

Evaluation of the 2015-16 Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) Program

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At-a-Glance

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home visiting program for parents of three-, four-, and five-year-olds targeting school readiness and parent involvement. HIPPY Dallas ISD had a total budget of \$2,813,589 for program year 2015-2016, including a general operating budget from Dallas ISD of \$1,252,073, \$1,158,446 from Title I funding, and \$403,070 from external sources. The HIPPY program in Dallas began in 1988 and is the largest of 11 HIPPY programs in the state of Texas, serving 1,237 children and 1,130 parents in 2015-2016, with 985 children and 912 parents successfully completing the program year. The purpose of this report is to summarize implementation and outcomes for HIPPY Dallas ISD participants.

Methodology

Implementation and Participants. HIPPY Dallas ISD program implementation information primarily came from an interview with the HIPPY Dallas ISD program director and from review of the 2015-16 HIPPY accreditation report. To summarize participant characteristics, the evaluator conducted frequency analyses on data provided by the Texas HIPPY office.

Coordinator and Home Instructor Perceptions. The evaluator administered online surveys to collect coordinator and home instructor perceptions.

School Readiness. The evaluator used the *Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA-3)* to compare mean raw and standardized scores at pre- and post-test using paired-sample *t* tests (statistical significance) and Cohen's *d*¹ effect sizes (practical significance).

Long-Term Reading and Mathematics Outcomes: The evaluator used *Terra Nova/SUPERA* (kindergarten through grade two) and *State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR; grades three through eight)* to compare passing rates and mean standardized scores between former HIPPY students and Non-HIPPY control groups. The evaluator used *Chi-square* analyses to test for group differences in passing rates, and *t* tests (statistical significance) and Cohen's *d* effect sizes (practical significance) to compare average scale scores.

Parent Involvement. First-year HIPPY parents completed the Parent Involvement Interview at the beginning and the end of the program year. Frequency analyses were conducted to compare pre- and post-test outcomes.

Implementation and Participants

Of the 1,237 children served by HIPPY Dallas ISD in 2015-16, 985 completed the program (912 parents). Enrollment was highest in HIPPY Year 1 (53%), followed by HIPPY Year 2 (29%) and HIPPY Year 3 (18%). Most children and parents who completed the program were Hispanic (both 85%). Most children participated with a biological parent (94%). Most parents were married (72%), did not work outside of the home (69%), and completed the program using the Spanish-language curriculum (78%).

Participation in HIPPY Dallas ISD increased this year. Compared to 2014-15, the number of children served by HIPPY Dallas ISD increased by 294, and 221 additional students completed the 2015-16 program year.

Coordinator and Home Instructor Perceptions

Coordinators (*n* = 10) and home instructors (*n* = 46) completed online surveys about their job- and program-related experiences with HIPPY Dallas ISD. The following themes emerged:

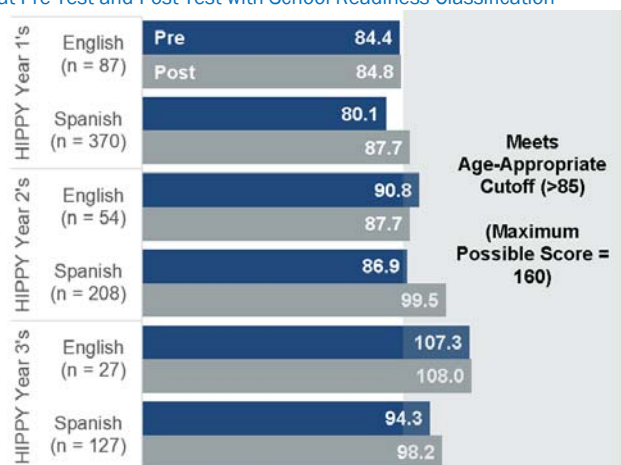
- Low percentages of coordinators and home instructors agreed that home instructor pay was commensurate with their job responsibilities, but more than half of both groups were agreeable to the amount of time home instructors spent on tasks outside of home visits.
- The majority of coordinators and home visitors believed that home instructor case workloads were appropriate.
- Coordinators expressed high overall job satisfaction (70%) and felt their supervisors listened to their feedback and took action, when necessary (50%).
- Home instructors expressed high overall job satisfaction (96%), believed working for HIPPY helped them build career-enhancing skills (98%), felt their supervisors listened to their feedback and took action when necessary (93%).

¹ Cohen's *d* values of 0.2, 0.5, and 0.8 are considered small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively (Cohen, 1988).

School Readiness

Composite and sub-test raw scores showed statistically significant pre/post improvements at all curriculum levels. Most of these differences were also practically significant. Both English and Spanish average standard scores for all curriculum years except for English HIPPY Year 2's improved from pre-test to post-test (see Figure 1). All of these gains were statistically significant; improvements for Spanish but not English were practically significant. Average scores in both languages for all curriculum years except English HIPPY Year 1's exceeded the school-ready threshold by the end of the program year. A majority of HIPPY Year 1's (66% English; 51% Spanish), Year 2's (76% English; 86% Spanish), and Year 3's (98% English; 82% Spanish) were classified as ready for school by the end of the year.

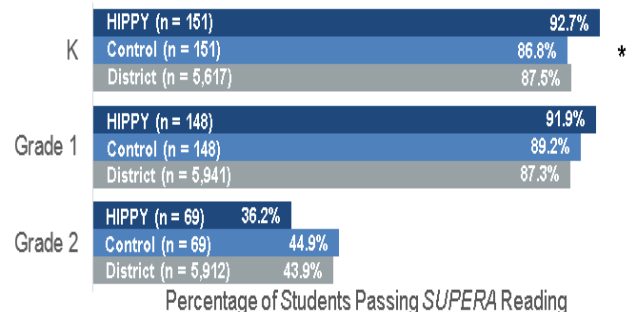
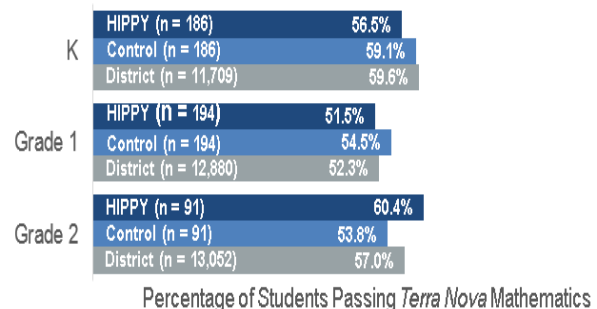
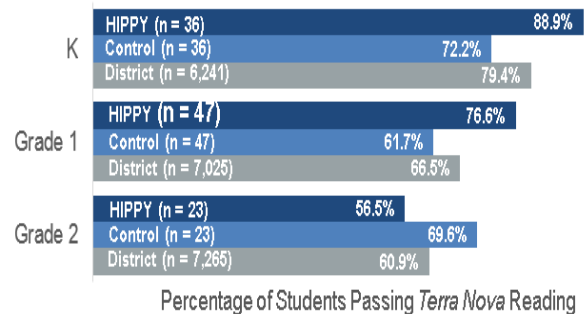
Figure 1: 2015-16 HIPPY Dallas ISD Average BSRA-3 Standard Scores at Pre-Test and Post-Test with School Readiness Classification



Source: Texas HIPPY program data files as of July 20, 2016. Note: Standard score categorizations were established by the publisher (Bracken, 2002), and were: Very Delayed (≤ 70), Delayed (71 to 85), Average (86 to 114), Advanced (115 to 129), and Very Advanced (≥ 130). The maximum standard score possible was 160. All pre/post differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$), and were practically significant for Spanish, but not English, for all three years. Some raw scores could not be converted into standardized scores because of incorrect or missing birthdate data.

Terra Nova/SUPERA. The evaluator compared *Terra Nova* reading and mathematics and *SUPERA* reading passing rates and average scale scores for kindergarten through grade two. Despite greater rates of HIPPY than Non-HIPPY students passing five of the nine *Terra Nova/SUPERA* reading and mathematics exams (see Figure 2), none of these differences were statistically significant. Scale score differences in kindergarten *SUPERA* reading were statistically and practically significant, but with a small effect size. Although it was not appropriate to statistically compare HIPPY passing rates to those of the district, HIPPY passing rates exceeded the district for five of the nine *Terra Nova/SUPERA* exams reviewed.

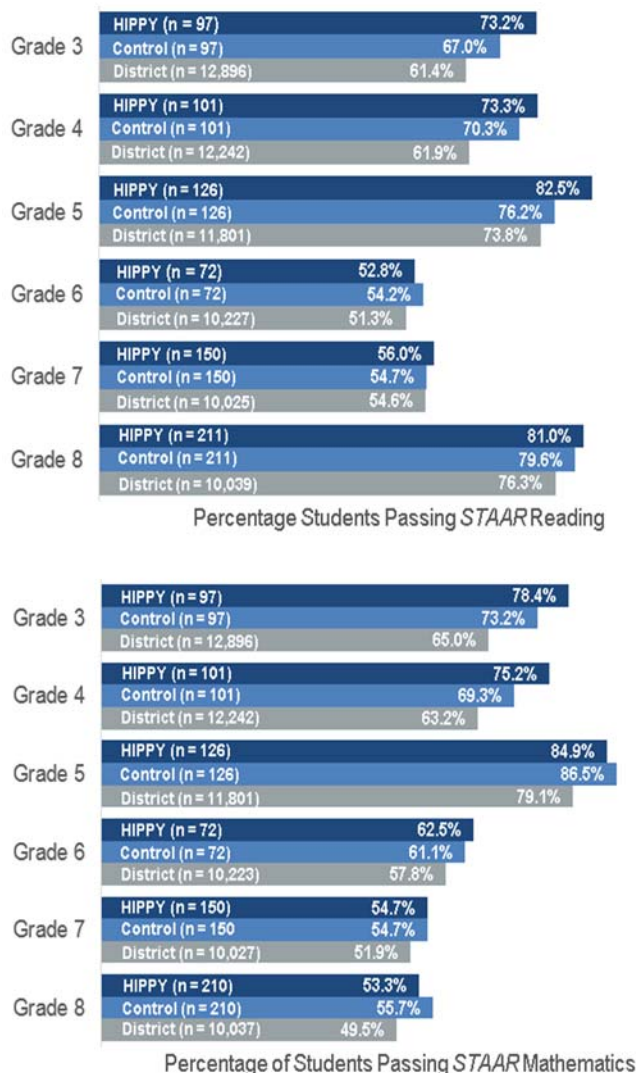
Figure 2: 2015-16 *Terra Nova/SUPERA* Reading and Mathematics Passing Rates for Former HIPPY Participants, Matched Controls, and the District



Source: Data reported as of June 6, 2016 for students enrolled on April 12, 2016. Updates after June 6, 2016 are not reflected in this report. Note: Students scoring at or above the 40th percentile were considered passing. * = Difference between HIPPY and Non-HIPPY control groups for average scale scores was statistically significant ($p = .02$) and practically significant ($d = 0.26$, small effect size) for kindergarten *SUPERA* reading. No statistically significant differences were found between HIPPY and Non-HIPPY control groups on percentage of students passing any *Terra Nova* or *SUPERA* test.

STAAR. The evaluator compared *STAAR* reading and mathematics passing rates and average scale scores for grades three through eight. Despite greater rates of HIPPY than Non-HIPPY students passing five of seven reading and three of seven mathematics exams (see Figure 3), none of these differences were statistically significant. No comparisons between HIPPY and Non-HIPPY groups on *STAAR* average scale scores were statistically significant. Although it was not appropriate to statistically compare HIPPY passing rates to those of the district, HIPPY passing rates exceeded the district for all *STAAR* reading and mathematics exams in grades three through eight.

Figure 3: 2015-16 STAAR Reading and Mathematics Passing Rates for Former HIPPY Participants, Matched Controls, and the District

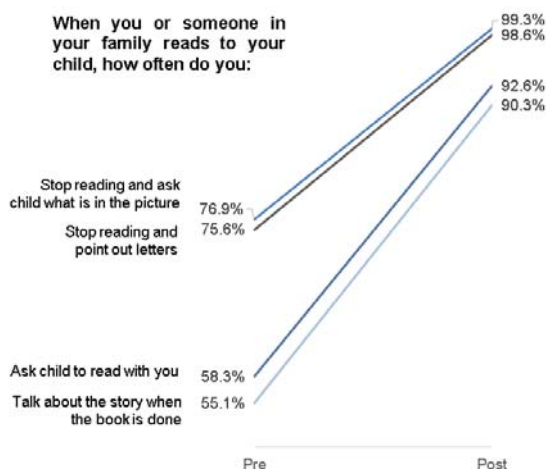


Source: District STAAR files dated July 11, 2016. Note: Passing rates reflect satisfactory or higher scores using the year-specific standard for all versions of STAAR excluding Alternate 2. Scores included for students enrolled as of April 12, 2016. No comparisons between HIPPY and control groups on the percentage of students passing or on average scale scores were statistically significant.

Parent Involvement

New HIPPY Dallas ISD participants achieved noted gains in parent involvement over their first year. Parent involvement as reported on the Parent Involvement Interview increased from pre-test to post-test in all activities. First, parents reported spending an average of over five extra minutes per day reading to their children at post-test (20.0 minutes) than they did at pre-test (14.6 minutes). In addition, as shown in Figure 4, at least 90 percent of parents reported at post-test that they engaged in four literacy enrichment activities when they read to their children, with two of the activities approaching 100 percent participation.

Figure 4: 2015-16 Percentage of HIPPY Dallas ISD Year 1 Parents at Pre-Test and Post-Test Who Marked “Sometimes” or “Usually” Performing Literacy Enrichment Activities When Reading to Child



Recommendations

Continue to seek areas for improvements in effectiveness and efficiency. It is clear that HIPPY Dallas ISD is strongly aligned with the goals of the international HIPPY program. The program has enjoyed pre/post gains in developmental skills and parent involvement every year it has been evaluated. HIPPY leadership should continue to nurture its staff and review processes to maintain these strong results.

Review home instructor pay schedule. While both groups expressed strong job satisfaction, both coordinators and home instructors agreed that home instructor pay is not commensurate with the work conducted. A review of the home instructor pay schedule may serve to either mitigate the perceived misalignment with staff members and/or result in more acceptable compensation levels.

Include HIPPY in evaluation of other major Dallas ISD early childhood programs. Many children in the Dallas ISD attend more than one pre-kindergarten program. Thus, it has become more difficult to evaluate the efficacy of any one early childhood program exclusively, particularly for long-term outcomes. Evaluation and program managers should consider program participation and dosage as a variable in future evaluations of early childhood education. Data structures and systems must be carefully reviewed and enhanced to support this goal.

References

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd. ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

The full 2015-16 HIPPY final evaluation report can be found at <http://www.dallasisd.org/Page/888>. For more information, contact Program Evaluation at 972-925-6457.