



HOME INTERACTION PROGRAM FOR PARENTS AND YOUNGSTERS

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR NEW HIPPY PROVIDER

Frequently Asked Questions

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What is HIPPY?

The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) is a two-year, home-based early learning and parenting program that empowers parents and carers to be their child's first teacher. The program builds the confidence and skills of parents and carers to create a positive learning environment, preparing their child for school. The program also offers some parents and carers a supported pathway to employment and local community leadership.

How were HIPPY communities selected?

HIPPY communities were selected by the Australian Government, in consultation with the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) and other key stakeholders.

The communities were selected based on the proportion of families in the area with young children who could benefit from the program. The selection methodology has ensured a range of factors were considered including:

- the proportion of families in the area with young children who could benefit from the program, including the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children;
- analysis of the Socio-Economic Index for Areas 2006 scale, Census information, the Australian Standard Geographical Classification and the Australian Early Development Census to target areas of disadvantage; and
- consideration of other programs in the area to ensure there was a need for the program and that establishment of HIPPY would complement and not have a negative impact on other services.

How are the current sites distributed across Australia?

HIPPY started in Australia in Fitzroy, Victoria in 1998 and has been progressively expanded to 100 communities across Australia. There are HIPPY communities in a broad range of areas from rural and remote locations to inner-city suburbs.

Where can I find out more about HIPPY?

The HIPPY Australia website www.hippyaustralia.org.au has a range of information about the program as well as links to independent evaluations of HIPPY that have been completed.

Do you have any research that shows that HIPPY works?

Over the last 50 years, HIPPY has amassed an impressive body of evaluative research across 14 countries and a diversity of contexts and cultures. In the USA, HIPPY is one of only seven approved evidence-based home intervention programs for Federal funding. A 2017 meta-analysis of HIPPY research found that in the:

- In the short term, HIPPY improved reading, language, maths, cognitive skills and behavior of children;
- Longer term the HIPPY child had higher rates of school attendance and their siblings benefitted from HIPPY home learning and parents understanding how children learning and their development; and
- Parents had improved self-esteem, behaviours and reduced their abuse of children.

The Australian Government has now undertaken three independent studies of HIPPY. The Acil-Allen evaluation found that HIPPY was well managed. It highlighted the importance of providing local flexibility while maintaining fidelity of the model; and demonstrated that the Government can expect a positive return on its investment in HIPPY.

The two HIPPY studies by Liddell in 2011 found that HIPPY improved outcomes for children, families and communities and was cost-effective (ROI of \$2.53 for every dollar spent) and by Urbis in 2013 found that HIPPY was targeted at the most disadvantaged families and communities.

In 2020, the Brotherhood of St Laurence released the findings of the HIPPY Longitudinal Study which analysed the impact of HIPPY on over 650 families across 45 communities. The study provided evidence on the long-term benefits for children and families of HIPPY particularly around the home learning environment, family characteristics, parenting style, social development, literacy, numeracy and goals and expectations.

Research publications are available on the Brotherhood of St Laurence website:

<https://www.bsl.org.au/research/publications/>

2. EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) PROCESS

The local HIPPY providers that will deliver HIPPY in Maroubra will be chosen via a competitive Expression of Interest (EOI) application process. Organisations interested in becoming HIPPY providers in these communities need to refer to the **EOI Guidelines** and download a new HIPPY provider **EOI Application Form**—both are available to download from the HIPPY Australia website hippyaustralia.org.au.

Completed EOI applications must be submitted by email to hippyaustraliaEOI@bsl.org.au and must be received by **5pm, Friday 8 October 2021 (AEST)**. Only fully completed applications will be assessed.

When will I know the outcome of this process?

All completed EOI applications that have been submitted will be assessed following the application close date. All applicants will be notified in writing of the selection process outcome via email to the nominated contact person on the EOI application form.

What happens if EOI applications are not successful?

If no successful organisation is selected through this EOI process, HIPPY Australia reserves the right not to proceed to sublicense a HIPPY provider. HIPPY Australia, if required, can approach other organisations to establish their interest in submitting an EOI at a later date or advertise the EOI again in the identified community.

When would an EOI be assessed as unsuccessful?

Any EOI application where the scores allocated *'do not meet criteria'* in any section or if the overall score is low and the risks assessed are high, the application may be considered unsuccessful.

If successful, how long will our organisation be funded for?

Following this EOI process, HIPPY Australia will select the organisation (HIPPY provider) to deliver HIPPY in Maroubra. Once selected, a Sublicence and Funding Agreement will be negotiated between the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) and the successful organisation for a period up to 31 December 2022. Delivery of HIPPY is subject to Commonwealth funding.

How are the risks to HIPPY delivery mitigated?

BSL may place conditions on successful organisations to reduce the risks to the delivery of HIPPY posed in the community. The HIPPY provider's Sublicence and Funding Agreement may include a requirement to address these risks in the site's Implementation Plan. The HIPPY provider must then be willing to work with HIPPY Australia to mitigate these risks. An Implementation Plan is developed with the HIPPY provider during the establishment of the HIPPY site.

Does HIPPY provide establishment funding for new providers?

Yes – new HIPPY providers will be receiving funding to assist in site establishment. The funds are to assist new providers' preparations to deliver HIPPY and are to be spent on items such as the recruitment of HIPPY Coordinators and Tutors, providing workspaces and purchasing office resources. Establishment funding will be a one-off payment to the HIPPY provider on signing the Sublicence and Funding Agreement and will need to be acquitted through annual audited financial statements.

If our organisation is not selected to deliver HIPPY, can I ask for feedback?

Yes, all organisations that submitted an EOI application can ask for feedback. Please contact hippyaustraliaEOI@bsl.org.au or phone 03 9445 2400.

3. HIPPY FAMILIES

Who can participate in HIPPY?

HIPPY is a free, voluntary program. To be eligible to join the program, families must have a child in the year before they start formal school, usually around four years old, and live in a catchment area where HIPPY is being delivered. HIPPY has developed Priority of Access guidelines to assist providers to enroll at least 75% of families who would benefit the most from the HIPPY program. These include:

- the household holds a Health Care Card;
- the HIPPY Child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander;
- the HIPPY Child resides in out-of-home care;
- they have no income or are receiving a form of government support payment as their main source of income;
- single-parent families;
- the child resides with a carer (i.e. not a parent); or
- the main language spoken at home is not English.

There is no cost to families participating in the program. Materials and resources are provided to families free of charge.

What are the target enrolments for HIPPY?

Each HIPPY site is expected to reach target enrolment numbers. The enrolment targets for Maroubra are 30 Age 4 children in the first year and to retain 25 Age 5 children in the second year.

Does HIPPY have to be done with the child's parent or can other people from the community do HIPPY with a child?

One of HIPPY's main aims is to build and develop a positive relationship between children and their main caregiver/s. HIPPY recognises that a child's main caregiver is not always their parent. The adult doing HIPPY should be one of the child's main caregivers, they should also live in and be involved in the local community.

Can a child do HIPPY if they are not yet four years old?

The activities in the first year of HIPPY have been designed for children who are four years of age. They work on building and developing skills that a four-year-old needs. The activities, storybooks, and group meetings in the first year of HIPPY also focus on the skills needed to start school. The activities are not considered suitable for children younger than four years of age.

Can a child do HIPPY if they are six?

The activities in HIPPY have been designed for children who are four years of age in the first year and then five years of age in the second year.

Can a child who has learning difficulties do HIPPY?

HIPPY is not a therapy program. Some families have found that HIPPY works for their child who has learning difficulties. If a child has learning difficulties of any kind, HIPPY recommends that the activities and storybooks are shown to the family and discussed with the child's health services provider before the child is enrolled.

4. HIPPY DELIVERY

How is HIPPY delivered?

HIPPY families spend approximately 10–15 minutes a day, five days a week, doing educational activities together. The activities reflect the HIPPY Curriculum Framework, which provides the basis for an integrated, cohesive, and intentional curriculum across Age 4 and Age 5, reflecting diversity and the Australian educational context.

Tutors schedule regular weekly or fortnightly visits with the families to discuss and work through the program activities in the family's home. Families are also encouraged to participate in regular parent group meetings.

Each HIPPY location is staffed by a Coordinator and a team of Tutors. Tutors are usually past or current parents participating in the program who live in the local community. Tutors are paid employees and receive training and support from the Coordinator.

Tutors visit parents in their homes on a fortnightly basis. On alternate weeks, parents, Tutors and the Coordinator come together for group meetings, to prepare for the week ahead and to participate in enrichment activities. Role play is the usual method used by Tutors to facilitate the understanding of the parents about how to do the activities.

Is HIPPY translated into any other languages?

The activity packs are all written in English. We recommend that families need a basic level of English to complete HIPPY. A family can choose to do the HIPPY activities with their child in English or using their home language.

Is the program flexible towards the needs of local sites?

Each HIPPY site operates differently according to the needs of its families and communities. There are opportunities to have an open discussion with HIPPY Australia about what variations might be needed. However, there are core elements of the program, which all sites follow in order to achieve the intended program goals and outcomes.

What is the cost for families?

There is no cost to families participating in the program. The local HIPPY provider supplies families with the materials and resources necessary to complete HIPPY within the allocated funding.

Do Tutors get paid?

Yes, Tutors are paid employees of the HIPPY provider.

Do HIPPY Tutors have to visit the home?

HIPPY is designed to be completed in an environment in which the parents feel comfortable and safe. For many this is their home, but it could be an alternative location such as the local library, a park, or at the HIPPY office.

What outcomes does an organisation have to achieve?

A HIPPY provider is required by the Sublicence and Funding Agreement to enroll a target number of children and retain them into the second year. Over the two years, Tutors support parents to teach their child 60 weeks of curriculum to encourage a love of learning, maximise their child's chance of enjoying and doing well at school and promote language and listening skills, developing concentration.

Parents are encouraged to attend fortnightly or monthly group meetings where they share their experiences of teaching their child and learn new skills and about local services—helping families to feel connected and engaged in their community.

The HIPPY provider is expected to assist Tutors in their professional development through the HIPPY Australia employment pathways program Pathways to Possibilities and additional Tutor Training funding is provided to every site to support this. HIPPY parents who are not employed as Tutors are also expected to be supported to access appropriate training and learning opportunities.

Who are the Tutors?

Tutors are HIPPY parents who are trained by a local Coordinator. The Tutors complete the HIPPY activities with their own children first, before visiting families in their homes every week or fortnight and role playing the activities with them. Tutors are employed by the HIPPY provider and work about 30 hours a fortnight depending on the number of families they support.

Who is the HIPPY Coordinator?

Reporting to the Line Manager, the HIPPY Coordinator implements and manages HIPPY within a specified geographic area or 'catchment'. HIPPY Coordinators have a diverse role, which encompasses employing and supervising Tutors, engaging and supporting families, keeping records of program delivery, networking and building partnerships, participating in governance of the HIPPY site and much more.

Who is the Line Manager?

The HIPPY provider appoints a Line Manager from among their staff to be responsible for managing HIPPY in their catchment. The Line Manager recruits a suitably qualified and experienced Coordinator, supports and

supervises the Coordinator, and ensures that the Sublicence and Funding Agreement is maintained. The Line Manager often has other responsibilities besides running HIPPY.

What is the HIPPY advisory group?

Every HIPPY community has an advisory group to guide its growth, development and its ongoing service to the community. The main responsibility of the HIPPY advisory group is to provide advice, assistance and support to the HIPPY Coordinator. A HIPPY advisory group generally comprises the Coordinator, Line Manager, Tutors, some parents enrolled in the program and a variety of representatives from key local service providers and community stakeholders.

5. HIPPY SUPPORT

What materials does HIPPY Australia provide?

HIPPY Australia provides a range of materials and resources including:

- A curriculum;
- Activity packs;
- Storybooks;
- HIPPY shapes for the activities;
- Information booklets, training manuals and brochures;
- Home Tutor training program: *Pathways to Possibilities*
- HIPPY Learning Management System; and
- Promotional resources.

How does HIPPY Australia support sites?

HIPPY Australia provides support and assistance, working in collaboration with HIPPY sites.

For new HIPPY Coordinators, HIPPY Australia provides a four-day, pre-service training course in Melbourne, following this with site visits to assist with the training of Tutors and the initial delivery of HIPPY. Additional visits to HIPPY sites occur on an annual basis as part of HIPPY Australia's Quality Assurance. These visits support the provider to identify site development goals for continuous improvement.

Offsite support is provided in the form of regular phone and email contact as well as a number of training webinars; while other HIPPY Australia staff are available to assist with general enquiries about the program, administrative processes, media and communications, the ETO performance management system and program finance management.

Is the program managed by the Australian Government?

The program is managed by BSL, through HIPPY Australia, on behalf of the Australian Government. BSL sublicenses non-profit organisations to deliver the program in selected communities. HIPPY is funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Social Services.

What training and support will be provided?

HIPPY Australia assists providers by assigning a dedicated HIPPY Consultant to advise them on the implementation and delivery of HIPPY in their community. HIPPY Australia delivers face-to-face training for new Coordinators and provides support to new sites in delivering Tutor Training. Coordinator training is supported by access to a Learning Management System (LMS) and an LMS Library which houses HIPPY Australia resources for sites. HIPPY Australia undertakes quality assurance visits on a regular basis at each of our sites and provides a data management system Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) to capture program delivery data. In addition to this, HIPPY Australia is committed to bring sites together for a National Gathering in 2022 to promote peer support and shared practice across the network.