

Hawaii HIPPY Programs Findings from the 2005-06 AmeriCorps Evaluation

Researchers at the University of South Florida conducted a multi-site evaluation for the second year of the HIPPY AmeriCorps Initiative to document the influence of the HIPPY program on the development of children's receptive vocabulary skills and parents' skills and involvement in their children's learning. Outcomes for parents completing their second year in the HIPPY program were also examined.

Children's Receptive Vocabulary Development

Seventy-eight children from the Hawaii HIPPY programs received a developmental screening with the Get Ready to Read instrument during Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 to determine their progress in acquiring reading-related skills. Fifty-nine children participated in the Oahu HIPPY program and 19 were in the Kailua-Kona HIPPY program. All 78 children were served by an AmeriCorps home visitor, and were enrolled in the HIPPY 4 curriculum.

- Sixty-eight percent of the children were assessed as having very strong skill at the first screening, and this percentage increased to 86% at the second screening.
- Only six of the children had very weak or weak reading-related skills at the first screening. At the second screening, two of these children had average reading-related skills, one child had strong reading-related skills, and one child had very strong reading-related skills.
- Sixty percent of the children had very strong reading-related skills at both the first and second developmental screening.

HIPPY Parental Involvement in Their Children's Learning for First-Year Parents

A retrospective parent survey was administered to 30 first-year HIPPY parents who were being served by a HIPPY AmeriCorps home visitor. Twenty-five parents participated in the Oahu HIPPY program, and five were in the Kailua-Kona HIPPY program. Twenty-six parents completed the English version of the survey and four completed the Spanish version.

- Parents reported significant increases in their level of involvement in a variety of home and community literacy activities with their children after completing an average of 25 weeks of the HIPPIY program.
- Parents reported that after participating in the HIPPIY program, they significantly increased their knowledge of early childhood development, improved the quality of their parent-child interactions, became more proficient in their teaching skills, and engaged more frequently in supportive parenting behaviors.

Additional Benefits of HIPPIY for Second-Year Parents

A retrospective parent survey was administered to 14 HIPPIY parents from the Kaliua-Kona HIPPIY program who participated in the AmeriCorps evaluation in 2004-05 and who had children enrolled in HIPPIY 5 in 2005-06. Ten parents completed the English version and four completed the Spanish version.

- Similar to the first-time HIPPIY parents, HIPPIY parents who participated in the HIPPIY program for a second year significantly increased their involvement in a variety of home and community literacy activities with their children.
- HIPPIY families reported they have significantly increased their interactive activities with their child that promote learning and development and foster a rich home literacy environment.
- Parents also indicated they have significantly increased their use of the HIPPIY teaching skills with other children in their home, for example, using guided reading techniques when they read with their other children.
- Parents reported that their enjoyment of doing educational activities with their child significantly increased after participating in the HIPPIY program.
- Parents reported that their confidence in their ability to advocate for services to meet their child's educational needs significantly increased after completing their second year in the HIPPIY program.
- Parents reported significant decreases in their feelings of social isolation after completing their second year in the HIPPIY program. Parents are making new friends who have become valuable sources of support and information regarding special services available in their communities.