Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters: 2008-09

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At-a-Glance

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) was a home-based program that fostered the parent-child relationship to increase school readiness skills among preschool children ages 3, 4, and 5. The program used the HIPPY model to empower parents and increase their self esteem, which in turn created a learning environment at home.

Program Overview

In 1969, HIPPY began as a research project at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel and has since expanded to 12 countries serving more than 22,000 families.

The HIPPY model was consistent in every program across the world. The curriculum was designed to be developmentally appropriate for children ages 3, 4, and 5, with a focus on language development, problem solving, logical thinking, and perceptual skills to increase a child’s exposure to skills, concepts, and experiences.

Budget

Dallas HIPPY received funding through on-campus budgets, several grants from Titles I and III, Texas HIPPY, and the Vickery Meadows Improvement District -- a total of $864,189. The program operated within 35 Dallas ISD Title I schools serving 501 students, 87% of whom spoke Spanish as their primary language at home.

Participation

The Dallas HIPPY program was free to all participants. Families with children ages 3, 4, and 5 were recruited within the attendance zones from 35 Dallas ISD Title I schools found in all learning communities.

Each family received 30 weekly activity packets, nine storybooks, a set of 20 manipulative shapes, and crayons for each age group. Families were able to keep all curriculum materials.

Parents of 3 and 4 year olds received 30 weeks of home visits or group meetings, while parents of 5 year olds received 15 weeks of home visits and group meetings bi-weekly. Parents worked with their children using the HIPPY curriculum for 15-20 minutes per day. Participation coincided with the Dallas ISD public school academic year.

As shown in Table 1, 91% of students served were Hispanic, with almost 5% African American students.

Nearly half of the students served were 3 years old and 30% were 4 years old. Five year olds represented 23% of the students served, and completed their second or third year of the Dallas HIPPY program. Children were not allowed to begin the program at 5 years of age because the curriculum was designed to build off the previous year.

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<th>Ethnicity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<td>African American</td>
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<td>4.8</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
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<td>49.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>50.5</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>30.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>23.2</td>
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Staff Overview

The 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 2008-2009, 13 of the home instructors were former HIPPY parents and 6 were attending school with an education grant they received from the AmeriCorp program.

Dallas HIPPY employed 33 staff members, four of whom were specialists and 27 were home instructors. Role-play was the method of instruction to teach parents curriculum. Specialists role-played the activities on a weekly basis with home instructors demonstrating the purpose of the activity and developmental significance for children. Then home instructors reviewed activities with their own child, or a practice child to gain first hand experience. After that, they role-played the activities with the parents. At each home visit, parents received their weekly packet containing five days of activities to do with their child approximately 15-20 minutes per day during the week.
Most parents who participated were mothers. However, this was the first year fathers participated in the Dallas HIPPY program, representing 4% of parents who participated. In addition, most of the fathers who participated were African American.

**Partnerships**

Dallas HIPPY built on increasing parental involvement by holding group meetings at least once a month at the child’s current or future school. At the school, parents were introduced to the principal and staff. In addition, community members could speak with families about topics that increase parental involvement in the child's life.

At one group meeting a community member talked about health and diet. A mother was so moved by the discussion that she changed her own and her children’s eating habits. Her husband was resistant, but later enjoyed a more healthy meal. The family now maintains a healthier lifestyle.

Families were also able to take part in an educational field trip to the Dallas Museum of Art to enhance cultural, emotional, and social development of their children.

The following were some Dallas HIPPY partners:

- AVANCE Dallas
- Boys and Girls Club of Greater Dallas
- Dallas Parks and Recreation
- Dallas Public Library
- HIPPY USA
- KERA
- National Council of Jewish Women, Dallas Section
- Parkland Hospital, Injury Prevention Center
- Texas HIPPY Center, University of North Texas
- Vickery Meadows Improvement District

**Research**

Dallas HIPPY conducted assessments, surveys, and interviews to monitor and track the progress of students and parents.

**Student Assessment**

Every student was given an assessment at the beginning and at the end of the program. These assessments tested the child’s language development, concepts, and skills. For example, students were asked to recite the alphabet and asked if they could recognize the color or shape of an object. Assessments were used as an information tool and not designed for analyses.

A Kindergarten Teacher Survey was administered to 24 kindergarten teachers in the Spring of 2009. Two sections of the survey measured classroom adaptability and classroom verbal behavior. According to Texas HIPPY, teachers were not aware of the student’s HIPPY involvement, and were asked to rate the student compared to other children in the classroom. Three surveys were completed and indicated HIPPY children were “average” or “above average” in classroom adaptability and classroom verbal behavior.

**Parental Assessment**

In the Fall of 2008, home instructors administered a Parental Involvement Interview to 311 first year HIPPY parents one week before the program began. Interviews were also administered at the completion of the school year to 306 parents. This interview was used to determine the parent’s level of involvement in their child’s educational activities at home, in school, and school support organizations. According to Texas HIPPY, results showed 68.3% of the HIPPY parents increased the amount of time spent engaging their children in literacy activities at home. In addition, 52.3% of HIPPY parents increased their level of parent involvement with their child’s school.

Another section of the Kindergarten Teacher Survey measured parental involvement. According to Texas HIPPY, results showed about 67% of HIPPY parents were equally or more involved than parents of other children in the classroom, as determined by the children’s kindergarten teacher.

Dallas HIPPY was the only site in Texas selected this year to participate in a pilot study to help determine if a parent’s participation in HIPPY measured changes in family protective factors against child abuse and neglect. A Protective Factors Survey (PFS) was distributed to new parents at the beginning of the year and again at the end. The PFS survey was adapted by the Institute for Educational Research and Public Service at the University of Kansas and the FRIENDS National Resource Center. Some protective factors assessed were: Family Functioning/Resiliency, Social Emotional Support, Concrete support, Child Development/Knowledge of Parenting, and Nurturing and Attachment. Inconclusive results were drawn for procedural reasons. The study would be re-designed for replication next year.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are offered regarding the Dallas HIPPY program:

- Continue to pursue avenues to increase expansion of the Dallas HIPPY program in Dallas ISD Elementary schools.
- Continue annual monitoring and assessments.
- Consider research opportunities that track parental involvement in middle and high school.

For more information please visit [http://www.unt.edu/hippy/](http://www.unt.edu/hippy/)