

CONFIDENT. SUPPORTED. CONNECTED

Findings from the independent evaluations of HIPPY Australia

HIPPY is a free, home-based early learning and parenting program designed to fit into families' daily routines.

In 2025-26, the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioned a suite of **independent evaluations of HIPPY**. The evaluations were conducted by the **Parenting Research Centre, Curijo, IPS Management Consultants** and the **Australian Centre for Evaluation**.

The findings provide valuable insights into HIPPY's impact, accessibility, and implementation, and are being used to support continuous improvement across the HIPPY network.



90+ communities



60+ providers



50 First Nations focused sites

HIPPY across Australia



6 in 10



HIPPY families

live outside of a major city



4x

8% of HIPPY families live in remote or very remote communities. That's **4x** the national population rate (1.9%)

Inclusive and accessible

The evaluation found HIPPY is widely recognised as inclusive and accessible

“ ”

Those sensory activities are all things that you would get from an OT [occupational therapist], but you're getting it in a program that's free.

HIPPY Parent | Stream 2 evaluation



Evaluation findings:
HIPPY strengths

- ☒ Fun and free
- ☒ Flexible delivery
- ☒ Personalised support
- ☒ Culturally respectful
- ☒ Responsive to all abilities





Children: Developing a love of learning early

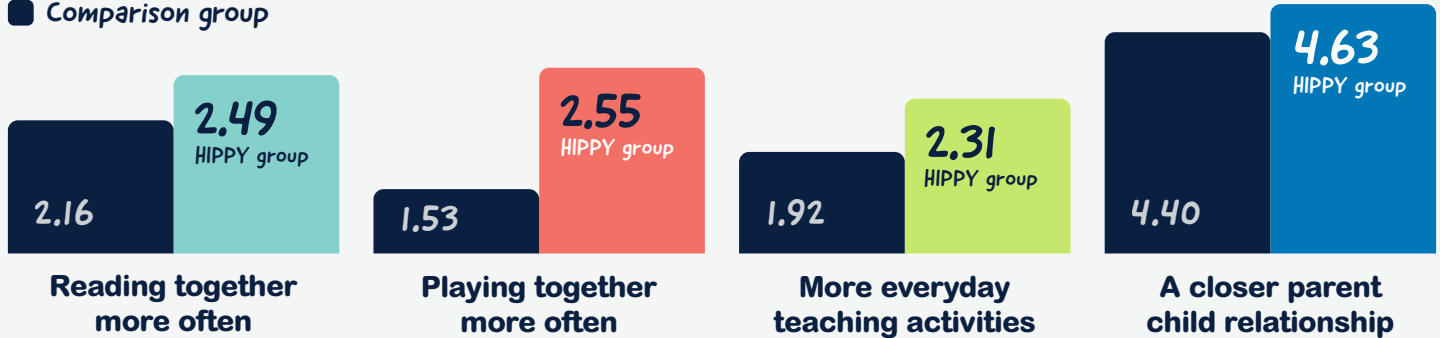
Children's earliest and most powerful learning comes from their family. The reports found HIPPY supports families to create a positive learning experiences at home, strengthening parent-child relationships and fostering a lifelong love of learning.

4/4 Higher outcomes

The evaluation showed participants performed better in all 4 outcomes when compared to the matched comparison group.

Average parent survey scores across the 4 outcome measures

■ Comparison group



Citation: Parenting Research Centre (2025). Stream 1 Report (Effectiveness and Efficiency Analysis). Independent evaluation of the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY). Melbourne, Australia.

“ ”

She loves school

I feel like HIPPY has given HER that passion and love of education, which means she loves going to school now.

HIPPY parent and Tutor | Stream 2 evaluation



96%

of parents surveyed felt HIPPY positively impacted their child's school readiness

Citation: Pirathiban R, Newman V, Rehill P, Copley S, Greenwell H and Williams E (2026) An impact evaluation of the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY), the Australian Centre for Evaluation, the Australian Treasury.

Developing a love of stories

By graduation, HIPPY children enjoyed listening to stories more than when they first started the program. The improvement from enrolment to graduation demonstrates that HIPPY fosters early literacy engagement, a foundational skill for school readiness and long-term educational success.



Quality time spent reading together

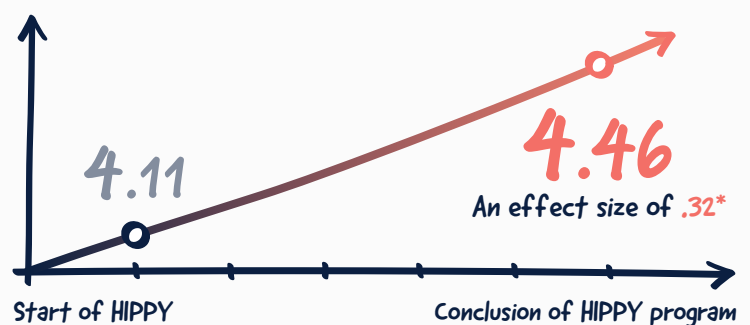


Improving early literacy indicators



Strengthening the parent-child relationship

Does your child enjoy listening to stories?



Effect size is considered small when 0.1, medium when 0.3, large when 0.5

Citation: Parenting Research Centre (2025). Stream 1 Report (Effectiveness and Efficiency Analysis). Independent evaluation of the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY). Melbourne, Australia.



Parents and carers: Building skills and connections

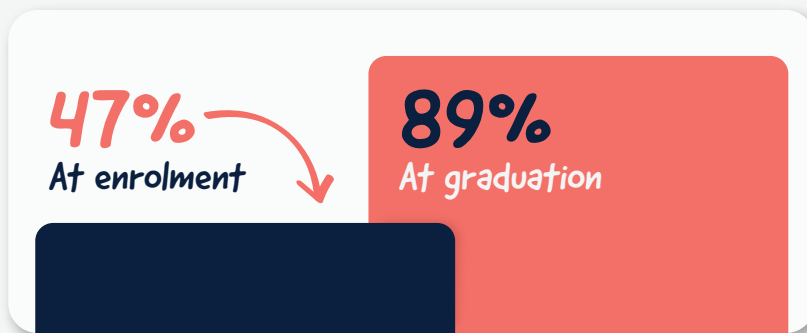
HIPPY parents/carers reported greater confidence as their child's first teacher and a better understanding of how their child learns. By graduation, they were using everyday activities to teach their child more often and felt more connected with their child.

Children thrive when parents are engaged in their learning. Parents play an essential role as their child's first teacher. Ongoing, active engagement of parents, families and communities has a major impact on a child's success at school.

Citation: Department of Education, Parent Engagement in Learning: Fact sheet, 2014, Supporting Family-School-Community Partnerships for Learning | Last modified Sep 2026

Parent confidence

89% of HIPPY parents graduated feeling highly confident doing learning activities with their child.



85%
understand how their
child likes to learn



73%
credit HIPPY for
this understanding



95%
of parents and
carers thought
HIPPY was a good
fit for their family

“ ”

Not only is it a bonding thing... It's educational...

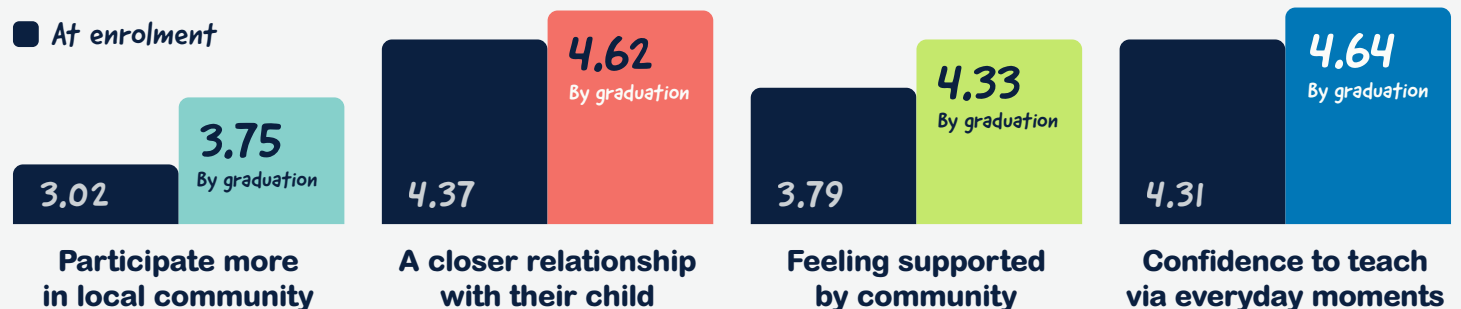
It makes it easy and you can have, 'oh, let's do HIPPY together'... Let's do our special time together.

HIPPY parent | Stream 2 evaluation

Citation: Pirathiban R, Newman V, Rehill P, Copley S, Greenwell H and Williams E (2026) An impact evaluation of the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY), the Australian Centre for Evaluation, the Australian Treasury.

From enrolment to graduation

By graduation, parents and carers reported stronger confidence, community connections and a closer parent-child relationship. These positive outcomes were seen across the network, including among First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse families



Citation: Parenting Research Centre (2025). Stream 1 Report (Effectiveness and Efficiency Analysis). Independent evaluation of the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY). Melbourne, Australia.



Tutors: Valuing parents and opening pathways

HIPPY creates paid employment and training opportunities for parents/carers as a HIPPY Tutor. Their lived experience, and community relationships help build trust, supporting families with learning and connecting them to local support.

Supporting parents to build careers

HIPPY parents/carers make up the majority of the HIPPY workforce. More than 400 Tutor positions are offered each year across Australia, providing paid employment opportunities for HIPPY parents. By drawing on their own experience of the program, Tutors provide practical guidance, peer support and local knowledge that helps families navigate HIPPY and access other supports within their community.

HIPPY parents and carers as HIPPY Tutors



93%
of HIPPY Tutors
are women



29%
of Tutors speak a language
other than English at home



24%
of Tutors identified
as First Nations

Citation: Parenting Research Centre (2025). Stream 1 Report (Effectiveness and Efficiency Analysis). Independent evaluation of the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY). Melbourne, Australia.

Valuing lived experience

Report findings highlighted that Tutors are central to a positive experience of HIPPY. Families valued Tutors for their understanding, encouragement and personalised support.



Strengthening workforce capacity and building a peer workforce

“ ”

If she wasn't there, I don't know how I would manage with all of it...

They are supportive. They help us a lot with their engagement...

HIPPY parent | Stream 2 evaluation

“ ”

We deliver packs in families' homes and in their own language. It's crucial for CALD and newly arrived communities.

HIPPY Tutor | Stream 2 evaluation

Citation: Parenting Research Centre (2025). Stream 1 Report (Effectiveness and Efficiency Analysis). Independent evaluation of the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY). Melbourne, Australia.



School readiness: A successful start to school

HIPPY helps parents lay the foundations for success at school by fostering a love of learning. The report findings highlighted the value of supporting learning at home – giving children more opportunities to build skills before they enter the classroom.

Supporting every family's learning journey

Building school readiness starts with meeting families where they are. By adapting to the needs of individual families, HIPPY helps parents understand how their child learns, navigate the education system and feel confident supporting their child's journey to school.

“ ”

It's been fantastic for me...

I was struggling how to, get them to learn.... But, to have someone show me how I can get them school-ready to then put it in place was good for me.

HIPPY parent | Stream 2 evaluation



94%

of parents feel HIPPY positively influenced their confidence as their child's first teacher

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When you came to Australia you don't know the good school system here... Through HIPPY you can realise how it works from the beginning. From kindergarten.

HIPPY parent and Tutor | Stream 2 evaluation



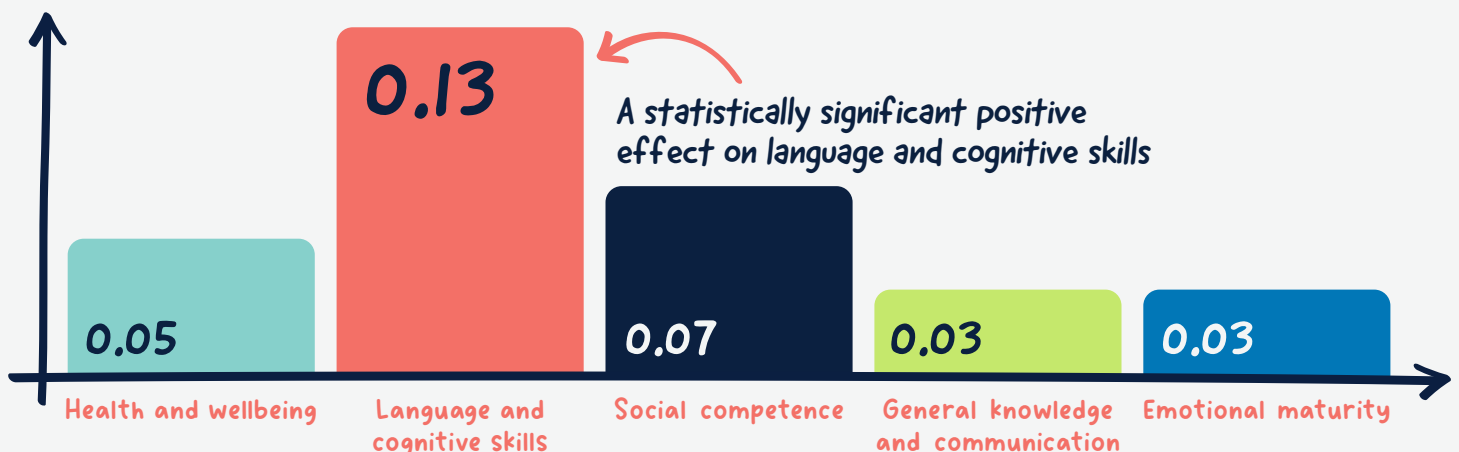
94%

of parents feel confident working with others to support their child's learning

Citation: Quote: Parenting Research Centre, IPS Management Consultants, and Curijo (2026). Stream 2 Report (Appropriateness and Implementation analysis). Independent evaluation of HIPPY. Melbourne, Australia.
Data: Pirathiban R, Newman V, Rehill P, Copley S, Greenwell H and Williams E (2026) An impact evaluation of the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY), the Australian Centre for Evaluation, the Australian Treasury.

Foundations for school success

School readiness is influenced by children's development across a range of domains. The chart below shows HIPPY's estimated impact across the five developmental areas measured by the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), including a small positive effect on language and cognitive skills.



*AEDC findings are based on 2018-2021 HIPPY participants and do not reflect the HIPPY Age 3 model introduced in 2023.

Citation: Pirathiban R, Newman V, Rehill P, Copley S, Greenwell H and Williams E (2026) An impact evaluation of the Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY), the Australian Centre for Evaluation, the Australian Treasury.