Maria, a single mother of two children acknowledges her kids as the motivation that keeps her smiling. The families she serves consider her a part of the family and are supportive of her new role. “She deserves it” said Helen Fordham a co-worker in the Dade office. As a coordinator I am fortunate to have the opportunity to work with someone so inspiring and helpful. For example, Maria’s clients call her during storms to make sure she is ok. This speaks volumes to the relationship she has built with her families and the level of support they offer each other. Maria brightens each day with her energy and is expected to do a great job as an Assistant Coordinator.
In August 2006, Florida joined California, Colorado, Hawaii, and Nevada in the national HIPPYCorps Initiative lead by HIPPY USA.

Through this initiative, HIPPY Home Visitors in Florida have an opportunity to earn an educational award to enroll in college or pay off current student loans. This initiative will provide 33 home visitors with an educational award of up to $2,362.50 for service of 900, 675 or 450 hours during the course of the program.

The HIPPYCorps Initiative is different from other AmeriCorps programs because HIPPYCorps members can include time spent making home visits to participating parents, organizing and conducting group meetings, attending inservice and staff meetings, making telephone calls to parents and completing paperwork towards their service hours. They will also participate in staff development and regional trainings as well as individual and group volunteer activities throughout their respective communities.

Florida is excited to be a part of this collaboration because it will have a powerful impact on children and families throughout the state. Our goal is to record 22,000 hours of service from home visitors and HIPPY parents by August 5, 2007. We will keep you posted on our progress in future editions of The Vital Link.

**Strategic Plan Goals**

- **Goal 1:** Build capacity of the state office to grow HIPPY in Florida
- **Goal 2:** Assist programs in reaching/building optimal quality and capacity
- **Goal 3:** Plan and conduct the 2007 HIPPY state conference
- **Goal 4:** Assist HIPPY USA in planning and conducting the 2008 national HIPPY conference

**Our Vision for Florida HIPPY**

All Florida HIPPY children will enter kindergarten ready to learn.