



**Australian Government**

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**Department of Social Services**

# **Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY)**

## **Programme Guidelines**

**2015-2018**

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# 1. PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

## 1.1 Background

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

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL), through HIPPY Australia, has an exclusive licence from HIPPY International to run the programme in Australia. The programme is delivered in selected disadvantaged communities by existing not-for-profit organisations in each location.

More than \$100 million has been committed (2008 to 2017) to HIPPY to support continuing programme delivery in the first 50 locations and expand the programme to an additional 50 locations, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Once fully implemented in 2015, HIPPY will operate in 100 communities with high levels of disadvantage and vulnerable families across Australia, benefitting around 4,000 children each year.

Further information about HIPPY can be found at:

[www.hippyaustralia.org.au](http://www.hippyaustralia.org.au)

[www.education.gov.au/home-interaction-program-parents-and-youngsters-hippy](http://www.education.gov.au/home-interaction-program-parents-and-youngsters-hippy)

## 1.2 Objectives

The programme objectives are to:

- provide a child with a structured education-focused early learning programme at home;
- improve children's preparedness for school and strengthen school participation;
- build the confidence and skills of parents and carers to create a positive home learning environment;
- support employment and community leadership opportunities for HIPPY coordinators, home tutors and parents;
- strengthen communities.

Benefits for children include:

- encourages a love of learning;
- maximises chances of enjoyment and doing well at school;
- promotes language, numeracy and listening skills;
- develops concentration and motor skills;
- builds self-esteem and confidence in learning;
- improves communication between parents and children.

Benefits for families include:

- helps create a learning environment at home;
- increases parents' knowledge of child development and the way children learn;
- provides parents with opportunities to enjoy positive time with their children;
- enables parents to be actively involved in their children's education;
- supports parents to meet regularly and promotes a sense of inclusion and connectedness with their community;
- increases parents' self-confidence;
- has an overall positive impact on family relationships;
- creates local employment and training opportunities.

### **1.3 Timeframe**

These Guidelines cover programme delivery from 2015 to 2018 inclusive – including continued programme delivery in the first 50 locations as well as the expansion of the programme to an additional 50 locations with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders which is being undertaken in two phases – the first 25 commenced delivery in 2014 and the remaining 25 will commence in 2015.

Although programme funding is allocated on a financial year basis, the programme is delivered in HIPPY communities on a calendar year basis. As such the Funding Agreement with BSL will cover delivery of HIPPY in the 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 calendar years.

### **1.4 Funding**

More than \$100 million has been allocated through budget processes to support ongoing programme delivery of HIPPY in 100 communities:

- the 2008–09 Budget allocated \$32.5 million over five years to roll out the programme to 50 communities nationally.
- the 2012–13 Budget allocated \$55.7 million over four years to allow the programme to continue in the first 50 communities for an additional two financial years, and to expand the programme into 50 new Indigenous focussed communities. This Budget also committed ongoing funding for the new 50 Indigenous focussed communities beyond the four year budget cycle.
- the 2012–13 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) allocated \$23.8 million over three years from 2014-15 to support programme delivery in the first 50 communities. MYEFO also committed ongoing funding for the first 50 communities beyond the three year budget cycle.

## **2. PROGRAMME GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE**

### **2.1 HIPPY Advisory Committee**

The HIPPY Advisory Committee provides high level advice, planning and recommendations about strategic direction and priorities for HIPPY programme delivery. Membership includes representatives from the Department of Social Services ("the department"), the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, BSL and HIPPY Australia. The Committee meets as required and is chaired alternately by the department and BSL.

## 2.2 Roles and responsibilities

### Programme delegate

The programme delegate is at SES Band 2 level – currently the Group Manager, Early Childhood Care Support - and is responsible for the overall management and decision making for the programme.

### Department of Social Services

The department is responsible for policy considerations, selection of communities, programme administration, and managing the Funding Agreement between the department and BSL.

### Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet provides advice to the department and HIPPY Advisory Committee to ensure programme delivery is consistent with key whole of government priorities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

### Brotherhood of St Laurence/HIPPY Australia

BSL (through HIPPY Australia) implements and manages the programme according to the requirements set out in the Funding Agreement. The National Manager HIPPY Australia is the main point of contact with the department.

BSL has an exclusive licence with HIPPY International to run the programme in Australia; BSL has the right to sub-licence in Australia and to enter into arrangements with not-for-profit organisations to have these organisations deliver the programme in the selected communities.

HIPPY Australia undertakes development, performance management, quality assurance, provision of programme materials and resources, training, site support, networking and liaison with community programme providers. HIPPY Australia also undertakes research and analysis to build the evidence-base, national communication and marketing of HIPPY and participation in the International HIPPY network.

### Programme Providers

Not-for-profit organisations are selected through a competitive application process by BSL in conjunction with the department to deliver the programme in each HIPPY community in collaboration with the community and do so in accordance with their sub-licensing and funding agreement with BSL.

## 2.3 Programme Assurance

The department has a comprehensive programme assurance approach to ensure sound administrative, decision making, risk management and financial monitoring processes are in place to protect the integrity of the programme.

Funding and provider reporting arrangements have been simplified in line with the government's deregulation agenda. Appropriate assessment of the risk of these changes has been undertaken and the following processes are in place to mitigate any risks identified:

- HIPPY Guidelines 2015 – 2018;
- HIPPY Funding Agreement 2015 – 2018;
- HIPPY Operational plan developed and agreed to by the department and BSL;
- Risk management plan;
- Complex sites implementation plan including:
  - utilising existing stakeholder networks (Social Services and PM&C State & Territory Offices) to support the provider selection process and ongoing HIPPY delivery in these locations
  - additional costs per site to support the more complex locations
  - agreeing critical review points which trigger the department and BSL to undertake an assessment of implementation progress in these locations

- adjustment of recruitment targets including target number of families and home tutor numbers due to the lower numbers of children and potential availability of staff in these communities.

### **3. PROGRAMME REQUIREMENTS**

#### **3.1 Programme delivery model**

HIPPY has 5 essential features:

- two year home based programme;
- role play as a learning tool;
- parents/carers as home tutors;
- home visits and parent groups;
- everywhere learning – looking for opportunities in every day settings.

Parents and their children enrol in the programme in the year before the child commences formal schooling and participate for two years. The programme activities are designed to be integrated into the daily life of the family. Each family participates in a series of structured learning experiences that are aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework. The first year of the programme provides children with 30 activity packs delivered weekly which support literacy, numeracy and motor skills. The second year provides 15 packs delivered fortnightly plus information for parents about children’s learning and development.

In each HIPPY site, the contracted not-for-profit organisation delivers the programme in collaboration with the local community. It is essential that the provider has an established presence in the community with linkages to other services and connections within the community. Each community programme is staffed by a tertiary qualified (or equivalent) coordinator and a team of home tutors.

The coordinator has overall responsibility for the programme and is key to the success of programme delivery. Coordinators recruit families into HIPPY; supervise home tutors and conduct weekly training sessions with tutors; conduct fortnightly HIPPY parent groups and enrichment opportunities; complete all reports and assessments; and attend all HIPPY training and conferences.

Home tutors live in the community (ideally drawn from the HIPPY parent group but any willing community member can be considered), are paid employees and receive training and support from the coordinator. They work with HIPPY families and deliver the programme through home visits and parent groups as well as assisting with parent enrichment activities and records for each family.

#### **Referral of Families**

HIPPY is a voluntary programme, and families may hear about HIPPY from a variety of sources. This may be through referral by other support programmes, by word of mouth, friends and family, advertisements in the local paper or through promotional posters around the community. Families are required to contact the local HIPPY coordinator if they wish to enrol or to find out if they are eligible to participate.

To be eligible to join the programme, the family must have a child in the year before they start school and live in a catchment area where HIPPY is being delivered.

#### **3.2 Funding arrangements**

The department will enter into a Funding Agreement (2015-2018) with BSL in early 2015 to support the implementation and delivery of HIPPY in a total of 100 communities.

The BSL has a licence from HIPPY International to use HIPPY International's intellectual property and to run the programme in Australia (using the five essential features and HIPPY materials). The licence to BSL includes a right to sub-licence; accordingly, BSL can enter into 'sub-contracting-type' arrangements with not-for-profit organisations to deliver the programme to the selected HIPPY communities.

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

The Funding Agreement specifies arrangements and requirements including:

- programme enrolment and retention targets;
- employing HIPPY coordinators and tutors;
- new location selection;
- programme provider selection;
- reporting, assessment, evaluation and innovative project development.

Under the Funding Agreement, payments will be made to BSL on a quarterly basis against progressive completion of milestones to the department's satisfaction.

### **3.3 Community selection**

HIPPY communities are selected by the department, in consultation with the BSL/HIPPY Australia and other key stakeholders.

#### **Phase 1 (first 50 communities) selected between 2009 and 2011**

Phase 1 locations (which target disadvantaged areas) were identified using analysis of the Socio-Economic Index for Areas 2006 Scale, Census information, the Australian Standard Geographical Classification, 2009 Australian Early Development Index results, where available. In addition, state and territory departments were consulted to ensure the establishment of the programme in a particular area would not clash with current jurisdictional programmes that may be similarly targeted.

#### **Phase 2 (additional 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focussed communities) - 25 selected in 2013**

In 2013 the first 25 new HIPPY communities were selected via an expression of interest (EOI) process, with the following selection criteria considered:

- a focus on communities with a minimum population of 100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 0-4 year olds;
- communities that have a strong need for an early childhood programme;
- communities that have a strong desire for an early childhood learning programme;
- communities that have, or have the ability to source, a not-for-profit programme provider who has the ability to form strong linkages and relationships within the community and deliver the programme at the local level;
- geographic spread.

#### **Phase 2 (additional 50 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focussed communities) - 25 selected in 2014**

The selection of the remaining 25 communities in 2014 is a two staged process. During stage one, communities nominate to have HIPPY delivered in their community from early 2015. In parallel, the department identified communities that met the selection criteria to target locations with high levels of demonstrated vulnerabilities, to ensure geographic coverage and to support other government policy initiatives. For stage two, shortlisted communities participate in information sessions facilitated by HIPPY Australia.

Community selection is determined by the assessment of potential communities against a number of selection criteria and other considerations.

Stage one criteria specify that communities must have:

- a minimum population of 100 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander 0-4 year olds;
- a strong need for an early childhood programme;
- a not-for-profit programme provider who will deliver the programme or the ability to source a suitable provider.

Stage two criteria include (but are not limited to):

- the ability of the community to participate in the programme in line with the HIPPY model;
- strong community support for HIPPY;
- factors that may influence the success and sustainability of HIPPY delivery in the community.

The department uses a range of data and information to assess a community's ability to meet the above criteria and considerations including 2011 Australian Bureau of Statistics 0-4 Indigenous population counts; 2012 Australian Early Development Index results (now known as the Australian Early Education Census); 2011 Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas data; Australian Standard Geographical Classification data; other early childhood, education and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programmes currently operating in the community, and information collected by HIPPY Australia during the information sessions conducted in the shortlisted communities.

### **3.4 Performance and monitoring**

Programme implementation and delivery will be monitored by the department to ensure HIPPY is delivered according to Australian Government policy priorities as well as according to specific requirements outlined in the Funding Agreement.

Under the Funding Agreement, BSL is required to submit quarterly progress reports to the department providing an update on programme implementation and delivery.

Key aspects of programme implementation and delivery (2014-2017) include:

- continued programme delivery in the first 50 locations (recruiting an average of 30 age four children and retaining an average of 23 age five children per site each year);
- expansion of programme to an additional 50 locations, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities – 25 in 2014 and 25 in 2015 (recruiting an average of 17 age four children and retaining an average of 13 age five children per site each year);
- review and delivery of the revised curriculum, material and resources;
- development and implementation of new database and performance management system from 2014;
- development and implementation of E-HIPPY from 2014-15 (an on-line portal and stand alone website).

### **3.5 Research and Evaluation activities**

As part of the delivery of HIPPY, BSL is able to conduct in-house research projects to inform programme delivery and build the evidence base for HIPPY, for example, by examining effective recruitment and retention strategies and factors affecting participation by HIPPY families.

Independent evaluation activities planned for 2015–16 and 2016–17 (to be commissioned by the department) will provide an opportunity to add to the evidence base and measure how effectively HIPPY contributes to key Government policy objectives (such as enhanced parental engagement and improving readiness for school), particularly as compared to other similar programmes.

This follows on from previous evaluation activities for the programme:

- the evaluation of the national roll-out of HIPPY in 2011, undertaken by Monash University in conjunction with BSL;
- the independent review of each of the first 50 HIPPY communities in 2013, undertaken by Urbis Pty Ltd.

### **3.6 Working with children**

It is a matter of law that individuals who are involved in the administering of this programme must, if they will be working with children, comply with the relevant legislative working with children check requirements of the jurisdiction in which they will be working with children. For example, in NSW, this would be the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012 (NSW)*.

## **4. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **4.1 Privacy**

The department, including its employees, contractors and agents, are subject to the *Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)* (the Privacy Act) and the requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) contained in the Privacy Act. The Privacy Act and the APPs regulate the handling of ‘personal information’ of individuals by government agencies and certain private sector organisations, including the collection, storage, use and disclosure of that information.

The department will, when administering the programme, abide by the Privacy Act when handling personal information collected for the purposes of the programme.

The department has also imposed on BSL, through the Funding Agreement, an obligation to comply with the Privacy Act and in particular the APPs when providing activities under the Funding Agreement.

For further information about the department’s privacy policy, including how to access or correct personal information held by the department or how to make a privacy complaint:

Please go to our website: [www.dss.gov.au/privacy-policy](http://www.dss.gov.au/privacy-policy)

or write to:

Privacy Contact Officer

Legal Services Group

Department of Social Services

PO Box 7576 CANBERRA BUSINESS CENTRE ACT 2610

or email: [DSSfeedback@dss.gov.au](mailto:DSSfeedback@dss.gov.au)

Privacy complaints may be made directly to the Federal Privacy Commissioner, but will only be actioned by the Privacy Commissioner where a complaint was made in the first instance to the department but was not dealt with to the complainant’s satisfaction.

### **4.2 Freedom of information (FOI)**

All documents created or held by the department in relation to the programme are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (FOI Act)*. If a request is made under the FOI Act for access to a document subject to the FOI Act, then that document will be made publicly available unless it can be demonstrated that the document falls under an exemption provision, or a conditional exemption

provision and disclosure would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest, as specified in the FOI Act.

All FOI requests are to be referred to:

FOI Coordinator  
Department of Social Services  
TOP CW2 PO Box 7576  
CANBERRA BUSINESS CENTRE ACT 2610

or email: [foi@dss.gov.au](mailto:foi@dss.gov.au)

Decisions regarding requests for access to documents will be made by an authorised FOI decision-maker in accordance with the FOI Act.

### **4.3 False and misleading information**

Giving false or misleading information to the Commonwealth is a serious offence.

### **4.4 Grant publication**

The department is also obliged to publish details of all grants on its website. Information that will be published includes the name of the funding recipient, the contract amount, a description of the project, and relevant dates.

### **4.5 Complaints**

The department has a formal complaints service and an unsuccessful community or service provider can lodge a complaint by telephoning 1300 363 079.

A complaint is defined as:

*Any expression of dissatisfaction with a product or service offered or provided* [Australian Standard AS4269–1995]

The department has a 'complaints recording system' to capture complaints to the department about any of its services or those delivered by funded service providers.

For the purposes of the department's complaints recording system, a 'complaint' does not include:

- ministerial correspondence;
- Freedom of Information requests; or
- complaints made to service providers, as these will be covered by their own complaints mechanisms required under sub-licensing arrangements.

If a service provider or community is dissatisfied at any time with our handling of their complaint, they can also contact the Australian Ombudsman at [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au).