

June, 2000



Florida HIPPY Research Brief #1

Training & Technical Assistance Center for
Florida's Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters

Ready...Set...Research!

A statewide accountability initiative in early childhood programming

Introduction

As a first step in beginning HIPPY (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters) research and evaluation activities in the state of Florida, the Florida HIPPY Training & Technical Assistance (T&TA) Center determined that it would be beneficial to approach HIPPY sites and specifically ask them about their research and evaluation needs and interests.

The Florida HIPPY T&TA Center has conceptualized prospective HIPPY research and evaluation efforts as a partnership between sites, agencies, the Florida HIPPY T&TA Center, and the University of South Florida. Priorities, research questions, evaluation plans, activities, and process and outcome measures would be developed to reflect the interests and needs of all stakeholders.

Purpose

The purpose of the site survey was to gather information from sites on their interest in and need for HIPPY research and evaluation activities.

Through the University of South Florida, the Florida HIPPY T&TA Center plans to commence statewide research and evaluation efforts during 2000-2001. The information from this survey will be helpful in:

- determining which sites to approach for participation in research and evaluation activities,
- determining which data/measures are already collected by HIPPY sites,
- selecting appropriate activities and instruments for research purposes, and
- establishing priorities for the expansion of research and evaluation activities.

The information from this survey may also be helpful to Florida HIPPY sites and agencies in:

- understanding the types of data that can be collected and analyzed for program evaluation purposes,
- establishing processes and procedures that support research and evaluation activities, and
- developing priorities and plans for research and evaluation at their sites.

Research Questions

- **Is there a need for program evaluation activities at Florida HIPPY sites?**
- **Do HIPPY sites have specific research interests?**
- **Do HIPPY sites collect data elements that are particularly useful for evaluation purposes?**

Method

On May 4, 2000, all 18 Florida HIPPY sites were mailed a short, one-page, seven-item survey regarding their interest in and need for HIPPY research and evaluation activities.

The Florida HIPPY T&TA Center provided telephone follow up to encourage participation and faxed additional copies of the survey, as necessary. In some cases:

- personnel from the HIPPY sites (e.g., coordinator) completed the survey,
- personnel from the implementing agency (e.g., supervisor or administrator) completed the survey, or
- a common implementing agency returned one survey on behalf of two sites (these surveys were counted twice).

Of the 18 HIPPY sites in Florida, 100% responded to the query for information. Thus, findings in this investigation are representative of all Florida HIPPY programs.

Findings

Is there a need for program evaluation activities at Florida HIPPY sites?

- Most programs (78%, 14/18) indicated that they had a need for program evaluation information at their sites.
- Similarly, 61% (11/18) of programs also indicated that their funding agencies require program evaluation information.
- Interestingly, two-thirds of HIPPY sites (67%, 12/18) have engaged in some type of program evaluation activity within the last five years.
- Of the 11 sites whose funding agencies require evaluations, eight indicated that they have completed evaluations.

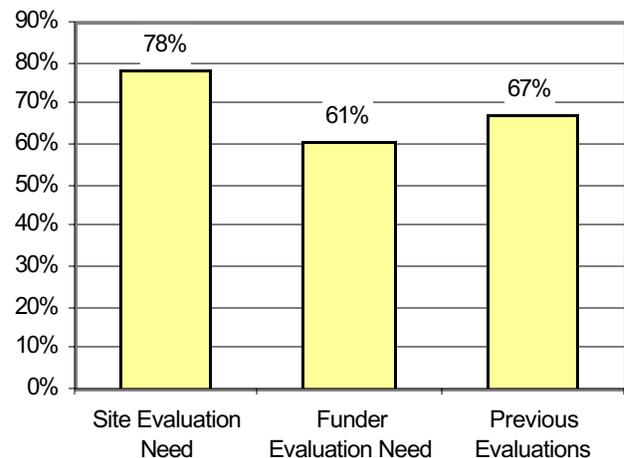
Do HIPPY sites have specific research interests?

- Most sites (83%, 15/18) indicated interest in participation in future research and evaluation activities sponsored by the Florida T&TA Center.
- Eleven categories of research activities were presented to respondents in checklist form. Survey instructions asked respondents to indicate those research activities in which they had the most interest in participating.
- Sites were also given an opportunity to write in other research and evaluation activities in which they have interest. No additional activities were suggested by the sites.
- The most popular (78%, 14/18) potential research activity was investigating the progress of HIPPY children by measuring developmental gains during the preschool years using child development and screening instruments
- The second most popular (66%, 12/18) activity was tracking the progress of HIPPY graduates into elementary school.
- Other activities in which several sites expressed interest (56%, 10/18) were:
 - ▶ video taping of parent-child interactions,
 - ▶ development of site profiles, and
 - ▶ paraprofessional completion of standardized instruments (e.g., employability skills).
- Half (50%, 9/18) of the respondents also indicated interest in:
 - ▶ Paraprofessional surveys,
 - ▶ Paraprofessional focus groups,
 - ▶ Parent surveys, and
 - ▶ Parent Completion of Standard and Adapted Measurement Instruments (e.g., Self-Efficacy, Attitudes Towards Education, Locus of Control, Parenting Skills, etc.)

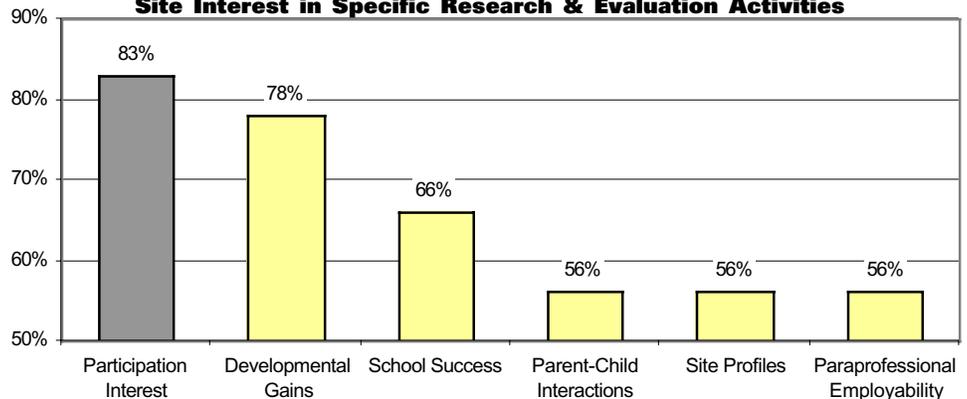
Do HIPPY sites collect data elements that are particularly useful for evaluation purposes?

- Many (78%, 14/18) sites reported that they routinely collect social security numbers from some or all of their HIPPY children upon enrollment.
- Children at the majority of sites (61%, 11/18) receive some type of developmental screening and/or assessment:
 - ▶ Four sites use the Brigance.
 - ▶ Three sites use the Battelle.
 - ▶ Three sites use Ages & Stages.
 - ▶ Other instruments used by sites included the DIAL-R/3, Mullens, and EPSF (Early Prevention of School Failure).

Sites Reporting Evaluation Need and Occurance of Previous Evaluation at Site (N=18 Sites)

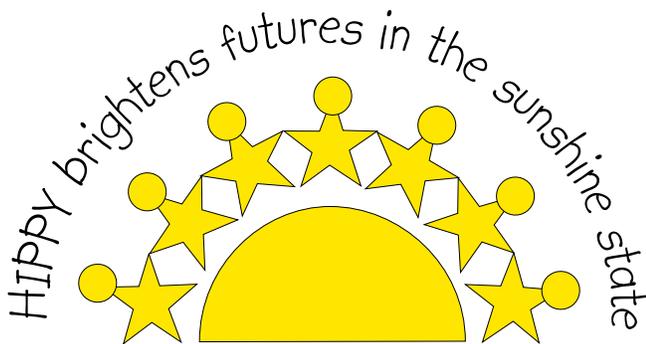


Site Interest in Specific Research & Evaluation Activities



Implications for Research & Practice

- The Florida T&TA Center will investigate the feasibility of initiating pilot statewide research and evaluation activities at selected HIPYPY sites. These pilot research and evaluation activities will be conducted by the University of South Florida. Based upon information from this investigation:
 - ▶ Research questions will be developed,
 - ▶ Priorities will be determined, and
 - ▶ Sites will be targeted for participation.
- The Florida T&TA Center will explore mechanisms to:
 - ▶ provide technical assistance for existing and ongoing research and evaluation activities initiated by Florida HIPYPY sites and
 - ▶ build site capacity for conducting site-based research and evaluation activities.
- Florida HIPYPY sites are encouraged to provide a copy of all evaluation reports to the Florida T&TA Center for archiving.
- Findings from subsequent studies should be used by Florida HIPYPY sites for:
 - ▶ program improvement,
 - ▶ evidence-based grant writing, and
 - ▶ justification to funding agencies for expanded and continued support and funding.
- In the age of accountability, programs that can demonstrate developmental gains in the populations they are serving may receive more support for continued and expanded services in the future.
- Several programs have contacted the Florida HIPYPY T&TA Center to ask for guidance in the selection of instruments for screening and/or assessment of children's cognitive, physical, and social/emotional development. In the selection of instruments for measuring developmental gains, the HIPYPY T&TA Center will study current trends in preschool assessment and review state and local guidelines for preschool assessment (e.g., Florida Partnership Board, Local County Readiness Coalitions, and School Districts).
- Investigating the effects of HIPYPY participation on children's subsequent school performance, attendance, and programming is a research interest for several sites. Given the current climate of accountability and recent legislation in Florida, analyses of these types of data are also a priority for the University of South Florida, the Florida T&TA Center, implementing agencies, funders, and local and state legislators. The Florida T&TA Center will begin evaluating potential school follow-up measures.
- The most feasible approach for accurately and easily tracking HIPYPY children into elementary school uses social security numbers (SSNs) because:
 - ▶ Most children entering a preschool program already have a SSN,
 - ▶ SSNs are unique to an individual child,
 - ▶ Names may change, but SSNs remain constant,
 - ▶ Many HIPYPY programs already use SSNs as child/family identifiers,
 - ▶ Most school systems use SSNs as student identifiers,
 - ▶ SSNs will permit linkages with DOE school data where districts utilize an alternative student identifier, and
 - ▶ SSNs will permit linkages with other service data (e.g., disability, health, social services, juvenile justice, etc.).
- The University of South Florida and the HIPYPY T&TA Center will share the findings from this investigation with the Florida HIPYPY Research Advisory Committee. This group will assist in the development of research priorities and an action plan for statewide HIPYPY research and evaluation in 2000-2001. The action plan for statewide HIPYPY research and evaluation activities will reflect the interests and priorities of all stakeholders.



About Florida HIPPY

The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home based, parent involvement program designed to help parents provide educational enrichment for their three, four, and five-year-old children.

The Florida HIPPY Training and Technical Assistance (T&TA) Center, based at the University of South Florida (USF), works in collaboration with HIPPY USA's National Office in New York to provide training, technical support, and guidance to all of the HIPPY programs in the state of Florida.

The Florida HIPPY T&TA Center, in conjunction with USF, HIPPY USA, and Florida HIPPY sites, began this research initiative to evaluate the efficacy of the HIPPY model, measure and describe changes in program participants, and provide evidence-based support for HIPPY programs.

Data from selected Florida HIPPY programs have been collected and analyzed. The purpose of these research briefs is to share knowledge on topics of interest with HIPPY stakeholders. Findings from this research may be used to develop "best practices" in service delivery, for program improvement and enhancement, to describe program functioning and impact to stakeholders, and to support program sustainability.



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