life success. (Senechal 2006, Hargrave 2000, Lignugaris 2001, Kuo 2004, High 2000)

Most reading problems can be prevented. (National Reading Panel- Teaching Children to Read 2000 ) The role of Raising Readers is to provide the systems, books and training so that primary care providers and care givers can foster early literacy. The manner and work of Raising Readers is founded on research and creating effective systems for literacy promotion in primary care practices. Raising Readers translates literacy research into systems change in office practices throughout the state of Maine.

## 1. Goal Statement/Objectives

Raising Readers translates literacy research into systems change in office practices throughout the state of Maine. The Objectives of Raising Readers are to promote literacy in Primary Care Practices, educate health care providers to coach parents about the importance of reading frequently to the child and its importance on brain development and early literacy skills, and provide high quality books to Maine Children through PCP's.

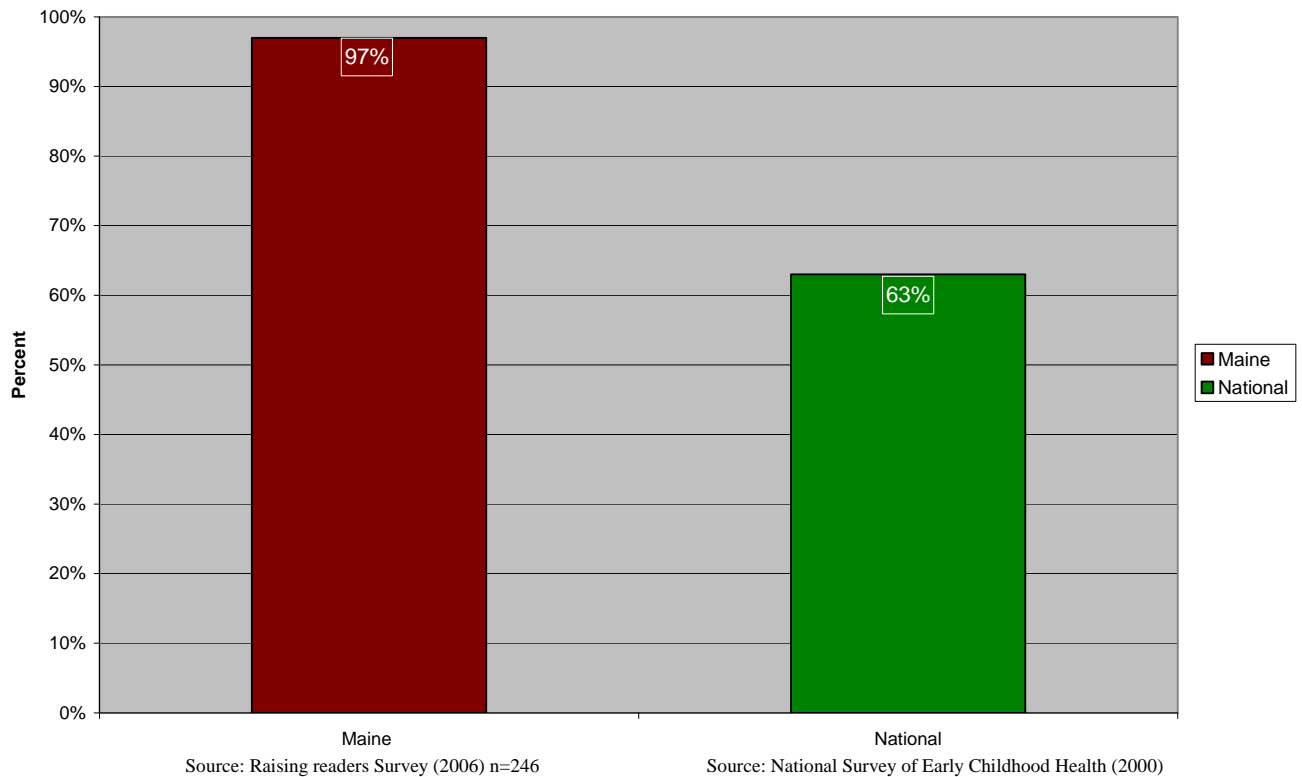
## 2. Quantifiable Results



A 2006 survey distributed at health care practices conducted by Raising Readers of 608 Parents and 246 Primary care providers gave the following results:

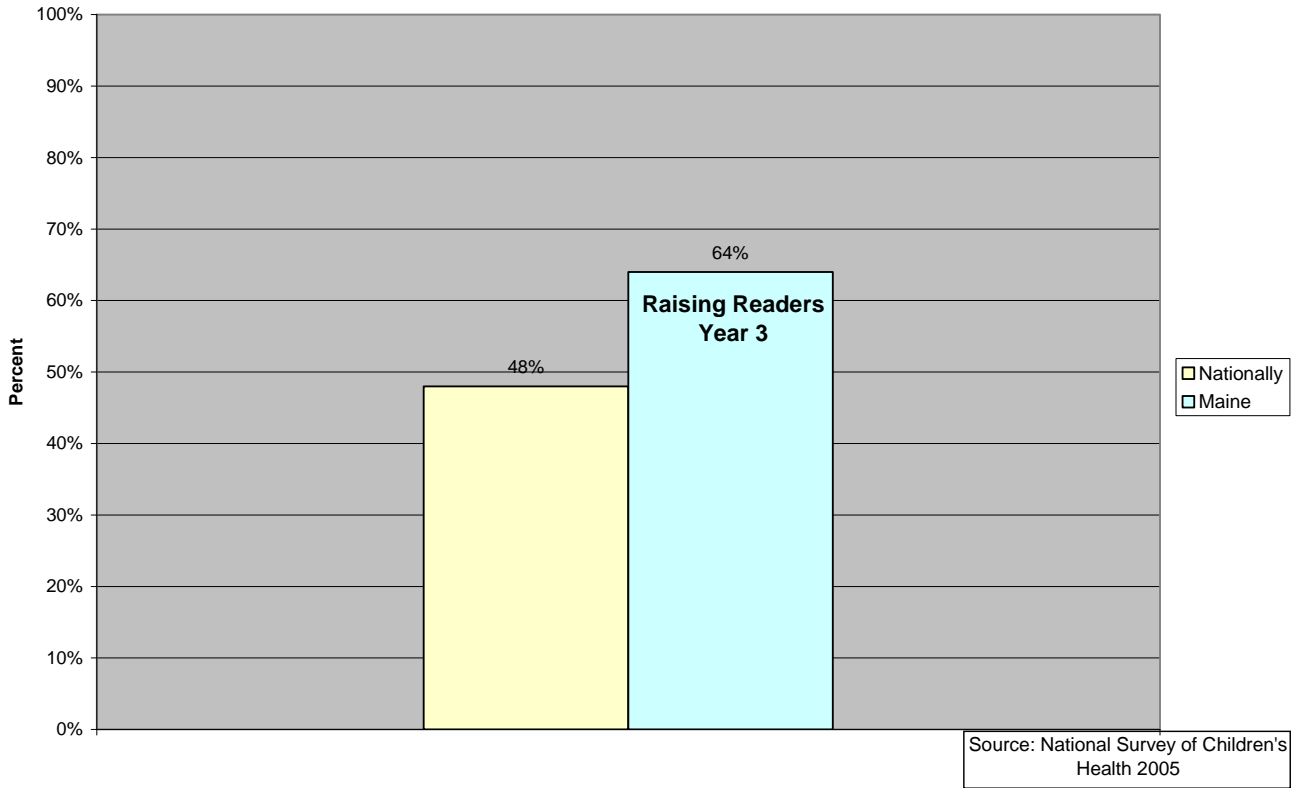
- 97% of health providers are discussing literacy with their patients. Compared to 63% from the National Survey of Early Childhood Health (2000)

**Percent of Health Care Providers Discuss Reading with Parents**

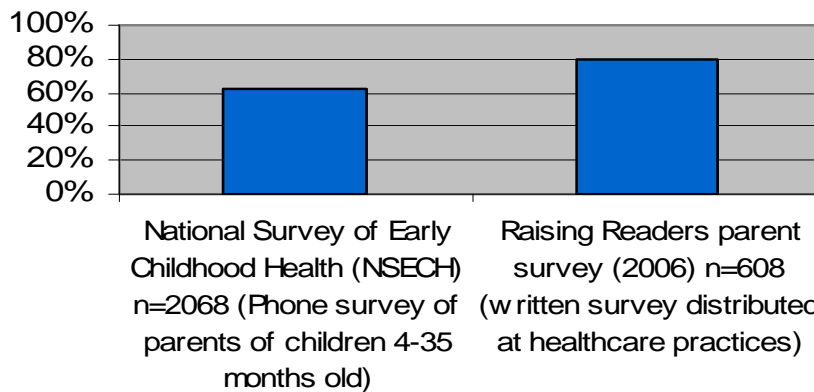


- 70% of health providers believe that there is an increase of parents reading to their children as a result of their counseling on reading.
- 58% of health providers say that participating in the Raising Readers program increases how frequently they counsel about reading.
- 31% of parents completing the survey completed high school and 49% completed college, which is comparable to education rates in the state of Maine. A strength of the Raising Readers program is that the parent participants reflect the general population of Maine.

### Percentage of Children Who Were Read to Every Day in the Past Week



### Parents who report they have discussed reading with their healthcare provider



### 3. Changes Made

1. Primary Care Practices in the state of Maine are invited to participate in Raising Readers.
2. 374 Primary Care Practices in the state of Maine are participating in Literacy activities with their patient's birth to age 5.
3. Quality books are provided free of charge to Primary Care Practices for all their patients birth to age 5. Over 1 million books have been provided to date.
4. 85% of all Maine children have received literacy promotion from their Primary Care Provider and books from Raising Readers

### 4. Conclusions

Maine is changing the systems in Primary Care and equalizing high quality care for all Maine children. Three hundred and seventy four health care providers statewide benefit from the Raising Readers program – indicating the reach of the Raising readers program. The National Survey of Children's Health (2005) found that Maine had the second highest percentage (64%) of Children who were read to every day in the past week. The number, frequency and quality of self reported literacy interactions among health providers and parents suggests that the Raising Readers program is effective in increasing literacy discussions between health care providers and parents in the state of Maine.

### 5. Future Plans