

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Dallas Independent School District's (ISD) Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home visitation program for parents of two-to-four-year-olds that trains parents to be their child's first teacher. The program aims to increase parental involvement and thereby ensure school readiness. The HIPPY curriculum promotes cognitive, social-emotional, and motor skill development. Dallas ISD's HIPPY program has historically been one of the largest in Texas.¹

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine a) program implementation and b) program outcomes.²

Program Components

HIPPY Staff Members

In 2022-23, the Dallas ISD HIPPY program staff included one program director, nine coordinators, and 34 home instructors (including seven part-time). Coordinators trained and supervised the home instructors.

Budget

In 2022-23, Dallas ISD HIPPY had a total budget of \$2,404,612, including \$812,125 from the general operating funds, \$1,308,750 from Title I funds, and \$283,737 from external sources.³ This was an increase compared to 2019-20 (\$2,152,979), when this program was last evaluated. Specifically, the increase was in Title I funds.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS/OUTCOMES

How was the HIPPY program implemented in 2022-23?

- In 2022-23, per HIPPY regulations, full-time home instructors carried a maximum caseload of 25 children while part-time home instructors carried a maximum caseload of 15 children. As a result, the number of families that can be served by the program is constrained by the number of home instructors on staff.
- The Dallas ISD HIPPY program utilizes a train-the-trainer approach to program delivery. Weekly, coordinators utilized role play to train home instructors. In turn, instructors used the same method to teach parents, who were then expected to incorporate the behaviors into daily interactions with their child.

- Home instructors met with parents for approximately 45 to 60 minutes, once per week for 30 weeks.
- Families were provided weekly curriculum materials that included story books and five interactive activities. The activities were designed to take about 15 minutes each and focus on different developmental areas (Literacy/Language, Math, Science, Physical/Motor, and Social/Emotional).

What were the characteristics of families enrolled in the HIPPY program in 2022-23?

Families

- In 2022-23, the Dallas ISD HIPPY program enrolled 714 families and 784 children.⁴ Enrollment was highest (39%, $n = 306$) for the 3-year-old program, followed by the 4-year-old program (31%, $n = 239$) and 2-year-old program (30%, $n = 231$).⁵
- Children enrolled in the HIPPY program were overwhelmingly Hispanic (88%, $n = 686$). Similarly, the majority of families enrolled in the Spanish curriculum (74%, $n = 582$). Only eight percent ($n = 61$) of those enrolled were African American.
- Participants who completed 26 of 30 home visits were designated as completers. In 2022-23, 82% ($n = 646$) of the 784 children enrolled in HIPPY completed the program, a decrease compared to 2019-20 (86%; $n = 760$).⁶
- Ninety-four percent of those who completed the first two months of home visits went on to complete the program.
- Completion rates were highest (87%, $n = 209$) in the 4-year-old program, followed by the 3-year-old program (86%, $n = 262$) and the 2-year-old program (75%, $n = 174$). Completion rates varied by race/ethnicity: 84% ($n = 576$) for Hispanic children, 69% ($n = 42$) for African American children.
- Fifty percent ($n = 105$) of children who completed the 4-year-old HIPPY program were concurrently enrolled in Dallas ISD prekindergarten (PK) or Early Childhood (EC) classes. In addition, 15% ($n = 38$) of those in the 3-year-old program were also concurrently PK or EC students.

¹ As reported by the Dallas ISD HIPPY Director on 01/29/20.

² Portions of this evaluation were adapted from Rowles and Hinkley (2019).

³ General Operating and Title I amounts received from Budget Department 05/01/2023. External sources amount (United Way) received from HIPPY Director on 01/26/23.

⁴ HIPPY data files from Visit Tracker pulled 08/07/2023 – 08/09/2023; internal rosters received 08/08/2023.

⁵ The Dallas ISD HIPPY curriculum consists of three years of programming, for 2-year-olds, 3-year-olds, and 4-year-olds. Enrollment is according to the child's age on September 1st.

⁶ The decrease in completion rate may reflect differences in data keeping as well as ages served.

Re-enrollment

In 2022-23, forty-two percent ($n = 328$) of children enrolled in HIPPY were returning participants. Specifically, 45% ($n = 137$) of the 3-year-old program enrollees and 80% ($n = 191$) of the 4-year-old program enrollees were children returning to the program.

What were the outcomes of the 2022-23 HIPPY program?

Parental Involvement

- Parents with children in the 2-year-old, 3-year-old, and 4-year-old HIPPY programs completed pre- and posttest Parental Involvement Interviews.⁷ Among families who completed the HIPPY curriculum in 2022-23, the proportion of parents who reported reading to their child at least three times in a typical week increased 28 percentage points, to 85% at posttest.
- The percentage of parents reporting reading to their child at least 15 minutes per day on average increased 19 percentage points, to 69% at posttest. Those who reported “usually” talking to their child about the book when reading to their child increased by 23 percentage points, to 73% at posttest.
- The percentage of parents working on specific school related skills with their child at least three times per week also increased from pre- to posttest (Table 1).

Table 1: 2022-23 Parental Involvement at Pre-and Posttest for HIPPY Curriculum Completers

Skill	% Practicing With Their Child ≥ 3 Times per Week		
	Pre	Post	Percentage Point Increase
Doing Arts/Crafts	60	78	18
Counting	50	69	19
Numbers	59	79	20
Playing Games that Use Single Digit Numbers	20	42	22
Patterns	27	52	25
Grouping by Size/Color	33	58	25
Letters	41	68	27
Shapes	36	64	28

Source: Texas HIPPY Visit Tracker data files dated 08/07/2023.

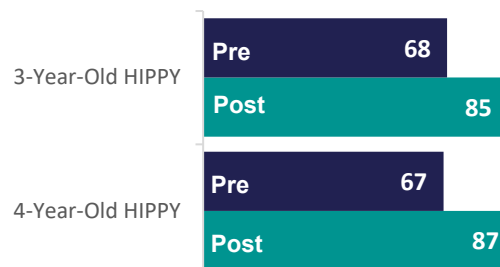
School Readiness

- Children in the 3- and 4-year-old HIPPY programs were administered a pre- and posttest measure of school readiness, using the *Bracken School Readiness Assessment (BSRA-3; Figure 1)*.⁸ Of children who completed the 3-year-old curriculum, 33% were very delayed or delayed at pretest, which decreased to 15% at posttest. Of children who completed the 4-year-old

curriculum, 32% were very delayed or delayed at pretest, which decreased to 13% at posttest.

- While most children who completed the 4-year-old program were returning participants, there was a notable difference at pretest between those who were new versus returning: 53% of new children were very delayed or delayed compared to 29% of returning children.
- Among children who completed the 3-year-old curriculum, the proportion scoring advanced or very advanced increased from 10% at pretest to 26% at posttest. Likewise, of those who completed the 4-year-old curriculum the percentage scoring advanced or very advanced increased from 10% at pretest to 30% at posttest.

Figure 1: 2022-23 BSRA-3 Percent Scoring Average or Above School Readiness at Pre- and Posttest for 3- and 4-Year-Old HIPPY Curriculum Completers



Source: Texas HIPPY Visit Tracker data files dated 08/09/2023.

Note: BSRA-3 = *Bracken School Readiness Assessment*. Percentages represent children scoring in Average, Advanced, or Very Advanced classifications. Average and above classifications indicate school readiness (Bracken, 2002). 3-year-old completers with pretest data $n = 247$, with posttest data $n = 240$. 4-year-old completers with pretest data $n = 205$, with posttest data $n = 197$.

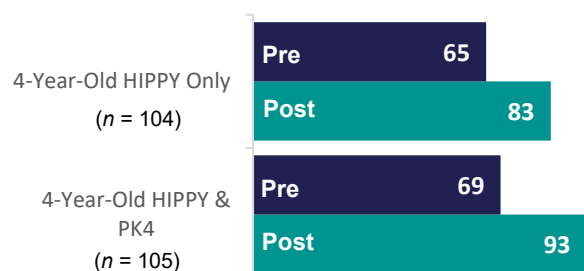
- While children who completed the HIPPY curriculum showed achievement in school readiness, the 50% who were concurrently enrolled in both the HIPPY 4-year-old program and Dallas ISD PK for 4-year-olds (PK4) demonstrated even greater gains (Figure 2).
- The proportion of children scoring very delayed or delayed among those who completed the 4-year-old HIPPY Program only (no PK)⁹ decreased from 35% at pretest to 18% at posttest. Among those who were concurrently enrolled in PK4, the percentage decreased from 30% to 7%.
- Similarly, the proportion of children scoring advanced or very advanced among those who completed the 4-year-old HIPPY Program only (no PK) increased from 9% at pretest to 20% at posttest. Among those who were concurrently enrolled in PK4, the percentage increased from 13% to 42%.

⁷ The Parental Involvement Interview (PII) was adapted from the National Research and Evaluation Center for HIPPY USA and is administered by Home Instructors at beginning-of-year (pre) and end-of-year (post). Curriculum completers who provided PII pretest data $n = 595$. Curriculum completers who provided PII posttest data $n = 617$.

⁸ Children with missing pre- or posttests, curriculum years, or who did not complete the program were excluded from analyses.

⁹ “No PK” refers to students who were not previously enrolled in Dallas ISD PK. However, participation in other PK programs is not known.

Figure 2: 2022-23 *BSRA-3* Percent Scoring Average or Above School Readiness at Pre- and Posttest for 4-Year-Old HIPPY Curriculum Completers with and without PK4



Source: Texas HIPPY Visit Tracker data files dated 08/09/2023; Student Information System demographic data file dated 01/30/2023.

Note: PK4 = Prekindergarten for 4-year-olds. *BSRA-3* = *Bracken School Readiness Assessment*. Percentages represent children scoring in Average, Advanced, or Very Advanced classifications. Average and above classifications indicate school readiness (Bracken, 2002).

What were the longer-term academic outcomes of HIPPY and non-HIPPY participants?

Kindergarten-Readiness

- Of the 7,998 kindergarten students in 2022-23, 147 (1.8%) were identified as having previously participated in the HIPPY program. The PK participation rate of these former HIPPY participants was 91% ($n = 134$), compared to 71% PK participation districtwide ($n = 5,669$).
- Of the 147 former HIPPY participants, 78% ($n = 114$) demonstrated kindergarten-readiness (K-readiness) as measured by the beginning-of-year (BOY) *Texas Kindergarten Early Assessment (TX-KEA)* Literacy Screener¹⁰ (Figure 3).
- Eighty-four percent of students ($n = 112$) who had participated in both HIPPY and PK were K-ready. This proportion was higher than that of all kindergarten students districtwide, as well as kindergarten students who had previously participated in Dallas ISD PK, and kindergarten students who had not participated in PK (71%, 79%, and 52%, respectively).
- To improve the validity of the evaluation and decrease error, former HIPPY participants were matched to students who had not participated in HIPPY.¹¹ While a slightly higher proportion (78% vs 74%) of former HIPPY participants demonstrated K-readiness compared to matched non-HIPPY students, the difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 3: 2022-23 Percentage of Kindergarten-Ready Students on BOY *TX-KEA* Literacy Screener for Former HIPPY Participants, Former Dallas ISD PK Students, and the District



Source: BOY *TX-KEA* data file dated 05/24/2023.

Note: PK = Prekindergarten. DISD = Dallas ISD. District $N = 7,998$; DISD PK $n = 5,669$; HIPPY $n = 147$; HIPPY & PK $n = 134$. Samples exclude students repeating Kindergarten and those whose grade was not listed as K in both KEA and demographic files.

Reading Growth

- In 2022-23, as measured by Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) *Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Growth*, a higher percentage (56%) of kindergarten students who had previously participated in the HIPPY program achieved projected growth in reading at or above the 50th percentile by end-of-year (EOY), compared to all kindergarten students, former Dallas ISD PK students, and kindergarten students who had not attended PK (48%, 49%, and 47%, respectively; Figure 4).
- Comparisons of the HIPPY/non-HIPPY matched samples showed that while a greater percentage of former HIPPY participants demonstrated at or above average growth in reading (55% vs 47%), the difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 4: 2022-23 Percentage of Students At or Above the 50th Percentile on EOY *MAP Growth* Reading for Former HIPPY Participants, Former Dallas ISD PK Students, and the District



Source: EOY *MAP Growth* data file dated 06/25/2023.

Note: PK = Prekindergarten. DISD = Dallas ISD. District $N = 8,176$; DISD PK $n = 5,678$; HIPPY $n = 144$.

¹⁰ For the analysis, the English and Spanish administrations were combined into one file to allow for examination of overall student performance. The percentage of students *On Track* was used. The BOY *TX-KEA* data file was dated 05/24/2023.

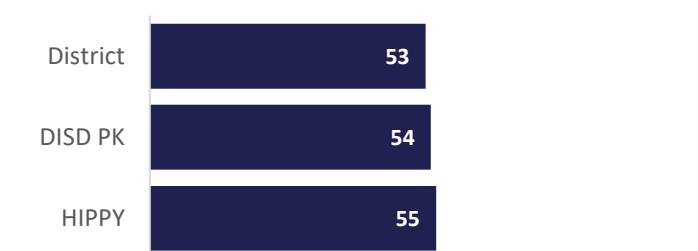
¹¹ Students were matched on nine demographic characteristics (gender; race/ethnicity; campus; special education status, emergent bilingual status, economically disadvantaged status, homeless status, at-risk status, and

PK participation status), resulting in a matched sample of 132 non-HIPPY students. Experimental and control groups were limited to students with scores on all three K assessments: BOY *TX-KEA* Literacy screener, EOY *MAP Growth* – Mathematics, and EOY *MAP Growth* – Reading.

Mathematics Growth

- On the EOY MAP Growth Mathematics, the proportion of prior HIPPY participants with growth at or above the 50th percentile (55%) was similar to the overall kindergarten cohort (53%) as well as those who had been PK students (54%; Figure 5). Among students who had not completed the Dallas ISD PK, 49% demonstrated growth at or above the 50th percentile.
- Comparisons of the HIPPY/non-HIPPY matched samples showed that while a greater percentage of former HIPPY participants demonstrated at or above average growth in mathematics (57% vs 51%), the difference was not statistically significant.

Figure 5 2022-23 Percentage of Students At or Above the 50th Percentile on EOY MAP Growth Mathematics for Former HIPPY Participants, Former Dallas ISD PK Students, and the District



Source: EOY MAP Growth data file dated 06/25/2023.
Note: PK = Prekindergarten. DISD = Dallas ISD. District N = 8,618; DISD PK n = 5,992; HIPPY n = 152.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase recruitment efforts targeting African American families. Communications with HIPPY department staff indicated that the department would like to increase overall participation of African American families in the HIPPY program. While African American students comprise 20% of the overall district, they make up only eight percent of HIPPY participants. Targeted recruitment efforts should include investigating potential obstacles or barriers that may be preventing African American families from taking advantage of the HIPPY program.

Drive engagement during the first eight weeks of curriculum. In 2022-23, 94% of participants who completed the first two months of HIPPY curriculum completed the entire HIPPY program for the year. However, only 82% of all enrolled participants completed their entire HIPPY year programming. HIPPY staff should focus engagement and retention efforts early in the program year to improve overall program completion rates.

Implement a centralized data management system. In 2022-23, the department indicated that the decentralized nature of their data management systems across multiple platforms made it difficult to accurately track HIPPY participation. It is recommended that the department utilize a centralized data management system that is connected to the district's student information system to track student participation and progress within the HIPPY program more accurately and efficiently.

As mentioned in previous evaluations, include HIPPY in the evaluation of other major Dallas ISD early childhood programs. Many children in the Dallas ISD attend more than one prekindergarten 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.

REFERENCES

Bracken, B. A. (2002). *Bracken School Readiness Assessment*. San Antonio, TX: The Psychological Corporation.

Rowles, S. & Hinkley, S. (2019). 2018-19 Evaluation of the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program. Dallas, TX. Dallas Independent School District.