

**MEMORANDUM**

January 12, 2011

TO: Board Members

FROM: Terry B, Grier, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: **HIPPY Program Evaluation Report**

CONTACT: Carla Stevens, (713) 556-6700

Attached is the 2009–2010 evaluation report on the Home Instruction of Parents with Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program. HIPPY is a school readiness program that helps parents prepare their preschool child for academic success. This report provides a summary of HIPPY program activities and its academic impact on HISD students whose parents participated in the program. This program evaluation is aligned with HISD’s strategic direction and focuses on the core initiative: Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports.

There was a substantial increase in the number of students whose parents participated in HISD HIPPY over the past two years, from 75 students in 2008–2009 to 206 students in 2009–2010. Academic performance data revealed that HISD HIPPY kindergarten students outperformed kindergarten students district wide on both the reading and math Aprenda 3 subtests by three curve equivalents (NCEs) in 2008–2009. Consistency in academic achievement was observed in 2009–2010, in that, HISD HIPPY kindergarten students outperformed students district wide on the Aprenda 3 reading and math subtests by 11 and 10 NCEs, respectively. Survey data revealed higher percentages of parents reporting that they engaged in school activities and assisted their children in activities that promote academic achievement following participation in HIPPY.



TBG

Attachment

cc: Superintendent’s Direct Reports  
Sam Sarabia  
Caleen Allen  
Karen Cotton  
Mary Jane Gomez  
Maria Gabriela Hernandez  
Kim Hall  
Martha Salazar-Zamora

# **RESEARCH**

**Educational Program Report**



## **Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY)**

**2009–2010**



## 2010 Board of Education

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**Houston Independent School District**

Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center  
4400 West 18th Street  
Houston, Texas 77092-8501

Website: [www.houstonisd.org](http://www.houstonisd.org)

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### HIPPY PROGRAM EVALUATION 2009–2010

#### **Program Description**

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a school readiness program that helps parents prepare their preschool child for academic success. This home-based, family-focused program targets parents from disadvantaged backgrounds to offer educational enrichment opportunities for their three, four, and five-year old children. The program was designed by Dr. Avima Lombard of the National Council of Jewish Women Research Institute (Hebrew University of Jerusalem). HIPPY USA authorizes HIPPY programs in the United States, and provides operational support and technical assistance to participating school systems and local HIPPY programs nationwide. HIPPY empowers parents as their children's first teacher by giving them the tools and skills needed to work with their children in the home. Specifically, HIPPY promotes school readiness and early literacy through parent involvement by:

- creating an environment that supports parents in their role as the child's first teacher;
- providing a HIPPY curriculum with activities for preschool children, that offers practice in skills that research has proven crucial to school readiness;
- designing the HIPPY curriculum so that parents from disadvantaged backgrounds (i.e., those with limited or unsuccessful schooling, and/or limited financial resources) can be successful teachers of their own children; and
- helping parents understand what their child is learning and how that supports future learning.

The HIPPY program was first implemented by the Early Childhood Department as a pilot program in the Houston Independent School District (HISD) during the 1993–1994 academic school year. During the 2009–2010 school year, the program was staffed by one coordinator and eleven home instructors who served 206 children in nine elementary schools and three early childhood centers (ECCs) located throughout the district. HIPPY operated at the following school sites: Brookline, Crespo, Farias ECC, Garcia, Halpin ECC, J.R. Harris, J.P. Henderson, Lantrip, Mistral ECC, Park Place, and Port Houston. All of the home instructors were parents of preschoolers and/or had young children attending the school to which they were assigned. The program is now operated by the HISD Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Early Childhood Department. This program evaluation aligns to HISD's strategic direction which focuses on the core initiative: Rigorous Instructional Standards and Supports.

#### *The HIPPY Model*

The HIPPY program model uses the following strategies: (1) the use of a developmentally-appropriate 30-week curriculum in English or Spanish; (2) the use of role-play as the method of teaching, staffed by part-time home instructors, and supervised by a coordinator; (3) and the use of home visits combined with group meetings to provide parents with the tools and materials that enable them to work directly and effectively with their child (HIPPY USA, n.d). A typical HIPPY program site can serve up to 180 children and their families, with one coordinator and 12–18 part-time home instructors.

#### *Home Instructors and Program Coordinator*

A typical Home Instructor provides services to 30 parents with children. The home instructor's main responsibility is to deliver the curriculum to his/her assigned parents. As such, home instructors are

required to schedule their own appointments and meet with their assigned parents at the parent's home once a week for a period of 30 weeks. During a home visit, instructors provide parents with a packet containing the week's activities. The home instructor engages in role-play with the parent often using his or her own child. However, the home instructor does not work directly with the child participant.

Home instructors are part-time employees of HISD, and work approximately 20 hours a week. The home instructors received weekly HIPPY training conducted by a full-time HIPPY coordinator. The program coordinator recruited and trained home instructors, organized group meetings, developed enrichment activities, and helped to recruit parents into the program.

### **Key Findings**

#### *1. What were the demographic characteristics of HISD students who participated in HIPPY?*

- A total of 206 students participated in the HISD HIPPY program during the 2009–2010 academic year. Demographic characteristics were validated on 155 of the participants using student information databases. The majority of the students were male (56.1 percent) and Hispanic (98.7 percent). Additionally, 82.6 percent of the students were identified as limited English proficient (LEP), at-risk of dropping out of school (87.7 percent), and economically disadvantaged (98.7 percent).

#### *2. In addition to traditional instructional lessons, what enrichment activities were conducted for the HISD HIPPY participants in the 2009–2010 school year?*

- In addition to home instruction lessons, HISD HIPPY parents and students participated in enrichment activities. Parents participated in a violence prevention series. Students, parents, and their families were also engaged in activities at the Houston Children's Museum. These activities were designed to encourage parents to be more involved in their children's learning and develop leadership skills.

#### *3. How did HISD students who participated in HIPPY perform on standardized tests and assessments?*

- The Aprenda 3 results show that the 2009–2010 HISD HIPPY students tested at kindergarten outperformed all HISD kindergarten students on the reading subtests in 2010 by 11 NCEs and the math subtest by 10 NCEs.
- To demonstrate trends in performance, the 2008–2009 HISD HIPPY kindergarten student group exceeded districtwide performance by 3 NCEs on the Aprenda 3 reading subtest in 2010. Similar results were observed on the math subtest, with this student group outperforming the district by 3 NCEs.
- Test results of the 2008–2009 HISD HIPPY students tested at first grade revealed that these participants outperformed all HISD students on the reading and math Aprenda 3 subtests by 10 and 11 NCEs, respectively.
- In 2010, 79 percent of the HISD HIPPY students scored 'developed' at the beginning of the year (BOY) and 100 percent scored 'developed' at the end of the year (EOY) on Inventory 2 (identify letters). On Inventory 6 (identify initial sounds), 71 percent of kindergarten students tested 'developed' at BOY, while 100 percent tested 'developed' at EOY. Less than five students were tested at first grade; therefore, results were not reported.

4. *How has parental involvement in the home and school increased as a result of participation in the HISD HIPPY program?*
- From before participating to after participating in the program, the percentage of parents reporting reading to their child more than once per week increased from 69.0 percent to 95.3 percent.
  - After participating in the program, 96.9 percent of parents reported attending some form of special event at their child’s school, 68.8 percent reported attending PTA or PTO meetings, and 91.7 percent reported that they had attended parent-teacher conferences.

### **Recommendations**

1. The vast majority of HISD HIPPY students are enrolled in prekindergarten programs. Consequently, there is limited standardized assessment and test data available on HISD HIPPY students. Continued identification and tracking of student performance longitudinally will provide more information on the long-term impact of the program on student achievement as students are promoted and tested on norm-referenced and state-mandated tests.
2. Due to positive academic achievement outcomes of HISD HIPPY students, the district should consider continued support for the HIPPY program. The program administration should consider expanding the program to reach a higher proportion of students in all ethnic groups.

## **HIPPY PROGRAM EVALUATION 2009–2010**

### **Program Description**

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- creating an environment that supports parents in their role as the child's first teacher;
- providing a HIPPY curriculum with activities for preschool children, that offers practice in skills that research has proven crucial to school readiness;
- designing the HIPPY curriculum so that parents from disadvantaged backgrounds (i.e., those with limited or unsuccessful schooling, and/or limited financial resources) can be successful teachers of their own children; and
- helping parents understand what their child is learning and how that supports future learning.

The HIPPY program was first implemented by the Early Childhood Department as a pilot program in the Houston Independent School District (HISD) during the 1993–1994 academic school year. During the 2009–2010 school year, the program was staffed by one coordinator and eleven home instructors who served 206 children in nine elementary schools and three early childhood centers (ECCs) located throughout the district. HIPPY operated at the following school sites: Brookline, Crespo, Farias ECC, Garcia, Halpin ECC, J.R. Harris, J.P. Henderson, Lantrip, Mistral ECC, Park Place, and Port Houston. All of the home instructors were parents of preschoolers and/or had young children attending the school to which they were assigned.

### *The HIPPY Model*

The HIPPY program model uses the following strategies: (1) the use of a developmentally appropriate 30-week curriculum in English or Spanish; (2) the use of role-play as the method of teaching, staffed by part-time home instructors, and supervised by a coordinator; (3) and the use of home visits combined with group meetings to provide parents with the tools and materials that enable them to work directly and effectively with their child (HIPPY USA, n.d). A typical HIPPY program site can serve up to 180 children and their families, with one coordinator and 12–18 part-time home instructors.

### *The HIPPY Curriculum*

HIPPY instructional materials are standardized and include story books, weekly activity packets, and manipulatives. There are 30 activity packets for use throughout the school year. Each weekly packet includes approximately 10 activities for parents and children. These activity packets concentrate on language development, sensory and perception discrimination skills, and problem solving. The materials are available in both Spanish and English and are designed to enable parents with little or no formal schooling to teach their children successfully.

### *Home Instructors and Program Coordinator*

A typical Home Instructor provides services to 30 parents with children. The home instructor's main responsibility is to deliver the curriculum to his/her assigned parents. As such, home instructors are required to schedule their own appointments and meet with their assigned parents at the parent's home once a week for a period of 30 weeks. During a home visit, home instructors provide parents with a packet containing the week's activities. The home instructor engages in role-play with the parent often using his or her own child. However, the home instructor does not work directly with the child participant.

Home instructors are part-time employees of HISD, and work approximately 20 hours a week. The recruitment procedure for home instructors required that they have (1) a child of appropriate age, to engage in the HIPPY curriculum, (2) a Graduation Equivalent Diploma (GED), (3) a valid Texas Drivers License, (4) transportation, and (5) a valid permit to work in the United States. The home instructors received weekly HIPPY training conducted by a full-time HIPPY coordinator. The program coordinator recruited and trained home instructors, organized group meetings, developed enrichment activities, and helped to recruit parents into the program.

### *Staff and Group Meetings*

Staff meetings provide home instructors with practice of the week's activities. These meetings allow home instructors to review and practice the role-playing lesson as it will be taught to the parent. Furthermore, home instructors learn from other home instructors and the coordinator about circumstances and situations that may arise while they are training parents. On the other hand, group meetings were designed to gather parents of HIPPY children to discuss information and provide parents a time to ask questions. These meetings often provided valuable information of available services and local resources that could potentially benefit the families of HIPPY children. In addition, group meetings allow parents an opportunity to meet with other program participants, share and learn from each other's experience, and to receive additional support and information from the community.

### **Program History**

The HIPPY program was first implemented in HISD during the 1993–1994 academic school year to help parents become actively involved in their child's education at an early age. The program was operated by the Early Childhood Department. In its first year of implementation, the program served 216 students and their families in eight elementary schools, and three early childhood centers throughout the district. These schools were Brookline, Crespo, Farias, Garcia, Halpin, J.R. Harris, J.P. Henderson, N.Q. Henderson, Lantrip, Mistral, Park Place, and Port Houston. All of the home instructors were parents of preschoolers and/or had young children attending the school to which they were assigned. Currently, the program is funded by the HISD Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Early Childhood Department and is housed within the Department of Parent Engagement.

**Figure 1** displays the number of students served by the HISD HIPPY program over the past eight years. No data were available in 2000–2001 and 2005–2006 to fully display a ten-year trend. Historical data from 1993, considering this year's data, revealed that approximately 1,749 students have participated in the program since its inception (HIPPY Report, 2008–2009). Figure 1 shows a steady decline in participation from 2001–2002, with a slight increase in participation in 2004–2005. A substantial drop in participation was noted in 2006–2007 from 2004–2005, although there was no previous year data available. This downward trend has been due to funding cuts in the program over the years. However, recent budgeting changes have led to a significant increase in the number of children served in 2009–2010, from 75 students in 2008–2009 to 206 students in the current year.

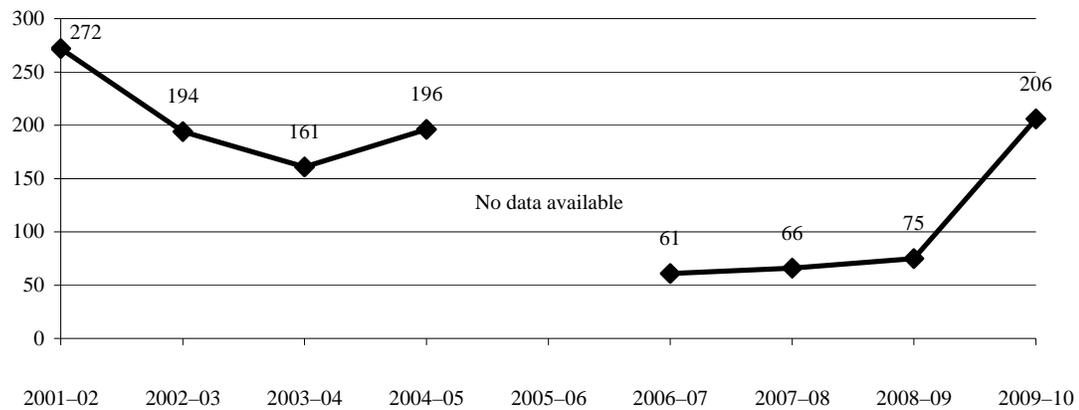


Figure 1. HISD HIPPY Participation, 2001–2002 through 2009–2010

### Purpose of the Evaluation Report

1. What were the demographic characteristics of HISD students who participated in HIPPY?
2. In addition to traditional instructional lessons, what enrichment activities were conducted for the HISD HIPPY participants in the 2009–2010 school year?
3. How did HISD students who participated in HIPPY perform on standardized tests and assessments?
4. How has parental involvement in the home and school increased as a result of participation in the HISD HIPPY program?

### Review of Literature

In general, the literature on parent involvement overwhelmingly demonstrates that there is a positive relationship between parent involvement and student achievement. More specifically, the research shows that when parents are involved, students have higher grades, test scores, attend school on a regular basis, are more motivated, have higher levels of self-esteem, have lower rates of suspension, and show improved behavior at home and school (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). While any form of involvement is better than no involvement at all, there are strong indications that the most effective forms of involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities in the home (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The research also shows that the earlier in a child’s educational process parent engagement begins, the more powerful the effects will be (Kagitcibasi, Sunar, & Bekman, 2001). Early childhood programs with strong parent involvement components have amply demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach (Jordan, Snow, & Porche, 2000; Mathematica Policy Research, 2001; Starkey & Klein, 2000).

Two of the studies reviewed for this literature specifically focused on the effects of the HIPPY program on student outcomes. In the first study (Baker, Piotrkowski, & Brooks-Gunn, 1998), researchers examined the impact of the HIPPY program in a New York school district. The study followed two cohorts of 182 HIPPY program participants and control-group children over a three-year period (from

kindergarten through the first grade). The findings from the study were mixed. In the first cohort, researchers found that HIPPY children outperformed control group children on measures of cognitive skills at the end of kindergarten, on measures of classroom adaptation at the beginning of the first and second grades, and on a standardized reading test at the end of first grade. However, in the second cohort the researchers found no significant differences between the HIPPY participants and the students control group. From their analyses of the data, the researchers concluded that the results may reflect the “variations of the effects of programs within communities (p. 584),” and cautions against generalizing single sample, single-site visit evaluations. Thus, they recommended further studies be conducted to validate the findings.

The second study was a ten-year study conducted by researchers in Turkey (Kagiticbasi et al., 2001). In this study, participants were randomly assigned to one of four settings: a HIPPY program, home care provided by mothers with no support, childcare without education, and educational nursery schools. The study found that in the short term, children in both HIPPY and nursery school settings made greater gains than children in the other two groups. However, seven years after completing the programs, HIPPY children showed greater gains in reading and math than children in the other three groups. The study also found that these students were more likely to stay in school than their counterparts. While the results from the study were impressive, these results should be taken with caution as the results do not take into account cultural differences.

## Methods

### Data Collection and Analysis

Student data for this report were obtained using a variety of sources. First, a list of HISD HIPPY participants for the 2009–2010 academic school year was acquired from the program administrator. Next, enrollment and demographic information was verified using the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) and the Chancery database. The HISD HIPPY program serves students who are as young as three years old; enrollment and demographic characteristics for these students were not included in PEIMS and Chancery.

To measure academic achievement of HISD students who participated in the HISD HIPPY program, the spring 2010 test results were extracted from the Aprenda 3 test database. Aprenda 3 is a norm-referenced test, generally administered to students classified as English language learners (ELL) in grades K–8. Students who received reading and language arts instructions in Spanish are typically administered the Aprenda 3 test. The reading and math normal curve equivalent (NCE) scores were summarized for this report. NCE scores allow the comparison of student performance from different test administrations, because the NCE units have the same meaning across tests, subtests, and grade levels. The academic performance of HISD HIPPY students on the Aprenda 3 was compared to districtwide student performance for the 2009–2010 school year. The majority of HIPPY students are classified as prekindergarten. It is not until these students enroll in kindergarten that Aprenda 3 performance can be measured. Consequently, the 2008–2009 HISD HIPPY students were included in the comparative analysis to capture kindergarten performance and to assess performance over time. Less than five students took the Stanford 10 at kindergarten, first, and second grades, thus, performance results on this test and for these students were not reported.

The El Inventario de Lectura en Español de Tejas (Tejas LEE) provides another measure of student performance for students who receive instruction in Spanish. The results for Tejas LEE are recorded as “Desarrollado (Developed-D),” “Nivel esperado (Expected performance-not in need of intervention but not yet at mastery-NE),” and “Nivel de intervencion (Needs intervention-NI).” Students who score “Desarrollado” have mastered the skill. Students who score “NE” are performing at a level expected for that grade and time point. Students who score “NI” are performing well below the expected level for the grade level and time point. The assessment includes nine inventories. For this report, only the percent of students ‘developed’ at the beginning of the year (BOY) and the end of the year (EOY) were reported on

Inventory 2 (identify letters) and Inventory 6 (identify initial sounds). These inventories provide information regarding student’s development of fundamental skills to master reading as they progress through school.

To assess the levels of parental involvement of HIPPY program participants during the 2009–2010 school year, parents were asked to complete a parent involvement survey both prior to and after participating in the HIPPY program. The survey, designed and distributed by HIPPY USA, contains fourteen Likert-scale questions about parental involvement in the home, at school, and interaction with school staff. All parents were asked to complete the survey, during the first and last weeks of the program. The data obtained from the completed surveys were compiled in Microsoft Excel, and later analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics (both frequencies and percentages) were then used to summarize parents’ responses.

## Results

### What were the demographic characteristics of HISD students who participated in HIPPY?

The HIPPY program administrator identified 206 students as participants during the 2009–2010 academic year. Demographic characteristics for 155 of the students were found in PEIMS and Chancery databases. **Table 1** presents the data. It is apparent that the majority of students were male (56.1 percent) and Hispanic (98.7 percent). Additionally, 82.6 percent of the students were identified as limited English proficient (LEP), while 98.7 percent were economically disadvantaged. When disaggregated by grade level, less than 1 percent of the students were in second grade, 2.6 percent of the participants were in the first grade, 12.3 percent were in kindergarten, and 84.5 percent were in prekindergarten.

### In addition to traditional instructional lessons, what enrichment activities were conducted for the HISD HIPPY participants in the 2009–2010 school year?

Students and parent participants in the 2009–2010 school year were provided enrichment activities in addition to home instruction lessons. These activities were designed to encourage parents to be more involved in their children’s learning and develop leadership skills. The enrichment activities during the 2009–2010 school year were as follows:

#### *Leadership Activities for Parents*

The HISD HIPPY program partnered with the Houston Women's Center and The City of Houston to conduct an eight-week workshop series for HIPPY parents. The purpose of this project was to raise

**Table 1: The Demographic Characteristics of the 2009–2010 HIPPY Student Population**

	2009–2010	
	N (206)	Percent
	n	
<b>Total</b>	155	100.0
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	87	56.1
Female	68	43.9
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
African American	1	0.6
Hispanic	153	98.7
White	1	0.6
<b>Grade</b>		
PK	131	84.5
K	19	12.3
First	1	2.6
Second	1	0.6
<b>Limited English Proficiency</b>		
Yes	128	82.6
No	2	1.3
Unknown	25	16.1
<b>Economically Disadvantaged</b>		
Yes	153	98.7
No	2	1.3
<b>At-Risk</b>		
Yes	136	87.7
No	12	7.7
Unknown	7	4.5

parents’ awareness about domestic violence and sexual abuse as well as inform them about local and national resources. In support of the HIPPY goal to empower parents to become leaders in the community, this preventive education provided HIPPY parents with the knowledge to share with others on how to prevent abuse at home and in the community. The IDRA La Semana del Niño Parent Institute invited HIPPY parents to participate in their annual conference in San Antonio, Texas.

*Trip to the Children’s Museum of Houston*

During the spring of 2010, HIPPY students, parents, and family members participated in a “family night” at the Children’s Museum of Houston (CMH). Approximately, 602 attendees were encouraged to explore the CMH with hands-on math and literacy learning activities. This educational event provided family members and students with an opportunity to discover and experience the programs offered at the museum. Parents were also given information on how they can visit again with their families. This event was provided at no charge for parents. Funding for this event was provided by the Children’s Museum of Houston, the National Council of Jewish Women, and the MFR, PC, a Houston-based Certified Public Accounting and Consulting Firm.

*End of Year HIPPY Celebration*

In May 2010, the HISD Parent Engagement Department sponsored the end-of-year celebration for over 950 HIPPY students, parents, and their family members. The guest speaker for the event was Jose Luis Orozco, bilingual education, children’s author, and recording artist. Principals and/or their representatives from all eleven HISD HIPPY schools recognized the dedication and achievements of the parents and children from their respective campuses. Each family participating in the HIPPY program was given a certificate of completion. This annual event provides the parents and the children with a sense of accomplishment for their hard work throughout the school year. Refreshments and entertainment for this event was provided through support from the National Educational Systems, Blanca Nelly Saldana, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, YMCA, and the National Council of Jewish Women.

**How did HISD students who participated in HIPPY perform on standardized tests and assessments?**

**Table 2** presents the mean normal curve equivalents (NCEs) of students who participated in HISD HIPPY during the 2008–2009 and the 2009–2010 academic years. The test performance of both student groups was presented to demonstrate program impact over time. Additional analysis included the grade-level comparisons of HISD HIPPY students to all students districtwide on the spring 2010 Aprenda 3 reading and math subtests.

The Aprenda 3 results show that the 2009–2010 HISD HIPPY students tested at kindergarten outperformed all HISD kindergarten students on the reading subtest in 2010 by 11 NCEs. To demonstrate trends in performance, the 2008–2009 HISD HIPPY student group also exceeded districtwide performance by 3 NCEs on the reading subtest. Similar results were observed in math. Specifically, the 2008–2009 HISD HIPPY students tested at kindergarten outperformed the district by 3 NCEs and the

Table 2. Mean NCE of 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 HISD HIPPY Participants on the 2010 Aprenda 3 Reading and Math Subtests

	2010 Aprenda 3 Results					
	2008–2009 HIPPY Student Sample <sup>†</sup>		2009–2010 HIPPY Student Sample <sup>††</sup>		All HISD Students	
	Read	Math	Read	Math	Read	Math
Grade	NCE	NCE	NCE	NCE	NCE	NCE
K	68	74	76	81	65	71
First	83	77	*	*	73	66

<sup>†</sup>Note: For 2008–2009 HIPPY students, at K: n=22, at first grade: n=7; for 2009–2010 HIPPY students, at K: n=16.

\*n less than 5

2009–2010 student group outperformed the district by 10 NCEs on the 2010 Aprenda 3 math subtest. The number of 2009–2010 HIPPY students tested at first grade was less than 5; therefore, Aprenda 3 results were not reported. However, test results of the 2008–2009 HISD HIPPY students tested at first grade reveal that HISD HIPPY students outperformed all HISD students on the reading and math Aprenda 3 subtests by at least 10 NCEs on both tests.

The Tejas LEE assessment results are presented in **Table 3**. In 2010, 79 percent of the HISD HIPPY students scored developed at the beginning of the year (BOY) and 100 percent scored ‘developed’ at the end of the year (EOY) on Inventory 2 (identify letters). On Inventory 6 (identify initial sounds), 71 percent of kindergarten students tested ‘developed’ at BOY, while 100 percent tested ‘developed’ at EOY. Less than five students were tested at first grade; therefore, results were not reported.

**Table 3. Beginning and End of the Year Results of 2009–2010 HIPPY Participants on the 2010 Tejas LEE**

		Inventory 2 (Identify Letters)				Inventory 6 (Identify Sounds)			
		BOY		EOY		BOY		EOY	
Grade	n	% Developed	n	% Developed	n	% Developed	n	% Developed	
K	14	79	15	100	14	71	15	100	
First	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	

\* Data are not reported because less than five students were tested.

### How has parental involvement in the home and school increased as a result of participation in the HISD HIPPY program?

To assess the level of involvement for parent participants in the HIPPY program during the 2009–2010 school year, parents were asked to complete a survey both prior to (pre-survey) and after participating in the HIPPY program (post-survey). The survey contained fourteen Likert-scale questions about parental involvement in the home, at school, and interaction with school staff.

Four of the fourteen Likert-type questions included on the survey were items related to literacy activities performed in the home. The responses are presented in **Figures 2** through **5** below. A four-point Likert scale was used as a format for these home literacy activities questions: “Never” = 1, “Once or Twice a Year” = 2, “Almost Every Month” = 3, and “More than Once per Week” = 4.

#### Home Literacy

“How often do you read to your child?” At pre-survey, 5.6 percent of parents indicated that they never spent reading to their child, while 4.1 percent indicated that they participated in this activity at least once or twice a year (see **Figure 2**). By post-survey, less than one percent of the parents indicated that they spent time reading to their child at least once or twice a year. The percentage of parents who reported reading to their child almost every month decreased from 21.3 percent prior to participating in the HIPPY program 3.5 percent on the post-survey. Between the pre-survey and post-survey, the percentage of parents who reported reading to their child more than once a week increased from 69.0 percent prior to participating in the HIPPY program to 95.3 percent on the post-survey.

“How often do you encourage your child to read or look at books, signs or labels?” The response rates are displayed in **Figure 3**. At pre-survey, 12.4 percent of parents indicated that they never encouraged their child to read or look at books, signs or labels, while 65.5 percent indicated that they participated in this activity more than once per week. By post-survey, none of the parents indicated that they never encouraged their children to read or look at books, signs or labels, while 91.2 percent indicated that they participated in this activity more than once per week. The percentage of parents who reported participating in this activity more than once per week increased by 25.7 percentage points.

“How often do you play games at home with your child to teach him/her new things?” At pre-survey, 6.2 percent of parents indicated that they never play games at home with their child, while 5.2 percent indicated that they engaged these types of activities once or twice a year. By post-survey, all of the parents indicated that they play games at home with their child at least once or twice a year, almost every month, or more than once per week (see **Figure 4**). The percentage of parents who reported that they play games at home with their child more than once per week increased from 64.2 percent prior to participating in the HIPPY program to 85.2 percent at the end of the program.

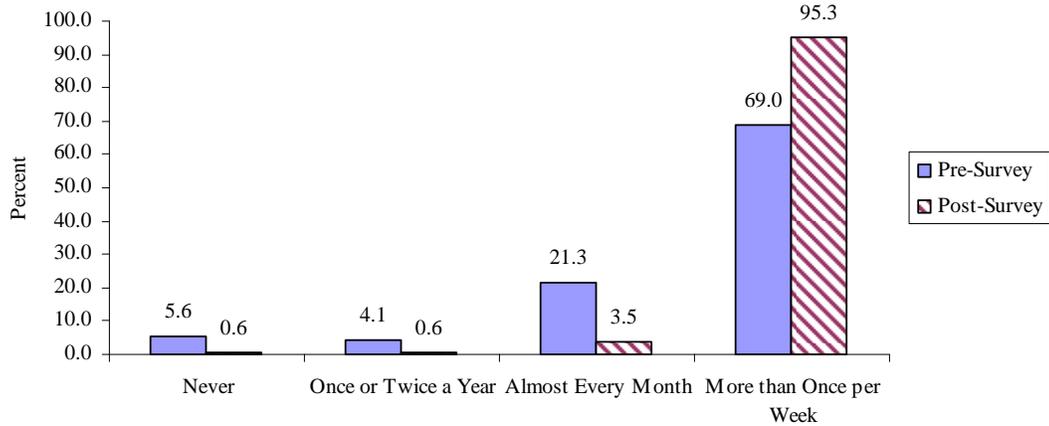


Figure 2. “How often do you read to your child?”

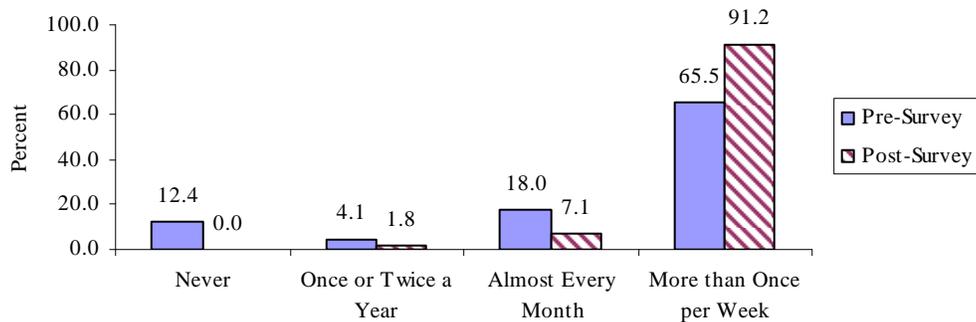


Figure 3. “How often do you encourage your child to read or look at books, signs or labels?”

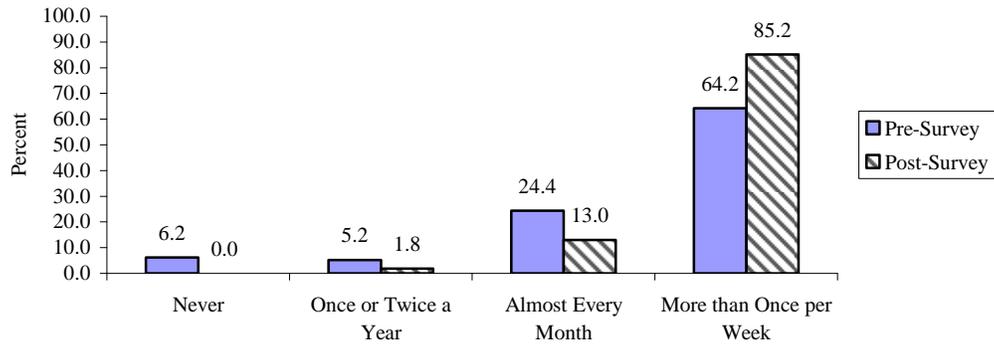


Figure 4. How often do you play games at home with your child to teach him/her new things?

*“How often do you take your child to the library?”* Prior to the start of the program, more than half (57.1 percent) of the parents reported that they never took their children to the library, while 15.8 percent of the parents reported taking their children to the library at least once or twice a year (see **Figure 5**). By the end of the program, 23.4 percent of parents reported that they never took their children to the library, while 26.9 percent reported taking their children to the library at least once or twice a year. The percentage of parents who reported taking their children to the library almost every month increased 28.6 percentage points from prior to participating in the HIPPY program to the end of the program.

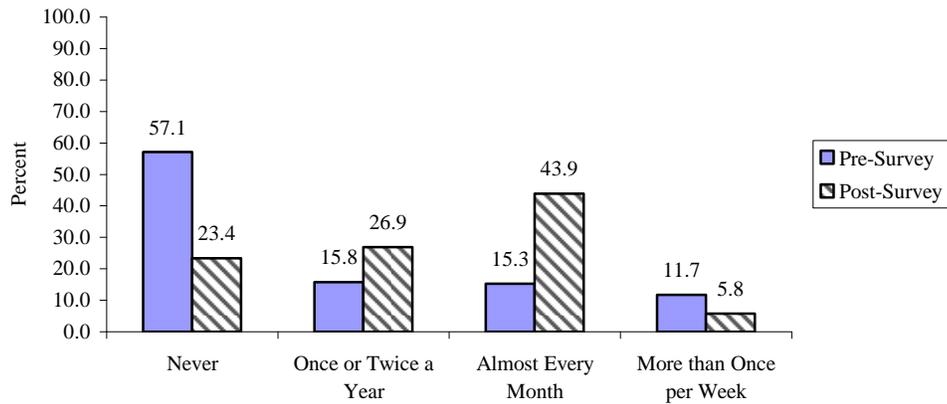


Figure 5. How often do you take your child to the library?

*School Involvement and Interaction with School Staff*

Twenty-three of the twenty-nine Likert-type questions included on the survey were items related to parental involvement in the school and interaction with the school staff. A four-point Likert scale was used as a format for these questions: “Never” = 1, “A Few Times a Year” = 2, “Monthly or More” = 3, and “Weekly or more” = 4. Some of the key results from the pre- and post-test interviews are presented in

**Table 4.** Parents were asked if they attended parent-teacher conferences. The data show that prior to participating in the program, 33.9 percent of the parents reported never attending a parent-teacher conference. However, after participating in the program, only 8.3 percent of parents reported never attending a parent-teacher conference.

The percentage of parents who reported having never called their child’s teacher decreased from 59.3 percent prior to participating in the program to 35.0 percent after participating in the program. Conversely, the percentage of parents who reported having called their child’s teacher a few times a year increased from 5.1 percent prior to participating in the program to 24.8 percent after participating in the program.

On the pre-survey, half (51.2 percent) of parents reported never having been invited to their child’s school for a special event. On the post-survey, however, only 6.3 percent reported that they had never been invited to their child’s school for a special event. Prior to participating in the program, 14.0 percent of parents reported monthly or more attendance at PTA/PTO monthly meeting. After participating in the program, 33.1 percent of parents reported monthly or more attendance at PTA/PTO meeting.

Table 4. Response Rates to School Involvement and Interaction with School Staff Questions on Pre and Post Parental Involvement Surveys, 2009–2010

		N	Never	A Few Times a Year	Monthly or More	Weekly or More
How often have called your child’s teacher?	Pre	177	59.3	5.1	19.2	16.4
	Post	157	35.0	24.8	25.5	14.6
How often have you visited your child’s school for a special event (such as a book fair)?	Pre	173	53.8	16.8	18.5	11.0
	Post	158	3.2	32.9	51.3	12.7
In the past year, how often have you attended meetings of the PTA or PTO?	Pre	171	69.6	10.5	14.0	5.8
	Post	157	31.2	27.4	33.1	8.3
How often have you attended parent-teacher conferences?	Pre	174	33.9	23.0	37.4	5.7
	Post	157	8.3	44.6	41.4	5.7
How often have you been invited to your child’s school for a special event?	Pre	172	51.2	18.0	19.2	11.6
	Post	158	6.3	29.1	48.7	15.8

## Discussion

HIPPY is a home-based, family-focused program that helps parents from disadvantaged backgrounds provide educational enrichment for their three, four, and five-year old children. Overall, Aprenda 3 results show that the 2009–2010 HISD HIPPY students tested at kindergarten outperformed all HISD kindergarten students on the reading and math subtests in 2010. The 2008–2009 HISD HIPPY kindergarten student group also exceeded districtwide performance on both subtests in 2010. Test results of the 2008–2009 HISD HIPPY students tested at first grade revealed that these participants significantly outperformed all HISD students on the reading and math Aprenda 3 subtests. In 2010, the large majority of HISD HIPPY students scored ‘developed’ at the beginning of the year (BOY) and all students scored

‘developed’ at the end of the year (EOY) on Inventory 6 (identify initial sounds) and Inventory 2 (identify letters) on the Tejas LEE.

The HIPPY program is designed to actively engage parents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, in their child’s education during the preschool years and help prepare them for success in school. During the 2009–2010 school year, parents were provided with additional enrichment activities that encouraged more engagement in their child’s school, community, and the process of learning. In addition, results from a parent involvement survey suggest the participation in the HISD HIPPY program increased frequency of parental involvement in various literacy activities at home, as well as, attendance at school functions.

### **Recommendations**

1. The vast majority of HISD HIPPY students are enrolled in prekindergarten programs. Consequently, there is limited standardized assessment and test data available on HISD HIPPY students. Continued identification and tracking of student performance longitudinally will provide more information on the long-term impact of the program on student achievement as students are promoted and tested on norm-referenced and state-mandated tests.
2. Due to positive academic achievement outcomes of HISD HIPPY students, the district should consider continued support for the HIPPY program. The program administration should consider expanding the program to reach a higher proportion of students in all ethnic groups.

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