HIPPY Grows in Florida

Mary Lindsey, Ph.D., HIPPY State Director

HIPPY Florida experienced phenomenal and unprecedented growth in 2014-2015. The Florida Legislature almost tripled funds for the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) Training and Technical Assistance Center at USF, which provides technical assistance, training and evaluation services to HIPPY programs throughout the state aimed at strengthening communities and families by empowering parents to actively prepare their children for success in school.

Funds from the Child Care and Development Block Trust Fund was provided to the HIPPY program to deliver high quality school readiness curriculum directly to parents so they may strengthen the cognitive and early literacy skills of at risk children. The increase in funds will allow HIPPY to work with Early Learning Coalitions to identify participant families based on poverty, parent’s limited education, and willingness to participate in all aspects of the HIPPY program.

HIPPY added 11 more counties to the existing eleven sites already operating in Florida. The counties were selected for the program expansion based on these factors; geographical areas where children scored below 70 percent on the Early Childhood Observation System (ECHOS) and Florida Assessment for Instruction for Reading (FAIR); counties without an existing HIPPY program, and counties located in “high-need” areas. There are ten additional counties that scored below the 70 percent that did not receive services this cycle and we are looking for resources to bring HIPPY to these children and families during the upcoming fiscal year.

It is an educators dream to see legislators, funders, community outreach workers, and HIPPY advocates working together to give all children the opportunity to learn and thrive. Independent research shows that HIPPY increases student achievement scores and makes families stronger. There is also a return-on-investment because these children will remain in school and become tax paying citizens and not a drain on society.
Florida HIPPY Sites Get On Board with New Research!

Ruby Joseph, MPA, HIPPY Researcher

The Florida HIPPY Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) has developed a robust research plan under the leadership of Mary Lindsey, Ph.D., HIPPY State Director, and Ms. Ruby Joseph, MPA, Florida HIPPY Researcher. Ms. Joseph joined HIPPY in May, 2014 with twenty-one years research, evaluation and direct educational service experience. Other research team members include Debra Mowery, Ph.D., Christa Haring, Ph.D., and Svetlana Yampolskaya, Ph.D. Collectively, this group of University of South Florida faculty provides diverse educational backgrounds and experiences including community research, student academic testing, and quantitative and qualitative research. Additional support includes two part time data entry staff. The research team has developed a comprehensive research agenda that currently includes research on Florida sites’ HIPPY students, and a multi-site national study of HIPPY student educational outcomes in the future.

Specifically, the Florida HIPPY sites research activities include the following:

- Pre and Post Parent Involvement Surveys-A survey that focuses on the amount of parent interactions and involvement with their child
- Pre and Post Bracken School Readiness Assessment-An assessment designed for Pre-K to 2nd Graders (ages 3 to 6yrs 11 months) that focuses on the following concepts.
  1. Colors
  2. Letters
  3. Numbers/Counting
  4. Sizes/Comparisons
  5. Shapes

The twenty-two Florida HIPPY sites have committed to implementing T&TA’s new research agenda. During this current 2014-2015 year, nineteen sites were engaged in all aspects of the new research plan. Due to mitigating circumstances, two sites followed a slightly modified plan with expectations of conducting all research activities in the 2015/2016 year.

In August and September, during regional orientations (existing sites) and pre-service trainings (new sites), sites received orientation and training on the new research plan, expectations, site requirements and responsibilities and research tools.

Sites were required to enroll all new 2014-2015 families into the research study and obtain parental informed consent forms. Returning HIPPY students and their families who already had informed consent forms on file were also permitted to participate in the new research.
Upon enrollment into HIPPY in 2014-2015 year, children of all new families enrolled were given Pre Bracken School Readiness Assessments (BSRA) and parents completed Pre parent involvement surveys. Post Bracken and Post Parental Involvement Surveys will be given to those same children and their parents after Week 25 of the HIPPY Curriculum has been completed.

To prepare sites for the Bracken assessment, site coordinators and home visitors received in-person and/or online Bracken training. Dr. Christa Haring was responsible for conducting all in-person trainings. Coordinators of existing sites received in-person training during the Coordinators meeting in Tampa in September, 2014. New sites were trained in-person during Pre-service training in Tallahassee in September, 2014. Additional in-person trainings were conducted in Tampa for the Hillsborough HIPPY Parent involvement Program in October 2014.

All home visitors were required to complete and pass the online Bracken training before actually starting to conduct Bracken assessments on HIPPY children in their programs. As of November 30th, a total of sixty coordinators and home visitors had completed and passed the online Bracken training. A refresher Bracken training is scheduled for January, 2015.

Under the new research agenda more rigorous, standardized service implementation, assessments, and an updated record keeping and data management system are top priorities. To assist sites in collecting, maintaining and updating site data management systems, Efforts to Outcomes (ETO), a comprehensive ETO clean-up process was initiated in fall 2014. The goal is to keep entry of data services updated with at least 50% of the number of enrolled families for each site to be inputted into ETO by the end of November 2014, 75% by the end of February, 2015 and 100% by the end of May, 2015. Sites are also expected to maintain a high degree of accuracy (90%).

Technical assistance and support for ETO clean-up was provided and sites were encouraged to run reports routinely and systematically. Updates on status of these reports were provided by Ms. Ruby Joseph with assistance from a part-time data entry staff. Natha Jolly, Data Management Specialist, HIPPY USA provided additional support to resolve problems identified during the clean-up process. Overall, the ETO clean-up process appears promising and many sites have already taken advantage of these resources, and addressed problems.

This has been a transitional year with eleven new sites coming on board and the ten existing sites embarking on an expanded research agenda for the first time. The enthusiasm and commitment of all sites (new and existing) has been very encouraging and all sites are on board. The HIPPY research team is looking forward to the future as sites continue to implement this rigorous data collection process which will ultimately facilitate a more in-depth study of child, family, and program outcomes.
HIPPY Mission Statement

HIPPY partners with parents to prepare their children for success in school.

HIPPY Graduates Earn Top Honors!

Brenda Brinson, Hillsborough HIPPY Parent Involvement Project Coordinator

**Jocelyn Ivey** and **Natalia Rechtorik** are recent graduates from the Hillsborough HIPPY Parent Involvement Project in Tampa, Florida. They began kindergarten in August 2014 and after the first grading period, they each were recognized for making the principal’s honor roll at USF Patel Elementary School! Jocelyn was very proud to share that she also received a citizenship award. Natalia was tested and admitted into the gifted program.

**Lakwandas Green** is a first grader at Just Elementary School where she earns top honors each nine weeks. Her mom, Kwandas says “I want to thank the HIPPY program for all that is has done for my daughter. She has always been a bright child, but with HIPPY she has progressed even higher. She is no longer the shy little girl she was when she began the program. She is very outspoken but respectful and has earned good citizenship each grading period.”

**Giovanni Ponce** was promoted to the Year 3 Curriculum in HIPPY and also entered kindergarten in August 2014. He earn principal’s honor roll and good citizenship at Gibsonton Elementary school during the first grading period. Giovanni’s mom, Cheryl was so very proud of his accomplishments that she immediately sent a picture of him and his award to the entire HIPPY staff.

These outstanding students embody the goal of HIPPY to help kids be successful in school and to give their parents the tools and resources to help them along the way! Your HIPPY family is so very proud of you and your accomplishments.

**How Can I Help? Make a Donation Today!**

Checks payable to: USF Foundation (Memo Line: Acct # 530004 HIPPY Services Fund)

Please send all donations to: Florida HIPPY Foundation Account, 13301 Bruce B. Downs Blvd., MHC 2113A, Tampa, FL 33612