Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters: 2010-11

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At-a-Glance

Overview

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) was a districtwide program for parents of children ages 3, 4, and 5. The program required parents to work with their child using the HIPPY curriculum for 15-20 minutes per day. This process helped parents develop the skills needed to become involved in their child’s education.

Instructors would meet parents in their home at least once a week to role-play the age appropriate curriculum before parents introduced it to their child. The curriculum was designed to be developmentally appropriate with a focus on language development, problem solving, logical thinking, and perceptual skills. Parents could keep all materials including: weekly activity packets, nine storybooks, a set of 20 manipulative shapes, and crayons for each age group.

In addition to home-based learning, the HIPPY program also incorporated weekly group meetings at the child’s potential district elementary school. School principals met the parents and provided a tour of the school. Speakers from the community also presented at the group meetings discussing topics that were of interest to parents such as health, fitness, careers, and education.

Participation

The program was free to families within the Dallas ISD attendance zone. Thirty-six (36) elementary schools served as home schools. Participants were recruited from each school’s attendance zone. Families outside the school’s attendance zone were eligible to join, but likely unable to attend group meetings because of the school location.

Many of the elementary schools were Title I schools and four schools were rated as Academically Unacceptable. These schools offered the Dallas HIPPY program with the intent to improve student performance. Estimated costs of Dallas HIPPY program per school were $19,000, which included curriculum for families and home instructors. Dallas HIPPY supplemented some schools’ expenses with other funding sources to cover costs of curriculum or home instructors.

Staff

The Dallas HIPPY program worked toward empowering parents to become involved in their child’s education. As a result, many parents developed the desire to complete their education or enter the workforce. In fact, some Dallas HIPPY parents become home instructors after their child completed the program.

Dallas HIPPY employed 34 staff members during the 2010-11 school year, four of whom were specialists and 28 were home instructors. The majority of home instructors were Hispanic females. Eighteen home instructors were AmeriCorps members. Two AmeriCorps members completed their two-year partnership with the Dallas HIPPY program and received a $2,300 education stipend.

Research

The HIPPY program was an international program that started as a research project in Israel during 1969. It has since expanded to 12 countries serving more than 22,000 families. Currently, there are seven Texas based HIPPY programs in the following areas: Dallas ISD, El Paso United Way, Grand Prairie ISD, Houston ISD, Irving ISD, Richardson ISD, and Snyder ISD.

The HIPPY model has been consistent in every program across the world and was recently named one of the seven home visiting models that were proven successful by the Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting program.

The Dallas HIPPY program had the opportunity to participate in several research projects with The University of North Texas, The University of Texas at Arlington, and the Texas HIPPY Organization.

Research results found:

- HIPPY Parents who were identified most at risk for child abuse and neglect made significant improvements in protective factors after their first year of HIPPY participation (Texas HIPPY, September 2010).
- Seventy-one percent (71%) of 2009-10 four-year-old participants were enrolled in Dallas ISD kindergarten during the 2010-11 school year (Martinez-Cantu, March 2011).
- Dallas ISD prekindergarten students who participated in the HIPPY program made greater gains in language than non-HIPPY participants according to 2009-10 Dial-3 results (Martinez-Cantu, March 2011).
• According to DISD 2009-10 TAKS results for Grades 3-12, 79 percent of the students who participated in HIPPY Met Standard in TAKS Mathematics, while 75 percent of the students who did not participate in HIPPY Met Standard in TAKS Mathematics (Martinez-Cantu, March 2011).

• After a year of participation, a significant relationship was found between parent participation in HIPPY and a positive, enriched home environment (Nievar, Jacobson, Chen, Johnson, & Dier, in press).

• Among low income Latinos, third grade children who participated in HIPPY had significantly higher mathematics achievement than children who did not participate in HIPPY (Nievar, Jacobson, Chen, Johnson, & Dier, in press).

• Results of the Parental Involvement Survey indicated parents increased the amount of educational activities within the home as a result of the program (Johnson, Martinez-Cantu, Jacobson, & Weir, 2011).

• Kindergarten teachers report that approximately 85 percent of children who participated in HIPPY were “ready for school” (Johnson, Martinez-Cantu, Jacobson, & Weir, 2011).

• Comparisons were made between HIPPY participants and non-HIPPY participants during the 2008-09 school year at grades three, five, seven, and nine. Results showed HIPPY participants had significantly higher school attendance rates than non-HIPPY participants at each grade level (Brown & Lee, 2011).

• Among ninth graders during the 2008-09 school year, HIPPY participants had statistically significant fewer grade retentions than non-HIPPY participants (Brown & Lee, 2011).

• HIPPY participants received fewer In-School Suspensions and Out-of-School Suspensions than non-HIPPY participants at each grade level (Brown & Lee, 2011).

Summary and Recommendations

The HIPPY program has been successful throughout the country. Parents have become empowered as their child’s first teacher and the benefits of their child’s participation are evident years later. Long lasting benefits may be attributed to the program’s emphasis of parental involvement in a child’s education. Many of these components can be carried through a child’s educational career after a family discontinues HIPPY participation.

Many Dallas HIPPY participants, ages four and five, were enrolled in the Dallas ISD prekindergarten or kindergarten program. Some Dallas HIPPY parents found it difficult to complete HIPPY assignments and schoolwork with their children. In many cases, parents withdrew from the HIPPY program. Although, HIPPY USA has approved changes to the Dallas HIPPY program to accommodate participants ages four and five, it is recommended that prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers reconcile homework requirements in order for parents who participate in the Dallas HIPPY program to continue to do both HIPPY and prekindergarten or kindergarten.

Additional research is recommended to compare performance between two-year HIPPY program participants and three-year HIPPY program participants.

For more information on this report, contact Evaluation and Accountability at 972-925-6457.

