



FAMILIES: THE VITAL LINK



WINTER 2003

WINTER 2003

HIPHY Public Relations

Florida HIPHY Public Relations

HIPHY Can Save Taxpayers Money

In the Summer 2002 edition of *Florida's Child*, Laura Bush discusses the importance of reading to young children. She states "We can explain to children that the more they practice reading, the smarter they become. For children who have just learned to read (or are in the process of learning), it is vital that they practice the skill regularly. Reading with children is one of the most important building blocks of their entire education." The article also states that "new studies on early childhood development shows that success in school strongly correlates to how often we spend time on reading and language activities with very young children—including infants."

These statements by Laura Bush are aligned with the philosophy and mission of the HIPHY Program. More importantly, recent political changes in Florida have given the HIPHY program a new image as a cost-effective alternative for Florida's Constitutional Amendment 8.

Florida voters recently passed Constitutional Amendment 8, requiring universal preschool options. Such a proposal is quite expensive for Florida statewide. However, the cost of serving one HIPHY child is about one-third the cost of a typical preschool program. HIPHY, therefore, is a cost-effective al-

ternative to preschool that prepares children for school, and it meets the preschool requirement of the amendment. The HIPHY "system" is already in place. The State HIPHY office coordinates training for HIPHY Site Directors, provides program oversight and monitoring, and assures ongoing Home Educator staff development.

Furthermore, HIPHY meets the criteria of "an organized program designed to address and enhance each child's ability to make age appropriate progress in an appropriate range of settings" as stated in Constitutional Amendment 8. If approved by the State of Florida Legislature, HIPHY, Parents As Teachers, and other home based literacy programs may be included as a Universal Pre-Kindergarten option for families of four-year-old children.

(Excerpt from an Article written by YMCA Children Youth and Family Services Sarasota HIPHY Program)



Highlighting each HIPHY program is one of the means of ensuring visibility for the program and agency. Different stages of public relations include:

Stage One

Programs prepare brochures, information sheets, success stories, etc. to use as public relations tools.

Stage Two

Programs invite funders, local legislators, local school readiness coalition staff, school officials, media personnel, etc., to view aspects of the HIPHY program. The activities include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Staff In-Service Training
- ◆ A home visit or group meeting
- ◆ Testimonials from various parents

Stage Three

Clusters of HIPHY programs convene a "HIPHY Information Day" to educate surrounding counties' legislators, school readiness coalitions, school personnel, etc., about HIPHY.

Stage Four

Programs invite parents/staff to meet with legislators in Tallahassee.

Programs can also organize celebrations, HIPHY promotion exercises, field trips, etc. and invite the media to share its HIPHY successes.

▲ ● ■ ★ HIPPY Brightens Futures

HIPPY PLUS PROGRAMS



HIPPY Programs Share Success Stories With The Media



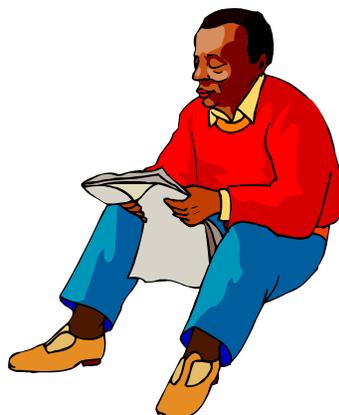
The **Gainesville HIPPY Program** (administered by the Williams Temple Church of God In Christ) used their 2002 graduation/promotion exercise function to highlight the educational progress of HIPPY families. In the article "HIPPY program tunes kids into early education", Brad Parsons writes in the *Gainesville Sun* newspaper, "A new generation of HIPPY children is poised to enter Gainesville preschools and kindergarten. But, unlike their tie-dyed namesakes, these kids tuned in to their parents and turned on to education during a 30-week child development course that could reduce the likelihood that any of them will ever drop out." One parent is also quoted as he shares with great pride, "When I take my child to child care, they

always rave about how advanced she is, how she seems to handle everything they put in front of her."

The Gainesville HIPPY Director, Earl Young, has been working for several years to sustain, expand, and bring visibility to HIPPY in Alachua County.

The **DeSoto County HIPPY Program** (administered by the YMCA Children, Youth, and Family Services of Sarasota) used their 2001 end-of-year celebration to share their success with the media. In a July 21 article, "Local program gets help with funding", newspaper editor Dawn Krebs wrote about the support of state Senator John McKay and Representative Lindsay Harrington in obtaining \$100,000 in state funding to boost the budget of the DeSoto County HIPPY Program.

The article goes on to provide a bit of history about the HIPPY program's beginnings in Israel, current program statistics for the U.S., and general information about the structure of the local program. Representative Harrington met with HIPPY staff and families to learn "first-hand" how the program has helped them. He said, "A dollar spent on a child is returned so many times over when they grow to be an adult."



Tips For Dealing With The Media

- Develop a **media plan** by determining your:
 - Public relations goals to be able to focus your efforts.
 - Resources available to help you set realistic goals.
 - Timeline to assist in organizing and prioritizing.
- Develop a **media list** to include: local and regional newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and special interest media such as church bulletins, community calendars, corporate newsletters, etc.
- **Communicate** with the media in different ways, such as:
 - A press release - usually a one-page summary of an event, upcoming activity, new initiative, etc. that includes the who, what, when, where, and how.
 - A media advisory - usually a memo (shorter than a press release) in an invitation format about an award ceremony, special event, press conference, etc. sent to the media several days before the event.
 - A letter to the editor—to share an interesting story (not breaking news) about a dedicated and effective individual, accomplishment, award, partnership or program achievement.
 - A press call - if you don't have time to write.
- Develop a **press kit** - includes press releases, fact sheet, program brochure, photos, newsletter, business card, etc.

Edited for Florida HIPPY programs with excerpts from "A Guide To Working With The Media" produced by the Office of Public Affairs, Corporation for National Service, NY 1997

FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

Florida Partnership for School Readiness • Florida Department of Education • University of South Florida • Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute • Center of Excellence • HIPPY USA

In The Sunshine State

HIPPY is on the Right Track



According to the recently released **"Florida HIPPY Research Brief #4—Building Relationships and Trust with HIPPY Families"**:

- ◆ Nearly 97% of paraprofessionals feel that their HIPPY parents think they do a good job.
- ◆ Talking, specifically about things other than HIPPY, and listening were the most frequently given examples of ways paraprofessionals have developed personal relationships with their HIPPY families.
- ◆ Paraprofessionals indicated that they build trust by encouraging their HIPPY parents and developing their self-esteem.
- ◆ Paraprofessionals with good relationships with the families they serve may also impact parents' behavior beyond HIPPY, encouraging them in other aspects of their lives, such as education and employment goals.

According to the recently released **"Florida HIPPY Research Brief #5 — Overcoming Challenges to Engaging HIPPY Families"**:

- ◆ Role-play presents a significant challenge for paraprofessionals. 48% of

paraprofessionals indicated that parents have to be convinced to participate in the role-play, and 53% indicated that they work with parents who are uncomfortable doing role-play.

- ◆ 38% of paraprofessionals have a parent not show up for an appointment at least once every few weeks, 14% have a no show at least once a week, and 40% re-schedule at least one appointment every week.
- ◆ Some paraprofessionals suggested that parents think school programs (versus home or community-based) and programs that charge a fee are more valuable to their children's education.
- ◆ Paraprofessionals also find that they often must deal with significant emotional and personal struggles experienced by the families they serve.
- ◆ Increasing parent interest and enthusiasm for HIPPY by reminding them of the benefits for their children was suggested as the best way to improve parents' comfort level with role-play and attendance of home visits and group meetings.

For more information on Florida HIPPY Research please visit the website <http://floridahippy.fmhi.usf.edu>



HIPPY Stars Shine

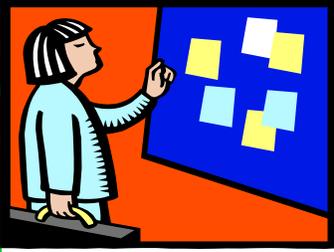
Sarasota HIPPY Shines

Ms. Jone Williams, Director of HIPPY Sarasota, began her relationship with HIPPY over ten years ago when she and her son enrolled in the program. The following year, Jone was hired as a Home Educator and was promoted to Director in 1999. HIPPY Sarasota celebrated its tenth anniversary with a family party that included over 500 HIPPY graduates, their families, and community supporters.

Ms. Williams says, "HIPPY continues to strengthen the Sarasota community. Our staff members live in the same neighborhoods that our families live in. We are your neighbor and we help you invest in the future of your family by assisting your children to arrive at school ready to succeed."

In 2001, HIPPY Sarasota was especially honored when the Community Foundation of Sarasota County named Ms. Jone Williams last year as an Unsung Hero who has made a great difference in the Sarasota Community. The same year, the Sarasota HIPPY program was selected by the Sarasota chapter of the NAACP as Program of the Year.

(Excerpt from an Article written by YMCA Children Youth and Family Services Sarasota HIPPY Program)



Home Visitors Corner

(This section can include success stories of home visitors, or any issues that may relate to home visitors. Therefore, if you would like to submit a story or relevant issue, please feel free to forward it to the HIPPY T&TA Center.)

Parents and Educators are the Key to Success

Parents ultimately make it all happen in HIPPY. Through their intimate participation with their children, they strengthen their own families and also find other opportunities for personal growth. Not only do they achieve an enhanced sense of their own abilities, they also have the satisfaction of teaching their own children, along with the excitement of seeing them learn. They experience the support, guidance, and friendship of trained Home Educators while building a bridge to other agencies and organizations that may help with other concerns. (<http://floridahippy.fmhi.usf.edu/abthip.htm>)

Much of HIPPY's success can be attributed to the consistency of the role-playing aspect of this program. Regardless of how low the literacy level of the family member is or the family native language, the Home Educator provides

the parent with the descriptive words and demonstrates activities that strengthen the child's language base leading to higher cognitive abilities.

Evidence continues to support "that mothers' speech (its frequency, elaboration, and verbal interchanges with children) is closely linked to young children's vocabulary development. Moreover, early vocabulary development is strongly associated with later school performance." (**Inequality at the starting gate: Social background differences in achievement as children begin school**, by Valerie E. Lee and David T. Burkam, University of Michigan, 2002).

(Excerpt from an Article written by YMCA Children Youth and Family Services Sarasota HIPPY Program)

WELCOME ABOARD

We extend a warm welcome to the following new HIPPY family members:

Starke HIPPY Program

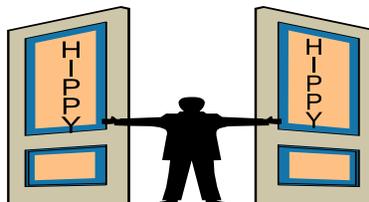
at Bradford County School District

Blanchie Jonas, HIPPY Coordinator

Cindy DeValerio, Early Childhood Lead Teacher and HIPPY Supervisor

Palm Beach County HIPPY
at Center for Family Services

Shilondra Sheppard, HIPPY Coordinator at Roosevelt Service Center Site



CONTACT US

FOR MORE INFORMATION

HIPPY STATE OFFICE

Florida HIPPY Training and
Technical Assistance Center
University of South Florida
The Louis de la Parte
Florida Mental Health Institute
CFS-DARES, MHC 2113A
13301 Bruce B. Downs Blvd.
Tampa, Florida 33612
Phone (813) 974-2177
Fax (813) 974-6115
Director
Mary Lindsey, Ph.D.
Asst. Director
Dabaram Rampersad

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

P. O. Box 291447
Temple Terrace, FL 33687
Phone (813) 238-5873
Fax (813) 237-3729
Executive Director
Mary Lindsey, Ph.D.

HIPPY USA

220 East 23rd Street, Suite 300
New York, New York 10010
Phone (212) 532-7730
Fax (212) 532-7899
Executive Director
Elisabet Eklind

To Learn More About the



HIPPY USA
FLORIDA

HIPPY Training &
Technical Assistance Center
visit our website at:

<http://floridahippy.fmhi.usf.edu>

FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

Florida Partnership for School Readiness • Florida Department of Education • University of South Florida • Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute • Center of Excellence • HIPPY USA