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# *Best Practice Fact Sheet – Strengthening Families*

## *HOME INSTRUCTION FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL*

### *YOUNGSTERS (HIPPY) - Florida*

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#### **Program**

##### **Description:**

HIPPY is an international program which started in Israel in 1969 as a research and demonstration project. It has since spread to other countries and came to the United States in 1984. There are now 146 HIPPY program sites in 25 states and the District of Columbia, serving over 16,000 children and their families.

HIPPY USA, located in Little Rock, AR, is the national office for the network of state coordinating offices and local HIPPY programs in the United States, with the primary responsibilities of providing training and technical assistance; developing and improving the HIPPY materials and model; conducting outreach and advocacy; collecting national data; and overseeing research.

There are 4 features of the HIPPY model:

- Developmentally appropriate curriculum:
- Role play (method of teaching)
- Coordinator and home visitors (peer mentor, usually an alumnus from the area)
- Home visits and group meetings (service delivery method)

All HIPPY programs nationwide have the same proscriptive curriculum and services. Local funding dictates the population served by the program. HIPPY Florida's receives state funding from the Office of Early Learning/Agency for Workforce Innovation to serve TANF eligible children in 16 counties.

##### **Target Population:**

Parents or foster parents with children who are age 3 to 5.

##### **Goals:**

For any parent who wants educational enrichment for his/her child, with emphasis on removing barriers to success, due to lack of education, poverty, social isolation and other issues.

##### **Caseload Data:**

A model program enrolls 60 children in the first year, 60 more the next year until the third year which caps enrollment to 180 children with a curriculum for all three age groups.

##### **Cost:**

The approximate cost is 2,500 per child per year in Florida.

##### **Evidence:**

California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse on Child Welfare Congressional Research Service.

##### **Caseload Data:**

A model program enrolls 60 children in the first year, 60 more the next year until the third year which caps enrollment to 180 children with a curriculum for all three age groups.

##### **Assessment:**

No assessment is conducted because this program is available to anyone who requests it.

##### **Operating in Washington**

No

### **Services overview:**

- The HIPPY curriculum contains 30 weekly activity packets, nine storybooks and a set of 20 manipulative shapes for each year. It focuses on language development, problem solving, logical thinking, and perceptual skills and emphasized early reading and writing skills as well as skill building activities.
- It blends 30 minute biweekly home visits and two hour biweekly group meetings over the course of three years.
- The parent is provided with a set of carefully developed curriculum, books and materials designed to strengthen their children's cognitive skills, early literacy skills, social/emotional and physical development.
- Home visitors are members of the community; many have a high school diploma or equivalent and are usually current or former recipients of HIPPY services. Home visitors are not encouraged to serve in that capacity for more than three years.
- Coordinators and home visitors receive intensive pre-service training and provide weekly and periodic in-service training to increase the knowledge, confidence, and effectiveness of the home visitors.
- Role play is the primary method of instruction—coordinators role play with home visitors, home visitors role play with parents, and parents then implement activities directly with their children.
- Group meetings are intended to bring parents together to share their experiences. During the first hour, parents discuss the previous week's activity and role-play the subsequent week's activity. In the second hour, parents engage in enrichment activities, which may cover issues related to parenting, employment, school/community/social services, and personal growth. The topics and objectives for the enrichment activities are selected by parents.
- Child care is provided during the group meeting—many programs also include Parent and Child Time (PACT) as a component of group meetings, allowing parents to observe and practice alternative methods of child rearing.

**Eligibility:** TANF eligible parents with young children between 3-5.

### **Findings:**

- Research shows that parental involvement in education is critical to a child's success in school, and HIPPY helps parents to get involved and stay involved.
- At the heart of the HIPPY model is the home visit. This is the time when the partnerships between home visitor and parent are developed. Each home visit is unique, but all of them share common methods and goals.
- During each visit, the home visitor provides the parent with the tools and materials that enable the parent to work directly with their child on developmentally appropriate, skill building activities.
- Another important aspect of the home visit is the transference (home visitor to parent) of early childhood development concepts and terminology that increase the parent's ability to observe and understand their child's learning process. This knowledge also allows parents to be better advocates for their children.

### **Implications for Policymakers and Program Developers to Consider:**

- HIPPY utilizes home visits and group meetings as the vehicles that allow parents to empower themselves. The education field recognizes that children need support in the learning process, but parents are too often left out of this process.
- Home visits are the key to the HIPPY program, but the relationships that are formed during these times are supported through group meetings. Group meetings and home visits work together to balance the learning experiences for the parent and child.
- Coordinators provide weekly and periodic in-service training to increase the knowledge, confidence and effectiveness of the home visitors. Role Play is the method of instruction utilized to teach the curriculum.
- According to Kimberly Howard and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn in their article on home visits in "The Future of Children" November 5, 2009, if home-visiting programs are to have their maximum impact, service providers must follow carefully the guidelines mandated by the respective programs, use professional staff whose credentials are consistent with program goals, intervene prenatally with at-risk populations, and carry out the programs with fidelity to their theoretical models.

**Resources:** [www.hippyusa.org](http://www.hippyusa.org)

Recommended by staff from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHS), and California Evidence-based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare as a best practice program for home-visiting services that is well supported by research

Sources on Home Visits:

- Child Trends, “What Works for Home Visiting Programs,” 7/27/2010\* [www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org);
- California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare, [www.cebc4cw.org/search/topical-area/18](http://www.cebc4cw.org/search/topical-area/18);
- Literature reviews and meta-analyses by Sweet, M.A. and Applebaum, M.I. (*Home Visiting Best Practices: A Review of the Literature, May 2007* - [www.birth-beyond.com/](http://www.birth-beyond.com/) and Deanna Gomby (*Home Visitation in 2005: Outcomes for Children and Parents* – [www.ced.org/projects/kids.shtml/#new](http://www.ced.org/projects/kids.shtml/#new))
- Kimberly S. Howard and Jeanne Brooks-Gunn in “The Future of Children” latest issue; (Journal Issue: Preventing Child Maltreatment Volume 19 Number 2 Fall 2009)  
<http://futureofchildren.org/futureofchildren/publications/journals/article/index.xml?journalid=71&articleid=514>
- Congressional Research Service report Home Visitation for Families with Young Children by Karen E. Lynch & Emilie Stoltzfus, 10/23/2009\*\*  
[www.preventchildabusesb.org/CRSHomeVisitReportOct2009.pdf](http://www.preventchildabusesb.org/CRSHomeVisitReportOct2009.pdf)