



Home Visiting and Elementary Education

Extending the Reach of Home Visiting

Series on Home Visiting's Connections to Larger Systems of Support

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Helping children and parents be ready for school in the early years supports children's development, can ease the transition to formal education, builds parental confidence which may be vulnerable due to their own experience with school, and reinforces the importance of parents as their child's first teacher and essential partner in learning.

According to research analysis by the National Home Visiting Resource Center:

“Children whose families participate in home visiting receive more stimulation and support for learning, more reading time with their parents, compared to children of nonparticipants. Services can also improve the quality of the home environment. In the long run, children of home visiting participants demonstrate improved early language and cognitive development, greater math and reading achievement, reduced absenteeism rates, and decreased in-school and out-of-school suspensions compared to their peers.”¹

Yet significant challenges remain. The 2026 KIDS COUNT Data Book indicates that 70% of fourth graders are not proficient in reading.² This underscores the importance of building strong developmental and learning foundations before children enter school – and maintaining strong connections between families, early childhood programs, and schools as children progress through the early grades.

When these two systems work together – home visiting and elementary education – children are more prepared for school, parents are more aware of their child's development and can be strong advocates for and partners in their children's learning, and schools have a greater understanding of each child's strengths, developmental needs, and family context and are therefore better able to receive and support each child so that they can reach their unique potential.

Promising Example

The National Home Visiting Network set out to uncover examples of collaboration between elementary education and home visiting. Fortunately, several home visiting models – most notably HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters), Parents as Teachers, and

¹ <https://nhvrc.org/yearbook/2025-yearbook/about-home-visiting/results/>

² <https://www.aecf.org/resources/2026-kids-count-data-book>

ParentChild+ – recognize the value of this partnership and are working closely with a few public school systems. Here is one promising example that illustrates what is possible when home visiting and elementary education work together.

Jefferson County Public Schools

In 1994, the Jefferson County Public School District implemented the HIPPY program to serve children ages 2 through 4. It is implemented as a bilingual program serving 98 families each year by 7 HIPPY home visitors who implement the 30-week model focusing on school readiness skills and social-emotional development. More recently, the District responded to community requests and added the Parents as Teachers (PAT) model so that they can now begin working with families prenatally with PAT and then continue to serve them with the HIPPY program to school age.

According to Kathy Harrison who oversees the home visiting programs, “This adds another layer of support for families – those early years are absolutely critical to brain development, so we want to make sure that families are reading books to their children, are practicing serve and return, and that they understand the importance of getting children ready for school.... making sure the whole family is ready for the school experience. Also, it’s great for early intervention too. We have a lot of resources we can access to address concerns that parents might have with their children’s development. And teachers now have a better understanding of the importance of the early years and want to make sure that all children have a strong home life to help ready them for school.”

The District uses an assortment of surveys and assessments to measure the growth in children and families – PICCOLO (Parenting Interactions with Children: Checklist of Observations Linked to Outcomes), Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and others. In 2024, they looked at data of 62 HIPPY graduates that completed 3rd grade and found:

- *Attendance.* HIPPY graduates had a 94% attendance rate, higher than the District.
- *Behavior.* Only one HIPPY graduate had a behavior challenge and it was not related to aggression.
- *READ Plan.* Thirteen HIPPY graduates had a READ plan (a Colorado specific targeted intervention plan tailored to the child’s specific reading skill gaps). A closer look at the data revealed that the children were all multilanguage learners or had an Individualized Education Plan in place as well. This suggests that there is an opportunity to offer more support to these children in Kindergarten to lower the READ Plan rate by 3rd grade.
- *Parent Confidence.* Before HIPPY, 26% of parents said they were confident with their parenting; after the program 93% expressed confidence.
- *Home Learning Environment.* Before HIPPY 24% of parents said they felt confident that they could create a learning environment in their home; after the program 87% expressed confidence.
- *Resources for the Family.* Before HIPPY 11% felt confident that they could find resources for their family; after the program 83% expressed confidence in knowing how to find resources.

Essential Lesson:

The data demonstrates that the program is not simply preparing children for school. It is building family capacity that leads to stronger partnerships between families, schools, and communities to better support children’s learning.

Collaboration Tips: Home Visiting and Elementary Education

Home visiting programs can collaborate with elementary education by:

- Creating opportunities for home visitors and teachers to learn from one another about child development, family engagement, and culturally responsive practices.
- Meeting with state and/or local Title 1 administrators to share information about the impacts of home visiting on school readiness and family engagement.
- Sharing information that Title 1, Part A funds can be used for home visiting to improve academic outcomes, reduce achievement gaps, and increase family engagement in high-poverty schools.
- Reviewing needs assessment and kindergarten readiness data to help determine where home visiting aligned with elementary education should be prioritized.
- Partnering to organize transition events that introduce the child and family to the new school environment and teachers.
- Engaging parents as partners in planning transition activities and identifying what information and support would help their families navigate the transition to school.
- Hosting group socialization opportunities for home visiting parents that take place in or near the schools.

Helpful Resources

Beyond the Early Years: The Long-Term Effects of Home Visiting on Mothers, Families, and Children - https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/MIHOPE_Home_Visits_Evaluation_Report.pdf

Children's Pre-Academic School Readiness and Home Learning Activities: A Moderated-Mediation Analysis of Home Visiting - <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1245893/full>

Parents as Teachers Home Visiting Intervention: A Path to Improved Academic Outcomes, School Behavior, and Parenting Skills - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0190740918303815?via%3Dihub>

Information on Selected Home Visiting Models that Work Closely with School Districts

HIPPY US - www.hippyus.org

Parents as Teachers - www.parentsasteachers.org

ParentChild+ - www.parentchildplus.org