



**HIPPYUSA**<sup>®</sup>  
Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

## Summary of Selected Research Findings

**Taken from a report prepared by:**

Lisa Klein, Hestia Advising  
Heather Weiss, Harvard Family Research Project  
Deanna Gomby, Deanna Gomby Consulting

**August 2006**

1221 Bishop Street  
Little Rock, AR 72202  
Telephone: 501.537.7726  
Fax: 501.537.7716  
Email: [info@hippyusa.org](mailto:info@hippyusa.org)  
Web address: [www.hippyusa.org](http://www.hippyusa.org)

# Report Overview

---

This brief report provides a summary of HIPPY research highlights. In keeping with the comprehensive nature of the HIPPY program, research findings are categorized into three key areas: effects on children, parents, and home visitors. In addition, two research points are included that address the current fiscal and policy trends of cost efficiency and universal preschool.

The research in this report is not meant to be an exhaustive review of all HIPPY research. Rather, the particular findings were selected based on meeting the following criteria:

1. They represent the most rigorous research designs and/or methods
2. They are a mix of qualitative and quantitative results that demonstrate how findings are being used to improve programs and determine effectiveness for participants.
3. They represent a sampling of the research from HIPPY programs all over the world.

## Introduction

The Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a parent involvement, school readiness program that helps low literacy parents prepare their three- to five-year-old children for success in school and life.

*Home Visits and Parent Meetings to Prepare Children for School and Life.* Through biweekly home visits alternating with parent group meetings, parents are provided a carefully developed curriculum, including books and materials that are designed to strengthen their children's cognitive, socio/emotional, and physical development so that they have the kindergarten readiness skills for school success. HIPPY programs serve at-risk families from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. By engaging parents in educational activities with their children, HIPPY fosters a lifelong commitment to education. Parents' positive experiences when teaching their own children empower them to become advocates for their children's education. Parents become confident enough to remain actively involved in their children's education in kindergarten and throughout their elementary school years.

The 30-week HIPPY curriculum is a direct instruction program focusing on language development, problem solving, perceptual discrimination, and other pre-academic skills. It is free to parents and delivered by home visitors who live in the same high need neighborhoods as the families they serve.

*Unique Among Major US Home Visiting Programs.* HIPPY is unique among the large home visiting models in the United States in that it focuses solely on 3- to 5-year-old children and their families.

*Broad Scope.* HIPPY is one of the largest home visiting programs in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of children have participated in HIPPY since the first HIPPY site was introduced in Florida in 1984, and HIPPY reaches more than 16,000 children annually through its 150 sites, and thousands more in countries around the world.

# Proven Results



HIPPY is firmly based in research. First tried, tested, and shaped by researchers from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel in the 1960s and 1970s, HIPPY has been implemented and studied in countries around the world, from New Zealand to Turkey to the United States. Results of these studies demonstrate that HIPPY benefits children, parents, and home visitors.

## Effects on Children

1. The HIPPY pilot program and a follow up study of children at the end of second grade found overall positive effects of participation in HIPPY for school achievement compared to children who were randomly assigned to a control group or a group who received teacher instruction.<sup>1</sup>
2. In Arkansas, where HIPPY is offered state wide, children who participated in HIPPY for at least one year outscored their peers on reading, math, and language arts achievement tests, had higher classroom grades, were less likely than their peers to have been suspended, and had better classroom behavior ratings from their teachers through the 6<sup>th</sup> grade.<sup>2</sup>
3. This quasi- experimental study found that children who had the HIPPY program for two years were better adjusted according to their teachers and had higher grades in language and reading that lasted through both third and sixth grades than children in other preschool programs.<sup>3</sup>
4. A New Orleans study demonstrated benefits of HIPPY through the 7<sup>th</sup> grade in attendance, academic performance, social skills, and low suspension rates.<sup>4</sup>
5. After participating in HIPPY for a year, more children were performing at or above their age level on standardized vocabulary tests, which are related to success in school.<sup>5</sup>
6. In New York HIPPY children scored higher than comparison and control group children on reading, standardized tests of cognitive skills, and adapting to the classroom. In Arkansas, more HIPPY children were promoted to first grade and adapted well to the classroom. It should be noted that in both states, these findings did not hold for a second group of children most likely because parents were not as involved in the program.<sup>6</sup>
7. In Colorado HIPPY children had higher grades in reading, math, and social studies than their classmates.<sup>7</sup>
8. In New Zealand, HIPPY children consistently performed better on a standardized reading test than children who did not participate in HIPPY, which probably reduced their need for remedial reading services later.<sup>8</sup>
9. In Israel, a teacher surveyed about the value of HIPPY said: “You can tell at once who is in it (HIPPY) and who is not. There’s a huge gap between a child in the program and one who isn’t.”<sup>9</sup>
10. Another teacher said: “There’s a three- and- a- half year old girl in the preschool. Once when I was just talking she was the only one to know the answer to a difficult question. I asked her, ‘How did you know that?’ She said that her mother teaches her in the HIPPY program.”<sup>10</sup>



## Effects on Parents

1. Parents report that they read to their children more, tell them stories, and teach them letters, words, and numbers more than parents report in the National Household Education Survey, the largest survey of parents in the United States.<sup>11</sup>
2. In 4 different locations across Texas, the majority of HIPHY parents report reading and telling stories to their children up to four hours a week, having children's books at home, and encouraging their children to read and write. Nine of every 10 parents said they became more aware of the importance of reading as a result of participating in HIPHY.<sup>12</sup>
3. Parents report they spend more time reading to their children, more time talking with them about books, more time teaching them the alphabet, and that they have more knowledge about the way young children grow and learn.<sup>13</sup>
4. Spanish-speaking parents said they changed the way they parent after participating in HIPHY and now have regular times and places so they can work on learning activities with their children at home, making HIPHY and especially important tool for the fast growing number of Spanish-speaking parents and their children.<sup>14</sup>
5. Parents report being involved in their children's education, working with their children at home on HIPHY materials, reading books together, and also connecting with their children's schools.<sup>15</sup>
6. Over 800 parents across Florida reported that HIPHY made them more aware of the importance of reading to their child and 8 of 10 say they read more to their child since joining HIPHY.<sup>16</sup>
7. Nine of 10 parents with children who are now in school say thanks to HIPHY they check to see if their children finish their homework every day or every week.<sup>17</sup>
8. HIPHY parents report that their experiences in the program have improved their communications with their children and helped them feel more confident as parents.<sup>18</sup>
9. In Colorado Teachers rated HIPHY parents significantly higher for attending teacher-parent conferences and other school events when compared to other parents in their fifth grade classrooms.<sup>19</sup>
10. In Israel teachers reported that HIPHY helps the parents. "They (HIPHY parents) show more interest in their children and what happens in the preschool, and even come sit with them in class and do some activities."<sup>20</sup>
11. They also report that HIPHY improves the relationship between parents and teachers. "The parents come in and talk...and it helps..."<sup>21</sup>
12. In New Zealand, HIPHY parents and caregivers were significantly more involved in their children's educational activities than other parents, doing things like serving as a teacher's aide, going on school trips, or sitting on school boards.<sup>22</sup>
13. HIPHY is one of the home- visiting programs offering a mechanism for ensuring that at-risk families have social support, linkage with public and private community services, and ongoing health, developmental, and safety education. When these services are part of a system of high-quality well- child care linked or integrated with the pediatric medical home, they have the potential to mitigate health and developmental outcome disparities.<sup>23</sup>





## Effects on Home Visitors

1. HIPPY home visitors are selected from among parents who are current or past HIPPY recipients. For many, their HIPPY experience is their first job working with children and families outside the home. Research suggests that, through HIPPY, these paraprofessional home visitors develop improved job skills that will prepare them for future employment.<sup>24</sup>
2. In a survey of Florida HIPPY paraprofessionals, close to half (48%) report that they have enrolled in school or taken classes for professional development or to work towards a certificate or diploma, and 42% have participated in other job training programs.<sup>25</sup>
3. In a Florida survey of HIPPY home visitors, more than 2 of 3 expressed interest in or took steps towards advancing their own education since being involved with HIPPY.<sup>26</sup>
4. HIPPY paraprofessionals almost all report that they have more confidence, can be more assertive, have better social skills, and feel like they have more to contribute as a result of being involved with the HIPPY program.<sup>27</sup>



## HIPPY and Cost Savings

HIPPY is one of 10 parenting programs strong enough to have a possible economic impact.<sup>28</sup>

Focusing just on benefits to children, HIPPY returns \$1.80 to society for every \$1 invested. That means a return of \$1,476 per child for the typical HIPPY program (in 2003 dollars).<sup>29</sup>

## HIPPY and Universal Preschool

Many states and locales are increasing funding for preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds – the same age range that HIPPY serves. But a key element in the success of many preschool programs is the involvement of parents, and HIPPY can be an important addition to preschool programs. Research from Israel, where preschool is universally available beginning at age 3, demonstrates that HIPPY led to a 50% reduction in the number of children assigned to special education and a 75% reduction in the number of children retained in grade (i.e., held back) – over and above benefits of preschool alone.<sup>30</sup>



# Conclusion

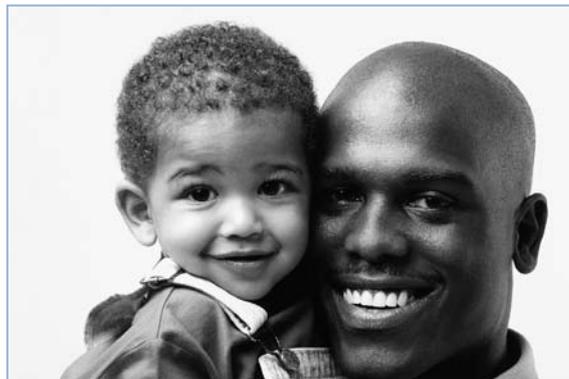
---

HIPPY has a tradition of accountability that began as the program was being developed and continues as HIPPY USA plans for the future.

***Dedicated to Quality.*** HIPPY began with a dedication to quality monitoring and improvement with evaluation as part of the original pilot program. The focus on quality continues today, with HIPPY USA's understanding that the effectiveness of the program depends greatly on the quality of the services being delivered. HIPPY state offices complete an annual tool, the Self-Assessment Validation Inventory (SAVI) to monitor how programs are operating and how families are being served.

***Continuing Focus on Research.*** HIPPY USA retains its commitment to the proud HIPPY research tradition, and has selected the Florida Mental Health Institute at the Department of Child and Family Studies of the University of South Florida (USF) to serve as the research arm for HIPPY USA. As part of this partnership, USF has:

- Developed a logic model to detail the connections between HIPPY's goals and activities. Such a model can serve as the basis for future evaluations of HIPPY;
- Compiled a comprehensive list of measures that HIPPY sites can use to assess children and family outcomes;
- Developed evaluation manuals and guidelines for local HIPPY programs;
- Provided technical assistance to HIPPY USA and local HIPPY programs regarding evaluation;
- Designed and implemented evaluation of HIPPY USA and HIPPY Florida projects.



# References

---

- <sup>1,30</sup> Lombard, A.D. (1994). *Success begins at home: The past, present and future of the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Dushkin Publishing Group: Guildford, CT, p. 46.
- <sup>2,3</sup> Bradley, R.H. & Gilkey, B. (2002) The impact of the Home Instructional Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) on school performance in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades. *Early Education & Development*, 13(3), 302- 311.
- <sup>4,18</sup> Author. (Winter 2001). *What we know about how HIPPY works: A summary of HIPPY evaluation research*. Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters. HIPPY USA: New York.
- <sup>5,13,14</sup> Black, M.M. and Powell, D. October 2005. Year One HIPPY AmeriCorps Evaluation: Parent Involvement in Literacy Activities and Children's Receptive Vocabulary Development. University of South Florida. Department of Child and Family Studies.
- <sup>6</sup> Baker, A.J., Piotrkowski, C.S., and Brooks- Gunn, J. 1999. The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters. In *The Future of Children*, 9, 116- 133.
- <sup>7,19</sup> The Center for Human Investment Policy. April 2003. Five Year Study of the Impact of HIPPY School Years 1997- 1998 Through 2001- 2002. University of Colorado at Denver. Graduate School of Public Affairs. Denver, CO.
- <sup>8,22</sup> BarHava- Monteith, G., Harre, N., and Field, J. 1999. A Promising Start: An Evaluation of the HIPPY Program in New Zealand. *Early Child Development and Care*, 159, 145- 157.
- <sup>9,10,20,21</sup> Kfir, D. and Elroy, I. 2003. Preschool Children in the HATAF and HIPPY Programs: Feedback from Preschool Teachers. In *Parents Making a Difference: International Research on the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters Program*. Westheimer, M. (Ed.). The Hebrew University Magnes Press. Jerusalem.
- <sup>11</sup> Author. Florida HIPPY Success Stories Booklet. 2004. University of South Florida and the Florida HIPPY Training and Technical Assistance Center. Tampa, FL. [www.floridahippy.edu](http://www.floridahippy.edu).
- <sup>12</sup> Jacobson, A.L. & Ramisetty- Mikler, S. (August 2000). *The HIPPYCORPS initiative: Getting things done*. 1999- 2000 Annual Program Evaluation Report. Prepared for The Texas HIPPY Center. Center for Parent Education, University of North Texas.
- <sup>15</sup> Black, M.M. & Powell, D. March 2006. Year One HIPPY AmeriCorps Evaluation: Children's progress in developing reading- related skills and HIPPY parental involvement in literacy activities: Kailua- Kona Hawaii HIPPY program. University of South Florida. Department of Child and Family Studies.
- <sup>16,17,26</sup> Cuenca, K. In collaboration with Dr. Diane Powell and Dr. Marsha Black. Findings from the Florida HIPPY Parent Survey. June 2003. University of South Florida. Department of Child and Family Studies.
- <sup>23</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics. *The Role of Preschool Home- visiting Programs in Improving Children's Developmental and Health Outcomes*. Council on Community Pediatrics. *Pediatrics* 2009; 12;598- 603 DOI: 10.1542/peds.2008- 3607.
- <sup>24</sup> Lovejoy, M. & Westheimer, M. (1993). *Voices from the field: A case study on one inner- city HIPPY program*. NCJW Center for the Child and HIPPY USA, New York, NY.)

- <sup>25</sup> Deuel, L- L. S. (August 2000). Employability skills that matter! The value of job training opportunities for HIPPY paraprofessionals. *Florida HIPPY Research Brief*, 3, Department of Child & Family Studies, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institutes, University of South Florida, pp. 1-5.
- <sup>27</sup> Baker, A.J., Britt, D.W., Halpern, R., and Westheimer, M. October 1995. Family- Oriented Childhood Programs: An In- Depth Case Study of the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters. Submitted to the Carnegie Corporation of New York. NCJW Center for the Child. New York, NY.
- <sup>28</sup> Partnerships for America's Economic Success. *The Impact of Good Parenting Goes Far Beyond its Influence on Individual Children*. <http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org/uploads/200090709/PAESParentingBriefFinal.pdf>. June 2009, Brief #10.
- <sup>29</sup> Aos, S., Lieb, R., Mayfield, J., Miller, M., & Pennucci, A. (2004). *Benefits and costs of prevention and early intervention programs for youth*. Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Lombard, A.D. 1994. *Success Begins at Home*. Dushkin Publishing Group. Sluice Dock, Guilford, CT.