



HIPPY
UNITED STATES

START-UP MANUAL

A Comprehensive Guide to
Establishing Your Home Instruction
for Parents of Preschool Youngsters
Site

Revised April 2024 HIPPY US



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INTRODUCTION

The successful implementation of the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPIY) program is the result of a partnership between the local implementing agency, HIPPIY US, and HIPPIY International. The local agency brings the knowledge and expertise of the community and HIPPIY US offers support and guidance on the HIPPIY model's fidelity requirements. Both components are vital to ensure that local needs are understood and met and that programmatic guidelines and requirements are in alignment with the national evidence-based model. HIPPIY International partners with HIPPIY US to support its programmatic operations and to oversee its operational and growth strategies. This manual was written to assist local communities as they engage in the process of starting a HIPPIY program. HIPPIY programs are operated by a variety of institutions and agencies that include: school districts; preschool programs; departments of health; hospitals, housing authorities; child welfare, and other community-based organizations. Each brings its own unique opportunities and challenges.

During this start-up process, you will receive support and guidance from HIPPIY US. Once we receive your information [form](#), you will be put in touch with the person who can best assist you.

HIPPIY US

HIPPIY US operates as a national network which provides support for program start-up, training, technical assistance to sites, curriculum development/enhancement, national data collection, outreach, advocacy, and engages in collaboration with national and international partners. The Program Operations and Advocacy function of HIPPIY US is led by representatives from each state office and an Independent Site contact. Support for interested communities to navigate the startup process is based on location. If a community is in a state with a state office (listed below), your contact person will be in that state office. If you are not in one of those states, your contact will be Carla Mowell.

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Arkansas	Simone Diggins	501-364-5460	diggins@archildrens.org

HIPPY US Continued

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IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

Based on our experience with helping local communities start HIPPY programs, we have broken down the process into eight steps. The order of the steps will vary from agency to agency.

1. Review program considerations and requirements
2. Convene community stakeholders
3. Secure funding
4. Submit an application
5. Sign a contract
6. Select a coordinator
7. Attend pre-service training
8. Schedule on-site, start-up training

STEP 1: REVIEW PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

What follows are the core components that need to be considered as you plan to implement HIPPY in your community. Variations on the components described below should be discussed with your HIPPY US contact person.

Program Location

A new HIPPY program typically serves children/families in one geographic area—that is, in one community. School districts may use school or district boundaries as their community. Other examples of communities may include a housing development, a county, or a group of people such as a refugee community. However defined, HIPPY should always be part of a specific community and have specified service area boundaries. In rural communities, clusters representing a home visitor’s caseload, may come from several different areas and still be a part of one program.

Program Length and Intensity

HIPPY offers curricula for children ages 2 -5. In each curriculum year, there are thirty weeks of activities. Program delivery is scheduled to coincide approximately with the public school year, which is typically 36 weeks long. Agencies must provide parents with a minimum of 2 years of service, starting with either the Little Learners, 3-year-old or 4-year-old curriculum. We understand that communities have varying needs and requirements, therefore, programs may enroll multiple ages (such as Little Learners and 3-year-olds, or 3- and 4-year-olds) in year one and serve the same number of children in subsequent years.



Program Size and Caseloads

It is suggested that programs begin by serving a minimum of 60 children. For maximum efficiency and the lowest cost per child, with one coordinator, a site's goal should be to reach 180 families within 3 years. For a program to serve more than 180 children, an additional coordinator, or assistant coordinator must be hired.

Program Coordinator

It is essential that each program site have one full-time coordinator whose time is fully dedicated to HIPPY. It has been our experience that program quality is greatly sacrificed when coordinators have additional responsibilities. This is true regardless of the number of children/families served. If it is impossible to hire a coordinator to manage HIPPY on a full-time basis, then an assistant coordinator should be hired. (See Attachments [1](#) and [2](#) for guidelines for hiring a HIPPY Coordinator and Assistant Coordinator.)

Home Visitors

The hiring of the right home visitors is crucial to the success of your HIPPY program. HIPPY home visitors are typically parents who have already been through the HIPPY program. Of course, this is not possible in the start-up year. In this first year, home visitors should be parents from the geographical community designated for the program. This peer relationship makes HIPPY unique. Experience shows that home visitors from your local community can more easily develop rapport and establish trusting relationships with parents.

Home Visitors receive initial training in the use of the curriculum during an initial site visit conducted by a national HIPPY trainer. Thereafter, they receive weekly HIPPY training from their coordinator, which focuses on understanding and role-playing together the curriculum activities to be delivered the following week. Additionally, a minimum of 15 hours of additional professional skill development should be provided every year. This training is key to the success of the home visitors, and subsequently, the program. The home visitor's main responsibility is to deliver the curriculum to their assigned parents each week.

Because home visitors are required to practice the curriculum before visiting families, they should either have a child of appropriate HIPPY age or be able to practice the HIPPY curriculum with a child of the appropriate age. Other eligibility requirements may be specified by the host agency.

Home Visitors working on a part-time basis (20 hours per week) should have a caseload of between 10-15 children. The caseload for a full-time home visitor (40 hours per week) can be up to 25 children. The recommended caseload allows adequate time for planning



Home Visitors Continued

visits and meetings, as well as in-service training and individual supervisory sessions. During start-up planning, we will discuss caseloads and help you calculate the appropriate caseload for your situation. The ratio of children to home visitors should be determined based on the characteristics of the community served (e.g., distances to be traveled, the vulnerability of families, and programmatic requirements such as agency or funder-led training or documentation requirements). For example, some funding sources may require monthly cross-training, reflective supervision, or additional documentation or assessments.

The HIPPY Home Visitor position is often a first step to future career growth, and it may be viewed as job training. To ensure continued high-quality interactions, and increase the economic impact on the community, the recommended employment period for HIPPY home visitors is up to 4 years. This should be made clear to prospective home visitors during the hiring process. Training and support to home visitors should be provided with this transition in mind. (See [Attachment 3](#) for Guidelines for the HIPPY Home Visitor).

Home Visits

Home visiting is a service delivery method and a component of the overall early childhood ecosystem. The comfort of the home setting helps to establish trust and rapport with more isolated or otherwise vulnerable families. The home visit experience increases parents' understanding of creating learning opportunities for their children and of their own impact as their child's first teacher. Families integrate learning and fun into their everyday experiences.

The first few home visits each program year are for recruiting new families, providing them with a comprehensive understanding of the program, conducting pre-test assessments on parents and children, and gathering required intake information. These visits take place prior to the home visit to deliver and role-play week one of the curriculum. It is vital to each family's overall success and retention that parents understand the commitment they are making to their children, as well as the commitment that the HIPPY staff/agency is making to them.

Recruitment is the HIPPY coordinator's main task during the program's start-up phase. Establishing partnerships within the organization as well as with outside organizations can help get the word out to potential parents. In the first year of implementation, the coordinator should focus time and effort on interviewing each parent who applies for HIPPY. This hands-on approach will increase chances of identifying a home visitor from within the pool of parents and will help ensure that parents enroll with a clear understanding of their role and commitment.



Method of Instruction

HIPPY utilizes the role-playing method of instruction when training home visitors and parents in the use of the curriculum. Role-playing promotes a comfortable, non-threatening learning environment in which there is always room for mistakes. In addition to maximizing parents' understanding of the HIPPY activities, role-playing promotes parental empathy for the developmental capabilities of young children.

The HIPPY role-playing cycle includes several steps: (1) The coordinator role-plays the activities for a given week with the home visitors during the weekly staff meetings. During this time, s/he explains the purpose of the activities and the developmental significance for children. (2) Home visitors are then expected to try out those activities with their own child, or with a practice child, in order to gain firsthand experience with the activities. (3) Finally, the home visitors are ready to implement the activities one-on-one with their assigned parents, by role-playing the activities together in the home visit. The parent is left with a paper or digital set containing 5 days of activities to do with their child (taking approximately 15-20 minutes per day). This cycle is repeated for the 30 weeks of the HIPPY curriculum.

Group Meetings

Group meetings are integral to the HIPPY program design. Since the core of the program is centered around home visits, a minimum of six group meetings annually provide an opportunity for parents to meet each other, share and learn from each other's experiences, and receive additional support and information from the coordinator and other community resources. For many parents who may feel socially and psychologically isolated, attendance at group meetings provides an important opportunity to bond with other parents and HIPPY staff. These groups involve the parents' home visitors and are supported by the social feed engagement on the HIPPY app.

The facility where the group meeting is held should have all of the necessary amenities and must be accessible to all participating families. It should include tables and chairs, spaces for parents and children to comfortably and safely engage in educational enrichment, and ideally food preparation areas. Group meetings are planned to run for 1-2 hours. Parents are offered an enrichment experience ranging from presentations on parenting, community, and health, to craft workshops for designing homemade toys or culturally relevant projects. The activity packets may also be presented and role-played, in which case two hours should be scheduled (one for role-play and another for enrichment). Children are invited to the meetings and children's activities with group leaders should be available in another room. Alternately, some programs have parents and children engage in an activity together.



Group Meetings Continued

It is important that HIPPY parents are involved in generating ideas for group meeting enrichment activities through annual surveys. The parents' sense of ownership of the meetings, because of their active engagement in the planning of the meetings, will positively influence their attendance.

Data Reporting Requirements

Each HIPPY site is expected to use a data management platform to track demographics, program participation, and assessments. HIPPY US will provide you with the data reports that are required. Many organizations already have data management systems in place and as long as that system can provide data to HIPPY US in a usable format, that is allowable. If you are looking for a new system, Visit Tracker is the most widely used platform and is recommended. Sites contract with Visit Tracker directly to pay for the service. Information on cost can be found at www.visittrackerweb.com. For more information about data reporting, contact: David Tisdale, david@hippyus.org.

Program Costs

The average cost per child varies based on the number of children served, agency salaries, and other variables. Larger programs have a lower cost per child. For maximum cost-effectiveness, we recommend that programs start with 60 children and plan to reach 180 within 3 years. Please use [the sample budget](#) to plan your annual budget. Note that there are items on the sample budget such as office space which may be provided in-kind by your agency.

STEP 2: CONVENE COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS

Because HIPPY is new to your community, it is important to convene a preliminary meeting to orient and inform members of the community about HIPPY, to discuss the need for and feasibility of implementing HIPPY, to strategize funding possibilities, and to consider potential implementing agencies and possible collaborations. Outcomes of such a meeting may include identifying or conducting a local needs assessment that informs the decision to implement the HIPPY model, the identification of potential funding sources, forming an advisory group, developing recruitment strategies/partnerships, and establishing ties between community members.



STEP 2: CONVENE COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS CONTINUED

The following is a list to help you create your initial invitation list:

1. Community agency representatives
2. Representatives from the target community
3. Volunteer organizations
4. School personnel (early childhood educators, principals, superintendents, community liaisons, military school liaison officers, parent involvement coordinators, Parent Teacher Association members, dropout prevention coordinators, etc.)
5. Local Head Start staff
6. Local government officials
7. Potential funding sources (State Department of Education, United Way, private foundations, local businesses, local government, school districts, job training organizations, and federal government resources such as AmeriCorps and Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting)

HIPPY Advisory Group

The stakeholders and participants in the preliminary meetings may naturally transition into membership in the advisory group. The primary responsibility of the HIPPY advisory group is to provide advice, counsel, and ongoing assistance and support to the HIPPY program. The HIPPY advisory group does not establish program policies. The advisory group's ultimate challenge is to ensure that the HIPPY program remains sustained and viable. The advisory group should be diverse, consisting of community stakeholders: parents, community leaders, volunteers, early childhood professionals, elementary school principals/teachers, college professors, staff, parents, and business/political leaders.

For practical and sustainability reasons, HIPPY recommends that an active member of the advisory group, other than the HIPPY coordinator or his or her supervisor/administrator, be designated as chairperson. An agency that already has such a group (e.g., an existing advisory group) with comparable representation might consider bringing the HIPPY program to an existing forum rather than creating a new one, or may consider forming a HIPPY Advisory Group as a subcommittee to the larger group.



HIPPY Advisory Group Continued

The following is a list of some recommended responsibilities typically assumed by advisory groups:

1. Promote HIPPY within and outside of the community
2. Assist in the procurement of funds for the HIPPY program
3. Provide input and advice regarding planning, implementation, and problem-solving
4. Assist the coordinator with various program needs such as recruiting families and home visitors, planning special events, planning field trips, arranging for guest speakers, and establishing a lending library
5. Assist the coordinator in promoting cooperative working relations with appropriate agencies, community and volunteer groups, and other early childhood/family support programs
6. Help organize group meetings and volunteer to set up or facilitate
7. Assist with supply drives for families
8. Assist with setting up referral systems to help families access food, housing, clothing, medical care, etc.

STEP 3: SECURE FUNDING

In many cases, securing funding is the greatest obstacle to starting a HIPPY program. HIPPY US recommends that new programs secure at least two years of stable funding. However, we are aware of the many barriers to obtaining long-term funding. Therefore, HIPPY International requires that local communities have the first year fully funded and a realistic plan for securing second-year funding before a program begins. We have found that it is often easier for existing HIPPY programs with a proven record of effectiveness to obtain funding.

The application to start a HIPPY program may be submitted at any time. If submitted prior to receipt of funding, we can address any concerns and offer suggestions that will support your funding application process. This information helps HIPPY US forecast and plan for new programs and preservice training.

STEP 4 SUBMIT APPLICATION

The [application](#) helps HIPPY US understand the implementing agency, local community, and targeted families. Applications are accepted year-round. Once your application has been reviewed and approved, a letter is sent to the agency.



STEP 5: SIGN CONTRACT

The approval letter sets other steps in motion, including receiving an operating agreement. If your program is within one of the 5 states where HIPPY has a state office, you will be sent an agreement from the state office. If you are outside the 5 states, HIPPY International will send you an agreement.

All HIPPY programs in the U.S. are affiliated with HIPPY International, either directly or through the state office, and are granted the right to implement HIPPY according to a formal operating agreement (contract). This contract spells out the conditions under which the HIPPY name and HIPPY materials may be used and provides the local community with the exclusive right to implement HIPPY in the "program community" as defined in the contract. It also lists the fees that need to be paid by the agency. The fees are calculated based on a set formula and are described in the sample HIPPY budget spreadsheet.

The agreement must be signed by someone with the authority within the agency to enter into legal agreements—this is usually the superintendent (school districts) or the executive director (community-based organizations). Once the agreement is signed, the curriculum publisher is notified of the “approved program” status and the HIPPY curriculum is then available for purchase through Connelly-3-Publishing Group.

Connelly-3-Publishing Group Contact Information:

1-800-775-2374

1-860-664-4988

Publisher@C3PG.com

HIPPY International offers the operating licensing agreement to agencies that are outside one of the five states with HIPPY state offices (Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, and Texas). New programs within the states listed above enter into a licensing agreement directly with the HIPPY state office.

STEP 6 SELECT COORDINATOR

Upon the approval of your application, you are ready for the initial phase of program implementation. You will need to select a qualified individual for the position of coordinator and arrange to send that individual to the HIPPY US Coordinator Preservice. For more details, see the description of the coordinator above and the guidelines in [Attachment 1](#).



STEP 7 ATTEND PRESERVICE TRAINING

The coordinator is required to complete the HIPPY Preservice training before starting a new program or taking on the coordination of an existing program. If the coordinator is hired after a Preservice has occurred, he or she must attend the next scheduled training. The HIPPY Preservice training is four days in length and covers all aspects of administering a HIPPY program. It also addresses the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of the program through practical, hands-on training.

Depending on how involved the administrator will be in day-to-day operations, it is recommended they also attend Preservice. Otherwise, all administrators must complete the online Administrator Training. This ensures that administrators will have an opportunity to learn firsthand about the administrative requirements of the HIPPY program and how to support the new program/coordinator.

STEP 8 START-UP AND ON-SITE TRAINING

After attending Preservice training, the HIPPY coordinators return to their agency to begin the process of HIPPY program implementation. After they have informed the appropriate agency staff about the HIPPY program and implementation requirements, hired home visiting staff, ordered materials, and recruited at least two-thirds of the total number of participating families, they are ready to schedule the initial site visit from a designated national HIPPY trainer. The national trainer will provide on-site training, technical assistance, and support to the HIPPY coordinator and home-visiting staff. Typically, a new site receives an initial site visit just prior to starting up home visits, and a follow-up visit before completing the 30-week cycle.



PLANNING CHECKLIST

To assist you in the planning process, we have prepared the checklist below. It will also serve as a guide for your ongoing conversations with your HIPPY US contact. As with the implementation steps above, the order will vary.

- Plan to begin serving a minimum of 60 children, with a goal to reach at least 180 families within 3 years.
- Decide the age(s) of the first cohort of children - will you start with 2-year-olds? 3's? 4's?
- Hire a full-time coordinator whose time is fully dedicated to HIPPY.
- Hire home visitors who are parents from the local community.
- Register program coordinator for HIPPY Preservice training, and administrator (coordinator's direct supervisor) in the Administrator Training.
- Identify space for weekly HIPPY curriculum training for home visitors, led by the HIPPY coordinator.
- Plan for 15 hours of additional professional development for home visitors.
- Plan the program year calendar such that the first few home visits each program year are for recruiting new families, there is time to implement the 30 weeks of curriculum with families, and a few weeks are scheduled at the end of the 30 weeks to finalize visits, complete files and plan for the following year.
- Plan for parent and home visitor recruitment to be the HIPPY coordinator's main task during the program's start-up phase.
- Plan for home visits to all parents for 30 weeks for approximately one hour, where the home visitor role plays the activities with the parent, who in turn works directly with their child.
- Plan for a minimum of six group meetings annually to include enrichment for parents and children, either together, or separately.
- Plan for a data management platform to track demographics, program participation, and assessments. Visit Tracker is the most widely used platform and is recommended.
- Convene a preliminary meeting with the purpose of orienting and informing members of the community about HIPPY, and identifying and mobilizing stakeholders to support program implementation. Some or all members of this group may naturally evolve into the advisory group, which is required.
- Ensure that the first year of program implementation is fully funded and a realistic plan is in place for securing second-year funding.
- Enter into a formal operating agreement to implement HIPPY in your community.
- Order digital HIPPY from HIPPY International <https://hippy-international.org/order3-0/> or paper-based curriculum from C3PG.
- Schedule the initial site visit from a designated national HIPPY trainer.

GUIDELINES FOR THE HIPPY COORDINATOR

Educational Qualifications: The coordinator has a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related field. If a bachelor's degree is not in early childhood education/related field, the coordinator must complete 24 hours of training in early childhood development each program year. If a candidate does not have a Bachelor's degree, they may be conditionally hired as a Coordinator with an Associate's degree and five years of home visiting experience. The coordinators must then obtain their Bachelor's degree in early education or a related field within three years. The coordinator must attend the next available HIPPY US Preservice Training.

Other Qualifications:

- Strong training and leadership capabilities
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Demonstrated knowledge of, and sensitivity to, the needs and interests of families from under-served communities
- Ability to forge strong partnerships and develop a spirit of teamwork
- Demonstrated supervisory, administrative, and organizational skills
- Prior experience in one or more of the following areas is an asset: education, program management, community mobilization, parent empowerment/family support, child/family advocacy, or staff development

Responsibilities

- Managing the HIPPY program in accordance with the terms specified in the contract
- Recruit and select eligible HIPPY children/families and home visiting staff
- Ongoing supervision and training of home visitors, including the planning and delivery of ongoing staff development
- Make three home visits annually to observe each visitor
- Plan and deliver parent group meetings that include the provision of an enrichment activity and may include role-playing the curriculum
- Provide curriculum training to all home visitors weekly in each curriculum being implemented. The training will use the role-play methodology.
- Train staff in data entry and monitor data quality to ensure accurate reports
- Prepare for initial, follow-up, or HIPPY accreditation site visits by HIPPY US staff or National Trainers
- Work in conjunction with the local HIPPY advisory committee
- Establish effective partnerships with other human service and educational organizations in order to ensure optimal service delivery to participating families
- Participate in state, regional, and national HIPPY conferences and meetings

GUIDELINES FOR THE ASSISTANT COORDINATOR

Educational Qualifications: Preferably, the assistant coordinator will possess the same or similar qualifications as the coordinator. However, since this individual will be under the leadership of a professional coordinator, other qualifications may be acceptable (e.g., associate's degree, experience in HIPPY, or equivalent work experience). The Assistant Coordinator is also required to attend and successfully complete the weeklong Preservice training. This should occur before assuming the role. If this is impossible, the Assistant Coordinator must attend the next scheduled session.

Other Qualifications:

- Good oral and written communication skills
- Good organizational skills
- Skills or aptitude for training and leadership
- Ability to take direction and complete projects
- Demonstrated sensitivity to the community served
- A team player

Responsibilities

Performing, under the direction of the coordinator, all/any of the following duties:

- Lead role play at staff meetings
- Assist with recruitment and enrollment tasks
- Organize group meetings
- Make home visits to observe home-visiting staff
- Data entry and reporting
- Create outreach materials, rosters, databases, and other general clerical duties
- Organize curriculum and props for the weekly staff meeting
- Maintain the filing system
- Secure speakers, purchase materials or refreshments, and/or set up for group meetings
- Process paperwork for participant referrals to social service, or other, agencies
- Participate in all HIPPY functions

GUIDELINES FOR THE HIPPY HOME VISITOR

Educational Qualifications: The HIPPY Home Visitor is a unique position in which the primary qualification is their successful experience as a HIPPY parent. While some funders or agencies may have minimum requirements such as an HS/GED, CDA, or other certifications, the HIPPY model itself does not have those requirements. “Soft skills” such as community leadership, people skills, and a passion for their child’s success are most important. This entry-level, paraprofessional job is an on-ramp to a career in education, social service, or other professions. Home Visitors are expected to transition out of the program after approximately 4 years, thereby opening an opportunity for a new parent to enter the workforce.

Other Qualifications:

- Eligible for participation in the HIPPY program with their appropriately aged child
- If they do not have an eligible child, they should have daily access to a "practice child" of the appropriate age.
- A resident of the targeted community
- Speaks the language of the families being served
- Ownership of a vehicle or access to public transportation (if needed)
- Oral, written, and reading skills in the language(s) of the families they will be assigned to serve
- Organizational skills and the ability to be task-oriented
- Ability to adhere to schedules and specific timetables
- Demonstrated leadership abilities
- Demonstrated emotional maturity and sensitivity to the needs and interests of the community
- Aptitude to complete paperwork and reports
- Interpersonal / “soft skills” (e.g., friendliness, openness, non-judgmental attitude, enthusiasm, etc.)
- Ability to serve as a role model (positive attitude, professional dress, demeanor, and behavior)

Responsibilities

- Practice the curriculum with his or her own child or an appropriate-aged child of a friend, family, or neighbor
- Meet and role-play the curriculum with assigned families each week • Participate in the planning and implementation of parent meetings • Participate in weekly in-service role-play training and other staff development • Keep the coordinator informed on each family’s progress and any issues or concerns
- Complete and submit the required documentation
- Participate in all sponsored HIPPY activities (e.g., field trips, graduations, awards ceremonies, etc.)
- Assist the coordinator in maintaining an efficient record-keeping system
- Enter data into the data management system