



HIPPYUSA®
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

Frequently Asked Questions

Origin

The HIPPY model was developed in Israel in 1969 by Dr. Avima Lombard to address the problem of immigrant children falling behind their peers, even when attending the same preschools. Dr. Lombard proposed a solution: provide services in the home to address two major areas: the educational enrichment of the child and strengthening the mother's self-esteem through her activities as an educator.

As HIPPY expanded, it became apparent the model was successful not only with immigrant parents, but with any parent who lacked the resources, skills or confidence to teach their children readiness skills.

In the 1980s, then Arkansas's First Lady Hillary Clinton, brought the model to the state as a way to help parents with limited resources prepare their children for school. The program has since expanded to more than 20 states.

Objective

HIPPY's primary objectives are: to close the achievement gap by enabling more children from at-risk communities to succeed in school and increasing the number of parents engaged in their children's learning activities.

HIPPY USA is implementing two strategies to increase the number of families participating in the program – expanding geographically to targeted high need areas, primarily in southern and western states and expanding existing HIPPY programs in communities where the demand for services exceeds capacity.

Leverage Points

First and foremost, the HIPPY program benefits children who might be at risk for failure in school. Children who start school behind have a much harder time catching up with their peers and many continue to fall behind. By closing the school readiness gap for children, HIPPY helps level the playing field.

Schools also benefit. Studies show HIPPY children have less need of special education services, have better grades, perform better on standardized tests and were more likely to graduate. Studies also show that HIPPY parents take a more active role in school, including supporting classroom activities and taking on leadership roles.

Effectiveness

HIPPY's research based curriculum is the foundation of the model. The curriculum includes activity packets and books which are delivered directly to parents who then spend time each day teaching early literacy, math, language and science skills to their own three, four, and five year old children.

HIPPY's curriculum is designed to help children achieve long-term academic success, by

- enhancing the parent-child bond,
- Increasing parental knowledge of early childhood development,
- Increasing family engagement in academic activities,
- improving the home literacy environment, and
- promoting education as a family value

Success Metrics

HIPPY has 25 years of research showing positive outcomes for families. Studies conducted in the United States and eight countries have shown HIPPY to be effective in improving school readiness, parent involvement, school attendance, classroom behavior and academic performance. 96% of parents participating in the HIPPY program report spending more time reading to their children; teaching them letters, words and numbers; visiting the library and monitoring their child's TV use. Children participating in HIPPY have demonstrated statistically significant higher scores on standardized tests in reading, math and social studies based on multiple measures used in Arkansas, Texas, Florida and Colorado.

Misconceptions

In the HIPPY model, parents, mostly mothers who participated in the program with their own children are hired to share what they've learned with other parents in their communities. Because HIPPY home visitors share the language, culture and life experiences of the families they serve, they can be very effective helping parent - who may be hard to reach due to poverty, language or social isolation - to feel comfortable participating in the program. Since many HIPPY home visitors have not had the luxury of going to college, working for HIPPY may be the first professional level job many of our home visitors have had – highlighting the strong workforce development element of the model.

Accomplishments

- HIPPY was one of the original seven home-visiting program models designated as evidence-based by meeting the rigorous criteria set for funding under the federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program.
- HIPPY USA was also named one of America's top 100 performing nonprofit organizations by the Social Impact Exchange, a newly launched giving platform. Their S&I 100 is the first-ever, broad index of top-performing, evidence-based nonprofits with proven results and a high potential to reach more people.
- Over the past 25 years, HIPPY USA has delivered more than 3.3 million books and 12 million activity packets to almost 400,000 families.

Challenges

Program funding remains the most common and consistent challenge within the network of HIPPY programs. Because HIPPY programs are implemented through a variety of institutions and agencies, continuous funding and sustainability are crucial to the program's success – both locally and nationally. Identifying sustainable funding streams is critical for the ability of sponsoring agencies and school districts to provide the high quality programming which leads to successful outcomes for children.

Future Planning

In many places the demand for HIPPY exceeds the capacity and funding of sponsoring agencies to enroll the number of families who want to participate. Unfortunately, in many places, children can age-out waiting for a slot in a HIPPY program. With additional funding, we would help programs move children off their waiting lists. Because the program is free to all who participate, the limited number of slots depends solely on funding. Simply put, more resources means reaching more children and families.

Gaps

With additional resources, HIPPY could expand its reach through the development of an effective and innovative home-visitation program for first through third graders. As schools and communities continue to seek to improved outcomes and ensure that all students learn to read with comprehension by third grade, there is a need for evidence-based practices to support efforts to engage parents. Implementing HIPPY as an in-home early literacy intervention can be a major strategy in improving reading outcomes for elementary age children, particularly those whose parents who did not graduate from high school, have lower levels of literacy or who are not native English speakers and are eager to help their children succeed.