**At-a-Glance**

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home-based program that fosters the parent-child relationship to increase school readiness skills. HIPPY has been a successful international program since 1969. The program uses the HIPPY model to train and support parents as teachers of their preschool children ages 3, 4, and 5. The goal of the HIPPY program is to increase the level of parental involvement in a child’s education, particularly among parents who may not feel confident in their skills to help their child.

**Implementation**

The Dallas HIPPY program serves families with children ages 3, 4, and 5 that live within the boundaries of the Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD). Children have the opportunity to participate in the two or three year program. However, children are not allowed to begin the program at 5 years of age because the curriculum is designed to build off the previous year.

In 2007-2008, families were recruited from 34 Dallas ISD Title I schools where Dallas HIPPY was offered. Recruitment may involve sending out flyers, posting information in schools, or door to door visits in the community. Three and 4 year olds participate in a 30 week program, while 5 year olds participate in a 15 week bi-weekly program. Participation usually coincides with the Dallas ISD public school academic year.

Dallas ISD holds the license with HIPPY USA to run the Dallas HIPPY program within the boundaries of the school district. As Dallas HIPPY maintains licensure with HIPPY USA, on-going site visits are conducted to ensure program quality. Site visits are conducted by national HIPPY trainers who meet with staff and administrators to produce an overall assessment of the program. Dallas HIPPY has been recognized as an exemplary program and received the HIPPY USA Stellar Award for their exemplary status.

A sub-contract is also held with Texas HIPPY to implement and distribute surveys. Although HIPPY USA does not require programs to conduct research to maintain licensure, programs may do so to facilitate funding and quality. A Parental Involvement Interview is administered to Dallas HIPPY parents one week before the program begins, and at the completion of the program. This interview is used to determine the level of participation by parents in the educational activities of their children and in school and school support organizations. A Kindergarten Teacher Survey is administered to teachers of HIPPY participants during the fall and spring semesters. The fall administration of this survey is used to measure student readiness and adaptation, while the spring administration is used to capture the teacher’s perception of parental involvement.

**Student and Teacher Demographics**

Demographics below are representative of 3, 4, and 5 year old students who participated in the Dallas HIPPY program.

In 2007-2008, Dallas HIPPY served 508 families with a total of 572 children. Hispanic children were the predominant ethnic group, representing 87% of children enrolled in the Dallas HIPPY program (Figure 1). Teachers were also predominately Hispanic. Figure 1 shows a comparison between student and teacher gender and ethnicities.

**Budget**

Funding

In 2007-2008, Dallas HIPPY received funding from Title I, Title III, and on-campus budgets. Dallas ISD receives Title I federal funding for schools that are classified as low performing according to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. Title I is a federal grant allocated to schools to improve basic programs to ensure that all children have an equal opportunity to receive a high-quality education. At least 1% of Title I funds are reserved for parental involvement activities that promote family literacy and parenting skills. Dallas HIPPY, a parental involvement program that promotes literacy, is able to provide Title I schools the option for services under this requirement. In 2007-2008, Dallas
HIPPY was able to serve families from 34 Title I Dallas ISD schools.

Federal funds from the Title III grant are allocated to Dallas ISD to increase the English proficiency of limited English proficient (LEP) students. Dallas ISD must use research based approaches and methodologies for teaching LEP students, including immigrant children and youth. HIPPY began in 1969 as a research project by the National Council for Jewish Women Institute in Education at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, and has been replicated in twelve countries, now serving 22,000 families worldwide. In 2007-2008, Dallas HIPPY served 463 children whose primary language at home was Spanish.

Expenditures

According to the HIPPY USA Start-Up Manual, the average costs to run a HIPPY program per child in the United States is $1,250 per year. Program expenses may vary to accommodate the needs of the community. The amount stated is based on requirements to maintain program guidelines and functions under HIPPY USA, which includes: salaries for full and part-time staff, fees for training and technical assistance, license and affiliation, program development, the cost of curriculum materials, and other direct costs. Part-time staff is based on one home instructor for each 10-15 children. Participation in the program is free for both parents and children; any charges to parents are prohibited by the operating agreement with HIPPY USA.

Outcomes

Surveys

In 2007-2008, Dallas HIPPY administered a Parent Involvement Interview and a Kindergarten Teacher Survey. The Parent Involvement Interview was administered one week before participants began the program and again at the completion of the program. Home instructors conducted the interview after a consent form was completed by the parent. According to the Dallas HIPPY 2007-2008 report by Texas HIPPY, 345 first-year parents completed the interview before they began the program, and 186 of these parents also completed the interview at the completion of the program. Results show nearly 76% of HIPPY parents increase the amount of time spent at home engaging their children in literacy activities after beginning the HIPPY program. About 60% of HIPPY parents made more frequent contacts with their child’s school.

The Kindergarten Teacher Survey was administered online to 144 kindergarten teachers who had HIPPY students in the spring of 2008. There were 51 surveys completed. The online survey consisted of sections that capture a student’s classroom adaptability, behavior, and parental involvement. According to the Dallas HIPPY 2007-2008 report by Texas HIPPY, 96% of teachers reported students who participated in HIPPY as average or above average in classroom adaptability, while 84% of students who participated in HIPPY were reported to be ready for school in classroom behavior.

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Regression analysis was used to examine long-term effects of students who participated in the HIPPY program compared to students who only participated in Prekindergarten. Income and classroom quality were also controlled in the analysis. Income is defined by the student’s lunch status. The measure of classroom quality is defined by the Classroom Effectiveness Index (CEI) for the child’s third grade language arts teacher. Third grade Reading TAKS scores remained the constant dependent variable through each model.

Results show HIPPY participation, classroom quality, and income are significant predictors of increasing reading achievement for low SES bilingual students. The significance of HIPPY participation remained consistent among low SES bilingual students who participated in both Prekindergarten and HIPPY programs. However, the variable for low SES bilingual students who only participated in Prekindergarten was not significant.

Summary

The HIPPY program strives to increase the level of parental involvement in a child’s education, particularly among parents who may not feel confident in their skills to help their child. The HIPPY curriculum is available to families in either English or Spanish and focuses on exposure to school readiness skills rather than mastery. In 2007-2008, Dallas HIPPY served 572 children from low performing schools, and of those students, there were 463 whose primary language at home was Spanish. Each student worked on increasing their school readiness skills by enhancing language development, problem solving, logical thinking, and perceptual skills.

Results indicate that the Dallas HIPPY program provide services to families who may not be confident in their skills to help their child. The program also increases their literacy skills. The HIPPY program focuses on the parent-child relationship as the key to increase school readiness skills. Results suggest that increases in parental involvement may contribute to an increase in reading achievement. Further research is recommended because the populations of low SES bilingual students who participate in HIPPY are understudied.
For more information, see EA08-178-2, available at www.dallasisd.org/inside_disd/depts/evalacct/ or contact Veronica Martinez-Cantu at 972-925-6437.