ENHANCING LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD WITHIN
THE FAMILY: EVALUATION OF PRACTICE AND THEORY IN A
MULTICULTURAL CONTEXT

BY

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ENHANCING LEARNING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD WITHIN THE FAMILY: EVALUATION OF PRACTICE AND THEORY IN A MULTI-CULTURAL CONTEXT

by

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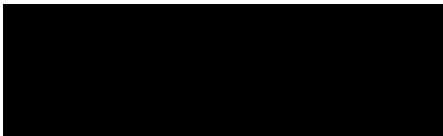Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts
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DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any higher degree or graduate diploma in any university, and that to the best of my knowledge and belief the thesis contains no copy or paraphrase of material previously published or written by another person, except where the reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Tim Gilley

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides an analysis of a particular approach to enhancing learning in early childhood within the family. It involves an evaluation of practice and theory in an educationally disadvantaged and multi-cultural community. The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) has a 30 year history and was introduced into Australia in 1998 by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. It is a two-year intensive program with four and five-year-old children and their families. Current understanding of the importance of learning in the early years, and intensive adult-child communication, explain why programs such as HIPPY which engage parents as teachers of their young children can be effective. Early learning experiences are at home. Later programs in school often appear to be inadequate to redress early disadvantage because they intervene too late and lack the resources to provide the necessary adult-to-child input. The research reported here was an evaluation of the second intake of 33 children (32 families) into HIPPY in Australia. A triangulation research method involved (a) participant observation of the program, (b) interviews with stakeholders, and (c) an assessment of children in the program and in a matched comparison group. Direct testing and teacher assessment of children was undertaken in the areas of general development, literacy, numeracy and school behaviour during the children's first and second years of schooling. The research findings indicated that the program was well implemented at a number of different levels and that the overseas model can be successfully implemented in multi-cultural Australian conditions. The approach to the diverse language backgrounds of families was a major area of successful adaptation from the standard model. Both qualitative and quantitative data analysis indicated that the program enhanced children's school progress. The study identified lessons for future evaluation studies of the program in Australia. The research findings indicate an encouraging start for HIPPY in Australia. In broader terms, the study points to the potential importance to disadvantaged children of well implemented home-based early childhood education programs.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There has been increasing disenchantment in Australia and other Western countries with the ability of preschools and primary schools to bring all children up to minimum, and testable, standards of literacy and numeracy (Australian Parents Council Inc., 1998; deLemos & Harvey-Beavis, 1995; Masters, 1997; OECD, 2001). This concern about educational outcomes, linked to recent research on the importance of the early years, has led to an increased interest in early childhood education as a way of reducing or eliminating educational disadvantage (Fleer, 2002; McCain & Mustard, 1999). While early childhood education has traditionally been provided in centre-based services in Australia and overseas (Boocock & Larner, 1998; Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, 1996), there are now a number of models available which are home-based, involving parents as teachers of their children (Berger, 1995; Vimpani, Frederico, & Barclay, 1996; Wagner & Clayton, 1999). One of these is the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), initiated in Israel in the 1960s and now operating in six other countries (National Council of Jewish Women Institute for Innovation in Education, 2001). Evaluation of this program in the Australian context provides a focus for considering a range of issues surrounding the role of early childhood education in addressing educational disadvantage in communities.

1.1   Scope of the present study

The research reported in this thesis is concerned with early childhood education practice and theory in multi-cultural conditions in Australia. The practice element was an evaluation of HIPPY implemented with a group of 33 children and their families. The program operated for two years with these children whilst they were four and five years of age and most of the families involved were from non-English-speaking backgrounds. The theory component concerned current understandings of how children learn. Attention was also given to understanding the research findings of this intervention in the context of the system of educational and other services provided in Australia and research on early childhood education programs generally, including the international evaluation literature on HIPPY.

The present study was undertaken at the piloting stage of this program in Australia as part of a broader research endeavour. A process evaluation was conducted with the first intake of families to HIPPY in Australia (Grady, forthcoming). The present study comprised a process and outcome evaluation of the second intake of families. Key components for the research were

therefore to investigate whether it could be successfully implemented in this country and what adaptations, if any, were necessary to suit existing conditions. As HIPPY was devised as a preschool program (Lombard, 1994), there was a particular interest in how it would operate in Australia where its second year coincides with children's first year of primary education (Dean, Leung, Gilley, & Grady, forthcoming).

With a view to the potential future development of the program, there was also an interest in whether it was possible to identify groups of families for whom the program would or would not work. Lastly, there was a broader interest in testing out evaluation research approaches which could be used in future evaluation of the program in Australia.

1.2 Aims and research questions

Two main aims or interests drove the study. The first was how an understanding of program implementation might generate an understanding of the relationship between implementation processes and any identified program effects. The second was to identify program effects on participating children and their parents. To achieve these broader aims, four main research questions were formalised, as set out below.

a) How was the standardised program implemented?

b) What were the experiences and views of the direct participants and other stakeholders of the implemented program?

c) What were the outcomes for children participating in the program, particularly in relation to the program goal of improving school success, as determined by parents, teachers and direct testing?

d) What were the outcomes for parents participating in the program?

In relation to program implementation, it was expected that there would be variations from the standard program model in how the service provider implemented the program (Clay, 1991). The standard approach could be a useful starting point for understanding implementation and identifying and reporting on variations. It was also expected that there would be differences in how the program was implemented with different families and that it would be possible to identify common and different parental and other stakeholder experiences of program processes, and what was important in these processes.

In relation to child outcomes, parents, school teachers and direct assessment of children were anticipated as important sources of information, especially when used in conjunction with the involvement of a comparison study group of children who did not receive the program. As the

focus of HIPPY is to improve children's progress at school, measures of child outcomes could reasonably be described as program outcomes. It was expected that there would also be effects on parents through their participation in HIPPY, which could help explain how the program worked.

In considering the potential development of the HIPPY program in Australia, four more detailed questions were identified.

a) Is HIPPY more successful for some groups of 'educationally disadvantaged' families than others?

b) What are the implications of providing HIPPY programs in the multi-cultural context of Australia?

c) What are the implications of running the second year of the HIPPY program in the child's first year of schooling?

d) What are the lessons for future evaluations of HIPPY in Australia?

In relation to the notion of 'educational disadvantage', families are selected into HIPPY on the basis of parents having an education level of Year 12 or less (discussed in Chapter 4). The issue of what constitutes educational disadvantage for children participating in this implementation of HIPPY, and how it relates to forms of disadvantage other than parental educational level, such as coming from a non-English speaking background or having a low income, is examined in this thesis.

1.3   Structure of the thesis

The structure of this thesis flows from its theoretical and programmatic evaluation focus.

Chapter 2 reviews theoretical debates about how children learn and about influences on their learning. Key resources here are the works of Vygotsky (1962) and Piaget (1952) concerning theories of how children learn, and Bronfenbrenner's (1986, 1991) ecological theory as a way of identifying the range of potential influences on children's learning. This chapter also considers the issue of bilingualism in education (Cummins, 1984a; Cummins & Swain, 1986; McKay, Davies, Devlin, Clayton, Oliver, & Zammit, 1997).

Chapter 3 focuses on the practices of early childhood education programs as approaches to combating educational disadvantage. Important resources for this are international reviews of home visiting (Daro & Harding, 1999) and early childhood education programs (Barnett & Boocock, 1998). This Chapter includes evaluations of Head Start Programs in the United States of America (Cicirelli, Evans & Schiller, 1969; Consortium for Longitudinal Studies, 1983; O'Brien, 1990).

Chapter 4 introduces and describes HIPPY in detail, covering its origins and international development, the program model itself and the published program evaluation literature. Key resources here are the HIPPY 1999 Coordinator's manual developed in Israel (Lombard, Levy, Marcoshemer, Gerslenfeld & Ginseberg, 1999), evaluation reports (Kagitcbasi, Sunar & Bekman, 1988; Lombard, 1994; Baker, Piotrkowski, & Brooks-Gunn, 1996) and other literature concerning HIPPY (Westheimer, 1997; Lombard, 1997).

Chapter 5 examines the service context in Australia in which HIPPY must operate. This comprises an overview of the systems of health and welfare services and early childhood education provision. Significant resources here are reviews of education provision (Marginson 1993; 1997), specifically early childhood education provision (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, 1996; Taylor, 1997; Kirby & Harper, 2001) and the provision of health and welfare services to families with young children (Gilley 1993; 1994, Gilley & Taylor, 1995; Health and Community Services, 1993; Taylor & Macdonald, 1998).

Chapter 6 sets out the overall rationale for the study, including a discussion of the aims and research questions formulated.

Chapter 7 describes the research method of the study within a broader methodological context relevant in this area. It outlines the assumptions about the nature of social science knowledge which underpin this research and develops the overall research design. It goes on to describe the main approaches taken to data collection: (a) participant observation, (b) stakeholder interviews and (c) testing and assessing children's abilities and adjustment to school. It then sets out the approaches taken to data analysis. Important resources for this are analyses of shifts in social research paradigms (Carr & Kemiss, 1986; Wadsworth, 1993), a review of the historical development of evaluation approaches (Guba and Lincoln, 1989), specific approaches to evaluation of educational interventions (Cazden, 1972) and the study's records of the research methods employed.

Chapter 8 is the first of two chapters presenting the findings of the present study. It focuses on the nature of program implementation for the families in this study and involves both descriptions of program implementation and participants' views of these. It draws upon the research interviews with parents, HIPPY staff and other stakeholders and upon the researcher's participant observation of the program.

Chapter 9 is the second chapter describing the findings of the present study. It focuses on program effects. Three major sources of data are entailed; namely (a) the views of parents of children enrolled in HIPPY, (b) the researcher assessments and (c) the teacher assessments of children in HIPPY, contrasted with those of a non-HIPPY group.

Chapter 10 reviews the data presented in Chapters 8 and 9 in relation to the aims and research questions of the study and relates these findings to those of evaluation studies of HIPPY and other early childhood education programs for disadvantaged families.

Finally, Chapter 11 examines the research findings in the light of key issues raised in the theoretical literature concerning children's learning and the Australian service context.

potential areas of learning and Piaget emphasises the inability of children to learn beyond their stage of development at any particular point.

Piaget (1952; 1977) made a major contribution to understanding children's learning in terms of viewing children as active participants in their own learning and in helping to establish that the thinking of children is qualitatively different from that of adults (Tizard & Hughes, 1986). One criticism of his work is that he overstates the inability of children to understand certain concepts, such as conservation of quantity at particular ages. An explanation for Piaget's emphasis on this was his empirical reliance on children's responses to single questions rather than their pattern of responses in everyday interaction with adults in more natural settings such as the home (Tizard & Hughes). His findings may be more a function of the language in which the task is explained than he claimed (Gething, Papalia, & Olds, 1996). Piaget's work has been increasingly seen as seriously understating both the capacities of young children for more advanced thinking, and the important role that relationships with adults play in the development of this (Gray, 1987; Tizard & Hughes).

2.1.2   Vygotsky and later developments

Vygotsky (1962) drew upon a number of fields, including linguistics, psychology and philosophy, to frame his theory of learning. He viewed thought and language as having different genetic roots, proposing that children can think before they have the use of speech and speak before words have any connection to thought. In his theory, the intersection and developing relationship between thought and language differentiate the intellectual development of human beings from other animals. Language emerges first as a tool but later transforms the nature of what it is to be human and what comprises human civilisation. In contrast with other animals, human beings are able to use language for problem solving and the development of higher orders of thinking. For Vygotsky, the search was for the historical child, rather than the eternal child, as he considered the development of the child's thinking to be directly linked to the historical and cultural circumstances in which the child grows and develops. Here was Marxist thought applied to the issue of language and human development.

Vygotsky (1962, pp. 59-69) described children's learning as following a developmental sequence. He saw the child moving from syncretic thinking in undifferentiated *'heaps'*, to thinking in increasingly sophisticated ways; firstly in concrete groupings which he named *'complexes'* and finally to conceptual thinking. Syncretic thinking occurs in the first twelve months of life. Complexes are predominant in the period before adolescence. In adolescence the child reaches the stage of conceptual thinking. For Vygotsky, learning for the child always occurs twice, first in relation to social meaning and then in relation to individualised, internal thinking.

Egocentric speech in the young child was seen as a transition stage between social speech and inner speech.

Vygotsky (1962) also made a distinction between the demands placed upon the child in learning the spoken word, which is developed in the context of everyday life, and the written word which lacks the cues provided in direct personal communication with others and which has to fully communicate meaning in symbols. This was later discussed in terms of the contrast between a restricted or limited code (typical of the spoken word) and the elaborated code which is typical of writing (Ravid, 1992). This has also been described as moving from modes of thought embedded in experience to more abstract thought (deLemos & Harvey-Beavis, 1995).

Michalowitz (1992) moved beyond the notion of literacy as knowledge of the written word to that of cultural literacy. He defined this as having three elements, namely knowledge of the different uses of the written language, a disposition, such as curiosity, to the written word, and the development of decoding skills. This concept of cultural literacy has similarities with Vygotsky's (1962) notion that the essential nature of children's learning is the transmission of culture, from adult to child, from one generation to the next. This focus on the importance of adult-child communication on the learning of the young child has led to the view of the primacy of parent to child communication, partly because of its intensive one-to-one basis (Tizard & Hughes, 1986). Also identified are the limitations of this communication in group settings such as preschools and schools (Gray, 1987; Tizard & Hughes, 1986), and the provision of more intensive adult-child communication, in remedial educational classes (Clough, 1987).

For Vygotsky (1962), children acquired everyday concepts through their early life experience, and instruction leads to further development. These everyday concepts were viewed as being long on experience, in the sense that they were part of the child's everyday world, but short on generalisability, in the sense that the child does not have an understanding of meaning that went beyond that experiential context. Scientific concepts are, in contrast, taught concepts. By their nature, they were seen as the opposite of every day concepts, being *'short'* on experience and *'long'* on generalisibility, because they are taught as generalities. Vygotsky saw the teaching of scientific concepts as leading to a re-evaluation of everyday concepts. This theoretical view is found, using different terminology, in the concepts of cognition and metacognition, with metacognition developing beyond cognition through understanding the processes of learning itself. Applied to the component of language development, young children learn their native or first language perfectly, but without conscious understanding of what they have learnt (that is, without metalanguage) (Ravid, 1992). The development of a second language stimulates the child's cognitive processes by making conscious the structure of language. This view is supported in modern language research (Cummins & Swain, 1986).

Others have taken Vygotsky's basic propositions further. Bruner (1986) developed the notion of scaffolding: the building of constructions of meaning between children and adults, to attempt to understand the process whereby the child's understanding of the world was increased through interaction with an adult. Ravid (1992) argued that the development of metalanguage depends upon the family environment in which the child grows up, reflecting the extent to which a child's curiosity is supported or discouraged. Thus less literate households, where language is more likely to be instrumental and dealing more with commands than providing explanations, will discourage the development of metalanguage. However, this explanation of educational disadvantage has been challenged on the basis of contradictory empirical findings (Tizard & Hughes, 1986), while others have emphasised the variations to be found in home environments and cautioned against making generalisations on this issue (DeTemple, 1994; Snow, DeTemple, Tabors, & Kurland, 1994).

There has been a recent growing interest in the importance of the very early years (0-3 years) to learning (McCain & Mustard, 1999), although some of the evidence and conceptualisation of this dates back to the 1960s and earlier (Beck, 1967). Recent evidence points to severe early deprivation leading to irreversible lack of physical brain development and positive learning experiences leading to accelerated cognitive development (Feinstein, 2001; Shore, 1997). However, others have argued that the extent to which neurological evidence supports the importance of learning in the first three years of life has been overstated, with a lack of empirical evidence linking child stimulation with physical brain development, except in cases of severe deprivation (Bruer, 1999). Some have argued that the early years are a sensitive or even critical period for children's learning (Peterson, 1994). A critical period can be defined as the crucial age or stage at which a given intervention will produce an effect and a sensitive period, as a less crucial period where relatively great effects can be expected.

Evidence of the effectiveness of later educational interventions leaves open the debate about how crucial the early childhood period is for learning and intervention (Flint, Kilgour, Edmonds, & Taylor, 1974; Rutter, 1980; Peterson, 1994). Reynolds and Temple (1998) have argued that extended interventions from preschool into the school years are more likely to lead to longer lasting positive changes in academic and social terms than early interventions only, although they acknowledge an overall lack of empirical data to support their position. They also asserted that longer periods of positive interventions are better for children and for parents who may also receive health and other services through the educational programs. Reynolds and Temple further claimed that creation of more stable and predictable learning environments for children promotes cognitive and social functioning and stressed the importance of support through the transition period into normal schooling.

In line with Vygotsky's (1962) emphasis on the importance of adult-child communication, Reynolds and Temple (1998) advocated for the importance of extended interventions involving children's parents and other forms of assistance for families which help promote a stable learning environment for children.

2.1.3   Learning readiness and school readiness

The influence of views of how children learn on early childhood education can be illustrated in relation to learning readiness and school readiness. These concepts have been developed in the context of addressing the educational needs of young children since the 1960s, principally in the United States.

Learning readiness has generally been encapsulated as the capacity of an individual to learn specific material. It is usually defined normatively and associated with a range of broader variables, such as health and intellectual ability, in turn seen to be influenced by environmental variables (Kagan, 1992a). In contrast, school readiness as formulated by Kagan, has been associated with more narrowly defined testing of specific abilities such as particular cognitive and linguistic skills. The concept of learning readiness has been criticised on the basis that children can be perceived as being ready to learn at any age. Caldwell's (1992) concerns with the concept included putting the burden on the child to be ready, rather than seeking an instructional system that will assist the child, including a focus on encouraging parents to become *'ready to teach'* (p.191). She argued also that it has been difficult to define acceptable performance levels.

At the heart of recent debates about whether children should be delayed in their entering school on the basis of low test results have been two opposing views about how children learn. The maturational approach is based upon an understanding that there is a biological timetable determining when children are ready to learn, and was developed from the work of Gesell and others (Crinic & Lamberty, 1994). The testing of school readiness in the work of Gesell can be linked to the earlier work of the behaviourists, in the sense that behaviourists believed that learning can only be understood through observation and measurement (Crinic & Lamberty, 1994). This maturational view of learning can also be linked in theoretical terms to the work of Piaget (1952; 1977), in terms of his position that the conceptual understanding of children was limited by a biological timetable of development. A contrasting viewpoint, supported in the work of Vygotsky (1962) and others on thought and language has been that learning stimulates development (Kagan, 1992a; Kagan, 1992b; Crinic & Lamberty, 1994).

The maturational approach has led in the United States to the use of testing of abilities to identify children who are deemed to be not ready for school, and to subsequently delay their entry into school until such time as they are considered developmentally ready to learn in the

school setting. This approach has been criticised on the basis of empirical evidence that children who delay entry to school do little or no better in specific academic areas such as reading and mathematics than their non-delayed peers, and have poorer attitudes to schooling itself, mainly ascribed to having been left behind by their peers. The particular application of school readiness in the United States has been seen as an obstacle to both useful interventions and inclusion (Caldwell, 1992; May, Kundert, Nikoloff, Lelch, Garret, & Brent, 1994).

Those promoting the view that learning stimulates development support age-related entry criteria and the development of school curricula which cater for the different learning needs of children from normal and special populations, such as those with disabilities. They have argued that it is the school which needs to change rather than the child (Kagan, 1992a).

2.2 Influences on how children learn

The complex range of influences on children's learning can be illustrated through the literature on literacy development, itself a critical aspect of children's learning. de Lemos and Harvey-Beavis (1995) identified three groupings of factors which influence children's literacy development, namely individual factors (gender, age, intellectual ability and health), social and environmental factors (language and cultural background of families, urban versus rural location, mobility, socio-economic status and home environment) and education variables (class size, class structure, medium of instruction, preschool education, early literacy intervention programs, teaching strategies and approaches to effective schooling). Influences on children's learning can be considered broadly at an ecological or systems level and more narrowly in terms of child competence. Areas of specific interest to this study are considered below, namely family factors, socio-economic status and language. Other factors identified above are also considered as part of the research analysis in this study.

2.2.1 Ecological theory and the concept of competence

Ecological theory begins with the effect on the child of family members and the family environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; 1991). It departs from viewing child development as solely a process of individual development (Berthelson, 1994). Instead, there is a focus on the impact on child development of social system processes, with influences ranging from the *'micro system'* of the everyday life experiences of the child to the *'macro system'* of culture and society (Bronfenbrenner). Macro system influences include, for example, government redistribution policies in relation to income support and the value of the social wage, and how a society treats members of minority groups (Gilley, 1993; Gilley & Taylor, 1995; Taylor & Macdonald, 1998).

In terms of the earlier discussion of school readiness, ecological theory provides a

framework for further understanding the problems inherent in making decisions on when children should start school based upon tests of abilities. The influential factors on children's learning success at school are considerably more complex than can be ascertained through relatively simple measures of children's abilities at a point of time.

The concept of child competence focuses on the nature of the child's developing abilities and fits as an element within Bronfenbrenner's (1986; 1991) broader scheme. Amato (1987) has defined competence as including:

> *... any skills or abilities that enhance children's success at dealing with the physical and social environment. These include the behavioural skills needed to get things done, such as being able to use a telephone, prepare a meal, or travel by public transport; the social skills that facilitate interaction with others, such as knowing how to make new friends, co-operate to achieve common goals, and resolve conflict; and self-control skills, such as the ability to delay gratification, control emotions, formulate plans and cope with success. According to this view, intellectual and academic skills are important aspects of competence, but they are not the only ones.* (p.8)

Amato (1987) described two broad categories of influences on the active child which affect competence, namely family structure resources and family process resources that affect competence. Examples of family structure resources include family size, parental education and family income. Family process resources include aspects such as parental support, sibling relations and marital harmony. Six forms of competence were identified by Amato. These were reading ability, life skills, self-esteem, social competence, self-control and independence.

2.2.2 Family factors

The family has come to be viewed generally in the field as the major direct influence on the developing child (Berger, 1995). For example, the family literacy environment has been perceived as having a major impact on the child's own literacy development and the skills with which the child enters school (Heath, 1982; Snow, 1991; Snow et al., 1994). While the degree of parental and other family influences wanes in middle childhood and adolescence, when school and peer groups become more influential, longer-term family influences on values and attitudes have been thought to remain profound for most individuals (Rigby, 1995). Within the notion of competence, discussed above, both family structure and family process mediate the impact of family on children.

Bowlby (1982) drew on psychoanalytic theory and ethology to develop a theory of attachment or bonding between children and their parents and to explain what happens when this

bond is disrupted. Ainsworth and Wittig (1969) further refined this theory, distinguishing three patterns of attachment related to security of attachment. Behind more recent interest in Bowlby's theory are the findings that patterns of attachment are associated with cognitive competence in children, as well as long-term ability to form intimate relationships (Barnes, 1995).

2.2.3   Socio-economic status

Economic and associated social and political disadvantages have also been considered to impact on child development, and are referred to using terms such as low income, poverty, working class and socio-economic status. Socio-economic status describes a person's overall social position in terms of variables such as income, occupational status and education level (Considine & Zappala, 2002). These form important aspects of family structure resources in Amato's (1987) model of competence discussed above.

The relationship between low parental socio-economic status (SES) and lower cognitive development and lower educational achievement for children has been well established (Boyer, 1987; Considine & Zappala, 2002; Kagan, 1979; McLoyd, 1998), with Kagan (p.229) arguing that this relationship is *'one of the firmest facts in psychology'*.

Two studies in Victoria, Australia, have provided evidence of the link between low income and poorer educational achievement.

The longitudinal Melbourne-based Life Chances of Children Study, commencing with 167 children born in 1990, is drawing a detailed picture over time of the different experiences of children from low and high income backgrounds. At age six, these differences were reflected in how children were progressing at school (Taylor & Macdonald, 1998).

> *Indications of the children's cognitive development and progress at school were given by their results at school on the Primary Reading Test, the ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading and the Behavioural Academic Self-Esteem Rating Scale (BASE). On average, the children who did well on the measures used were more likely to come from families in which family income was not low, in which parents had tertiary education and in which English was the home language. Conversely, the children who did less well on average were more likely to come from low-income families, to have parents with less formal schooling, to have a home language other than English and to live in families with parental conflict.* (pp. xvii-xviii)

There was also a significant relationship found between low family income and low educational level of parents.

Similarly, the earlier Melbourne-based Brunswick Family Study, commencing with 272 children born in 1972, found links between low family income and children's intellectual and reading attainment (Smith & Carmichael, 1992).

> *On measures of intellectual ability and reading skills performed when the children were aged eleven, the poorer children scored significantly below children from more affluent families indicating the detrimental effects of poverty throughout childhood. Poverty in the first year of life correlated highly with lower cognitive functioning at the age of 11. Long-term exposure to poverty has detrimental effects on IQ and reading skills. (p.1).*

Why children from lower educational backgrounds are likely to perform more poorly at school was considered by Amato (1987), who summarised the influences of SES on children.

> *Children growing up in high SES families have a substantially broader range of resources to draw upon than do children growing up in low SES families. Children's access to nutrition, health care, education, material goods and travel are all determined by SES. In addition, the research reviewed ... suggests that children in high SES families have greater access to interpersonal resources than do children in low SES families. High level of parental support, the encouragement of independence and achievement, and training in self control are likely to be associated with greater cognitive ability, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and an intrinsic motivation to achieve goals. (p.203)*

A rare empirical study by Tizard and Hughes (1986) of parent-child interaction at home challenged the commonly-espoused explanation that it is a lack of positive parent-child interactions in working class households, together with a focus on instrumental language, which leads to low educational performance compared with middle class households. Children in British working class households exhibited a lively intelligence and curiosity in their interactions with their parents at home, but less so in the classroom. The researchers noted that their study did not explain the well established fact that children from working class backgrounds have poorer school performance.

One possible explanation for poorer school performance is that children in working class households face a conflict of values between home and school. Working class parents may have high aspirations for their children's schooling, but they provide *'a different body of knowledge and competencies (in technical matters) at home, thus inadvertently raising doubts in their son's mind about the value of school learning'* (Brown & Foster, 1983, p.116). In contrast is the situation of children in professional middle class families.

> *In these families there is little mystery about school and higher education. The academic*

curriculum is the route to university. These parents understand what is expected of their children in school and are likely to support the structures and practices of the school designed to meet those expectations but also to challenge them if they see fit. Teachers and parents are likely to 'speak the same language' and parents can articulate their expectations for their children and the school with a sense of equality (even superiority) in respect of the teachers. Hence their children may experience less conflict in meeting the demands of school and home learning. (p.116)

2.2.4   Culture and language background

Culture and language are major influences on how children learn, with considerable differences in parental attitudes to, and practices of, raising and educating their children (Heath, 1983; Lau, 1997; Lynch & Hanson, 1992). These differences can include family systems, physical care, religion, and influences on cognitive development, such as language and play (Multi-Cultural Child Care Unit of South Australia, 1998). Cultural and language issues are linked in complex ways (de Lemos & Harvey-Beavis, 1995). Darder (1991) argues that language is one of the most powerful transmitters of culture.

The complex links between culture and language and how they affect children's learning, are particularly evident in immigrant families adapting to a new environment. Adaptation strategies adopted by immigrants range between assimilation or total adoption, preservation or total rejection and what might be regarded as the happy medium between these two, namely acculturation, defined as *'learning to function in a new culture while maintaining your own identity'* (Bryam, Morgan & Colleagues, 1994, p.7).

A major issue in children's learning when their home language is different from that of the dominant culture is the issue of bilingualism in education (McLauglin, 1984). Tucker (1984) identified two broad types of public policy purposes in supporting bilingualism. The first is to assert and maintain the importance of different cultural or linguistic groups. The second is to facilitate the learning of a second language. Much of the research in this area revolves around the second purpose.

A central issue here is whether proficiency in the home language is necessary both for learning English and for optimum cognitive development of children (McKay et al., 1997). In a critical review of research on this issue, Cummins and Swain (1986) identified two opposing points of view. The first is that learning of the second language leads to intellectual confusion because there are two names for everything. The second is that learning a second language fosters language and cognitive development by making conscious the structure and meaning of language.

There is research evidence to support both points of view. Cummins and Swain (1986) identified two possible explanations for this. Firstly, there are differing, and not always compatible, outcome measures used as research evidence and, secondly, the competency of the bilingual speakers chosen in these studies may have biased the research evidence in one direction or the other. They further posited a threshold hypothesis as a possible explanation of the contradictory findings. This is that there is a threshold of linguistic competence in the home language below which further learning in this first language is unhelpful for a child to learn a second language and unhelpful for a child to develop general cognitive skills. Correspondingly, there is a threshold of competence above which it is helpful to develop both these skills. Cummins and Swain (1986) asserted that more research is needed to test this hypothesis and to delineate what level of home language might constitute such a threshold. Elsewhere, Cummins (1984a) argued that it may never be possible to identify exact thresholds as these will vary with the social context.

The notion of the threshold hypothesis grew out of Lambert's concept of *'subtractive'* and *'additive'* bilingualism (Cummins, 1984b, p.75). Subtractive bilingualism is the learning of the home language only as a vehicle for learning the second and majority language which eventually replaces the home language. *'Additive'* bilingualism describes the situation where the home language is secure and ongoing and the second language acquisition is seen as additional, rather than a replacement to the home language. Cummins concluded that groups with subtractive bilingualism become insensitive to their own language and culture. They are discriminated against economically and are most at risk socially.

In reviewing studies which have contributed to this debate, McLauglin (1984) concluded that learning the home language contributes positively to learning the second language, but that evidence for more general promotion of cognitive development is less certain. Cummins and Swain (1986) argued that research evidence supports education policies which promote competence in both home and second languages, through a form of additive bilingualism. This needs to vary with the characteristics of the learner and the learning environment. Thus for families from low SES backgrounds, where the home language is denigrated by the families themselves and by the local community, initial instruction at school would most usefully be in the home language with a later switch to the second language. For families where the home language is a majority one, valued in their community, and literacy is encouraged in the home, school instruction can most usefully begin in the second language. Cummins (1984a) also made the distinction between speaking/listening proficiency in a second language and the development of literacy skills, with the latter being poorly developed unless explicitly taught.

In a review of the research on the importance of language development to cognitive

development and academic success, Cummins and Swain (1986) argued that low SES is not necessarily a barrier to learning, provided that cognitively demanding tasks present learning cues which are imbedded in a context which is meaningful for the child. Differences between the culture of the school and the culture of the home can make learning difficult for the child.

Another issue in considering learning English as a second language is how different English is from the parents' home language. This is indicated by the term distance, as displayed in the following figure pertaining currently to common immigrant languages in Australia.

Figure 1. Distance of home language from English

Increasing distance from English

———————————————————————————————▶

English   Spanish   Russian   Arabic   Vietnamese
Indo-European Indo-European Indo-European Semetic Family Vietnamese Family
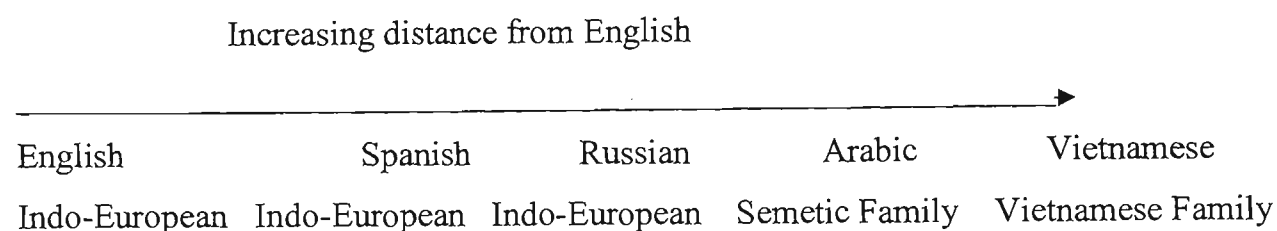
Source: McKay et al., 1997, p. 50

For the languages considered in Figure 1, Vietnamese is at the greatest distance from English and therefore makes learning English for this group particularly difficult (McKay et al., 1997).

2.3   Longitudinal research on the long-term effects of early disadvantage on children

An important source of data concerning family and other environmental influences on human development is that of longitudinal studies of children, particularly those that have commenced close to birth and continued into adulthood. Two major themes emerged from these studies. One is that there is a degree of continuity between early childhood disadvantage, such as low parental income and level of education, and poorer longer term educational, employment and relationship outcomes. However, alongside this is a degree of upward social mobility for some of these children (Davie, 1993; Duncan & Rodgers, 1988; Pilling, 1990; Rutter, 1980; Werner & Smith, 1989). The fact that some children appear to be able to overcome the effects of early family disadvantage, such as low socio-economic status, has led researchers to theorise that there are protective factors, such as extensive family networks, which appear to assist these children (Pilling; Werner & Smith).

2.4 Overview of how children learn

Current theoretical understandings of how children learn reject notions that this is genetically predetermined. Rather, learning is perceived as a potentially healthy interaction of environment and heredity. While there is a genetic timetable in children's learning, the limitations inherent in this timetable appear to have been overstated in the work of Piaget (Gray, 1987; Tizard & Hughes, 1986). Vygotsky (1962; 1978) has drawn attention to the importance of learning in adult-child relationships. This provides a valuable basis for understanding how early childhood education can enhance children's learning, through a focus on positive adult-child relationships. The family environment can potentially provide the most intensive adult-child communication in the early years and is therefore a major input to young children's learning. This understanding of how children learn affords an optimistic view of the potential capacity of society to foster children's progress, especially by supporting parents' efforts with their children.

There are complex factors influencing children's learning, indicated by ecological developmental theory and demonstrated by research findings. Such a conceptualisation implies that social reform in this area needs to consider change at the broader societal levels, as well as at the levels of the community and the family. These broader influences are captured in the concepts of education as a transmission of culture and cultural literacy. Children from minority language and cultural groups and with low SES status are at risk of particular learning difficulties at school and may often need additional assistance to that provided by their families and mainstream education. The notion of school readiness focuses attention on those abilities a child needs to bring to school to be able to operate successfully. Current knowledge of the learning of a second language emphasises the importance of understanding the context in which families find themselves, in order to most effectively target language and education policies.

The notion of the primary importance of the family environment to learning in the early years suggests the value of interventions that target positive family change. The next chapter reviews the literature discussing early childhood education programs which have attempted to convert these more theoretical understandings of the importance of learning in the early years into practical programs to assist disadvantaged children.

CHAPTER 3

ENHANCING CHILDREN'S LEARNING: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR DISADVANTAGED FAMILIES

The history of early intervention to enhance children's learning in Australia shows an interplay between its importance for all children and a specific focus on meeting the perceived additional needs of children living in disadvantaged families (Mellor, 1990). It is this latter group which is the focus of this thesis.

Early childhood education programs can be divided into home-based and centre-based services, with some interventions such as HIPPY including both aspects. Cazden (1972), in a review of study findings in the United States, made a further type of distinction between what she termed instructional early childhood education programs, which teach specific content, and traditional preschool programs which provide developmentally appropriate activities for children. In Australia, two recurring themes occur in early childhood provision of services: care of children versus education of children and provision to poor children versus more general provision (Mellor, 1990).

This chapter examines the rationale for early intervention to enhance young children's learning. As HIPPY is an early childhood education program which includes home visiting, literature pertaining to both early childhood and home visiting programs is reviewed below.

3.1 Importance of early intervention

In times where there is an increased public emphasis on the importance of demonstrated educational outcomes in general and literacy in particular, the extent to which interventions in the early years can make a difference is assuming greater social and political significance (Cairney, 1998; O'Brien, 1990; Fleer, 2002).

The importance of early childhood education as a remedial anti-disadvantage, anti-poverty measure revolves around three issues, namely the concept of educational disadvantage, the importance of learning in the early years and the effectiveness of early childhood education. These are discussed in broad terms below.

3.1.1 Educational disadvantage

Educational disadvantage means that some children are unfairly unable to reach their potential educational level of achievement, that is, that they are more capable learners than their education results suggest (National Research Council, 2001). As noted in Chapter 2, this can be related to a child's low socio-economic status (SES) or language or cultural background (Kagan, 1979; McLoyd, 1998). The quality of the schooling can also be influential (Considine & Zappala, 2002). Travers (2000) has made the point that a key indicator of children's educational success in Australia, and access to the labour market, is their proficiency in literacy and numeracy.

As noted in Section 2.2.3 above, low SES status has been found to put children at risk of educational failure (Boyer, 1987; Considine & Zappala, 2002; Kagan, 1979; McLoyd, 1998). These children start school at a considerable disadvantage compared with children from higher income and better educated backgrounds. This starting level is a reliable indicator of later educational achievement (McCain & Mustard, 1999; Travers, 2000). The same type of disadvantage is experienced by Australian children from some cultural minorities, who are also more likely than other children to live in poverty (Smith & Carmichael, 1992; Taylor & Macdonald, 1998).

3.1.2 Importance of learning in the early years

There is a growing consensus that early childhood is a crucial period for learning, with an increasing interest in the one to three-year-old period (Fleer, 2002). As suggested in Chapter 2, children who are disadvantaged in the early years are at a lifetime disadvantage. The early childhood period is seen by many as an important period to intervene to prevent long-term educational disadvantage in children (McCain & Mustard, 1999).

3.1.3 Effectiveness of early intervention

Investment in children's learning at the beginning of the life span has therefore been perceived by developmentalists to be more effective in terms of delivering better value for money than investment to rectify learning problems in later years (Hobbs, 1975; Keogh, Wilcoxen, & Bernheimer, 1986; Karoly, Greenwood, Everingham, Hoube, Kilburn, Rydell, Sanders, & Chiesa, 1998).

Karoly et al. (1998) argued that early intervention programs are cost effective. On the basis of an analysis of the long-term effects of the High Scope Perry Preschool

(Head Start) program in the United States, an investment of $12,000 per child eventually saved $38,000 (Barnett, 1996). The Prenatal/Early Infancy Project concluded that home visiting interventions had savings of expenditure on the higher risk sample of 'unmarried mothers' of $25,000 per family and that interventions with psychosocially disadvantaged children and their parents in the early years of the child's life had long-term benefits for up to fifteen years (Olds, Eckenrode, Henderson, Kitzman, Powers, Cole, Sidora, Morris, Pettit, & Luckey, 1997).

The importance of interventions to enhance learning in the early, 0 to 8 years, period has been summarised by Raban-Bisby (1995) at five levels.

a) *The impact of quality early childhood education influences the lives of all young children, but is greatest for children from backgrounds of poverty and disadvantage, locally, nationally and globally.*

b) *Quality early education leads to lasting cognitive and social benefits, not only at the start of school, but throughout early adolescence and into early adulthood.*

c) *Investment in quality early education is cost effective and a number of studies are indicating the extent to which this has been possible.*

d) *The most important learning in the pre-school years concerns task persistence, social skills, feelings of confidence and aspirations for the future.*

e) *The necessity for supporting emergent literacy during the pre-school years as a way of developing literate ways of thinking during the years of schooling can no longer be ignored.* (p.15)

3.2   Early childhood education programs for disadvantaged families

In Australia, early childhood programs in the areas of child care and preschool were started late in the nineteenth century, as a way of assisting children in poverty. It was only after the Second World War that there was a shift into more general provision for children, though the Commonwealth Government had begun this work in the 1930s with the establishment of a Lady Gowrie Centre in each State (Mellor, 1990).

In the United States, Head Start programs focusing on the educational needs of disadvantaged children commenced from the 1960s onwards, as part of what was popularly known as a war on poverty (Westinghouse Learning Corporation and Ohio State University, 1969). The focus of these interventions was providing centre-based interventions for four-year-old children. They included a strong element of parental

participation. There were considerable variations in individual projects funded under the national Head Start program, with Perry Street, mentioned above, as one example. Most of the claims for the value of early childhood education targeted at disadvantaged families come from evaluations of US Head Start programs (Ochiltree, 1999). There is however a growing international literature on longer term outcomes from early educational intervention, for example Boocock & Larner's (1998) review of research studies in 16 countries.

Boocock and Larner (1998) reported on three types of research which provide the basis of claims for the value of early childhood education: large scale surveys on the benefits of programs, smaller scale comparative studies of the value of different types of early care and education (ECE) interventions and evaluations of individual programs.

Relevant information has also emerged from evaluations of home visiting programs. This area is reviewed first.

3.2.1   Home visiting programs

Home visiting has been identified as a frequent feature of early intervention programs both internationally (Gomby, 1999) and nationally. A review by Vimpani et al. (1996) identified 280 programs in Australia.

Programs have diverse goals for parents and children, including prevention of child abuse, children's education, parenting skills and general health and development of families. Despite varied goals, the common assumptions of these services have been the importance of the early years, the fact that parents help shape children's experiences in these early years and the notion that the best way to intervene is to bring services directly to families in their own homes (The Future of Children, 1999, 9(1), Executive Summary). Home visiting has been seen as a non-threatening preventative measure and as a bridge between families and health and community services through the development of a trust relationship between the home visitor and the family (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, 1996).

Two major examples of home visiting programs in the United States which focus on children's education in the early years are Parents as Teachers and HIPPY (Future of Children, 1999, 9(1), Executive Summary). Both these programs are established in Australia. Parents as Teachers operates in the first three years of the child's life, whilst HIPPY usually operates when the children are four and five years

of age. Both programs directly involve parents as their children's teachers. Each involve components of home visiting and group meetings of parents. Parents as Teachers, however, employs professionally trained staff in home visiting, whilst HIPPY employs paraprofessionals (home tutors), usually parents enrolled in the program, who receive in-house training (see Chapter 4).

3.2.2   Evaluation of program outcomes

Evaluation studies of home visiting programs have generated mixed results in relation to outcomes (Daro & Harding, 1999), although participant families and providers have generally reported positively on the programs (Vimpani et al., 1996). Daro and Harding concluded that it is not possible to generalise across different program models, that there are major problems with families leaving these programs before completion (between 35 to 50% of participants) and that it is not clear for whom different programs are suitable. Overall, they cautioned that one needs to have modest expectations of such programs in themselves, and that they need to be seen as part of a network of intervention services. Parents as Teachers has been extensively evaluated with generally positive results internationally (Future of Children, 1999, 9(1), Appendix B) and in Australia (Starr & Nevan, 2003).

Initial research on Head Start funded early childhood education programs in the United States found immediate IQ gains for children, but these gains were not sustained in the next wave of follow-up studies (Cicirelli, Evans & Schiller, 1969). However, later research identified that there were long-term educational, social and economic gains in terms of school completion, increased likelihood of tertiary education, and higher levels of employment and family stability (Hubbell, 1983; Washington & Oyemade, 1987; Barnett & Boocock, 1998).

The first wave of Head Start evaluation studies has been criticised for relying on simple IQ testing as outcome measurement, rather than taking into account the broader social and emotional development of children (Kagitabasi, Sunar, & Bekman,1988; Washington & Oyemade, 1987).

A number of national and international reviews of early childhood education research have identified immediate scholastic and cognitive gains for children, improved grade retention, reduced allocation to special classes, improved self-concept and generally long-term positive gains (Barnett, 1995; 1998; Boocock, 1995; Goodman & Goodman, 1979).

Barnett (1998) summarised the demonstrated effects of early care and

education (ECE) programs in the United States.

> *For economically disadvantaged children, ECE substantially improves cognitive development during early childhood and produces long-term increases in achievement (learning) and school success. The evidence of long-term effects is provided by 38 studies and generalises across a wide range of programs and communities Although many studies fail to find persistent achievement effects this is plausibly explained by flaws in study design and follow-up procedures. Positive effects on grade retention and special education are found in the overwhelming majority of studies, and positive effects on high school graduation is strong though limited to the small number of studies with very long-term follow-up.*
> (p.38)

Boocock and Larner (1998) reached similar conclusions on the long-term value of ECE programs in nations other than the United States. Recent research in Australia has concluded that there are positive educational gains at primary school for children who attend preschools (Margetts, 2002).

3.2.3 Explanations of program outcomes

Gomby (1999) identified four possible factors possibly explaining positive outcomes from home visiting programs, namely increased parental knowledge, changes in parental attitudes and expectations, changes in parent-child interactions and increased surveillance of parents' child rearing practice by service providers, which lead to earlier identification of problems. These are intermediary outcomes. They were seen as part of a causal chain, creating greater plausibility for positive outcome study findings when present and doubt for such positive outcomes when absent.

At a different level, Barnett, Young, and Schweinhart (1998) identified four major theoretical alternatives to explain the empirical evidence of long-term positive effects of early childhood education programs. One is simply to dismiss the evidence and argue that there are no long-term effects. This explanation is rejected on the strength of the contrary evidence. A second explanation is to see initial improvement in the child's cognitive abilities, which then leads to long-term educational achievement. A third explanation is to see immediate improvements in a child's motivation and behaviour which then leads to higher educational achievement. The fourth approach is to seek the explanation in changes in the parents' attitudes and

involvement in their children's education.

The authors then tested their explanations on the Perry Preschool data set: 123 children enrolled in an early intervention program between 1962 to 1965. Data was collected in successive waves until the participating children reached 28 years of age. There was also a matched control group of 123 children. Their analysis supported the model emphasising initial increases in children's cognitive abilities, which then leads to higher long-term educational achievement.

However, another explanation plausibly links the child's cognitive and school achievement gains with positive responses from parents and teachers which then further reinforces the children' gains and leads to further improvement. This notion of a 'virtuous circle' has been described by Kagitcibasi et al. (1988) as follows.

The explanations of these long term positive effects have focused on interactions between immediate cognitive gains from enrichment programs and environmental factors such as teachers' and parents' expectations and school requirements. Specifically, it appears that children who go through preschool enrichment programs gain immediate cognitive skills as well as other skills such as attentiveness to teachers, ability to follow instructions, task perseverance and sustained focussed attention, ability to work in groups and relate well to others. All these school-relevant skills help them to adjust to the demands of classroom procedures and the public school system better than children from similar disadvantaged backgrounds. These positive attitudes and behaviour are in turn perceived by the teachers and further reinforced, producing feelings of competence and higher aspirations of success in children, thus triggering a virtuous circle—a 'positive' Pygmalion effect leading to sustained satisfactory school performance. While these effects do not involve raising children's IQs they are at least as important in term of real life consequences. (pp. 5-6)

An explanation for the loss of increased IQ benefits after initial gains in Head Start funded programs, coupled with ongoing benefits in terms of higher achievement, is that different abilities are being assessed. IQ tests measure intellectual ability while achievement tests assess skills and subject matter knowledge. Thus early childhood education can be seen as primarily improving subject matter knowledge and skills, which in turn improves early achievement. This in its own turn sets up an *'achievement-motivation-behaviour cycle that produced long-term gains but had little or no effect on long-term general intellectual abilities'* (Barnett, Young &

Shweinhart, 1998, p.181).

A major characteristic of Head Start funded programs was the successful engagement of parents. The most common understanding of this engagement is provided by the concept of empowerment in radical and reformist traditions, in which parents are partners in the process of change. This occurs by acknowledging their interests and abilities and involving them in decision making processes (Benn, 1981; Labonte, 1990; Gilley, 2001). Such partnership arrangements between providers and users of services often involve small group processes in which parents learn from each other and gain self confidence. The concept of empowerment is commonly acknowledged as an important element in home visiting (Gomby, 1999) and early childhood education programs (Hegar & Hunzeker, 1988), including HIPPY (Lombard, 1994; Lombard et al., 1999).

Critically, it is important to acknowledge that empowerment as a concept is used with widely different meanings; different in laissez faire and interventionist traditions and in arguments on the left and the right of politics (Gilley, 2001). In this thesis, the term is used to describe approaches in interventionist and left wing reform traditions. The core of such approaches is the active engagement of disadvantaged groups in the solution of their own problems. Empowerment in this sense can be contrasted with remedial/deficit approaches in which professionals define the problem and also define and administer the solution (Benn, 1981).

The Senate inquiry into early childhood education in Australia (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, 1996) noted two major themes in submissions, namely the importance of adult-child relationships and the nature of child development in the early years. It also noted, and was critical of, an historical division between care and education in early childhood service provision.

Within the family, the nature and importance of adult-child relationships has centred on the quality of parent-child relationships. In the service context there has been a strong focus on adult to child ratios in child care, preschool and primary schools (as part of the debate on class size) (deLemos & Harvey-Beavis, 1995; Marginson, 1993; Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, 1996).

Another type of approach has been to identify the attributes of successful interventions. In a review of longitudinal research, McLoughlin & Nargorcka (2000) identified the following elements of successful interventions in Australia and overseas:

- *commencement early in the life of the child, the earlier the better;*

- *provide services of adequate intensity, at least two years;*

- *provide services of high quality, which includes low staff to child ratios, engaging children as active learners and adequate training and supervision of staff;*

- *provide services directly to both children and parents;*

- *seek to empower parents;*

- *be based in the community, rather than institutions such as hospitals and universities; and*

- *work in partnerships with other services.* (p.30)

With a narrower focus on program elements, Ure (1996) reported on research on childcare centres in the United States. She summarised high quality centres as having:

- *stable childcare arrangements such that children interacted with just a few primary care givers in any one day;*

- *low staff turn-over so that children were cared for by the same individual over several years;*

- *good staff training in child development; and*

- *low adult: child ratios- eg from 0-12 months the ratio was 1:3, from one to three years it was 1:4, and from four to six years the ratio was 1:8-12, in order that interactions can be initiated and sustained.* (p.165)

In contrast, poor quality centres lacking these very features led to children being *'distractible, low in task orientation and had considerable difficulty in getting on with their peers' and generally 'doing poorly at school'* (Ure, 1996, p165).

Clay (1991) argues that educational programs are designed for particular settings and that research needs to focus on factors which successfully support their transfer into other settings.

3.3 Conclusions concerning early childhood education for disadvantaged children

Justification for early childhood education programs for disadvantaged children comes from claims that these children are unfairly disadvantaged in their educational potential because of family background, that learning in the early years is important to later educational outcomes and that early childhood education programs can be highly effective in promoting educational success in both the short and long-term. There is substantial research support for all three claims, although as noted in Section 3.2 above, not all interventions had positive results.

Viewed critically, most of the explanations for program effects reviewed above were inferential rather than based on research evidence collected for that purpose. Indeed the main focus of many of these studies, such as those of Head Start programs, has been on program outcomes rather than on program processes. As Head Start was more a national funding approach rather than a program model, it could also be considered that the variations in programs had some relation to variations in outcomes. As noted in the review of evaluation studies of home visiting programs, it is not possible to meaningfully generalise across different program models.

The next chapter examines the literature on HIPPY, as a specific early childhood program. There is a particular emphasis on whether the evaluations of this program are in line with the generally positive outcome findings reported here and also whether there are similar limitations in designs of evaluations for explaining outcomes.

CHAPTER 4

THE HOME INSTRUCTION PROGRAM FOR PRE-SCHOOL
YOUNGSTERS: THE PROGRAM AND ITS EVALUATION

This chapter describes the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY). It begins with the purpose of the program and a conceptual framework for it. A description of its origin and international structure follows. There is then a description of the program model itself, followed by a comprehensive review of the published evaluation literature on HIPPY. The final section of the chapter teases out the implications for the present study of the material reviewed.

4.1   Purpose and conceptual framework

HIPPY was designed to assist preschool aged children whose parents have low levels of education and often low income, to be more successful at school. This was to be achieved by fostering the children's cognitive ability and confidence in themselves as learners (Lombard, 1994). The initial curriculum was devised to be appropriate to the developmental level of three, four and five-year-olds in the three years before they commenced formal schooling in Israel. In other countries it has been mainly implemented as a two-year program. It was based upon evidence of long-term educational and economic disadvantage faced by these children (Lombard, 1994).

The underlying logic of how HIPPY works is similar to that of other home visiting programs which work with families identified as disadvantaged (Daro & Harding, 1999; Vimpani et al., 1996). If families lack the resources to provide adequately for their children, then arguably an effective method of intervening is to provide those resources through home-based interventions which support families to change in positive ways. Such changes may include improved family functioning or greater engagement in children's education.

In HIPPY, the focus is on ensuring that children begin their formal schooling with the skills and confidence to succeed in the education system. The program sets out to achieve this through engaging the parents as teachers of their children. Davis and Kugelmass (1974) argue that parental change is an essential element in this process, as follows.

A second vital operational goal is to effect changes in the behaviour and/or attitudes of parents so they may support the child during the intervention and

help maintain any effects after intervention. (p.1)

An implied conceptual framework for HIPPY developed by Baker, Piotrkowski and Brooks-Gunn (1999) is presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2.   Implied conceptual framework of HIPPY program
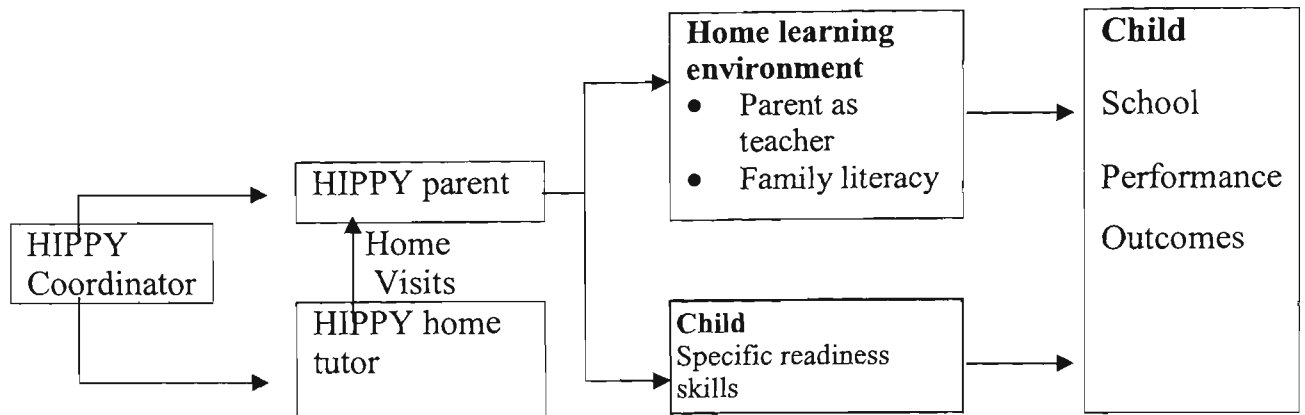
Source: Baker et al. (1999), p.118

Thus the program is run by a coordinator (appointed by the organisation which is the auspice for the program) who recruits and trains the home tutors, who in turn provide the lesson through home visits to parents, who then provide the lesson to the child. The intention is that the child will learn specific school readiness skills (as noted in Figure 2), such as literacy and numeracy. The intention is also is to engage the parent as the teacher of the child and through this process to improve literacy practices within the home. Both the learning of specific skills and changes in the family literacy environment are seen to lead to improvement in assessable school performance outcomes for children. Critically, this diagram does not include group meetings, which are an import aspect of the program, nor does it emphasise the importance of children gaining self confidence/ self esteem in learning for school success (Lombard, 1994), restricting itself to acquisition of specific readiness skills.

4.2   Origins and international development

HIPPY originated in Israel in the late 1960s as a response to an observed gap between some children's skills and the levels of abilities and skills needed to succeed at school, and the tension between high parental expectation for their children's education and generally low achievement (Lombard, 1994). Lombard and early childhood educationalist colleagues in the School of Education at the Hebrew

University of Jerusalem developed and piloted the program. During the period that HIPPY has operated in Israel, the Government has attempted to integrate into society immigrants of the Jewish religion who came from a range of cultural and language backgrounds.

From the mid 1970s onwards, HIPPY became progressively established in countries outside Israel. In 2001, it was operating in seven countries, including Australia. The United States provides the largest current program with more than 14,000 participating families. Next is Israel with 6,000 families, New Zealand with 1,200 families, Germany with over 1,100 families, and South Africa with 600 families. Pilot programs are operating in Australia and Canada (National Council of Jewish Women Institute for Innovation in Education, 2001). Programs have also been established in Chile, Mexico, the Netherlands and Turkey. These have not been sustained for reasons not detailed in the literature (Lombard, 1994).

The program is managed by HIPPY International, based within the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel, which owns the rights to the program (Lombard et al., 1999). There is a contractual agreement to deliver the program between HIPPY International and licensees who operate the program outside Israel. This contract covers a number of issues, including: agreement by the licensee to deliver the basic HIPPY model, agreement for program coordinators to attend a familiarisation program in Israel (provided annually) and agreement by the licensee to meet the cost of an annual visit from the Director of HIPPY International. Attendees at the international familiarisation program in Israel are provided with a manual which sets out in detail the program model and its implementation (Lombard et al., 1999). The annual visit of the Director of HIPPY International is part of part of the quality control process and has also been used as an opportunity to promote the program.

There is also an option for an organisation to take up a national licence to deliver HIPPY, which involves responsibility for the program's development and management in that country.

As mentioned above, in Israel the program was established as a three-year system for children who were yet to enter the formal schooling system (primary school). In other countries it has been mainly established as a two-year program for four and five-year-old children in the two years before they commence school (Lombard, 1994). In Australia and New Zealand, because children start school earlier, usually at five years of age, HIPPY has operated in the preschool year and the first compulsory year of schooling (Burgon, Dominick, Duncan, Hodges, Roberts, &

Weenik, 1997) .

Three broad contexts were perceived as important to the program's operation in Israel: national, sociocultural and institutional (Lombard, 1994). The program meets a national goal of allowing *'weaker elements in society to become stronger and join the mainstream'* (Lombard, p.59), leading to public investment in the program. In sociocultural terms, the program addresses the problem of the social gap, that is, the high (but unrealistic) educational expectations of parents for their children and for themselves. This in turn motivates parents to participate. Institutional settings include the parent-institution and the adult-education contexts, with the Hebrew University providing a high status framework which attracts and supports the involvement of parents, services and communities.

Key factors identified as contributing to the stability and replicability of the program are the known elements of the program (such as materials), the organisational structure, and the lines of communication among staff and participant families. Additional factors include *'belief in the efficacy of materials, the sense of mission vis-à-vis the community, success in administration, comments by participants indicating their gratitude and a sense of cohesiveness that stimulates loyalty'* (Lombard, 1994, p.61). Lombard has noted that interpersonal dynamics impact on the program's stability:

> *the provision of a forum (intimate or group) for the expression of feelings and ideas, the inclusion of participants in some of the decision making processes, and the recognition of and affirmation that changes occur in the self-concept and performance of all participants.* (pp.61-62)

The coordinator's relationship with home tutors is seen as central, requiring *'communication skills and a deep understanding of the dynamics of interpersonal relations'* (Lombard, 1994, p.60), and belief in the program. *'The research suggests that the performance of the coordinator accounts for most of HIPPY's success or lack of it'* (Lombard, p.61).

The structure of the HIPPY model is perceived as minimising substantive change in the program's operations. It has been argued there is a balance of rigidity and flexibility in the program which can be adapted to local contexts. For example, the nature of additional activities in group meetings of parents is decided locally (Lombard, 1994).

4.3 The ideal program model

The model described below is the two-year program described in the Coordinator's Manual (Lombard et al., 1999). It is presented in terms of: its educational materials, the developmental areas of the curriculum, key skills it attempts to impart to children, language policy and cultural issues within the program, the delivery system, and the underlying dynamics of the program.

4.3.1 Materials and activities

The HIPPY materials consist of 18 story books, a set of 16 plastic shapes, 60 weekly activity packets (for the 60 weekly lessons over a two-year period) and weekly instructions for Home Tutors International (Lombard et al., 1999). The program also encourages the use of commonly used materials available locally, including in the home.

Criteria for selection of activities associated with the use of these materials were: appropriateness to the development age of participating children, contribution to school success, attractiveness to children, acceptability in the home without special equipment, and making sense to the parent (Lombard,1997). The materials and activities were also selected on the basis of being relevant to the subject matter taught in schools (Lombard, 1994).

4.3.2 Developmental and skill areas

The key developmental areas covered in the HIPPY curriculum have been described by Lombard et al. (1999) as:

a) cognitive development, through discrimination skills, memory, language, concept development and problem solving;

b) physical development, especially fine motor skills, using materials such as paper, scissors, paste, pencils, play dough etc.;

c) emotional development, through promoting independence, a healthy self-concept, mutual respect and dealing with issues in stories that are problematic for preschool children;

d) social development, through contributing to the development of the social behaviour of the child as a pupil; and

e) creativity development, through encouraging parents to interact intellectually and emotionally with their children in a way that is accepting of their children's

efforts rather than seeking perfection.

These developmental areas can be further broken down into skill development areas. For example, physical development encompasses gross and fine motor skills and eye hand coordination. A list of the skill areas targeted by the program have been identified by Lombard et al. (1999) as:

a) gross and fine motor skills;

b) eye hand coordination;

c) language and book related skills;

d) pre-mathematics and mathematics skills;

e) visual discrimination;

f) auditory discrimination;

g) tactile discrimination;

h) conceptual discrimination;

i) logical thinking;

j) self-concept;

k) creativity; and

l) verbal expression.

4.3.3 Language policy: Families from different language backgrounds

While children's acquisition of language forms a critical part of the program, there is no clearly stated language policy as it relates to the language of instruction for families from different language backgrounds. In Israel, the program focused on providing the program in the country's official language (Hebrew), although participants' first language might, for example, be Russian or Ethiopian.

This approach to language issues appears to have been related to broader societal gains of forging a nation from linguistically and culturally diverse groups and, more pragmatically, on the basis that it was important for children to gain early mastery of the language used in school if they were to succeed in these institutions. Programs are typically run for single language groups (Lombard, 1994).

In other countries, such as New Zealand, the program has at times followed a similar philosophy to that of the program in Israel, that is, provided in a country's official language. Elsewhere, such as in the Netherlands (Eldering & Vedder, 1993), it has been translated and delivered in minority languages. HIPPY has been translated into English, Spanish, Dutch, Turkish, German and Papamiento (Lombard, 1997).

4.3.4 Cultural issues: Families from different cultural backgrounds

HIPPY was devised to meet the needs of immigrant minorities in Israel, from a range of different cultural backgrounds. The program internationally has been experienced by people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Lombard, 1994). The program interest has not been in understanding cultural processes per se but in ensuring that the program has been offered in culturally appropriate ways (Burgon et al., 1997; Eldering & Vedder, 1993). This issue has been examined in interviews with parents in terms of the acceptability of the program and as a possible factor in explaining why some parents withdraw part way through the program (Lombard, 1994; Burgon et al., 1997).

Lombard (1994, p.112) has emphasised that the universal attraction of engaging parents as educators of their children will supersede cultural differences.

In providing opportunities for successful educational interaction with their children, HIPPY opens new horizons for these parents in terms of their abilities as educators, strengthening the natural parent-child bond. These processes have been found to be appropriate for all the cultural and ethnic groups that HIPPY has worked with to date. A probable explanation may be found in both the universality of both the parent-child bond of affection and the need for empowerment in adults.

While this may usually have been the case, there have been cultural barriers to successful implementation of the program with different minority groups in the Netherlands and in New Zealand with Maori families (discussed in Section 4.4.1.2 below).

4.3.5 Delivery system

The following seven elements comprise the program's delivery system (National Council of Jewish Women 1995):
a) parent delivery of the lesson;
b) home visiting;
c) group meeting of parents;
d) use of para professionals (home tutors);
e) intensive in-house training of home tutors;
f) role playing as a method of learning; and

g) structured nature of the program.

Each element is described in more detail below in relation to the ideal program model and the rationale for the approaches used.

4.3.5.1 Parent delivery of the lesson

The HIPPY model provides parents with information and support to do the lesson with their children (Lombard, 1994). The standard requirement made of parents engaged in the program is that they deliver 60 weeks of lessons over a two-year period, spending at least 15 minutes per day, Monday to Friday, for each week of the lesson. This provides 75 hours of parent to child instruction over the two years of the program.

The involvement of parents as teachers in HIPPY was predicated on an understanding of educational disadvantage and the view of the home environment as an important educational setting for young children. On this basis it was designed to provide educational enrichment activities for children and to strengthen 'the mother's self-esteem through her activities as an educator in the family setting' (Lombard, 1994, p.8).

4.3.5.2 Home visiting

According to the ideal model, the home tutors visit the parent once a fortnight in their own home for about an hour. They introduce and role play with the parent the five lessons which the parent will conduct with the child during the week. The parent and home tutor alternately play the role of parent and child. The focus of the program on the home environment is because of its identification as the place in which children's educational disadvantage originated (Lombard, 1994).

4.3.5.3 Group meeting of parents

After an initial period of about eight to ten weeks, during which time families receive weekly home visits, parents meet fortnightly together in small groups with their home tutor, on alternate weeks to the home visits. Again parents role play the lessons for the week. The parents also have the opportunity to ask questions about the program and the group may undertake additional enrichment activities, such as inviting guest speakers to the meeting. These additional enrichment activities are described by Lombard (1997) as an area of flexibility in local program

implementation.

Parents who do not attend a group meeting receive an additional home visit from the home tutor, to teach the weekly lesson material. This is usually for a shorter length of time than the normal home visit, for about half an hour.

Group meetings are an element added to the original Israeli program. This was based upon early research on HIPPY which showed that there had been less impact than hoped for in parents' understanding of their role as educators (Davis & Kugelmass, 1974). It was believed that the group meetings would provide parents with a better understanding of the program and their role in it (Lombard, 1994).

> *We believed that such a forum would enable mothers to share their problems and reactions, to learn from the experience of others, and to internalise, through active discussion, some of the stated objectives of the program, thus enhancing the quality of their work with their children.* (p.19)

4.3.5.4   Use of paraprofessionals (home tutors)

A program coordinator selects home tutors from the same local community as parents enrolled in the program. The tutors meet the same eligibility criteria as parents (low educational level and low income). They usually have a child who is enrolled in the program. They are selected by the program coordinator on the basis of interest, good communication skills, ability in the official language of the country and ability in an additional language for parents who lack fluency in the country's official language. Their main task is to deliver the program to parents, in order that the parents can successfully deliver the program to their children (Lombard, 1994; Westheimer, 1997).

The following reasons for using paraprofessional home tutors in HIPPY are provided by Lombard (1994):

> *The use of parents to teach parents provides a minimally threatening home teaching setting. As members of the community and as peers of the target families, the parents who serve as paraprofessional home visitors are able to establish meaningful communication with the HIPPY families, while at the same time acting as community role models for involvement in education. They are instructed weekly in their roles as paraprofessionals and are personally supervised by the HIPPY local coordinator who is a professional.* (p. 112)

4.3.5.5 Intensive in-house training of home tutors

Home tutors attend a weekly group training session of about four hours with the program coordinator, in which the lessons for the following week are role played and teaching strategies are discussed and developed (Lombard, 1994; Westheimer, 1997).

4.3.5.6 Role playing as a method of learning

Role playing is the method by which home tutors learn to deliver the program from the Coordinator, the parent learns from the home tutor and the child learns in interaction with his or her parent. As described above, participants alternately play either the part of parent or child in training sessions.

Lombard (1994) provided the following description of why role playing was chosen as the method of transferring learning in the program:

We selected role playing as our basic technique for teaching 'how to teach' because it has been found to be especially successful for use with the disadvantaged. The emphasis is on action rather than talk; it is interactive experiential learning that is down to earth and concrete; and its easy informal tempo provides a game-like rather than a test-oriented setting. Thus, role-playing provided non-threatening atmosphere in which both mother and aide [home tutor] could clarify specific problems and areas of mother's understanding of the materials. (p.18)

Lombard (1994, p.18) argued that the use of role play was also necessary because of the use of para professionals in the program, whose own lack of education *'precluded the possibility of transmitting a set of verbal rules for teaching in a meaningful way'*.

In terms of learning theory, HIPPY provides a format in which children can learn in an intensive adult-child relationship, with the content being designed by educationalists to be appropriate to the stage of development of the child and relevant to what is taught in schools. The rationale for the use of role play is that it allows parents with low levels of education and/or experience of educational failure, to successfully complete the lesson material with their children.

4.3.5.7 Structured nature of the program

The program is highly structured with set materials, lists of instructions for

parents and a clear regime for the teaching of the lesson to the parent and the parent to his or her child.

Lombard (1994, p.110) argued that the structured nature of this program ensured its success. She described the structure as an appropriate way for parents from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds to teach their children, because it *reduces the chance of failure due to their lack of knowledge and experience*. In responding to criticism of the structured nature of the program she pointed to the flexibility of the program to respond to local needs and expectations, and how parents are *encouraged to elicit as many ideas as possible from their children*.

Westheimer (1997), Director of HIPPY International from 2001, acknowledged the tension between providing sufficient structure in the program to allow parents to deliver it whilst allowing for more open ended types of learning, which are often considered to be developmentally appropriate for young children. Specifically, she identified three criticisms of the type of structured teaching provided for in HIPPY, namely that it is not an appropriate way for young children to learn, that it is too test-like and that it prevents appropriate individualisation of the program. She argued however that the materials were designed for parents to use and that it allowed them to teach their children in developmentally appropriate ways. She identified about five per cent of the HIPPY materials as test-like. She saw this as a compromise between the view that children should not be tested (but in reality are) and the need of children to be able to complete tests successfully. This was seen as especially important when the results were used for placement rather than diagnostic purposes. She acknowledged the ongoing tension between structure and individualisation in the program.

4.4   Evaluation literature

The former Director of HIPPY International, Avima Lombard, pointed out the close relationship between the Israeli program and research, the broad commitment of the program to research and the policy of HIPPY International to leave individual programs to develop their own type of research. She commented:

> *One, I belong to a research institute, so by definition everything we do has to*
> *have a recent evaluation about a research dimension. Two, we were starting a*
> *new concept so we went into field research, so our first project has a lot of*
> *data on it. Three, it became clear to us that we needed a lot more information*
> *as we were going along and that we weren't going to be able to honestly say*

we have a program that works, unless we could show that it works in some dimension. It didn't have to be necessarily outcomes, it could be process, it could be anything. What we decided, it was a decision of our little committee there, was that every new program would commit to doing research, but we weren't going to dictate what to research. [It would be] according to the local needs and according to local standards and local possibilities but they had to do research. They could connect to a university, to somebody else, any way it could be. We estimated that over time we would get a body of data which would speak for itself. That's about it, that we would help, we would help in conceptualising, but not with the research, and that was funding (Transcript of research interview, 1999).*

Lombard also stated (interview, 1999) that funding for research has often proven difficult to procure. Indeed, as demonstrated below, published research has been somewhat scant, given the extent of international program implementation, and has largely focused on evaluations of outcomes for children. The message also provided in the familiarisation sessions attended by the present researcher in 1997 was that outcome evaluations studies should be avoided in the first year of a new program, since establishment difficulties were likely to lead to poorer outcomes for children than later programs (Lombard, personal communication, 1997).

Miriam Westheimer, the second Director of HIPPY International, and former Director of HIPPY in the United States, has described the evaluation of HIPPY programs as *'piecemeal'*. She further commented that this appeared to be because it was more difficult to attract funding for research than for program implementation (Westheimer, personal communication, 2001).

4.4.1 Evaluation studies

Evaluation results for 16 studies of HIPPY are summarised in Table 1 on pages 43 to 49. These studies comprise all reports available, both published and unpublished. The far right column is an assessment by the researcher as to whether the study results indicate mainly positive, neutral or negative outcomes of the HIPPY intervention.

The studies span a 30-year period and were carried out in six countries. There were multiple studies in Israel, New Zealand and the United States, with single studies in Turkey, the Netherlands and South Africa. A number of additional United States studies have been listed on a HIPPY web site, but reports were not available at the

time of writing despite extensive efforts to find them. No Australian evaluation studies are reported in Table 1 as none have yet been published, but a comprehensive process evaluation of the first implementation of HIPPY in Australia is in the process of being documented as a doctoral thesis at the time of writing (Grady, forthcoming). An account of the research program and an evaluation of the first intake of families into the program in Australia is a chapter in a forthcoming book (Dean, Leung, Gilley & Grady, forthcoming), and is summarised in Section 5.2.4.

Evaluation studies are considered in relation to assessment of program effects and explanations of program effects below.

4.4.1.1 Program effects

Most published studies have focused on outcomes for children and have involved a control group of children not receiving HIPPY. These were either quasi-experimental (nine studies, Table 1.) or experimental (three studies, Table 1.), where the three latter studies involved random allocation to HIPPY and control groups. There were also two studies which provided a mix of quasi experimental and experimental approaches. The main forms of assessment of children have been by direct testing (thirteen studies, Table 1.), teacher assessment (twelve studies, Table 1.) and examination of school records. More that 30 measures have been used in assessing child outcomes. The main focus has been on children's cognitive development, reading and maths ability and school readiness and school performance.

Several studies have identified other effects, such as specific gains for parents in child rearing practices (11, Table 1.), improvement in mother-child relationships (11, Table 1.) and educational gains for parents, particularly those employed as home tutors (5, 6 & 7, Table 1.). These types of gains are also supported on the basis of anecdotal evidence (Lombard, 1994).

Findings of studies on child outcomes reviewed in Table 1 below have indicated a mixture of mainly positive (eight studies) or mainly neutral (six studies) results for those who completed the program. High attrition rates in several studies indicated that the program as implemented did not suit all families.

The initial Israeli study in Tel Aviv, (1969-1979), (1, Table 1.), identified that children in HIPPY out performed both a control group and a teacher instructed group up to Grade 2. This was measured in terms of mental maturity, reading, mathematics and school performance (Lombard, 1994). By Grade 5 children in HIPPY continued to perform better on school achievement and were less likely to be assigned to special

remedial classes. A replication Israeli study in Jerusalem (1971-1977), (2, Table 1.), failed to repeat these positive findings (Lombard, 1994). There were some significant gains for children in HIPPY up to Grade 2, but only in areas of understanding of basic concepts and reading, with no gains identified in further follow-ups in Grades 3 and 4. A further study in Jerusalem (1976-1979), (3, Table 1.), also reported mainly neutral results. Higher mathematics scores were achieved for children in Grade 2, but none were reported in Grade 1 or Grade 3.

Five studies have been reported from New Zealand. One major study, part of a broader study of Family Centres, (4, Table 1.), reported mainly positive results for the children completing HIPPY (50 per cent of families) as assessed by parents, teachers and direct testing of children. Over four-fifths of parents reported that the program had improved their children's progress at school, teachers were less likely to report children in HIPPY as making slow progress at school, and the children had similar results on mathematical abilities to those of a representative sample of New Zealand children. Similar or better result levels for children in HIPPY compared with those in the larger study could be regarded as a positive finding on the basis that they were educationally disadvantaged. A more minor study, (5, Table 1.), also compared HIPPY children's assessment scores with those children in the same larger study. The results for reading and word recognition were again positive. The group had a similar attrition rate (50 per cent). A third New Zealand study, (6, Table 1.), found no differences between HIPPY and non-HIPPY children on a school readiness test. The fourth New Zealand study, (7 in Table 1.), found no difference between children in HIPPY and those in a matched comparison group where teacher assessment of children's academic self-esteem was the measure used. The children in HIPPY did however outperform classmates. The last New Zealand study, (8, Table 1.), found that HIPPY children out performed non-HIPPY children on developmental assessments, mathematics, work and social habits. Parents recorded a significantly higher interest in their children's education.

Table 1

Evaluation studies of HIPPY

Country and duration*	Sample size**	Study types	Sources of data	Key outcome measures***	Key findings	Assessment of findings
1.Israel, Tel Aviv 1969-1979 (Lombard, 1994)	HG:58 TI: 48 CG: 30 HG = HIPPY group CG = Control Group TI= teacher Instructed Group	Experimental in part and quasi experimental in part, with three groups: HIPPY, no intervention and teacher instructed in HIPPY materials	Children: direct testing, teacher assessment and school records	Children's development: mental maturity (Columbia test), Good Enough Draw a Man Test, development test (Frostig), same and different test, matrix and home story test, basic concepts, visual perception, IQ, report card evaluations, reading and mathematics	Children in the program out performed those in the other two groups on measures of mental maturity, reading and mathematics and school performance up to Grade 2. In follow-up studies to Grade 5, children were achieving more highly at school and were less likely to be assigned to special classes for delayed children	Mainly positive, with some neutral results on some assessments
2.Israel, Jerusalem 1971-1977 (Lombard, 1994)	HG: 66 CG: 64	Experimental	Children: direct testing, teacher assessment and school records	Children's development: visual perception (Frostig), basic concepts (Boehm), maths readiness (Minkovich), reading comprehension (Ortar-Ben-Shachar)	Children in the HIPPY scored significantly higher on visual perception and understanding of basic concepts after kindergarten, teacher assessment of reading after Grade 2, but no significant differences in assessments at Grade three and four	Mainly neutral, with few significantly higher results in the first three years and none in the final two years
3.Israel, Jerusalem 1976-1979 (Lombard, 1994)	HG: 206 CG: 103	Quasi-experimental	Children: direct testing and teacher assessment	Teachers reporting of differences between HIPPY children and other similar children, maths and reading achievement to Grade three.	Some reporting of positive effects by teachers after the kindergarten year, higher performance of children in HIPPY on maths assessment after controlling for parental education level at Grade two level, but no differences at Grade one level and no reporting of Grade three results	Mainly neutral, with only significantly higher math scores after Grade two

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Table 1

Evaluation studies of HIPPY (continued)

Country and duration*	Sample size**	Study types	Sources of data	Key outcome measures***	Key findings	Assessment of findings
4. New Zealand 1990s (Burgon et al., 1997)	IG: 435	Quasi-experimental, with children in HIPPY drawn from two cohorts across seven centres as part of a broader evaluation of Family Service Centres with HIPPY as one program within centres, results compared with those of another major study (n=704)	Children: observations, testing and teacher assessment Parents, teachers and board members: interviews	Children were assessed on problem solving related to the provision of a picture on tow children and one toy, receptive vocabulary (Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test), logical reasoning in a non-verbal manner (Coloured Progressive Matrices) and mathematics (from Competent Children Study)	Both parents and teachers believed that HIPPY had improved their children's behaviour, 83 % of parents believed that it had improved their children's progress at school, teachers were less likely to report children in HIPPY as making slow progress at school, children improved their receptive vocabulary and outperformed other children on vocabulary once age was controlled for, children's results in mathematics were similar to the controls which was interpreted as a positive finding of children 'holding their own in mathematics Attrition rates of over 50% for the two cohorts	Mainly positive on the basis of positive results for children completing the program, as assessed by parents, teachers and test results
5. New Zealand 1990s (Barhava-Monteith, et al., 1999)	HG: 77	Quasi-experimental and qualitative , with results compared with those of another major study (n=704)	Children: test results from school records	Children's need for remedial reading tuition (Reading Diagnostic Survey) and word recognition skills (Burt Word Reading Test)	Children in HIPPY outperformed other children on three of the five sub tests of the Reading and Diagnostic Survey and on word recognition test. Attrition rates of over 50%	Mainly positive on the basis that children outperformed controls on most of the assessment
6. New Zealand 1990s (Barhava-Monteith et al., 1999)	HG: 29 CG: 29	Quasi experimental	Children: test results	Four sub-tests of an assessment of children's skills (Metropolitan Readiness Test, Level one), assessing auditory memory, visual matching, school language and listening and quantitative language	No significant differences between children in HIPPY and controls	Neutral result

Table 1

Evaluation studies of HIPPY (continued)

Country and duration*	Sample size**	Study types	Sources of data	Key outcome measures***	Key findings	Assessment of findings
7. New Zealand 1990s (Barhava-Monteith et al., 1999)	HG: 29 CG: 29	Quasi-experimental, with participants from study no.10 with the addition of 47 class mates	Children: test results	Behavioural evaluation (Behavioural Academic Self Esteem Scale)	Significant differences amongst the three groups, with children in HIPPY and controls outperforming classmates groups, but no significant difference between children in HIPPY and controls	Neutral result
8. New Zealand 1990s (Watt, 1994)	HG: 20 CG: 20	Quasi-experimental	Children: test results and teacher assessment Parents: interviews	Children: development (Batelle Developmental Inventory), mathematics ability on entering school (Beginning School Mathematics I), teacher assessment Inventory on Work Habits and Social Development) Parents: assessment of home environment (HOME) and parental involvement in children's education	Children in HIPPY outperformed controls in sub-part of the Batelle: the Receptive Domain in the second year, the Communication Domain in the first year, and showed a higher rate of development in the Expressive Domain, with no significant differences in the Cognitive Domain. Children in HIPPY also outperformed controls in teacher assessment of work habits and social development. Parents in HIPPY showed significantly higher interest in developing their children's education, but no differences in assessment of having a stimulating home environment	Mainly positive on the basis that children in HIPPY outperformed controls on most measures
9. Netherlands late 1987-1992 (Eldering & Vedder, 1993)	HG: 141 CG: 117	Quasi-experimental, involving Dutch, Surinamese, Turkish and Moroccon families	Children: direct testing and teacher assessment Parents: in-depth interviews	Non verbal IQ (SON), language test (TAK), class room behaviour (SCHOBL) and family environment (HOME)	Children in HIPPY outperformed controls on hand-eye coordination, Moroccon children in HIPPY outperformed controls on language skills, no differences on cognitive skills, between children in HIPPY and controls. There was a 40% attrition rate. The intensity of parental involvement in HIPPY correlated with cognitive development of children and positive classroom behaviour.	The results were mainly neutral, on the basis of few differences between children in HIPPY and controls

Table 1

Evaluation studies of HIPPY (continued)

Country and duration*	Sample size**	Study types	Sources of data	Key outcome measures***	Key findings	Assessment of findings
10. South Africa early 1990s (Adams, Skuy & Fridjhon, 1992)	HG: 104 CG: 104	Experimental, with the intervention in two cohorts: Coloured and African communities	Children: direct testing and teacher assessment	Aptitude·Test for School·Beginners (Tredoux & Swart), Pupil Rating Scale (Mykebust), Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test- Revised	Children from the Coloured Community outperformed children in the controls on all assessments, except for memory and verbal comprehension sub test of the Aptitude Test. Children from the African cohort outperformed controls on the Aptitude Test and on the auditory comprehensions sub test of the Pupil Rating Scale. There was a 78% attrition rate from the program for this group	The results were mainly positive for the Coloured community (did better than controls), and negative for the African community (attrition and better than controls on only some assessments)
11. Turkey 1982-1995 (Kagitcibasi, 1996)	HG: 140 CG:140	Mixture of experimental, quasi-experimental and qualitative, with study children in three situations: home care, in child care with preschool education and in child care with no preschool education, follow-up study when children 13-15	Children: direct testing and teacher assessment, interviews in adolescence, school records Parents: assessment of styles of interaction with children, interviews	Children's intelligence and development (Stanford Binet, Analytical Triad, Block Design·WIPSY and Piaget Tests), school achievement tests, social behaviour assessment on aggression and autonomy; school achievement (school records) and vocabulary (WISC-R) in follow-up study. Parents: child rearing orientations including more patience with the child, life styles and self concepts (Hess & Shipman task)	Children in HIPPY outperformed controls on all measures of cognitive and school development, less aggressive and more autonomous

In follow-up study, children in HIPPY did not outperform controls on academic performance (attributed to poorer students in Control Group leaving school and the study), but did on other measures such as self esteem, social integration and autonomy, also more likely to be remain at school higher rate of retaining children in school. HIPPY mothers maintained higher status in families, had higher educational expectations of children and more interested in their schooling, and had closer family relations | Positive |

Table 1

Evaluation studies of HIPPY (continued)

Country and duration*	Sample size**	Study types	Sources of data	Key outcome measures***	Key findings	Assessment of findings
12. United States, New York 1990s (Baker et al., 1996)	HG: 84 CG: 98	Experimental, in two cohorts, assessed at end of program and one year after program completed	Children: direct testing, teacher assessment and school records	Cognitive skills (Cooperative Preschools Inventory), standardised school achievement from school records, including the Metropolitan Readiness Test in Kindergarten and the Metropolitan Achievement Test in first grade, and classroom adaptation (Child Classroom Adaptation Index)	In Cohort I, children in HIPPY outperformed controls on four of the seven assessments (over two points of time), including cognitive skills, classroom adaptation and standardised reading. In Cohort II, there were no significant differences in assessment scores between children in HIPPY and controls. Differences between these two findings was not due to their being drawn from different populations, reasons unknown	Mainly positive for Cohort I and mainly neutral results for cohort II on the basis of no difference
13. United States,, New York 1990s (Baker et al., 1996)	HG: 121 CG: 105	Quasi-experimental, in two cohorts, assessed at end of program and one year after program completed	Children: direct testing, teacher assessment and school records	Cognitive skills (Cooperative Preschools Inventory), classroom adaptation (Child Classroom Adaptation Index), school achievement (Stanford Early School Achievement Test), and timely movement through the grades	In Cohort I, children in HIPPY outperformed controls in classroom adaptation at the one year follow up and there were no other significant differences between the two groups. In Cohort II, controls outperformed children in HIPPY in school achievement and there were no other significant differences	Mainly neutral in that there were only minor differences between groups, minor positive results for Cohort I and minor negative results for Cohort II

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Table 1

Evaluation studies of HIPPY (continued)

Country and duration*	Sample size**	Study types	Sources of data	Key outcome measures***	Key findings	Assessment of findings
14. United States, Arkansas (Bradley, 1999)	HG: 516 CG: 516	Quasi-experimental, assessing children in third and sixth grades	Children: direct testing, teacher assessment and school records	Children assessed on school attendance, suspensions from school, school assessment on reading, maths and language art (Standard Achievement Tests), and classroom behaviour (Child Classroom Adaptation Index)	Children in HIPPY outperformed controls on reading, maths, language art and on classroom behaviour.	Positive
15. United States, Texas 1997–2000 (Jacobson, forthcoming)	HG Cohort I: 89 HG Cohort II: 353 HG Cohort III: 45	Qualitative study in three cohorts assessing adaptation to kindergarten and parental involvement in their children's educations	Children: kindergarten teacher assessment Parents and teachers: interviews	Children were assessed on overall classroom adaptability, verbal classroom behaviour, language arts/reading instruction. Parents were interviewed about parent activities and beliefs related to school, family literacy and home environment	Main findings from Cohort I was that program objective of 70% of parents feeling more confident in engaging in school activities was met as was the objective of 75% of children in kindergarten demonstrating school adaptability behaviours. Similar positive findings for succeeding cohorts.	Positive

Table 1
Evaluation studies of HIPPY (continued)

Country and duration*	Sample size**	Study types	Sources of data	Key outcome measures***	Key findings	Assessment of findings
16. United States 1990s (Baker & Roth, 1997)	Part of studies 12 & 13 above	Two qualitative studies involving interviews with coordinators and home tutors in one site (New York)	Program staff	Interview material with a major focus on attrition from the program and intensity of involvement of parents	Main findings were that some families left the program early when they understood the degree of commitment, another group left at the end of the first year either because of lack of contact with the program or because the first year of HIPPY was seen by parents as sufficiently preparing the child for his or her first year of formal education, and others left because of their involvement in HIPPY clashed with new commitments or their home tutor left. Also suggests that parents with more education and higher incomes had higher expectations for the child's education and greater intensity of involvement in the program.	Focused on process rather than outcomes.

* Please note that the variability in which time periods are reported for each study, is due to the variability in the information provided in the research reports

** The figures provided represent the initial sample sizes. Most studies experienced reduction in sample size during the period of the research, with this more extensive in longer studies

*** Children in HIPPY are referred to as outperforming controls only when differences in assessment scores are statistically significant

In a Netherlands study, (9, Table 1.), the results were mostly neutral, with few differences between HIPPY children who completed the program (60 per cent) and non-HIPPY children, where language ability and classroom behaviour were measured.

The South African study, (10, Table 1), found mainly positive results for participants from the coloured community. HIPPY children outperformed non-HIPPY children on aptitude and IQ tests and a pupil rating scale by teachers. Most of the families from the African Community did not complete the program. The children who did complete it outperformed non-HIPPY children on the aptitude test.

The Turkish study, (11, Table 1), reported positive results for HIPPY children on a wide range of measures. The children have been assessed into adolescence. Assessments have included measures of intelligence, school achievement, social behaviour and self-esteem. Parents of HIPPY children were also assessed as having more positive child rearing orientations than parents of non-HIPPY children.

Six studies in the United States were reported, with four of these mainly focusing on child outcomes. The first two studies were undertaken by the same researchers, (12 and 13, Table 1.), and included two HIPPY cohorts in each study. In the first cohort in each study, there were positive results, with HIPPY children outperforming non HIPPY children in areas of school readiness, kindergarten and school achievement and classroom behaviour. These positive findings were not replicated for the second cohort. The third United States study, (14, Table 1.), reported positive findings with children in HIPPY outperforming non-HIPPY children at Grades 3 and 5, on reading, mathematics, language art, and classroom behaviour. The fourth United States study, (15, Table 1.), focused mainly on children's classroom adaptations and on parents becoming more confident in engaging in school activities. No control group was used. The program met its self-set target, in three cohorts, with at least 70 per cent of parents feeling more confident in engaging in school activities and three-quarters of children demonstrating school adaptability behaviours. The last two United States studies, (16, Table 1.), examined why families left the program and the importance of the intensity with which families were involved in HIPPY.

Only four studies, two Israeli (1 and 2, Table 1.), one Turkish (11, Table 1.) and one United States (14, Table 1.), have included further follow-ups of participants to assess the longer-term effects of the program, and none of these have gone beyond early adolescence. Three of these four studies reported positive results as discussed above and detailed in Table 1. The exception was the Jerusalem replication study (2,

Table 1), which reported no significant differences between HIPPY and non-HIPPY children at grade 3 and grade 4.

4.4.1.2 Explanations of program effects

There has been a lesser focus in the published evaluation literature on program implementation processes, which provide explanations for program success and failure. This is a serious limitation given the known variations in some program implementations which might have affected results. For instance, the Turkish program (11, Table 1.) used HIPPY materials for children, but added a two year enrichment training program for mothers, whilst HIPPY in the Netherlands dealt with multiple cultures in the one program and translated the HIPPY materials into the minority languages of the families (9, Table 1.). The feedback from HIPPY staff to a HIPPY international conference in the United States in 2001 was that programs in that country vary considerably in their implementation (third HIPPY Coordinator in Australia, personal communication, 2001).

Several studies have attempted to explain high rates of attrition from HIPPY, although, as in the evaluation field reviewed in Chapter 3, this question was not usually incorporated in the research design for these studies. A very high degree of family disadvantage has been indicated in the South African Study (10, Table 1.), and in New Zealand studies (4, 5, 6 and 7, Table 1.), where health and relocation of families to other areas were important factors. United States studies, (16, Table 1.), identified reasons for attrition related to: leaving the program soon after its commencement (when time commitment became evident), leaving after the end of the first year (due to loss of family contact with program or a felt need that HIPPY had sufficiently prepared the child for formal schooling) and leaving at other times (because of other parental commitments or because the family's usual home tutor left). Another factor identified among some cultural groups in the Netherlands study, and among Maori participants in New Zealand studies, (4, 5, 6 and 7, Table 1.), was the desire to retain their own language and cultural and religious traditions. This meant that some of the parents in these programs who were wary of the central rationale of HIPPY of promoting success in the dominant culture left the program part way.

In two outcome studies in the United States (Baker & Roth, 1997), the authors acknowledged that they were unable to explain their contradictory research findings, with the first Cohort in both studies indicating positive benefits for children from participation in HIPPY and Cohort II indicating mainly neutral results. The authors

unsuccessfully sought explanations through examining characteristics of participating families (16, Table 1.). They concluded that there was a need in future studies to focus on several factors: how much parental involvement was needed to achieve positive results for children; the identification of sub-groups of families who are more or less likely to benefit from the program (as recruitment selection criteria); and the identification of other family characteristics which might mediate the effects of the intervention.

As noted in Table 1 above, the intensity of parents' involvement in HIPPY was found to correlate with children's cognitive development and positive classroom behaviour in the Netherlands study, (9, Table 1.), and was inferred in two qualitative United States studies (16, Table 1.) .

4.5   Discussion and conclusions

Because the prime purpose of HIPPY is to improve success at school for children from disadvantaged families, program effects for children can be equated with program outcomes. Positive effects for parents have been identified as operational program goals facilitating positive effects for children (Davis & Kugelmass, 1974).

The conceptual framework of Baker et al. (1999), which features the achievement of HIPPY's educational goals for children through the training and support of parents as teachers of their children, underpins the HIPPY International model program. In essence, HIPPY relies on the prevalence across nations and cultures of the strength of the parent-child bond, the learning capacities of four and five year old children and the existence/importance of education in the eyes of parents. As a program with a 30-year history, HIPPY brings with it its own baggage of issues, and a wealth of practice wisdom associated with its implementation. The originator of the program (Lombard, 1994) identified elements which related to its effectiveness. These included parental interest in their children's education, the relevance of the educational materials and tasks to the developmental age of the child, the home-based plus group meetings approaches and the structure of the program. The program coordinator was also identified as playing a key role in its success or failure. Particular factors affecting the development of the program in Israel were also identified.

Evaluation studies published so far indicate that HIPPY has the ability to improve the scholastic progress of children living in disadvantaged families within different national and cultural settings. However, some research has failed to find positive results. These evaluation studies, with their strong focus on children's

outcomes and quasi-experimental design, have failed to either explain these neutral findings, or to focus on explanations between program processes and outcomes. These drawbacks of HIPPY evaluations are consistent with the review of evaluation findings of early childhood education programs for disadvantaged children more generally, reviewed in Chapter 3. An important aspect in the HIPPY evaluation research is the limited way that parental data has been used in previous studies, which have mostly not used parents as a major source of data on both implementation processes and program effects. In many cases no data have been collected from parents beyond demographic information or the identification of home environment factors which might affect children's learning. Where parental views have been sought it has usually been in relation to broad satisfaction with the program.

The major implications of past findings for the present research were taken to be the need for complementary process and outcome evaluation, the value of quasi-experimental design for assessing outcomes, and the involvement of parents in assessing both processes and outcomes.

This chapter has presented a generally positive picture of HIPPY internationally and the worth of the program in improving school success for educationally disadvantaged students. However, evidence of neutral results for some implementations of HIPPY and failure for some groupings of families raises issues that are important to this research. Can the program operate successfully in countries such as Australia, given the different services, social and educational contexts that exist here? Are there groups of families for whom the program is unlikely to be helpful?

The next Chapter presents the Australian and Victorian services context in which HIPPY has been implemented, together with the history of the program's establishment in Victoria leading up to the present study.

CHAPTER 5

THE AUSTRALIAN SERVICES CONTEXT IN WHICH HIPPY OPERATES

A question posed by this study was whether or not the HIPPY model can be successfully implemented in Australia. The system of services provided in this country is an important context for understanding program implementation. One would expect the nature of program implementation to be affected by the existing system of services used by young children and their families. Local services can serve as a point of referral for families, as well as providing supports and advice to a new program. They can also be a source of competition for funding. As noted in Section 4.4.1.2, poor health and other forms of disadvantage can affect families' capacity to engage in HIPPY (Adams et al., 1993, Burgon et al., 1997) and in early childhood education programs more generally (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, 1996). The provision of good quality health and other services can assist families to meet health and other pressing needs and can thus support their capacity to engage in early childhood education programs such as HIPPY. Early education programs in generally service-rich environments may therefore need to be less proactive in helping families with their other needs, than programs in areas where such services are less well provided. In the latter case additional forms of assistance may therefore need to be organised to help create the necessary conditions for families to fully participate (Ochiltree, 1999).

This chapter describes the system of health, welfare and education services which form part of the context in which HIPPY operates in Australia. Whilst the system of secondary and tertiary education is of long-term interest to children in this study, it is not considered to be of current interest, given the young age of participants. The introduction of HIPPY into Australia is then described, leading to the rationale for the present study, detailed in Chapter 6.

5.1   System of services for young children and their families

The system of services for families with young children is outlined in terms of two broad classifications, namely (a) health and welfare, and (b) children's services.

5.1.1   Health and welfare services

There are a number of health and welfare services whose purpose is to improve the well-being of young children and their families (Gilley, 1993, 1994; Gilley & Taylor, 1995; Ochiltree, 1999; Taylor & Macdonald, 1998). These are either provided on a universal basis with the expectation that all families with children will use them, or targeted at particular

disadvantaged groups. In Victoria these services include:

a) pre and post-natal health care through maternity hospitals and community health centres (universal);

b) general medical practitioner services and medical specialists through a national Medicare system (universal);

c) the Maternal and Child Health Service which provides free local advice and support to mothers and their children (aged 0 to 5 years) (universal);

d) specialist children's services for children with special or additional needs (targeted);

e) parenting education through the Positive Parenting Program, Parentline, the Victorian Parenting Centre and Regional Parenting Resource Centres (targeted); and

f) a range of other outreach type services targeted to families with additional needs including home visiting services (targeted).

(Gilley, 1993; Ochiltree, 1999; Vimpani et al., 1996).

Most of these services are centre-based, though the Maternal and Child Health Service includes a home visiting component and general medical practitioners may also conduct home visits.

Health and welfare services exist to provide and promote one of the necessary conditions to children being able to learn, namely good health (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, 1996). In the United States, these services were not generally available to the participant families in the Head Start programs and additional health and welfare services were made available (Ochiltree, 1999). In contrast, disadvantaged families living in Victoria have access to a relatively good quality system of services covering the early childhood period. The inner city locations in which this HIPPY program was run have particularly strong networks of health, welfare and educational services and highly developed public transport systems (Gilley, 1994). Despite this, some problems of access to and quality of services for disadvantaged families have been identified. Problems have included lack of continuity of care in general medical practitioner and public hospital care, lack of privacy in public hospital care, and difficulty in gaining access to specialist medical services and dental services. More affluent families are less likely to experience these difficulties (Gilley, 1993; 1994; Gilley & Taylor 1995; Taylor 1997; Taylor & Macdonald, 1998).

5.1.2 Children's services

Early childhood education in Australia is delivered through what have been broadly termed children's services targeting the 0 to eight years age group. Some of these services have a primary focus on child care but may also include educational components, whilst others have education as their main focus but can also be viewed as providing child care. As noted in Section 3.2.3, a Senate inquiry into early childhood education identified this division between education and care as a major one. The view of the inquiry was that this was an unhelpful dichotomy and coined the term 'educare' to indicate the complementary nature of care and education functions in early childhood services (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, 1996).

The main children's services with a focus on child care are:

a) long day child care provided through child care centres (targeted);

b) Family Day Care, in which child care is provided for up to four children in private homes (targeted);

c) occasional child care in both childcare centres (targeted); and

d) out of hours school care (pre-school, after school and holidays) (targeted).

The main children's services with an educational focus are:

a) preschool education for all four-year-olds and some three-year-olds (in Victoria), where the primary focus is on children's learning (universal);

b) early years of compulsory schooling in primary schools (five to eight years; universal). (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, 1996).

Other organised services and activities which relate directly to children's learning are three-year-old preschool, playgroups, libraries and toy libraries, and other specific early childhood education programs (Gilley, 1993; 1994; Gilley & Taylor, 1995). Again these are usually centre-based and are provided by a range of government and non-government agencies. In recent years there has been an increasing interest in establishing programs which enhance children's learning in what has been termed the early years, 0 to three (Fleer, 2002; McLouglin & Nagorcka, 2000).

In Victoria, one year of preschool called kindergarten, is provided on a sessional basis to children when they are four years of age, for at least four sessions, that is 11 hours per week. To be eligible, children must have turned four by 30th of April (Kirby & Harper, 2001). The State Government has the overall financial and administrative responsibility for the system of preschools, though the programs are managed by local committees or other education providers and parents also pay fees. The State government also funds preschool education in child care centres. There is a more minor provision of three-year-old kindergarten which government does not subsidise, which means that many families are excluded (Kirby & Harper). This system of preschool education has been described as delivering *'individually planned programs to enhance the development of all children as well as providing the opportunity for families to develop links with their communities and to become more aware of the range of supports that are available'* (Kirby & Harper, p.1)

Child care is provided through a complex system of public and private systems, with the Federal Government as a major provider of funding. Parents also pay fees which are, however, subsidised on a scale related to their income level (Commonwealth Child Care Advisory Council, 2001; National Association of Community Based Children's Services, 2001). Unlike preschool, which is provided on a sessional basis, much child care is provided on a long day basis. Its primary focus is to support parents who require care for their children because of employment commitments. Education for children also occurs in child care centres and Family Day Care. The general point has been made that children learn in all early childhood settings irregardless of whether or not they are labelled as education (Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee, 1996).

Research in Victoria in the 1990s identified systems of children's services which generally provided good access and good quality (Gilley, 1993; Gilley, 1994; Gilley & Taylor, 1995; Health & Community Services, 1993; Taylor & Macdonald, 1998). However, it also identified a lower usage of children's services by children in low-income families compared with those on higher income, in the areas of play groups, child care, libraries and toy libraries (Gilley, 1993; 1994), with some problems of access to preschools because of increased fees (Taylor, 1997).

Recent research in Victoria has indicated that enrolment in preschools has positive effects for children in terms of helping them to succeed at school (Margetts, 2002). There is, however, what has been described as a crisis in resources for preschool education (Kirby & Harper, 2001). The main conclusion of research into child care in Australia has been that good quality child care does no harm (Ochiltree, 1994). However, concerns have recently been raised about the quality of child care provision in Victoria (Margetts, 2002).

In Australia there is a system of compulsory primary and secondary education for children from about five to 15 years of age. The system is the overall responsibility of State Governments, though the Commonwealth Government has a major funding role (Marginson, 1993). Marginson noted that the largest direct providers of primary and secondary education are the State Governments (about two-thirds of all schools), while Catholic schools accounting for about two-thirds of all private schools. In Victoria, children have to be five years of age by the 30th of April to commence their schooling in that year.

5.1.3   Overall system of services for young children and their families

An overview of the provision of services affecting young children can be represented by Figure 3. This shows the age-related nature of some of the services, represented as a straight line from 0 to eight years, and the division between universal services which are available to all children and their families (above the line) and more targeted services which only some children and their families would be expected to use (below the line). It needs to be noted that universal provision does not necessarily equate with universal enrolment.

Figure 3.   Services to families with young children
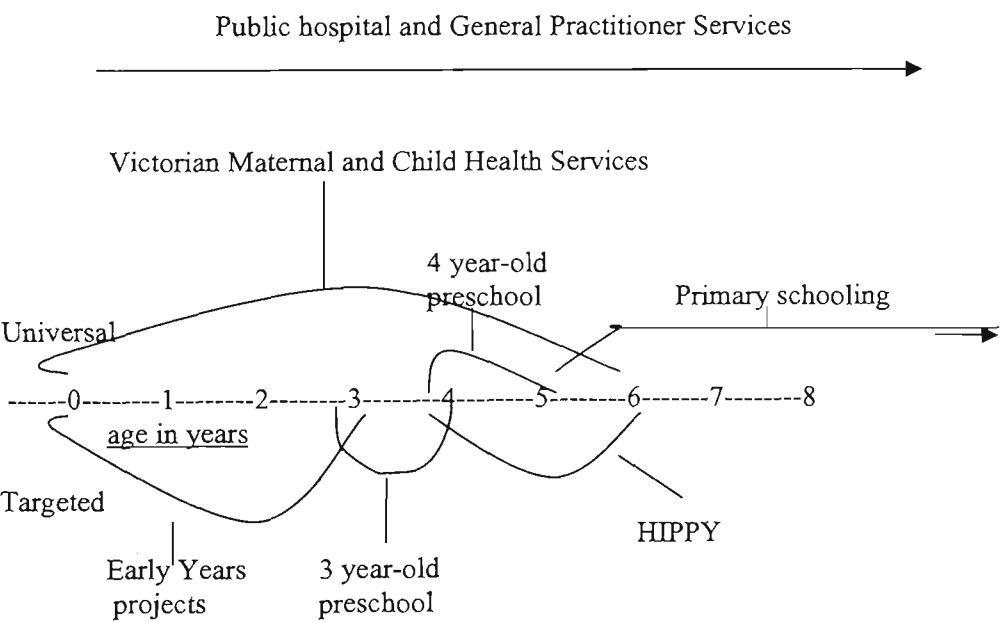
What emerges is a comprehensive system of universal and targeted children's services. However, as discussed above, there have been concerns expressed about poor access for disadvantaged children in the early years, especially between 0 to five years of age. This includes lack of contact with the Maternal and Child Health Centres in the crucial two weeks after a child's birth and then again after the first 12 months, lack of access to the targeted services of

child care and three-year-old kindergarten (mainly on financial grounds), increased difficulty of accessing four-year-old kindergarten because of higher fees and difficulties in accessing specialist medical services and dental services (Gilley, 1994).

Harris (1990) developed the principle of *'progressive universality'* as a way of identifying the elements of a system of services and social supports which would ensure all Australian children an adequate start in life. This would include material support through a guaranteed minimum income, and adequate and stable housing. It would ensure access to appropriate services through the provision of a universal framework of such services, a range of anti-discrimination and counter discrimination strategies to assist members of disadvantaged groups and the development of community responses to locally identified needs. Harris identified the major barriers to appropriate service use as financial, geographic, socio-cultural, and asymmetrical power relationships between users and providers.

On the basis of an analysis of longitudinal studies of children from a number of countries, McLouglin and Nagorcka (2000) argued that intervention programs should focus on decreasing risk factors, such as poverty, and strengthening protective factors, such as strong intra-family and extra-family relationships. They emphasised certain program approaches of particular importance: preschool, enhanced child care, home visiting services, parent education/development, family literacy, and community development.

5.1.4   Issues in service provision

A number of broad issues can be identified which are relevant to the present status and possible future development of HIPPY in Australia. These issues include the nature of Federal/State relationships and the Commonwealth's role in children's services. This section draws upon a historical account of early childhood service provision for the insights this provides into current arrangements.

The Commonwealth's role has been to encourage the development of services at particular stages and particularly to encourage features such as flexibility and community responsibility. Regulatory authority resides in the States (Mellor, 1990). However, the lack of long-term funding commitments by the Commonwealth has also left State Governments with the ongoing financial responsibility. The 1980s saw a substantial increase in State Government funding leading to improved provision of preschools, but in the early 1990s there were significant reductions in funding, which meant reduced hours and higher fees (Kirby & Harper, 2001). The current arrangement (2002) is that the Commonwealth takes primary responsibility for funding childcare whilst the States takes primary responsibility for preschool.

Another issue has been the separation of preschool and primary education. Historically, this has been partly due to the different child development principles on which preschool education was established, which made primary school classrooms unsuitable for this purpose. This has been described as a contrast between the use of a developmental framework in preschools to one of teaching skills and knowledge in core curriculum areas in primary schools (Ure, 1996). It also relates historically to the decisions by the Kindergarten movements to maintain their own training system, which was initially separate (now combined), from those established in higher education centres for other teachers. Another barrier has been lower pay for preschool teachers, compared with that of primary teachers. This has grown out of the earlier voluntary nature of preschool services, with teachers from well-to-do backgrounds seeking a vocation rather than a living (Mellor, 1990).

In Victoria, preschools have been traditionally more closely allied, and sometimes co-located, with Maternal and Child Health Services rather than with primary schools. State government management of preschools has been administered by variously named departments in the health and community services areas since the early 1940s (currently a combined Department of Human Services). This related to the provisions of the 1872 Education Act which had forbidden the granting of public funding to non-State schools, which in turn had made it difficult to publicly fund (through the Education Department) the substantial numbers of church-run preschools established by the late 1930s.

There has been a shift from the 1970s onwards from early notions of assimilation in working with children from migrant backgrounds (and aboriginal children) to a multi-cultural approach, where differences in languages and cultural practices are acknowledged and incorporated into service practice (Mellor, 1990).

Another shift from the 1970s onwards has been from the child's needs being the central concern of early childhood services, to priority being given to child care in response to women's rights to participation in the community and the provision of child care to serve women's employment needs. This has been largely led through Commonwealth funding policies (Mellor, 1990).

Early childhood education began with the purpose of ameliorating the plight of children living in poverty. It grew into an interest in universal provision based upon a view that it was important for all children. These two interests are recurring themes in the provision of early child education in Australia (Mellor, 1990).

An ongoing issue in the education debate in the early primary school years has been the importance of smaller classes to children's longer term education prospects. This has been given greater immediacy by the introduction of various systems of monitoring and improving the

progress of individual students. This has included the system of CLASS adopted in many Catholic Schools, Keys to Life in state schools, the First Steps program and Reading Recovery. The basis of these programs has been to provide greater attention to the learning needs of children on an individual basis. These approaches to improving educational outcomes for children have in turn being linked to the controversial issue of testing in schools in which students are nationally benchmarked at Grades 3 and 4 against national standards. Approximately one-quarter of students fell below these minimum standards (Masters, 1997).

Marginson (1997) identified a number of different social roles for education. These are *'child management and pastoral care, the inculcation of knowledges and behavioural values, civic and political learning, research and product development, preparation for work in most occupations and social selection'* (p7).

5.2 HIPPY in relation to other services

Young children and their families in Victoria would be expected to have been involved in the different universal services. In relation to children's services, this would be expected to include four-year-old preschoolers in their first year of HIPPY and the first year of primary schooling in their second year of HIPPY. Some children may also have been involved in the targeted services, such as child care and three-year-old preschools, although this would probably be less likely because of lack of access to these services for families on low incomes.

HIPPY can be viewed as forming part of a small group of non-mainstream early childhood education programs targeted at children disadvantaged in some way. It can also be contrasted with mainstream early childhood education programs on the basis that it is home-based rather than centre-based, makes use of parents as teachers rather than educational professionals, and is based upon one-to-one instruction for children rather than children learning within a group.

In pedagogical terms, HIPPY has more in common with the approach to teaching in primary education, with its focus on subject learning, than the self-directed focus of preschools. The traditional difficulties in transition between two different approaches to early childhood education are part of the context in which HIPPY operates. At one level this poses potential challenges in terms of its acceptability. At another level, this provides the potential to positively contribute to better transition arrangements.

The division between preschool and primary education in this State poses particular challenges for any program, such as HIPPY, which spans both. Neither the Department of Education nor the Department of Human Services is likely to see HIPPY as dealing with issues that are wholly their responsibility. This may have longer-term implications in seeking government funding and support for HIPPY.

In terms of Harris' (1990) notion of progressive universality, HIPPY is an example of a counter discrimination measure within a framework of universal service provision. Interest in HIPPY represents a renewed interest in programs targeted at the needs of disadvantaged children. Despite some problems with service access and quality, HIPPY is provided within a context of what can generally be described as good quality system of universal and targeted health and welfare services. The role of HIPPY in relation to these service systems might therefore be seen as ensuring families are participating in these services, rather than helping families with any direct provision of health and welfare assistance.

Marginson's (1997) analysis of the public purposes of education shifts the notion of program effectiveness from a simple conception of longer and more successful education to consideration of its underlying aims. Thus, it can be asked whether it is the purpose of HIPPY to help bring children up to a certain standard of literacy and numeracy achievement, whether it claims to improve later employment prospects, or whether it is about assisting families from different cultural and language backgrounds to better integrate into Australian society and become better citizens. The answers to these questions have important implications for how the program is developed and perceived in Australia.

5.3   Introduction of HIPPY into Australia

The immediate background to this study is discussed in relation to early interest in the program and the Brotherhood's engagement as the auspice for the program.

5.3.1   Early interest in HIPPY

The history of the establishment of the program in Australia has a number of elements relevant to this research which have been documented (Dean et al., forthcoming).

The first visit to Australia by the Director of HIPPY International, Avima Lombard, occurred in 1993 as a stopover on her way to New Zealand where HIPPY programs were already established. The visit was encouraged and funded by the Australian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. They organised public forums and other meetings at which the Director spoke about HIPPY and what would be involved in establishing the program in Australia.

As a result of this visit, a staff representative from a local city council in Melbourne attended the annual HIPPY familiarisation program in Israel in 1994, with a view to establishing a program in the western suburbs of Melbourne. The trip to Israel was funded through the Australian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The staff person from the city council also approached her local university, Victoria University, as a potential evaluator of the program. A second university, Deakin University, was

also approached by the Australian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem because of its involvement in early childhood education. Staff from these universities attended a research conference in Israel in 1995. Those with an interest in HIPPY established a steering committee in Victoria which adopted the mission of establishing and evaluating HIPPY in Australia.

5.3.2 Brotherhood of St Laurence involvement and networks of services

The executive officer of one of the potential funding bodies for the program, the then Victorian Community Foundation, suggested to the council staff person, mentioned above, that the involvement of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, a Melbourne-based voluntary welfare organisation, would increase the likelihood of their funding the program. The Brotherhood of St Laurence was therefore invited to join the HIPPY Steering Committee. In 1997, the present researcher, at that stage an employee of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, attended a familiarisation program in Israel to assess the relevance of the program to the organisation's mission. The Australian Friends of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Brotherhood of St Laurence jointly funded this. A favourable report to the organisation from this trip established the Brotherhood of St Laurence's interest in trialing HIPPY.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence operated a centre for early childhood programs with disadvantaged families in the inner city area of Fitzroy. This provided the venue and establishment support for the program. A major feature of the area is the provision of a large public high rise estate providing low cost housing to a multi-cultural community. There were already established linkages with other local service providers, and the organisation is a well-known and respected provider of services, with a reputation for working in collaboration with other services. Fitzroy was also the major area of recruitment of children for a longitudinal study of the impact on poverty of children, which had entailed gaining the cooperation and support of local providers of services (Gilley, 1993).

The Brotherhood of St Laurence established the first HIPPY program in Australia in 1998. HIPPY programs have since also been established in Geelong, a Victorian regional centre, in 1999, in Hobart, the capital of the state of Tasmania, in 2001 and in LaPerouse, Sydney, NSW, in 2002. In 2001 the Brotherhood of St Laurence was granted the national licence by the international body overseeing the program, HIPPY International, to develop and manage HIPPY in Australia.

This present research evaluates the program for a second intake into the Brotherhood of St Laurence program for a group of 33 children, who commenced in 1999.

5.3.3 Involvement of HIPPY International

The arrangements involving HIPPY International included the following features:

a) visits to Australia by the director of HIPPY International;

b) HIPPY coordinators and other interested persons attending 'training' sessions in Israel which provided an overview of the program and broad expectations;

c) HIPPY coordinators visiting the program in New Zealand;

d) the provision of a manual at the training session which provided detailed information on program implementation;

e) having a standard set of educational materials, organised in a 60 lesson structure, with instruction sheets for parents and Home Tutors (from HIPPY USA);

f) having these expectations formalised in reporting and contractual arrangements; and

g) being in regular communication with HIPPY International about aspects of program implementation.

The former Director of HIPPY International (Lombard, transcript of research interview, 1999) provided the following description of how the system of support for programs was developed internationally.

> *The pluses are great internationally. We're not a well thought through plan, it evolved because of a need and the program is it. In my desire to make sure things were going to be as expected I adopted a system of communication that would work for me, that's what makes it so difficult to turn it over to someone else. It is a system that is built around a person, not a good system, a good way, but it's there. The idea is that I know what a good program should be, what the elements are and my job is to get this across to people who are doing it and to establish lines of communication which will make it possible for them and me to stay on an even keel. This worked in Turkey, later on in the United States, in Holland it worked, it worked in Mexico...*

5.3.4 Beginning research on HIPPY in Australia

Research on HIPPY in Australia has been led by the Department of Psychology at Victoria University, which was one of the founding organisations for establishing the program in Australia as a member of the Steering Committee discussed above in Section 5.2.1 (Dean et al., forthcoming). The main aspects of this research effort and findings are summarised below.

A HIPPY international research conference in 1995, attended by a representative of Victoria University, had suggested the importance of coordinated research, of building a step by step research program to eventually include a quasi-experimental aspect, and an international

focus to the research using an instrument developed in Israel for HIPPY for measuring school readiness (Gumpel, 1995).

Research was also undertaken on the early period of the establishment of HIPPY in Australia, through interviews with main participants, most of whom were on the steering committee, and examination of committee documents (Dean et al., forthcoming). This research highlighted the united resolve of the Committee in establishing the program in Australia, the general difficulty in attracting funding for a program new to the country in a competitive funding environment, and the specific difficulty in attracting funding from the Victorian state government as HIPPY straddled the area of responsibility of two government departments.

A research study was conducted in 1997 in Fitzroy to establish the nature of any unmet educational needs of preschoolers, and therefore to determine whether there was a perceived basis for introducing HIPPY in the target communities. The study involved early childhood workers, and preschool and primary schools teachers. It found that there were major concerns with the language ability and social skills of local children, especially those in non-English speaking families. Research participants also identified a corresponding need for early educational intervention with these children and their families (Dean et al., forthcoming).

A qualitative process evaluation study was undertaken of the first intake of families into HIPPY in Australia commencing in 1998. This study included interviews with HIPPY staff and the parents of the 18 children in the program (Grady, forthcoming). Grady found that the program had been successfully implemented in Australia. Participants were very positive about their involvement in HIPPY and identified major educational gains for the children from their participation. The major difficulty in program implementation related to the language difficulty for most of the parents for whom English was not their first language. A key finding, followed up in the present study, was that participation in the program had led to closer parent-child relationships as perceived by the parents themselves.

In order to assess the appropriateness of the use of the *Readiness Inventory* developed by Gumpel (1995) in Australia, a validation study was undertaken through Victoria University. It was found to be valid with children and teachers in Victoria, and therefore appropriate for use as an outcome measure in studies of HIPPY in Australia (Moussa, 2000).

The scene was set for the development of a further study of HIPPY in Australia, combining both process and outcome, and qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The rationale for the design of the present study is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

RATIONALE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The necessary momentum for this study, and to an extent its rationale, was derived from a number of sources. As noted in Section 5.3.4 above, this study was part of a research plan devised by Victoria University (Dean et al., forthcoming). An explicit commitment to program evaluation was part of the Brotherhood of St Laurence's adoption of the program in order to establish whether the program model could be successfully implemented in Australian conditions. In addition, and in line with the organisation's anti-poverty mission, new programs such as HIPPY had to have potential for broader social change, in this case through possible expansion of the program and dissemination of research evaluation findings.

Research efforts were also encouraged by the parent body, HIPPY International, though as noted in Section 4.4, the precise nature of the research was left to individual programs. The early engagement of Victoria University in the program's introduction into Australia provided an academic base from which to develop an overall research strategy and specific research proposals. The arrangements for this research study, as a university and welfare industry partnership, arguably provided the necessary research independence through the academic base, while ensuring that the practical implications of the research findings would be integrated into any future development of the program in Australia.

The nature of the evaluation was also formed by an understanding of the services context in which the program operates in Australia and the evaluation literature on early childhood education programs, including HIPPY, as discussed in earlier chapters.

6.1   Aims and research questions

The broader aims identified in Section 1.2 were to understand both program processes and effects, as well as the relationship between these. As noted in the earlier literature review, evaluations of early childhood education programs for disadvantaged children have tended to focus on program outcomes. There is a gap in the knowledge of program implementation processes and their relationship to program outcomes. Without a research focus on the link between process and outcomes,

adequate explanations have not been forthcoming for either positive or negative findings. This is not helpful to either program improvement or to demonstrating the effectiveness of program models.

6.1.1 Main research questions

Four main research questions were developed as follows.

a) How was the standardised program implemented?

b) What were the experiences and views of the direct participants and other stakeholders of the implemented program?

c) What were the outcomes for children participating in the program, particularly in relation to the program goal of improving school success, as determined by parents, teachers and direct testing?

d) What were the outcomes for parents participating in the program?

The first two research questions were developed in order to provide a focus on how the ideal program model was implemented in practice. This shifted the research from the assumption that all implementations of HIPPY are the same to the view that each program may have unique properties. Answers to these two questions also were also expected to provide data for considering the relationship between program processes and any identified program effects.

HIPPY is a family-based program, where the main effects can be expected to be on children who receive the program and the parents who deliver it. This gives rise to the third and fourth main research questions. Outcomes for children have reasonably been a major focus of evaluation studies. Potential funding bodies and supporters of early childhood education programs for disadvantaged groups generally require some evidence that the program goals are achievable. The present research was planned to follow a fairly standard practice of evaluating early childhood education program outcomes in terms of the effects on children, particularly in terms of literacy and numeracy skills, and school achievement, and measures of how children are able to work in the school environment, such as academic self esteem. The use of a matched comparison group in this study would also be used as a standard way of assessing program outcomes, and is further discussed in Section 7.1.2 below.

This study was planned to draw on parental views of what the program may or may not have achieved for their children, on the basis that parents are the deliverers of the program to their children and are therefore well placed to understand what their

children learnt in the program, including whether it appeared to have any impact on their progress at school. This has been a neglected research approach in considering program outcomes in early childhood education evaluations, though parental views are sometimes sought when considering program process issues. This issue is highlighted in Chapter 4.

As HIPPY is centrally concerned with improving children's success at school, effects on parents are not considered in this study as program outcomes per se. Rather, the interest is in the extent to which these effects help explain or confirm effects on children. In line with this reasoning, effects on parents have been viewed as intermediary outcomes which should be expected in interventions with positive effects for children (Gomby, 1999), and as operational goals in the HIPPY program (Davis & Kugelmas, 1974).

6.1.2   Additional research questions

Four more detailed questions were further identified.

a) Is HIPPY only successful for some groups of educationally disadvantaged families, whilst being unsuccessful for others?

b) What are the implications of providing HIPPY programs in the multi-cultural context of Australia?

c) What are the implications of running the second year of the HIPPY program in the child's first year of schooling?

d) What are the lessons for future evaluations of HIPPY in Australia?

The literature indicates high attrition rates for home visiting programs generally, and in some implementations of HIPPY. This indicates that HIPPY is likely to work for some families and not for others. Any light which can be shed on this question can be of assistance for both for better targeting of participants and for determining adaptations of the program which might make it work for families for whom it would normally fail.

With respect to the second additional research question, the extent to which any HIPPY service implementation can be adapted to the range of language and cultural groups in Australia has important implications for its future usefulness in this country. Similarly, and leading to the third question here, running the second year of the program in the first year of children's formal schooling, is not the way the program was originally designed. The implications of this adaptation are important in terms of any challenges it may pose for making the program work in this country.

Finally, in regard to the fourth additional research question, while evaluation research has been a major part of the development of HIPPY internationally (see Section 4.4), it has been somewhat piecemeal in its approach,. The opportunity exists in Australia to make evaluation a more integral and systematic contribution to the program's assessment and development. It is important that the lessons from this study are considered in any future developments of the program and their value maximised.

6.2 Broader contexts of the research

The literature review provided a number of broader contexts to the study. It is considered that more theoretical views of how children learn, and of influences on their learning, are important for any light they may shed on why the program might or might not be successful. A more theoretical context was considered likely to be valuable in maximising this study's contribution to knowledge in the early childhood field.

The evaluation studies of early childhood education programs in general, and HIPPY in particular, provided another knowledge context for this study. These were important in developing and implementing the research design and, through comparison and contrast, provide another basis for understanding the research findings in a wider context. Such comparison and contrast with other studies could allow for this study's findings to contribute to an understanding of the value of HIPPY internationally.

Finally, it was clearly necessary to understand the service context in which HIPPY operates. This was in order to understand aspects of program implementation in the present study, the environment within which any further development of the program needs to operate and in making international comparisons.

Having now established the rationale for the present study, the next chapter examines how the research was practically conducted in the context of the nature of social research.

CHAPTER 7

DESIGN AND METHOD

This chapter presents the method employed in the present study. It begins with a general discussion of issues of methodology in social research, which provides a context for later assessment of the research approach used here. This is followed by a description of the research method adopted, covering the research design, approaches taken to data collection, a description of the tests conducted with children and teacher assessments of children's abilities, and the approaches taken to data analysis.

7.1 Issues of methodology in social research

What have been termed positivist traditions in social sciences originally attempted to parallel those of the physical sciences. These were based upon assumptions that human nature and behaviour can be researched and ultimately understood with the same certainty that scientists appeared to be enjoying in exploring and identifying the laws of the physical universe. Post-positivist traditions developed out of a critique of these underlying assumptions. These pointed to the failure of positivist research to take into account factors such as self knowledge and free will (Carr & Kemiss, 1986).

Wadsworth (1993) commented on a shift away from the old science paradigm to acknowledging additional forms of valid knowledge:

> ... over the past 70 years , changes in how scientists and physicists see the world has led to a 'paradigm shift' from Newtonian to post Einsteinian understandings that our perceptions of the world are much more a result of our own perceptions, and relative to our value-driven purposes, than was previously thought. At the same time a powerful critique has built in the social sciences about the problems which can arise from the use of the old paradigm science—including irritating and even dangerously inaccurate findings, impractical theory and 'merely academic' conclusions. (p.1)

How the issues raised here have impacted upon program evaluation, conceptions of experimental controls and triangulation of research methods is elaborated below.

7.1.1 Evaluation of interventions

Newburn (2001) examined the distinction between research and evaluation. They hold in common a commitment to social science methods of inquiry. A major difference is that

evaluations are focused upon a 'distinctive purpose' and have as a prime concern the notion of value. Table 2 summarises major differences between research and evaluation highlighted by Newburn.

Table 2

Evaluation and research contrasted

Evaluation	Research
Addresses practical problems	Addresses theoretical problems
Culminates in action	Culminates in description
Makes judgements of value	Describes
Addresses the short-term	Addresses the long-term
Includes insider evaluation	Always done by outsiders

Adapted from Newburn (2001)

Guba and Lincoln (1989) identified four dominant historic developments of evaluation theory and practice, mainly based upon the United States experience, where each succeeding generation represented a further refinement based upon critiques of previous evaluation approaches.

The first generation of development was typified by measurement, developed initially to test children's education level. In the case of Binet's original work in France, it was commissioned to screen out children not doing well at school who were seen as interfering with the education of their more gifted peers. The Intelligence Quotient or IQ, an estimate of mental age over actual age, was one popular form of indicator derived from testing of a range of abilities.

The second generation of evaluation identified by Guba and Lincoln (1989) was typified as descriptive and grew out of a need to assess (in terms of set objectives) and improve on innovative curricula developed for secondary education in the United States in the 1930s. Measurement approaches were viewed as inadequate in achieving the purpose of research defined as helping to develop educational programs. Measurement became one of the tools of evaluation rather than being equated with it.

The third generation was typified by judgement. It was developed in the 1950s, at least partly in response to what was perceived as a falling behind in education in the United States compared with the Soviet Union. This was felt to be highlighted by Soviet gains in space exploration. Descriptive approaches were seen as inadequate, given the lack of clarity about the objectives of a consequent review of education in the United States. There was also a growing belief that research should develop the capacity to have input into a process of change prior to

the completion of any evaluative effort. This new approach called upon the evaluator to make a judgment of programs which included the goals themselves.

The fourth and current generation proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1989) is typified by negotiation in which the experiences and views of multiple stakeholders are sought, documented and compared. This has been grounded in what has been termed a constructivist approach. McGuiness and Wadsworth (1992) argued that research needs to place one of these stakeholder groups' construction of reality, those using services in evaluation studies, at the centre of the research process, since their views and experiences were regarded as critical.

This fourth development in evaluation was based upon three criticisms of previous generations of evaluation. These were that previous approaches were over managerialist (relying too heavily on the concerns of those with a controlling interest in the programs being evaluated), unable to accommodate value-pluralism, and over reliant on the less appropriate scientific paradigm of inquiry grounded in the hard sciences (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Within the fourth generation ethos, Pawson and Tilley (1997) identified a 'realistic evaluation' approach as an attempt to answer questions both of what happened and why it happened. This is presented in terms of defining of the context, an intervention mechanism and outcomes, as set out in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Realistic evaluation approaches
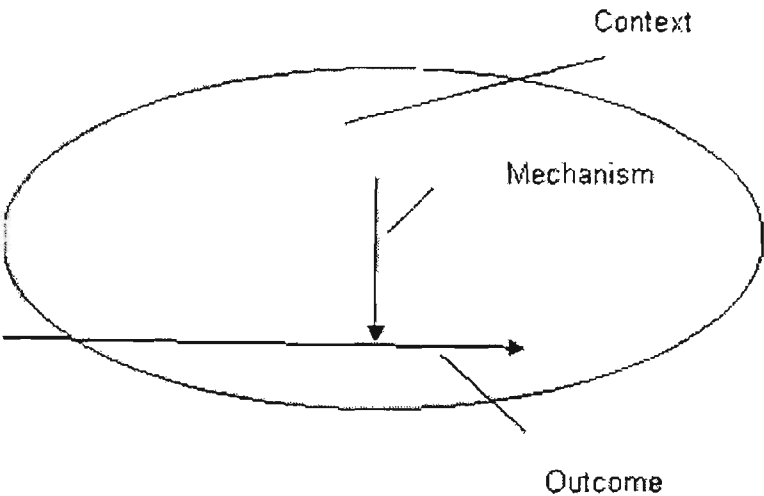
Source: Pawson & Tilley (1997), p.15

A distinction has also been made between formative evaluation which is focused upon processes and service improvement, and summative evaluation which is focused upon outcomes (Newburn, 2001). In the terms described above, experimental research would be regarded as a form of outcome evaluation, whilst constructivist evaluations would include process evaluation

approaches. Newburn (2001) also acknowledged the division between qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

Bronfenbrenner (1986), in considering influences on family change, differentiated research paradigms at three successive levels of sophistication. Firstly, the social address model examines the implications of different environments, as defined by geography or social background, for developmental outcomes for children. Secondly, the process-context model introduces a second element, family process, and examines the impacts of particular environments on family processes. Thirdly the person-process-context model introduces a third element, namely individual differences, and relates the impact of particular environment on individuals via changes in family processes.

Bronfenbrenner (1986) pointed out that many studies do not acknowledge two-way effects. For example, while studies have examined the effects of family life on a child's schooling, most of these fail to examine the reciprocal effects of schools on family life and hence on children. Bronfenbrenner identified studies which overcame this type of problem as using mesosytem models. Secondly, he identified studies which did not examine the impacts of parental external environments, such as workplaces, on children. He described studies that include these external influences as using exosystem models. Further, he criticised studies which examined child development over time without taking into the account the effects of changing external environments. Studies that take into account these changes he described as using chronosystem models.

7.1.2 Experimental and quasi-experimental studies

Experimental and quasi-experimental studies make use of control or comparison groups. All other things being equal, a difference in outcomes for the intervention and control group participants can be attributed to the intervention process. The assumption of the condition of all other things being equal is the matching of an intervention and control group on selected variables considered relevant in order that any differences in outcomes cannot be attributed to differences in the characteristics of the two groups (Sarantakos, 1998). In experimental studies, subjects are randomly assigned to intervention and control groups.

In real life situations, serious ethical dilemmas are associated with this more blatant form of non-provision of assistance to members of the control group. Hence an experimental approach is less common in evaluation studies than quasi-experimental approaches where participants are drawn from other populations. In quasi-experimental studies the control group must be found to match the intervention group being investigated. There are inherent difficulties in the assumption

that all other things are equal for the two groups from that point onwards, unless relevant characteristics are monitored and assessed. Thus neither approach is without its drawbacks.

7.1.3   Triangulation

Triangulation is a process in which information is gathered from more than one source to attempt to answer a research question (Miles & Huberman, 1994). For example, in the present study information on whether HIPPY improved children's learning and school performance was to be sought from three sources: from parents, from children's school teachers and from direct assessment by the researcher. Miles and Huberman described triangulation as a way of increasing the certainty of findings by showing that various independent measures agree with a given finding, and as validating of a finding through subjecting it to a series of imperfect measures. Denzin (1978) defined triangulation by data source, by method, by researcher, and by theory. Miles and Huberman (1994) added the category of data type and argued that one should choose triangulation sources which encompass different biases, in order that they may complement each other.

7.2   The present study: Description of method

The present study drew upon the richness of the context of this research tradition. The present study was designed to be eclectic, in the sense that it made use of approaches in both positivist and post-positivist traditions, combined both qualitative and quantitative methods, and encompassed aspects of quasi-experimental and non-experimental design. Using Newburn's (2001) definition of evaluation, it integrated major aspects of evaluation traditions, including the use of measurement through testing of children, description, and judgement. It also acknowledged the importance of multiple stakeholder viewpoints from fourth generation methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In particular it identified parents as key stakeholders. It included elements of insider and outsider evaluation. The insider aspects included the partnership arrangement between the Brotherhood of St Laurence, as the organisation providing the service, and Victoria University, as the university responsible for its evaluation, and the researcher's history of engagement with the program and his employment within the Brotherhood of St Laurence. The outsider arrangements included university processes related to doctorate research and the associated traditions of independence. The research involved a combination of elements of both process and outcome evaluation. In considering the complexity of issues bearing on the usefulness of HIPPY in Australia, the present study featured a person-process-context approach within the ecological framework espoused by Bronfenbrenner (1986; 1991) and used a

triangulation approach in collecting and analysing data. It was short-term rather than long-term in its orientation.

In deciding not to interview children in this study, the view was taken that the age of children (four to six years) meant that it was not a good use of research resources to have conversations with children about the program itself, as a primary source of data collection. Certainly, other research studies of HIPPY noted in Chapter 4, that have included children's direct comments, have been of older children. This is true of a number of other longitudinal studies of children, including the Melbourne-based longitudinal Life Chances of Children Study reported upon in Chapter 2. However, children were arguably centre stage in the program and its evaluation in a number of different ways. In research terms, there were observations of four of the children undertaking HIPPY lessons (discussed below). The behaviour and views of children was a regular topic of conversation in interviews with parents, in home tutor training sessions attended by the researcher and in interviews with stakeholders (including HIPPY staff). Lastly, the researcher made the conscious decision to undertake all the testing of children personally, partly in order to gain observational insights into the children themselves, averaging about 40 minutes with each child.

The research method is described in terms of the initial research design, the overall shape of the study, the three main forms of data collection and the approaches to data analysis.

7.2.1 Research design

The planned research design was developed around an analysis of variables in educational research as set out in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Variables in educational research

Curriculum Model (A):	Process variables:	Product variables:
Objectives and strategies for achieving them	Behaviours of teachers and children in the educational process	Scores on tests immediately after educational process or later
Degree of implementation of model	Relationship between process and product	

Source: Cazden (1972), p.23

This provided the basic research design for the present study and led to the development of the four main research questions, outlined in Section 6.1.1 above, which included an interest in program processes, program outcomes and their relationship. This provided the framework which would enable the researcher to draw conclusions about the relationship between processes and outcomes.

Cazden (1972) acknowledged the oversimplification inherent in this model, which does not include other potentially influential variables on program products such as school size, degree of parent participation, effects of other public institutions and socio-economic status of families. These factors are considered in the later analysis of the data in this study.

7.2.2   Shape of the study

Data for the study were mainly collected over the two years that the program operated for the second intake of families into the Brotherhood of St Laurence program, with additional assessment of children's abilities in the year following the families' completion of the program.

An understanding of program implementation was gained by attendance at a number of the weekly in-house training sessions involving the HIPPY Coordinator and Home Tutors, group meetings of parents, and other types of gatherings of staff and families. It also included interviews with program and other organisational staff and parents. Two foci in this data collection were a description of implementation process and a gathering of the views of staff and families upon the main elements of the program. These particular data were collected over the two years of the program.

An understanding of the program implementation was also sought in terms of the local service context. This was approached through interviews with other local service providers. The main focus in these interviews was to gather data on the roles these stakeholders played in the program and their related views from the perspective of their involvement. These data were collected in the first year of the program.

Identifying outcomes for children from being involved in the program was undertaken by asking parents to assess what their children had learnt through HIPPY and whether that had helped them at school. A number of assessments of children in the HIPPY group were compared with the same assessments for a matched Comparison Group. Four of these assessments were conducted by the researcher, and five by children's teachers. The timing of the first four assessments was about half way through the children's first year in primary school and the timing of a second round of assessments was about half way through the second year. These two points of time were about half way through the second year of the HIPPY program and about six

months after the completion of the program. The children were assessed at school. A plan to assess children in the HIPPY and Comparison Groups at the beginning of involvement in the program, as a pre-assessment of children's abilities, was not practicable for reasons discussed as part of the data presentation in Chapter 8.

The families in the Comparison Group in this study were deliberately recruited from locations that where different to those of the HIPPY families. This was in order to avoid the participation of families in the Comparison Group who had the opportunity to become enrolled in the HIPPY program but had decided not to do so. The concern was that selecting both sets of families from the same area might have lead to differences between the two groups in relation to parental commitment to their child's education.

7.2.3   Three data collection approaches

The evaluation of this second intake of HIPPY took three approaches to data collection methods, namely participant observation, interviews with stakeholders, and direct testing and teacher assessment of children. In addition there were informal discussions with staff at the schools visited as part of the assessment of children, and with parents of children in the Comparison Group as part of the recruitment process. These three approaches are summarised in Table 3 on page 79.

Informal discussions with school staff and parents of children in the Comparison Group provided contextual information which were not subjected to formal data analysis.

Each of the three main types of data collection are now described.

7.2.3.1   Participant observation

Participant observation in program evaluation has been described as a process of prolonged engagement (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The potential strengths of this engagement are understood to include the value of obtaining a grounded understanding of the program based upon long-term relationships with stakeholders, improved access to major stakeholders for research purposes and an important form of data validation (Edwards, 1999). One of the understood difficulties in participant observation is that the researcher becomes an influence on the implementation of the program itself. This difficulty does not invalidate the use of participant observation but requires some assessment of the influence as part of the research method (Jorgensen, 1993). In this study this assessment involved the views of HIPPY staff, as well as the self reflections of the researcher. Lastly, another potential difficulty with participant observation is a tendency to ignore what is familiar to the researcher (Edwards).

Table 3

Data collection timetable

Type of data collection	Total number of participants/ observations	1999 data collection	2000 data collection	2001 data collection, after completion of program
Participant observation				
Attending in-service training sessions between coordinator and Home Tutors	10	May to November	March to October	N/R
Attending group discussions with parents in HIPPY group	8	August to December	May to December	N/R
Observation of Home Tutor/parent sessions and parent/child sessions with families	4	N/R	May/June	N/R
Informal contact with families and staff	All	July to December	March to November	N/R
Interviews with stakeholders				
Interviews with parents of children enrolled in HIPPY	30*	**	November-December	February
Informal discussions with parents of children in Comparison Group	33	November-December	February-December	February-June
Interviews with Line Manager and Coordinator(s) of HIPPY	5	August to November	May to November	N/R
Interviews with Home Tutors***	8	October to November	N/R	N/R
Interviews with other stakeholders	12	May to December	N/R	N/R
Informal discussions with staff at children's school	66	N/R	May to July	May to July
Assessing children at school				
Direct testing of children by researcher and teacher assessment	65****	N/R	First round: May to July	Second round: May to July

*Two parents were not interviewed and there was one set of twins enrolled in HIPPY.

**There were some informal discussions with parents as part of attendance at group meetings.

***Three Home Tutors were also interviewed as parents with a child in the program in 2000.

**** One child enrolled in HIPPY could not be contacted for the second round of assessments in 2000.

N/R = Not relevant/ not undertaken in that year.

Documentation of this process of participant observation involved a detailed diary which combined a description of the engagement and reflections from the researcher. Key elements of these observations are presented in descending order of significance in terms of the amount of time allocated:

a) attendance at Coordinator/ Home Tutor training sessions (10 sessions over the two-year period);

b) attendance at group meetings of parents (8);

c) informal 'discussions' with staff and occasionally with parents at the HIPPY centre in Fitzroy; and

d) attendance at social occasions with parents, including excursions and HIPPY graduation ceremonies for children.

Some of the information gathered in attendance at group discussions was similar to what might have been gleaned in formal group interviews.

Appendix 1 presents a sample page of the researcher's diary, to demonstrate its form and content.

7.2.3.2   Interviews with stakeholders

Stakeholders interviewed formed three main groupings, namely staff of the organisation providing the HIPPY program, parents of HIPPY children, and other stakeholders, including early childhood service providers and school staff.

HIPPY staff consisted of three volunteers, the Home Tutors, two Coordinators of the program, the Coordinator's Line Manager and the Director of Community Services who was responsible for overall management of community service programs in the Brotherhood of St Laurence, including HIPPY.

All but two parents of children in the HIPPY program were interviewed. One was unable to be contacted and one was unavailable. The unavailable parent was not involved in the program and it was her sister who delivered the program to her nephew as well as her own son, and it was she who was interviewed.

Interviews with other stakeholders consisted of staff at two Fitzroy primary schools and two preschools, a Fitzroy Maternal and Child Health Nurse, and the head of the private business who funded the program for the second intake of families into HIPPY.

A summary schedule of these interviews is provided in the Table 4 on page 81. In total there were 57 formal interviews.

Table 4
Stakeholders interviews

Stakeholder description	Year of interview
Director of HIPPY International	1999
Manager of funding source for program	1999
Manager of Community Services in the Brotherhood of St Laurence	1999
Line Manager of HIPPY Coordinator	1999 2000
First HIPPY Coordinator	1999
Third HIPPY Coordinator	1999 2000
8 Home Tutors	1999
3 Volunteers in HIPPY	1999
2 Local preschool teachers	1999
2 Principals of local primary schools and 4 other teaching staff at these schools	1999
30 Parents of children enrolled in HIPPY (including 3 Home Tutors who were also parents of children enrolled in HIPPY)	2000 and 2001(one interview only)

Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders were organised around two issues, namely the nature of the person's contact with the program and their views on the program. This included questions on processes and outcomes and the relationship between the two wherever relevant. The nature of an interviewee's contact with the program identified the issues experienced which then led to an exploration of these experiences and their reflections on them. Appendix II sets out the range of issues covered in interviews with stakeholders, while Appendix III provides the semi-structured interview guide used with parents.

The orientation of the researcher in interviews was to allow it to be as much interviewee-led, rather than researcher-led, as possible, while still covering the issues germane to the research. This included encouraging the interviewee to talk about the issues they were interested in, and allowing the interviewee to determine the sequence in which they discussed issues.

The greater the person's contact with HIPPY, the more detailed was the discussion of program elements. At one end of the continuum was the interview with the manager of the funding organisation where the main question was why they had decided to fund HIPPY. At the other end were interviews with program Coordinators which covered the full range of issues associated with the program. Interviews with parents of children enrolled in HIPPY included why they joined, their degree of involvement, what they and their children gained from their participation and their experiences and views of the different program elements. These elements included those listed in the review of the HIPPY program in Section 4.3, such as HIPPY materials and activities, home visiting and group meetings. A finding of research on the first

intake of families into HIPPY in Australia (Grady, forthcoming) that parents developed a closer relationship with their children, led to direct questions on this issue.

Interpreters were used in interviews with non-English speaking parents and interviews were audio-taped. In addition the researcher took notes during the interview.

Transcripts of interviews were typed and the researcher prepared a summary of each interview. Appendix IV provides an unidentifiable example of an interview transcript and interview summary.

Stakeholders were encouraged to provide a realistic, rather than an overly positive view of the program, through a number of approaches. This is illustrated below in relation to interviews with parents.

In interviews with parents, three approaches were used to encourage parents to share their concerns as well as any positive comments, namely the use of a standard preamble at the commencement of the interview, including specific interview questions on difficulties experienced in HIPPY and asking parents who left the program after 12 months their reasons for doing so.

The preamble wording is provided in the transcript of an interview with a parent provided in Appendix 4 and in the interview schedule in Appendix III, as follows:

The purpose of this research is to get an understanding of HIPPY, what works in HIPPY and doesn't work, and how it works. So we are not looking for a good news story about HIPPY, we want to understand it from all points of view...'

Questions 11, 12 and 13 in the interview schedule were developed to encourage parents to identify any difficulties they experienced with the program (Appendix III).

A third way of eliciting critical comments was to ask parents who left the program after one year their reasons for doing so.

7.2.3.3   Assessing children's abilities

A key component was the use of a comparison group matched on parental educational level and cultural background.

Assessment involved:.

a)   direct testing of the general development and literacy of the 33 children in the HIPPY program, and a Comparison Group of 33 children, matched on parental educational level and other characteristics, in both their first and second year of school; and

b)   teacher assessment of the children in HIPPY and Comparison Groups, in both their first and

second year of school.

Children's abilities were assessed using seven separate instruments, four were administered by the researcher and five were teacher assessments. The main criteria for selecting instruments was that the content was relevant to school progress, for example, general development, literacy, mathematics and school behaviour/school readiness. Testing was to be kept to the minimum necessary to address the research questions.

With the exception of the *Gumpel Readiness Inventory* (introduced below), all measures have been the subject of relatively large Australian studies conducted by the Australian Council of Education Research, as summarized in Table 17 (page 174), with the general conclusion that they provided reliable and valid measures with Australian children. Available data on reliability and validity of these measures is provided below in relation to each of the measures.

In relation to teacher assessments, there was no formal mechanism for the program to advise schools that specific children were enrolled in HIPPY. In informal discussions with the researcher, teachers (with one exception) indicated that they did not know that the children were enrolled in HIPPY. This was at the first point of the first assessment of children's abilities about half way through the second year of the program. Similarly, teachers of children in the Comparison group (at different schools) became aware of children being in the study at this point of assessment. In the two schools with the greatest number of children in HIPPY (seven and three), teachers were aware of the program but not which children were in it.

School records were rejected as a useful source of data for the present study, despite their use in other studies of HIPPY (Lombard, 1994). This was on the basis of advice from the Victorian Department of Education and Training (personal communication, 1999) that the methods of assessment were too variable across schools to allow for meaningful comparisons. The use of kindergarten records was also rejected on the basis of similar advice from kindergarten teachers.

7.2.3.3.1 Researcher administered tests

The following tests were all directly administered by the researcher about half way through the children's first and then second years of compulsory schooling, in 2000 and 2001.

7.2.3.3.1.1 First round researcher administered tests in 2000

Who am I? is an Australian measure that has been described as a *'manageable, child friendly and reliable assessment of young children's (four to seven years) developmental level'* (de Lemos & Doig, 1999, p.5). The assessment involves children writing their own name, copying five shapes, writing numbers, words, and a sentence, and drawing a self picture. It

provides three numerical sub-scores: Copying, Symbols and Drawing and a Total score out of a possible 44.

This measure was developed for use in the *Australian Council of Educational Research Project on Educational Research Curriculum and Organisation in the Early Years of School* (de Lemos, 1999). Its main purpose is to assess the developmental level of children from age four to age seven. It is based on previous research which has shown that copying skills are associated with general cognitive development and are valid measures of development across different cultural groups.

> *'The inclusion of measures of spontaneous writing as indicators of developmental level is supported by the research of Ferreiro and Teberosky, that demonstrates the links between children's early attempts at writing and their growing understanding of the way in which spoken words are represented in print'* (de Lemos & Doig, 1999, p.5).

In an Australian study, the estimate of test-retest reliability of *Who am I?* was .91 using the Quest analysis. Validity was reported upon in three areas: content, construct and criterion validity (deLemos & Doig, 1999, pp. 21-23). Content related to the extent to which the material was representative of the area the test was purporting to measure. Construct validity related to the extent to which data from use of the test reflects developmental progression of children over time through increasing mean scores. Evidence that the test satisfied external criterion was reported upon in terms of correlations of *Who am I?* with other measures of numeracy and literacy. Correlation results were between .61 and .63 for children in their first and second years of schooling for the *Literacy Baseline Test*, .48 for the Primary Reading test administered at the end of the second year of schooling and .56 to .48 for *I can do Maths...* (de Lemos & Doig, p.23).

The *Literacy Baseline Test* is a British test which assesses literacy levels of children at school entry and is used to *'act as an initial reference point against which subsequent progress can be measured'* (Vincent, Crumpler, & de la Mare, 1996, p.12). It provides numerical sub scores for Phonological Awareness, Initial Sounds and Rhymes, Literacy Concepts, Letter Names, Letter sounds; Reading (picture to word, word to picture and sentence to picture), and Spelling. It provides a Total numerical score out of a possible 38.

In an Australian study, estimates of reliability on a test-retest basis of the *Literacy Baseline Test* ranged from 0.84 to 0.92 using the Normal program. Correlations with other measures were .63 with *Who am I?*, .63 for *I can do maths...*, and .62 for the *ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading* (deLemos, 2000).

7.2.3.3.1.2 Second round researcher administered tests in 2001

The Primary Reading Test (France, 1981) was developed in the United Kingdom as a test of children's development of skills required for reading and writing. It includes 48 items, in which children are asked to select the correct word from a group of five possibilities. In the first 16 items a picture is provided of each item. In this research, all items were administered as a word recognition test, with the researcher speaking the word which the child then attempted to select. It provides a Total score out of a possible 48.

In an Australian study, estimates of reliability for *The Primary Reading Test* using the Normal program ranged from .84 to .92. Correlations with other measures in the second year of schooling were .49 for *Who am I?*, .46 for *I can do maths...*, and .62 for the *ACER teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading* (deLemos, 2000).

I can do maths... is an Australian test developed to assess children's development in numeracy, within a context of assessing key learning objectives in the early years of schooling. In level one, used in this research, there are 30 items. To obtain correct answers, children need to write, draw, count and measure (Doig & deLemos, 2000). It provides a Total numerical score out of a possible 30.

In an Australian study, estimates of reliability for *I can do maths...* in the second year of schooling were 0.91 using a Quest analysis. Correlations with other measures were .49 for the *Literacy Baseline*, .46 for *I can do maths...* and .63 for the *ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading* (Doig & deLemos, 2000).

7.2.3.3.2 Teacher assessments

The following assessments were made by teachers of the children in the HIPPY and Comparison Groups about half way through the children's first and then second years of compulsory schooling, in 2000 and 2001.

7.2.3.3.2.1 First round teacher assessments in 2000

The Behavioural Academic Self-esteem (BASE) rating scale is a United States teacher rating of children's academic self-esteem, based on observation of their classroom behaviour (Coopersmith & Gilberts, 1982). It comprises five subscales assessing Initiative, Social Attention, Dealing with Success/Failure, Social Attraction and Self-confidence. It provides a Total score out of a possible 80.

The *Australian Council of Educational Research Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading* is based on the Western Australian (WA) First Steps Project which was developed by

the Education Department in WA. This checklist was developed for use in the *Australian Council of Educational Research Evaluation of the Victorian First Steps Pilot Project for the First Three Years of Schooling* (de Lemos, 1999), and covers the child's progress in achieving the five phases of literacy development as identified in the WA First Steps program: Role Play, Experimental Reading, Early Reading, Transitional Reading and Independent Reading. It provides an overall numerical score out of a possible Total of 48.

In an Australian study, correlations with the Literacy Baseline Tests was .63 (deLemos, 1999).

7.2.3.3.2.2   Second round teacher assessments in 2001

Repeats of the *Behavioural Academic Self-esteem* (BASE) rating scale and the *ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading* were conducted by children's Grade 1 teachers, as described in Section 7.3.2.3.2.1 above.

The Gumpel Readiness Inventory (Gumpel, 1999) was developed in Israel as a tool for assessing school readiness of children in association with HIPPY International. It was developed through research conducted mainly with first-grade teachers. In its final form it comprises six items of readiness behaviours with a four point rating scale for each item, from 0 to 3, ranging from *'never behaves in this way'* to *'always behaves in this way'*. In research conducted in Israel, it discriminated significantly between children enrolled in HIPPY (more school ready) and children not in HIPPY (less school ready). It provides an overall numerical score out of a possible Total of 18.

An Australian study of 115 grade one children concluded that it was a reliable and valid measure of school readiness, with a Cronbach's alpha of .90 and significant correlations with all but one of the subscales of the AGS Early Scale of the AGS Early Screening Profiles: .75 (Communication domain), .33 (verbal concepts), .47 (visual discrimination), .14 (logical relations), .56 (basic school skills) and .30 (intellectual performance) (Moussa, 2000).

7.2.3.3.3   Overview of child ability assessments

The above assessments fall into the four categories of general development, literacy, numeracy and adjustment to school. *Who am I?* includes aspects of literacy and numeracy as well as general development. It is the only assessment instrument used in the present study which includes an assessment of fine motor skills. The *Literacy Baseline Test* and the *Primary Reading Test* are the direct tests of children's global literacy levels, the former for children of five years of age and the latter for children of six years. The teacher assessments are of school

behaviour and literacy ability. The *Gumpel Readiness Inventory* was used in the present study as it provides a potential basis for international comparisons of HIPPY outcomes.

The use of the second literacy test in the British series, which provided the *Literacy Baseline Test* as the first, was rejected for the second round of testing in 2001 in this study in favour of the *Primary Reading Test*. This was on the basis of advice from the Australian Council of Educational Research (de Lemos, personal communication, 2000) that there was uncertainty whether test results using this assessment were an indication of literacy ability per se, or rather the ability to interpret the instructions (the children completed the set tasks from written instructions).

7.2.4 Procedures of the study

Recruitment of the sample groups and data collection procedures, during the two years of the HIPPY program and in the year following the completion of the program, is now outlined. As noted in Section 5.2.4, program staff were involved before the commencement of the present study with Victoria University's evaluation of the program for the first intake of families (Grady, forthcoming). The Brotherhood of St Laurence had further agreed on a partnership arrangement with Victoria University in submitting an application to the Australian Research Council for a grant to conduct the present study.

A research ethics application was made to ethics committees at both Victoria University and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, which included a letter to HIPPY parents explaining the study (Appendix V) and an Invitation and Consent Form for them to sign (Appendix VI). These letters and forms were provided to parents in the appropriate language, namely English, Cantonese, Hmong, Somali, Turkish or Vietnamese.

7.2.4.1 Recruitment of HIPPY families

All families participating in the second intake of families into the Brotherhood of St Laurence HIPPY program were invited to participate in the research.

Prior to providing the letter of explanation and Consent Form to parents, meetings were held with the Line Manager for the program, the Coordinator and Home Tutors to explain and discuss the research. The researcher also attended group meetings of parents, undertaken as part of their participation of the program, and explained the research. Home Tutors accepted responsibility for answering any further questions from parents and collecting the Invitation and Consent forms.

7.2.4.2 Recruitment of Comparison Group families

The sources of recruitment here were community contacts in suburbs with low socio-economic status (SES) communities, similar to those in Fitzroy and North Melbourne. With two exceptions, the children in the Comparison Group attended different schools to the HIPPY children. Recruitment commenced in the first year of the research and was completed in the second year, prior to the first round of assessments of children.

Thirty-seven children were initially recruited for the Comparison Group. Data on who declined the invitation to participate were not collected, as it was a complex process involving multiple service providers. Contact was lost with two children between the first and second rounds of assessments and data from these two children were therefore excluded from the analysis. A further two children were excluded from the analysis on the basis that their teachers identified special learning needs.

The recruitment of Comparison Group families involved the use of the same Invitation and Consent Form used for HIPPY families, referred to in Section 7.2.4.1.1 above and provided as Appendix VI. Potential participant families were identified by the researcher through established networks of recruiting persons (preschool and primary school teachers and community development workers), in contact with the type of families being sought. The researcher described to the recruiter the characteristics of families being sought, as having low levels of education, low incomes and coming from non-English speaking backgrounds. In addition, participants from two specific non-English speaking backgrounds were recruited to match the ethnicity of the two main groups in the HIPPY Group of families, namely Vietnamese and Somali-speaking. For these two groups, the researcher convened and attended meetings with the parents to explain the research and to obtain informed consent to participate. Further meetings were organised for about 12 months later with these two groups, towards the end of the second year of HIPPY program, to report research progress and to check on the location of families. With other families there was a once only contact to obtain informed consent.

7.2.4.3 Data collection over a three-year period

Table 3 on page 79 above displayed the detail of the data collection timetable. A main form of data collection in the first year of the research, in 1999, was participant observation of the program, recorded as diary entries. This consisted of observation of training sessions with the

Coordinator and Home Tutors and observation of group meetings of parents and other events organised by the program. These other events included a visit by Hmong-speaking parents to the Melbourne Zoo and observation of a first year graduation ceremony for children in the first intake of families into HIPPY in Australia. There were also interviews with HIPPY staff and other stakeholders. First contact was made with some of the families who were to form part of the Comparison Group and demographic information was collected from them concerning their circumstances. Comparison Group families were paid $20 each for their time.

In the second year of the research, 2000, there was a continuation of the participant observation in a similar way to the first year. There were second interviews with the Line Manager and HIPPY Coordinator, which took place late in the year after completion of the program for most of the participating families. In addition, there was the first round of assessments of children in HIPPY and Comparison Groups towards the middle of the year, and individual interviews with most of the parents of the HIPPY children. First contact was made with the remaining Comparison group families and demographic information was collected on their circumstances. Both HIPPY and Comparison Group parents were paid $20 each for their time.

The main form of data collection in the third year of the research was the second round of assessments of children, undertaken in the middle of the year. Interviews with HIPPY parents were completed early in the year.

Direct assessments of children were all undertaken by the researcher for the purpose of standardising the administration of the tests and all were administered at the child's school, to minimise intrusion into the families' lives. The assessments were undertaken in generally quiet areas in the schools without a second adult present (though in eyesight of a school staff member for duty of care reasons). No children in HIPPY remembered the researcher in the first round of testing, though the researcher had seen some of them before on informal occasions connected to HIPPY.

7.3   Data analysis

In broad terms, the data were analysed in terms of the major themes of this research, namely program outcomes and program implementation processes. There was a significant focus on whether different data sources supported or contradicted particular conclusions. Data analysis is examined in more detail in relation to qualitative and quantitative data sources and the presentation of the results of the analysis is explained.

7.3.1 Qualitative data analysis

Thematic content analysis was the method applied to the qualitative semi-structured interview data.

For example, each parent's responses to questions about patterns of attendance at group meetings and what they gained from attendance at these meetings was recorded in note form in the interview, in the transcript of the interview and in summary form by the researcher. The main meaningful points or themes of each parent's comments about the value of group meetings were identified and summarised. Similarly, the views of the Coordinator and Home Tutors on group meetings were also analysed for themes. See Appendix IV for an example of how themes in a particular interview were summarised.

One of the questions which developed out of this approach was whether data on the different compositions of these groups, the different patterns of attendance, and differences in how Home Tutors ran the groups, could be linked in any way to help understand the effects of this part of the program process.

In other words, the focus in the analysis was on making sense of the data relating to each aspect of program process and outcomes being considered and then examining the linkages between different data sources concerning that aspect.

7.3.2 Quantitative data analysis

The main form of quantitative data was the assessment scores of the children, though demographic data on families and class size in schools were also collected.

The first task in relation to the assessments was to obtain accurate total scores for each assessment. The scoring for all but one of the assessments was straightforward. In relation to teacher assessments, the task involved circling a number that represented a particular aspect of a child's ability or development. These numbers were then added together to provide a total score for each child. The same was true for the researcher administered assessments. However, in the *Who am I?* there was an element of personal judgement in how well the child completed each task and in allocating a score for each item, despite a manual which set out examples of children's work and associated scores. For this reason, children's responses to this test were scored independently both by the researcher and an employee of the Australian Council of Educational Research who had previously rated scores in the same assessment tool in a study which provided Australian norms (deLemos & Doig, 1999). Differences in scoring were identified and resolved to ensure a consistent interpretation.

Both independent sample t tests and multivariate procedures were used as appropriate in the analysis of quantitative data, where scores for the HIPPY and non-HIPPY children were compared at two points of time. These scores were also compared with those provided for the same assessments in other Australian studies.

7.3.3 Presentation of data analysis

It was decided to present the results of the data analysis beginning with those relating to program implementation (in Chapter 8), and then those relating to program effects (in Chapter 9).

It was further decided in presenting the data to pay particular attention to the experiences and views of parents in HIPPY in considering both program processes and outcomes. In considering program effects for children, the data provided by parents is presented first. Parents are the providers of the lesson to the child and therefore the key informant on this aspect of program implementation. They are also a major source of information on the home visiting sessions and the group discussions. Their general views on the program, positive and negative, can be taken as one important indication of implementation in a way relevant to family needs. A parent is possibly in the best position of all stakeholders to understand the impact of the program on the child in terms of what the child has learnt and whether HIPPY may have helped the child at school. The lack of primacy usually given to parental experiences and viewpoints had emerged as one of the limitations in analysis of the relationship between program processes and outcomes in other evaluations of HIPPY, and of early childhood education programs more generally.

This is not to denigrate the importance of other data collected. By their extensive contact with children over a prolonged period of time, teachers are clearly well placed to assess children's progress in the school environment. Also, the value of direct testing of children provides another source of reliable data on children's abilities. The comparison of assessment results between the HIPPY and non-HIPPY children, and with normative data on the same assessments, strengthens the value of these data to the present study. Some parents may have an inflated view of the value of a program through a natural tendency to want to believe that what they have done with their children has made a major difference. It is important therefore to have additional sources of data on program effects for children as a check on parental assessments. There remains, however, a central interest in the present study in parental perspectives and other data is examined for its consistency and explanatory power in relation to this.

CHAPTER 8

RESULTS: PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter reports the data on program process. It begins with presentation of the data concerning the views of local providers of services as part of the process of implementation. It goes on to describe the program delivery with the 33 children and their families and mainly follows the sequence of the standard program model presented in Section 4.4.

The data are purposefully presented as both description of program implementation and the views of stakeholders concerning this implementation, on the basis that this provided the clearest way of understanding program processes. This purpose was in turn related to two major research questions (identified in Section 1.2 and discussed later in Section 10.4), in reviewing the findings of the relationship between program processes and outcomes.

a) How was the standardised program implemented?

b) What were the experiences and views of the direct participants and other stakeholders of the implemented program?

8.1   Views of local service providers

Local providers of services in the main location of the program who were most heavily involved were the Maternal and Child Health Service, two local preschools and two local primary schools. Local providers of services were aware of the program. Staff from these services had assisted in the recruitment of families, and the program had reciprocally encouraged parents to enrol their four-year-olds in preschools and reminded parents later in the same year to enrol their children in primary schools. Although HIPPY was viewed positively by local providers of services, there was also a repeated comment that they had to an extent lost contact with the program following their involvement earlier in the year (in 1999).

In addition, the researcher had informal discussions with providers of services in a second, more minor location of the program and overall discussions with staff at four preschools and 31 primary schools. These staff contributed to the research by recruiting families and/or assessing children in both the HIPPY and a Comparison Group. In schools, these discussions were typically with the school principal, who was the initial point of contact for gaining access to the children, and the class teachers of the children.

Most of these interviews and discussions were about children from non-English-speaking backgrounds, as these comprised most of the study participants. Their comments are presented in

terms of two main themes, namely the typical difficulties normally faced by such children and the relevance of HIPPY process to assisting with such difficulties.

As noted in Section 7.2.3, the formal interviews with these providers of services were conducted in the first year of the research, whilst the informal discussions were mostly in the second and third year of the research, when children were being assessed.

8.1.1 Typical educational difficulties

Providers were concerned about children beginning school without the right background and skills to succeed. Whilst these were general comments, those making them from the Fitzroy and North Melbourne areas also had direct contact with some of the children participating in the program.

A common theme in their comments was children's usual lack of English ability both in preschool and on entering primary school. It was also an expressed view that children were able to acquire skills in English over the first few years of schooling, though there was some concern about the delaying effect on progress at school of lack of English for children in these first few years. A second theme was children's lack of background experience to make sense of what they learnt at school. This was expressed by one early year's literacy Coordinator (in one of the primary schools from which children were recruited) as children learning to read in English but not understanding the content.

The following comments from early childhood educators in the South Fitzroy area from the two local primary schools illustrate these viewpoints.

What we would find is that when the children arrived, day one in Prep [Grade], not only did a number of them not have any English, but they also didn't seem to be able to relate to broader experiences. So when the families came in you would use interpreters and talk to the parents and the children and their life was basically the flats and perhaps their first excursion would be to the beach. Many of them had never been to the beach or they have never been on a big bus... so there were gaps there because of the nature of their life experiences in the first five years or so. Now obviously the parents did provide them with wonderful physical care and they were well dressed, but in terms of the broader experiences, from which you can elicit language so that you can begin pre-reading and pre-writing, there are gaps. (School principal, first local primary school)

I guess the earlier it [education] starts the better it is for the children. Because if they have limited exposure to English and literature before they go to school then they really

start behind the eight ball and it's really hard to catch up. (Assistant Principal, local primary school)

In our school we have 166 students and 90 per cent are from the high rise flats...Mostly our Preps are non-English speaking. They have been exposed to English in kindergarten but not many of them speak English... They have been exposed to English but not many of them use it. So when we tested our students last year as part of the literacy program we found that many knew few letter sounds or letter names, but it was also a lack of confidence in talking to the teacher who tested them (Principal, second local primary school).

Another teacher in the early years juxtaposed the issues of both English and the nature of the home environment:

A lot of our problems here are that children come to school with very little experience of anything and it's a backward starting point for them to trying to learn to read, because even in their own language they don't have the experiences ... It is a combination of lack of English and lack of experience, but the lack of experience and the quality of interaction [of children] with parents and not being given access to pens and crayons, I think that is hugely underestimated ... (teacher at local primary school)

Several teachers made informal comments to the researcher at the time of visits to test children concerning the difficulties they had in following through individual educational plans for children because of large class sizes (noted in diary entries by the researcher).

8.1.2   Relevance of HIPPY process

Service providers saw HIPPY as relevant to the educational problems that children faced, identified above. Some commented on the difficulties they had in engaging with parents from non-English-speaking backgrounds, and what they perceived as the success of HIPPY in assisting with this. Others commented that the way that educational material was conveyed to children in HIPPY was appropriate to involving already motivated parents in their children's education, although different from professional teaching practices in preschools and schools. The following comments are provided as illustration of these views. The comments include reference to two of the groups in the study, the Hmong-speaking and Vietnamese-speaking groups.

The Hmong families have typically not been involved in other community activities... they've pretty much stayed on their own. Maybe a couple of the Vietnamese families you

might have thought would have [become involved] eventually. But because they're all new arrivals, I really think that it takes that first generation of being in Australia before you can expect these families to take a role in things... I was thinking of a couple of the English-speaking families from disadvantaged backgrounds [enrolled in HIPPY], absolutely no way they become involved, they wouldn't get involved in the playgroup here, for example. (Maternal and Child Health Nurse, Fitzroy)

I think that HIPPY is a fantastic program in areas like this because there are a lot of parents who want to do something supportive for their children but really don't know what to do. Anything that gets parents and children working together is fantastic. (Teacher at local primary school)

I think it is accepted how highly motivated some groups are, for example, the Vietnamese without question... I think you are dealing with a very different problem with poorly educated, poorly motivated Australian-born families... I think you would need more one to one with a Home Tutor... because you would have to teach the parent. Whereas with the other [non-English-speaking] parents all you are doing is showing them what they need to do and they go and do it. There are only technical problems that they don't understand something they're supposed to do, so I think it is a very different issue. (Ex-primary school teacher in the Fitzroy area, a volunteer with the HIPPY program)

I think it [HIPPY] was wonderful... The thing that I thought was really great about it was that it empowered people, the kind of community spirit it engendered. People in the community really wanted to help kids before they got to school and fell behind. They got to school with a fair chance of grasping language and taking off with the other kids. (Assistant Principal, local primary school)

In short, providers saw the program as providing assistance to what were viewed as typical educational difficulties faced by local children, namely lack of English ability and general lack of experience on which to base the educational program. The process was helpful because it empowered already motivated parents to assist their children with their education.

8.2 Program implementation

Presentation of the data on implementation with the 33 children and their families commences with three sections, namely (a) a presentation of a timetable for the first four intakes

of families and the associated employment of Coordinators, (b) recruitment and participation of families, and (c) staffing of the program. This information relates to tasks undertaken by Brotherhood of St Laurence staff in the development of the program and provides background necessary for an understanding staff and parental descriptions and views of the program implementation that follow.

The following four sections deal with emergent themes relating to the aspects of the ideal HIPPY model discussed in Section 4.3, namely (a) materials and activities, (b) language issues, (c) cultural issues and (d) the program delivery system.

The next section, on themes in parents' views on completing the program, follows chronologically the previously presented data. The last three sections, on differences between the first and second year of the program, the importance of localism and the impact of the researcher on the program as a participant/researcher, examine three general aspects of program implementation. These are placed at the end to not to interfere with the logical flow of the order of the earlier sections.

The data collected are presented in detail below to do justice to the complexity of the implementation issues and their thorough examination in this thesis.

8.2.1 Timetable for the first three intakes of families

Presented in Figure 6 on page 97 is the timetable for the first three intakes of families and associated employment of program Coordinators.

The second Coordinator only remained in the program for a short period, of about 10 weeks. The first and second Coordinators overlapped in their employment and there was also a short time of overlap of employment of the first and third Coordinators. The first, and to a lesser extent the second, Coordinator was initially responsible for the program for the second intake of families, with the third Coordinator accepting responsibility from about half way through the first year. This meant that the third Coordinator managed the program for about three quarters of its two years. Further references to the program Coordinator in the present study refer to the third Coordinator unless otherwise indicated.

8.2.2 Recruitment and participation of families

The two main criteria followed for selecting families for HIPPY were those set internationally, namely having a child of the right age (four years at intake) and parental education level being Year 12 or less (Lombard et al., 1999). To follow the criterion for entry into the four-year-old kindergarten in Victoria (Kirby & Harper, 2001), children needed to have turned four by the 30th of April to enrol in HIPPY. This also made the participating children eligible to attend their first year of school in 2000.

Figure 6. Timetable of intakes of families and employment of program Coordinator personnel

Month and year	Intakes of families				Employment of Coordinators		
	First	Second	Third	Fourth	First	Second	Third
November 1997							
March 1998							
November 1998							
March 1999							
November 1999							
March 2000							
November 2000							
March 2001							
November 2001							
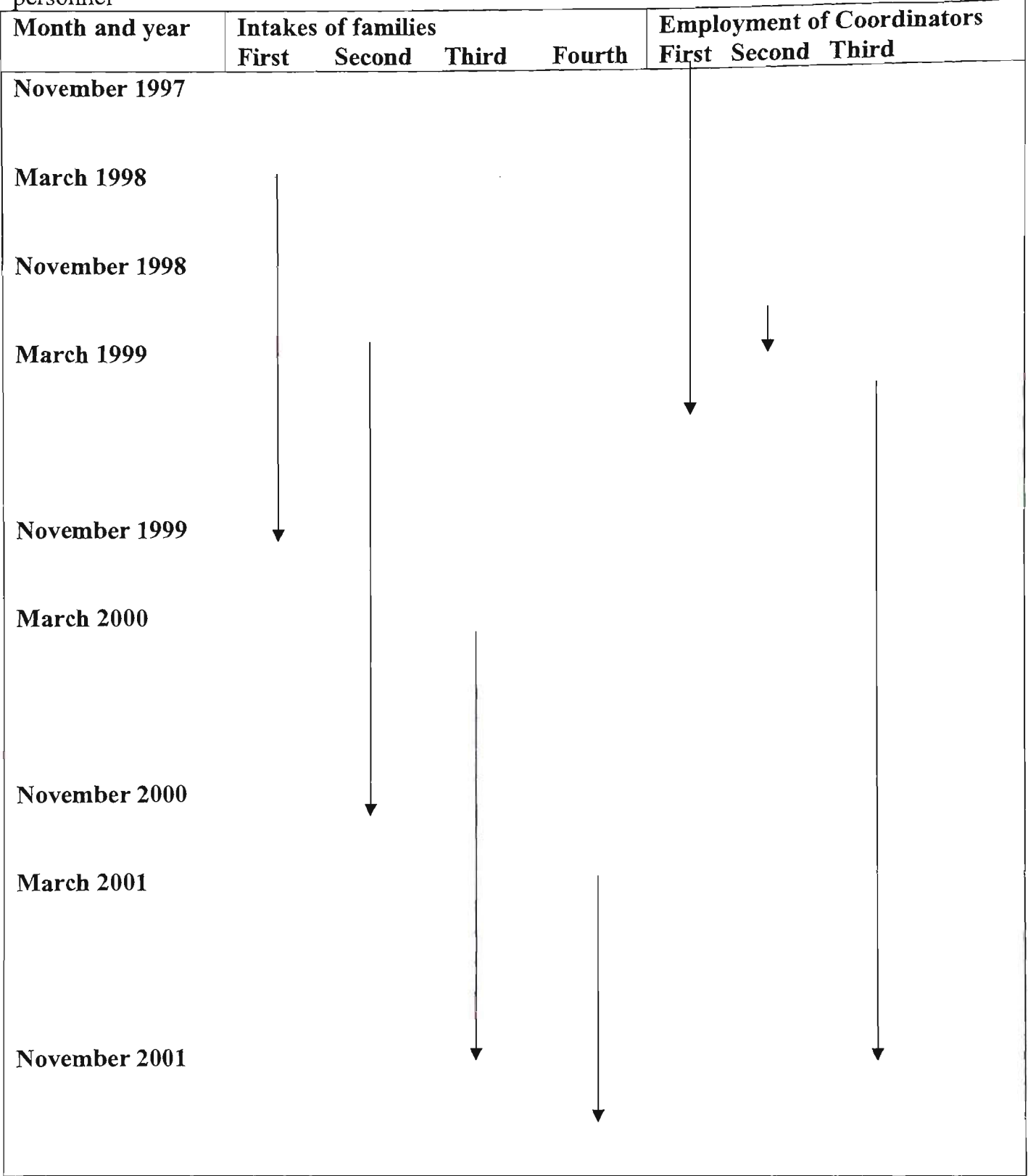
Thirty-five children participated in this second intake of HIPPY. The parents of 33 children agreed to participate in the research, with two other families refusing. One parent was involved in HIPPY in the first year only, when her child participated in the first round of assessments. However, contact was later lost with the family and therefore the parent was not interviewed, and her child did not participate in the second round of assessments.

In addition, a small group of families showed an initial interest in joining HIPPY but withdrew after becoming more aware of the time commitment involved, according to the Home Tutors.

Families participating in the research are described in terms of their patterns of participation in the program, characteristics, recruitment and geographic location.

8.2.2.1 Patterns of participation of families

The program for the first intake of families had been provided solely through a Fitzroy (inner city) location. For the second intake of families, the main program was also provided in the Fitzroy location, but a small satellite program was added in the separate inner city location of North Melbourne. The pattern of participation of families at these two centres is set out in Table 5. This shows which centre they attended for group meetings and the length of their participation.

Table 5

Participation patterns of families in second intake

Groupings of participants	Numbers of children	Group meeting location
Completed two years	13	Fitzroy
Completed one year	13	Fitzroy
Completed one year	7	North Melbourne

Half of those in the Fitzroy location only completed about 12 months of the program. The families attending the North Melbourne location also completed about 12 months of the program, but over a different time frame to the other families (commencing late, in August 1999, and finishing late, in January 2001. These families completed the first year materials and, in some cases, a few lessons from the second year.

The families in the Fitzroy location came from a range of backgrounds, mainly from South-East Asia, whilst the families in the North Melbourne location were all from Somalia.

8.2.2.2 Characteristics of families: Demographic data

Demographic data were collected in interviews with parents on the basis of their potential relevance to program processes and outcomes. Data were not collected on the nine ex-partners of sole parents. Table 6 on page 97 below summarises the general demographic aspects of the participating families.

8.2.2.2.1 Education

Most of the parents had relatively low levels of education, though there were a small number of parents (3) with tertiary qualifications (despite the Year 12 entry criteria). As many of

the parents had arrived in the past decade, most of their educational experiences were in their country of origin, and all their tertiary qualifications were gained overseas. Information on education level was not systematically recorded in program records, but was obtained in interviews with parents.

8.2.2.2.2   Family structure

About one-third of families were headed by sole parents and the number of children per family ranged from one to five. Over half of the families (18) had children who were older than the child participating in HIPPY and about one-third had a younger child (11).

8.2.2.2.3   Gender and age of children

There were 15 male children and 18 female children enrolled in HIPPY. The age of children was calculated at the time of the first round of assessments, for later contrast with children recruited for the Comparison Group. This was about 16 months after commencement of the program. Children's ages ranged from 5 years and 3 months to 6 years and 3 months, with an average of 5 years and 8 months.

8.2.2.2.4   Gender of parents delivering the program

All but three of the parents delivering the program were women. The parent interviewed was the one involved in delivering HIPPY. The dominant trend according to their reports was for women to take responsibility for providing the program to their child. All three fathers undertaking the lessons with their child gave the researcher an explanation of why they did the program rather than their spouse, though the researcher had not asked for an explanation. In contrast, where mothers delivered the lesson they often did not volunteer an explanation for their involvement rather than their spouse. Two of the fathers said that their wives lacked the patience, and both appeared in the researcher's contact to be very patient men. The third father said that he undertook the task because his English ability was much higher than that of his spouse.

The parent was also asked (in two-parent households) in the research interview whether the other parent was involved at all in the HIPPY lesson. It was the pattern for partners not to have a major role in delivering HIPPY, even when their English was better than that of their spouse. The sense was that in two-parent families there was a clear division of labour. Explanations for this included that the other partner worked long hours and/or was too tired.

8.2.2.2.5   Family income

Information on family income level was not collected as part of the process of selection of families into the program. It was also not collected in interviews with parents on the basis that

it was not a high priority issue and that the process involved in attempting to collect this information reliably could interfere with other more important data collection. Income levels also changed for some over the course of the period of the program. This was indicated, for example, when parents withdrew from the entire program or from the group meetings because of new paid work commitments. However relatively low income for most families can be inferred from a range of anecdotal information in parental interviews, such as unemployment or employment in traditionally low-paid occupations such as restaurant waiter. The fact that most families lived in public rental housing in high rise estates also indicated low income, as this is an eligibility criterion for government housing.

8.2.2.3 Characteristics of families: Immigration and language data

Data on immigration into Australia and language background of parents is presented in Table 7 on page 103. Most of the categories are self-explanatory. The 'first language' category refers to the language spoken in the parent's family of origin. Spoken English ability was a self rating given by the parents interviewed, who also provided a rating of the ability of their spouse to speak English.

8.2.2.3.1 Immigration

All but three of the parents delivering the HIPPY program were born overseas, from 10 different countries of origin. Vietnam and Somalia were the two most common countries of origin. Whilst families' average period of residence was 14 years, there was considerable range in the period in which families had lived in Australia, with the most recent immigrant having arrived in Australia in the year before they joined HIPPY. In two-parent families, the most common pattern for number of years resident in Australia was for both parents to have arrived together and have the same length of residence and the same country of origin. This was true, for example, for seven Somali-speaking families. However, within some families, parents had different lengths of residence; the general trend being for fathers to have a longer period of residence in Australia than their spouses.

8.2.2.3.2 Language background and English ability

For all but three of the parents delivering the program, English was not their first language. Ten different first languages were represented among the parents, with the most common being Vietnamese and Somali. Two of the Cantonese-speaking parents had emigrated from Vietnam and spoke some Vietnamese as a second language.

Table 6

General demographic data of families participating in second intake of HIPPY

Characteristic	Children in HIPPY*
Education level of parent delivering program	
Year 6 or less	4
Year 7-10	11
Year 11-12	14
Year 15**	3
Education level of other parent*	
Year 6 or less	7
Year 7-10	2
Year 11-12	11
Year 15**	4
Sole parent or two parent family	
Sole parent family	10
Two-parent family	23
Age of parent	
24-30	10
31-40	17
41-50	5
>50	1
Number of dependent children	
One child	8
Two children	11
Three children	6
Four children	4
Five children	4
Birth order position of HIPPY child in family	
Oldest child	5
Youngest child	12
Middle child	6
Only child	8
Twins	2
Children: gender	
Male	15
Female	18
Children: age	
Range	5 years & 3 months
Mean	5 years & 8 months
Median	5 years & 8 months

* Numbers refer to children rather than parents, with data on one family missing on some characteristics
** Indicates a three-year tertiary qualification

About half of the parents interviewed reported that they spoke English 'not well'. Those who spoke English 'well', about one quarter of families, indicated that they had some difficulties with the English language (discussed in Section 8.2.5.2 below). The remaining families, who

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said they spoke English 'very well', were either born in Australia or had lived here for a considerable length of time.

8.2.2.3.3 Relevance of Year 12 education level as cut off entry point to the program

As noted earlier, HIPPY is targeted to families with low levels of education. However, one of the mothers with a tertiary qualification argued that migration to Australia from a non-English-speaking country should be the selection criterion for entry into the program, rather than education level, because of the difficulties she faced, especially with English. She commented as follows.

> *According to the conditions placed by this program I wouldn't have been able to take part, because I have studied at University. I hope that the program expands so it doesn't place a limit on the educational levels of parents ... because for us English is not our native language, so there is no way we can come up along with other parents in Australia... When I came here there were lots of things to learn. Even though I studied at University, everything was new to me and hard for me.* (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

The third Coordinator conveyed the point of view that an overseas university qualification provided no easy entry into Australian society, referring specifically to the Somali-speaking families (two of whom had a university education). She considered it was therefore reasonable for such families to have access to HIPPY.

> *I have no qualms in accepting some families with university education; firstly because, if you come from Somalia, you are a refugee and a qualification doesn't guarantee you anything like a qualification does if you get it here. So they are not on a par with other Australian or English speaking-communities anyway, so in that sense they are at a disadvantage.*

8.2.2.4 Recruitment of families to participate in HIPPY

Both the Line Manager and the first Coordinator made the point that the Brotherhood's existing network of services in the Fitzroy area, referred to in Section 5.2.2, facilitated recruitment of families. Further, that it was easier to recruit for this second round of families because the program was better known locally. It was not possible to collect data on how many families were approached to enrol in HIPPY, as this was a complex process involving other families and service providers (described below).

Table 7

Immigration and language data of families participating in second intake of families into HIPPY

Characteristic	Parent delivering program (n=33)*	Other parent (n= 24)**
Country of birth		
Vietnam	9	6
Somalia	7	6
Laos	4	4
Turkey	3	3
Australia	3	0
Ethiopia	3	0
China	2	2
Chile	1	1
Thailand	1	0
Lebanon	0	1
New Zealand	0	1
Birthplace and years in Australia (in year 2000)	**Years in Australia**	**Years in Australia**
Born in Australia	3	0
Not born in Australia	30	24
Range	2-20 years	2-29 years
Mean	9 years	14 years
Median	8 years	13 years
English as a second language		
English as a first language	3	1
English as a second, third or fourth language	30	23
Speaks English		
Very well	8	9
Well	9	3
Not well	16	12
Not at all	0	0
First main language of parent		
Vietnamese	7	5
Somali	7	6
Hmong	4	4
Cantonese	4	4
English	3	1
Turkish	3	3
Eritrean	2	0
Thai	1	0
Armharic	1	0
Spanish	1	1

* All numbers other than age of parent refer to children rather than numbers of parents
**Data not collected on ex-partners of sole parents (9)

Parents were asked in their research interview how they first heard about the program. The main sources of recruitment were Home Tutors, local preschools, friends and other parents, as follows:

a) Home Tutors (8 parents);

b) local preschools (7 parents);

c) friends/parents (6 parents);

d) Brotherhood of St Laurence early childhood centre (4 parents); and

e) Other sources (7 parents).

The other sources included receiving a pamphlet in their letter box (2 parents), being told by other local service providers (2 parents), a newspaper report of the program, and through a 'door knock' visit from the program Coordinator (one of the recruitment approaches used). One family was a self-referral, having a younger child in the program in the first intake.

Both the first and third Coordinator commented in research interviews that bilingual Home Tutors were the most successful agents in recruiting families, and this is reflected in these figures above.

The first Coordinator said that recruitment of families for this second intake of families in Fitzroy was easier than for the first intake because of local knowledge of the program. The difficulty in recruiting families from non-English-speaking backgrounds in the first intake was illustrated in this comment from a local (English-speaking) preschool teacher:

She (the first Coordinator) came on the first day the children came back to start kindergarten (preschool) so she could meet the parents. It was very difficult because she did not know how to explain it to the parents because the parents didn't have much English and I didn't know how to explain it to the parents.

In the case of the Vietnamese-speaking community, there was a Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor who had already been employed with the first intake of families who assisted in this process. A Hmong-speaking Home Tutor had also been employed in the first intake of families. In contrast, the Somali-speaking families were a new group into the program, so there was not the advantage of this established relationship, though here again the Home Tutors have been the best recruiters.

8.2.2.2.4.1 Why parents joined

The reasons parents joined the HIPPY program are important in understanding the potential of the program to meet their needs, and the role that parental motivation plays in an explanation of program effects.

All parents who were interviewed stated that they joined to help their children's learning, and two parents gave an additional reason. One wanted the opportunity to meet other families and the other wanted to improve her English. The most common responses were about wanting to help the child generally, help the child to do well at school, and improve his or her English, often expressed as an aid to helping the child to do well at school.

A more detailed thematic analysis of parents' interviews is provided below. Because some parents gave more than one reason, the number of responses exceeds the number of parents.

a) About one-third of parents simply said they wanted to help their children with no additional explanation on how they felt the child would be assisted (10 responses). One of these mothers also said she checked the HIPPY materials before deciding that the program would help her child. In addition the mother who provided the program for her nephew said she joined the program to assist him and provided the program to her own child because he was the right age.

b) About one-third of parents said they joined because they wanted to help the child with his or her education at school, which is the main message of the benefit of HIPPY provided by the program providers when recruiting families (13 responses). Four of these parents made the additional point that they wanted to provide a better start for the child at school than they had been able to give to their older children.

c) About one-third specified that they wanted to help the child to improve his or her English (12 responses), usually associated with wanting to assist the child with schooling.

d) Two fathers mentioned the Brotherhood of St Laurence as part of their reason for joining; one because the organisation had a *'good reputation for working with disadvantaged families'*, while the other said that he was advised by staff in the organisation that his son, who was already enrolled in another Brotherhood of St Laurence early intervention program, would benefit from HIPPY.

e) A Hmong-speaking Home Tutor said that it was a paid work opportunity, she wanted to help out her sister (relieving her sister who had been working in this position, and was having a baby) and that she wasn't doing anything else at the time.

f) Other comments from parents were that they wanted *'more for my son'*, *'to assist my daughter with maths'*, *'to help my daughter to learn things'*, *' to help my daughter to reach her full potential'*, *'to help my daughter to read and there was pressure on me from my child to do more things together'*; and *'the small fee* [$1 per week] *meant I could afford to join the program'*.

The following three quotations illustrate the views of three parents who saw the program as an opportunity to learn English.

> *We arrived from China not that long ago and we did not know English at all. It so happened that when we arrived we came to know about the program and both my daughter and I were keen to learn English, so the program just happened in time for us to participate.* (Cantonese-speaking mother)

> *Because English is not our native language I wanted to make sure that he was as good as everyone else when he started school.* (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

> *At home I can teach my child Vietnamese, but I thought it would be better for my son to be involved in a program where he can learn English* (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

One parent explained the experience of one of his older children when starting school, which was part of the motivation for him to participate in the program.

> *When my daughter got there [school] she was under five [years old] and she didn't speak any English. It was very hard. But for my son it was easier because he had English and I was teaching him in English.* (Spanish-speaking father)

Parents were clearly motivated to support their children's education. Parents also acknowledged their need for support in this area as their motivation for enrolling in HIPPY.

8.2.2.5 Location of families

As noted earlier, families were recruited to be involved in two program locations, namely Fitzroy and North Melbourne. Most families either lived in these two areas or in nearby suburbs. The Melbourne suburbs in which families lived at the time of recruitment is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Location of families at point of recruitment into HIPPY in 1999

Suburb of residence	Number of children
Attended Fitzroy Centre	<u>26</u>
Fitzroy	19
Collingwood	3
Tottenham	2
North Fitzroy	1
Meadow Heights	1
Attended North Melbourne Centre	<u>7</u>
North Melbourne	5
Carlton	2

Parents of 27 of the children participating in the study lived either in the same area as the centre which they attended for group meetings or close by. This included the three families in Collingwood who lived within 10 to 15 minutes walking distance of the Fitzroy Centre.

Six families attending the Fitzroy centre moved to other Melbourne suburbs during their involvement in the program.

8.2.3 Staffing of program

In the earlier review of the HIPPY literature in Chapter 4, it was noted that personnel occupying the position of Coordinator can be expected to have a major impact on program implementation, and, further, that Home Tutors are also likely to be influential as the direct deliverers of the program to parents (Lombard, 1994). The staffing of the program is therefore discussed below in relation to the positions of Coordinator and Home Tutors as well as two other staffing arrangements which were part of program implementation, namely the Line Manager and volunteers.

8.2.3.1 Coordinators

The staffing of the program is considered in relation to the background experience of personnel and changes in staffing.

8.2.3.1.1 Background experience of Coordinators

This issue is considered for the first and third person to fill this position only, on the basis that the second Coordinator left after only 10 weeks and was not perceived by participants to be a major player.

In both cases, the Coordinator had proven skills in working directly with families as well as the ability to work on broader planning issues for the program. For the first Coordinator, this included experience as a teacher and a school principal. For the third Coordinator, it included experience in nursing, family therapy, and designing and delivering training.

In commenting on the appointment of the third Coordinator, the Line Manger of the HIPPY Coordinator identified the importance of her having worked with disadvantaged families and being able to do some broader analytical thinking about the future direction of the program in Australia. This last point related to the early stage of the program's development in Australia. If the program had been well established with a national Coordinator, such broader analytical skills might have been seen as less crucial. The Line Manager commented as follows.

> *We were looking for people with qualifications in a range of fields, but giving priority to people with qualifications in early childhood, social work or early teaching experience. We were also looking for people who had experience in working with disadvantaged communities and families from different language and cultural backgrounds. Also people who had some experience in an educative role with adults and who had done work with families and children and in their application indicated an awareness of child development. We felt comfortable that the people we interviewed had the appropriate background and experience, so when we started the interviews we started looking for a range of other things, for a person who could do the bigger analytical thinking... who indicated the capacity to make links, to do bigger structural thinking around specific problems... The person we chose doesn't have a qualification in any of those areas (see above) but she has a background in nursing and family therapy and had extensive experience over the last four or five years in developing and delivering training programs, so I felt the elements we needed were very much in evidence.* (Line Manager, research interview)

8.2.3.1.2 Changes in Coordinator personnel

As depicted in Figure 6 on page 97, there were three Coordinators employed during the period of the second intake. A decision of the first Coordinator to extend her employment to half way through the first year was to counter likely difficulties in program continuity caused by the

resignation of the second Coordinator. The first Coordinator was also in a position to pass on her knowledge to the third Coordinator. It also provided continuity in supervision and training of the Home Tutors in an established relationship

Despite attempts to maintain program continuity, there were several consequences of the short-term stay of the second Coordinator. Because of the second Coordinator's involvement with recruiting families, contact was lost with some of these families and fewer families were recruited. The program with the Somali-speaking families was also further delayed and did not commence until August, rather than March as planned. Based upon the experience of the program elsewhere, it would have been expected that beginning the program in a second location and with a new linguistic and cultural community would involve delays and *'teething'* problems in any case. (Lombard, Director of HIPPY International, personal communication, 1997). The changes in personnel extended these difficulties.

Another consequence of personnel changes was that the Line Manager made the decision to delay giving the researcher access to the Home Tutors and families. This was expressed at the time in terms that earlier contact might have adverse effects on program implementation. Specific mention was made to the researcher that the Home Tutors still lacked confidence in their role, the new Coordinator needed to establish her relationship with the Home Tutors, and families were only beginning their engagement with the program. This delayed the researcher's access to program staff and the families, which in turn lead to the abandonment of the planned intention to pre-test the children's abilities soon after their entry into the program.

A further consequence of the appointment part-way though the first year of the program, noted by the Coordinator at her first interview, was that she had less contact with, and knowledge of, families in the second intake than for subsequent intakes. This was because she was not directly involved in their recruitment into the program.

8.2.3.2   Line Manager position

This position provides management coordination for family and early childhood programs in the organisation, including HIPPY. The Coordinator of HIPPY reported directly to the person in this position. In contrast to changes in the position of Coordinator, there were no changes in personnel in this position. She was involved in selection of all three Coordinators.

According to both the Line Manager and the first Coordinator, this position was important in providing continuity for the program when the second Coordinator resigned. More broadly within the organisation it was also important in advocating for the continuation of the program with the executive level of the organisation.

Late in the first year, when there were changes in program Coordinator, the Line Manager undertook additional practical and administrative tasks in HIPPY to cover for the lack of staffing. The third Coordinator commented that the program would not have worked without her input in the first year of the second intake of families (1999).

8.2.3.3 Home Tutors

Home tutoring arrangements are considered below in relation to staffing and employment conditions, allocation of families to Home Tutors and parental relationships with Home Tutors. It also includes parents' views on changes in staffing. The system of in-service training is discussed later in this chapter.

8.2.3.3.1 Home Tutor personnel and employment conditions

There were five Home Tutor positions for this intake of families, all of them bilingual. Four were chosen to work with families from a particular non-English speaking background, whilst the fifth position was to work with families in English. These positions and changes in staffing are presented in Table 9 on page 111 below.

There were eight staff employed in the five Home Tutor positions for families over the course of this research study. The first Somali-speaking Home Tutor resigned because of her children's health problems. The second Somali-speaking Home Tutor withdrew in the second year of the program from teaching the families in the North Melbourne (and Carlton) locations, because of excessive travelling time exacerbated by the unreliability of parents to be available at prearranged times.

The first Hmong-speaking Home Tutor took leave of absence from the position for maternity reasons, but did not return because there was no program offered to this group in 2000. This was due to the small number of families interested in undertaking the program, because of the small number of children of Hmong-speaking mothers of the right age living in the local area. There were only four families potentially available for the second year of the second intake, and no Hmong-speaking children of the right age available for the third intake of families which could have provided additional hours for employment for a Hmong-speaking Home Tutor. The second Hmong-speaking Home Tutor made the point that it was necessary to have at least seven families available to her as a Home Tutor to make employment in the program financially worthwhile for her. The third Coordinator offered employment as a Home Tutor to a Hmong-speaking woman, but she was not interested because the money was insufficient.

Table 9

Employment of Home Tutors in second intake of families, 1999 and 2000

Home tutor: other language used in program	First employee	Second employee	Third employee
Vietnamese	Enrolled in the program with her four-year-old child in the second intake	No second employee	No second employee
Somali	Enrolled in the program with her four-year-old child in the second intake	Employed August 1999 to May 2000 with second intake of families but then transferred to working with third intake of families	Enrolled in program with four-year-old child in August 1999, appointed as Home Tutor in May 2000
Hmong	Enrolled in the program with her four-year-old child and as Home Tutor in the first intake, took leave in May 1999 but did not return	Enrolled in program with four-year-old child, employed from May 1999 to November 1999	No third employee
Turkish	Enrolled in the program with her four-year-old child in the first intake, employed as Home Tutor in second intake	No second employee	No third employee
English only	Enrolled in the program with her four-year-old child and as Home Tutor in the first intake, ceased employment in June 2000	No new appointment, Turkish-speaking Home Tutor provided lessons to second intake families after June 2000	No third employee

The English-speaking Home Tutor resigned about halfway through the second year of the program because of the long distance she had to travel to Fitzroy and her reliance on public transport. She expressed an interest in being employed in the program, but to work in her local area in outer Melbourne. The families with whom she was working were transferred to the Turkish-speaking Home Tutor.

The Turkish-speaking Home Tutor had a baby in February 2000, prior to the commencement of the second year of the program, but continued to provide the program to her families.

Four of the Home Tutors said that they spoke English *'very well'* when asked to rate their English on a four point scale (very well, well, not well, and not at all). These were the Turkish-

speaking Home Tutor, the first and second Somali speaking Home Tutors and the second Hmong-speaking Home Tutor. The remaining four Tutors said they spoke English *'well'*.

Home Tutors were employed as unqualified welfare workers under the Social and Community Services Award, with a 25 per cent loading as casual workers ($16.50 per hour in 2002). Each week they spent four hours on in-house training. On home visiting weeks they spent about an hour with each family. On group meeting weeks they attended a two-hour group meeting. For a Home Tutor with 10 families they would have an average of about 14 hours in the home visiting week and about six hours in the group meeting week, providing an average time allocation of about one hour per family per week, and about 30 hours per annum.

The third Coordinator made the point that it is the nature of Home Tutor positions that staff will usually remain on a short-term basis, as the pay is low and the work is repetitive and can become boring, particularly after the Tutor's own child has completed the program. Only one Home Tutor had remained in the Brotherhood of St Laurence program in Australia for longer than three years (up until 2001). She also made the point that it is inevitable that some Home Tutors were more skilled in their role than others.

8.2.3.3.2   Allocation of families to Home Tutors

The allocation of Home Tutors to families is summarised in Table 10 according to the language competencies of the Home Tutors.

Table 10

Allocation of families to Home Tutors by language

Home tutor languages used	Number of families	First language of parents
Vietnamese and English-speaking	10	Vietnamese (7)* Cantonese (3)
Somali and English-speaking	7	Somali (7)
Hmong and English-speaking	4	Hmong (4)
Turkish and English-speaking	6	Turkish (3) English (1) Armharic (1) Cantonese (1)
English-speaking	6	English (2) Eritrean (2) Spanish (1) Thai (1)

* Numbers in brackets indicated the number of children with families with each first language

About three-quarters (24) of families were matched with Home Tutors with the same first language, namely Vietnamese, Somali, Hmong and Turkish. Not matched were the parents of nine children who spoke other languages.

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8.2.3.3.3 Parents' views of Home Tutors

It was difficult to draw out comments from many of the parents on their own Home Tutor, other than she was *'fine'* or *'OK'*. A discussion of possible explanations for these brief responses is provided in Section 8.2.12. However, a number of insights into the relationship between parents and Home Tutors emerged in the thematic analysis of comments made by some parents and by some HIPPY staff. These comments illustrate the importance of trust and friendships.

The Turkish-speaking Home Tutor made the point, from her experience of being a parent in the first intake of families into HIPPY, that the development of a trust relationship between the parent and the Home Tutor was an important aspect of the program.

> *I was a parent before I was a Home Tutor, pretty different for me. I wanted to meet the person, to know if I could trust the person, I didn't know if we were going to get along. You have all these doubts in your head, what if I don't like you, what am I going to do? [English-speaking Home Tutor's name] was my Home Tutor and we just hit it off really great. It is all up to the Home Tutor if they do a really good job, and they know how you feel, it just goes well.* (Turkish-speaking Home Tutor)

Another parent emphasised the assistance he received with the English language.

> *Even though I have some English I find the Home Tutor is a great help, because when I am stuck with some of the questions I can get the Home Tutor to explain the problem to me. She shows me how to explain to my daughter so that my daughter can easily grab the idea.* (Vietnamese-speaking father)

The relationships between parents and Home Tutors could be expected to vary on an individual basis. However, they appeared from interviews to vary in a more systematic way with the Turkish and Hmong-speaking families.

The three Turkish-speaking families developed a degree of personal friendship with the Home Tutor. Thus one mother learnt about the program from the Home Tutor who was already her friend and another said she developed a friendship with the Home Tutor. The third mother discovered that they had been at the same school (in Australia) although in different years.

This friendship pattern appeared to have facilitated a more flexible system of 'home visiting' with lessons sometimes held in the Home Tutor's house, instead of attending group meetings. For one of the families, it appeared to have facilitated a variation in the program where the Home Tutor sometimes did the lesson directly with the child (from parent interview). It also

meant that the mother felt comfortable in ringing the Home Tutor when she wanted to discuss some aspect of the lesson. The relationship did not, however, lead to these three mothers staying with the program beyond the first year, for a range of personal reasons discussed in Section 8.2.9.1 below.

All four Hmong-speaking families knew each other from growing up in refugee camps together. They shared a family history of flight from their homes in Laos, survival in a jungle environment, loss of siblings, growing up in a refugee camp and then migration to Australia. There were three sisters. Two of them had children in the program, including the second Hmong-speaking Home Tutor, whilst the third sister was the first Hmong-speaking Home Tutor with a child in the first intake into the program. One mother reported that her sister *'dropped off'* the lessons to her, and this casual way of providing the materials appeared to have something to do with the fact that they were sisters.

In addition, a number of parents made positive comments on the careful and thorough way that the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor carried out her role.

Another insight into parents' relationships with their Home Tutors was in response to an interview question to those parents who experienced a change in Home Tutors during the program—just under half (15) of the 33 children. When asked about how this had had affected their use of the program, most parents said that it made no difference to them, with the change being acceptable to them. One Hmong-speaking mother indicated that she preferred the second Home Tutor on the basis that she spoke better English but also valued the first Home Tutor on the basis that she visited her more regularly.

Parents said they were comfortable with the change of Home Tutors half way through the second year (from English-speaking to Turkish/English speaking) as they already knew the Turkish-speaking Home Tutor from the group meetings. However two parents said that the English-speaking Home Tutor had started cancelling home visits prior to leaving the program and there was a period of more than a month when they found it difficult to obtain the lesson material. They both expressed frustration about this, illustrating the importance to parents of Home Tutors arriving at agreed upon times. One of these parents commented:

> *She didn't come. Sometimes we would make an appointment. I was making time to be here [at home] and I was waiting for her, but she didn't turn up. Then [Turkish-speaking Home Tutor's name] came. It went smoothly, no problem.*

Several Somali families said that the appointment of a local mother (their third Home Tutor) was better for them as she was easier to contact because she lived locally.

8.2.3.4 Volunteers

The Brotherhood of St Laurence has traditionally engaged volunteers to assist with achieving its activities, and has employed a volunteer Coordinator to manage this. Three volunteers were recruited to assist with administrative tasks in the program and worked directly with the program Coordinator. They undertook a number of administrative tasks, including the photocopying and collation of sets of HIPPY materials and the insertion of translations of stories into Somali and Vietnamese (pasted alongside the English words). This meant the Coordinator was available for other tasks.

8.2.4 Materials and activities

In its contractual obligations with HIPPY International, the program in Australia had a choice of purchasing materials from HIPPY in Israel or HIPPY in the United States. The latter was chosen by the first program Coordinator on the basis that this had been the choice of the program in New Zealand (which she had visited). Here the materials seemed to have worked successfully, and the United States material appeared to be potentially more culturally understandable than the Israeli material. A consequence of this choice was the presence of a number of Americanisms in the books and Activity Sheets, such as *'mom'* rather than *'mum'*, and the presence in stories of squirrels rather than possums (which might appear in Australian stories). In a number of the Home Tutor training sessions attended by the researcher, this issue was discussed and the language used in the Activity Sheets was amended. Also discussed was the acceptability of the material to people from different cultural backgrounds, discussed in relation to the in-service training of Home Tutors in Section 8.2.8.7.6 below.

Activity Sheets used in the program in Australia were black and white photocopies of the originals purchased from HIPPY in the United States, rather than the more attractive coloured sheets used in the program in the United States (Director of HIPPY International, personal communication, 2001).

The third Coordinator also commented that the longer-term aim, with the planned establishment of the program nationally, was to develop and use Australian materials. This would make the stories more relevant to Australian families. It would also provide a source of income for the central development of the program, paid for by Australian implementations of HIPPY.

Parents were charged $1 per week for HIPPY materials. When asked, all parents said that they had no difficulty with this charge. Several saw it as payment for the materials they received,

such as the story books, and said that they thought that the program provided good value for their money.

The following anecdote illustrates the significance to Home Tutors of having the materials available to parents in a timely way. In the first year of the program one of the Home Tutors told the researcher that the Home Tutors had recently been frustrated that HIPPY materials had not been available on time for parents (from the Coordinator). She said that they felt it reflected poorly on the professionalism of the program, and how parents regarded the Home Tutors. The particular Home Tutor said she had been *'selected'* by others to be the spokesperson on this issue with the Coordinator. She said she felt awkward in this role and that they found the issue difficult to raise with the Coordinator. The issue was resolved within a month of the issue being raised by the Home Tutor, to everyone's satisfaction.

Another aspect was the importance of using materials available in parents' homes; there is a later discussion of this issue in relation to the in-service training of Home Tutors in Section 8.2.8 below.

8.2.4.1   Parents' views on materials and activities

Parents' attitudes to the materials were positive overall, though the researcher was unable to draw out from many of the parents more extensive responses other than *'good'* and *'fine'*. However, there were a small number of critical comments of a relatively minor nature related to Americanisms, and to the material being regarded as too easy or too difficult.

Parents reported problems with Americanisms, as mentioned in 8.2.4 above. An English-speaking father in the program commented that, while he could easily make this correction when reading a story, he had noticed that other parents in the program, who attended the same group meeting and were from non-English-speaking backgrounds, had difficulties doing this.

Some of those with difficulties speaking English said they had problems with some of the English words, though they managed with a variety of strategies, such as asking the Home Tutor, an older child, their spouse or a friend, or using a dictionary.

Several parents said that the material was too hard in the first year of the program but too easy in the second year. Others felt that the second year was better because it was easier. Two parents said that one of the stories was too long and too complex for their child. These comments appeared to relate to the differing abilities of the children.

Two more extensive comments of parents are provided below for illustrative purposes. One father talked about some stories being too complex for his daughter to understand and mathematics too easy.

In terms of stories, sometimes we read very interesting stories. My daughter really likes, enjoys the stories, but sometimes the stories are a bit complex. So she has a problem understanding the story. After reading out to her, I ask her again what the story was about and she did not remember what it was... I think the maths work is too easy. I would like it to be a bit harder. (Vietnamese-speaking father)

One parent commented positively upon the value of the interactive nature of reading and talking about the stories with their children.

The program has helped my daughter to cultivate an interest in what she is reading. It helps her to understand what the book said. If it's not for the program then she might just be reading without doing the activities and she might not be able to make connections between things. (Cantonese-speaking mother)

8.2.5   Language issues

The acceptance of families into the program from a number of different language groups was a major difference from how HIPPY programs have usually being organised in overseas countries. The first and third Coordinators reported this structure as being mainly a response to expressions of interest, that is, they accepted anyone who wanted to join. The introduction into the program of Somali-speaking families was part of a deliberate strategy to trial the program with another group.

The program commenced with materials, story books and activity sheets, in the English language only.

Language issues are discussed below in relation to the program policy on teaching English, the language background and English ability of parents, program adaptations to deal with language diversity, and parents' views on language issues within the program.

8.2.5.1   Program policy on teaching English

There was a conscious decision by the first and third Coordinators not to focus the program on the learning of English for either parents or children, despite advice from the former Director of HIPPY International to concentrate more on the learning of English as the official school language. The third Coordinator commented on how teaching English skills was not an explicit goal of the program, despite the use of English in the program.

When I went over to Israel for the training it was very clear that there was a push for parents to learn English, or Hebrew [in Israel]. I said 'we don't do that because we've got so many languages that we're dealing with' ...There are some parents who try to do it in English but that actually is not the aim of the program. That's not how we encourage

it to be implemented here in Melbourne. There are some things like shapes and colours and things like that where we encourage the Home Tutors to write the words in both English and their first language and teach the parents to say it in both languages to the child. That's very basic concepts and concepts that you know they will be looking at in school. But generally I actually don't see it as a program that will help children with their English, in their school preparation. I am very open to see how we can do that, but I see it on a par with the parents [learning English]. If we are going to integrate that as a goal we need to look at doing it in a very specific way, rather than trying to introduce it via the parent.

8.2.5.2   Language use in the program

As noted in the Table 7 on page 103, all but three of the 33 children came from a non-English speaking background. Somali and Vietnamese were the two main language groups. However, there were seven other languages (excluding English) which were the first language of parents.

As also noted in Table 7 above, there were 16 parents delivering the HIPPY program who said they spoke English *'not well'* and who could be described as having major difficulties with the English language. There were another nine parents who said they spoke English *'well'* who still identified difficulties with the English language, such as not always understanding some English words or being unable to pronounce the ends of English words correctly.

People who had been in Australia longer had, as might be expected, better English, especially for those who arrived here with little or no English.

The use of language in the program is summarised in Table 11 on page 119 below, organised according to the main language spoken at home (in the left-hand column). Table 11 indicates that the main language spoken at home was usually the same as that used in group meetings. The exceptions were the Cantonese (4), Spanish (1) and Thai-speaking (1) families who spoke a different language at home to that provided in the group meetings. This trend continued into the main language used in Home Tutor-parent sessions and parent-child sessions, though there was, from parents' comments, an increasing tendency over time to use English.

However, by focusing on the main language used, the information provided in Table 11 considerably understates the use of English, as all families spoke some English at home and some English was a regular part of all group meetings, Home Tutor-parent sessions and parent-child sessions. It also obscures the complex use of multiple languages. Some examples of such complexity are provided below.

The Armharic-speaking parent, whose situation is referred to in the footnote to Table 11, said that she migrated from Ethiopia, spoke English at home with her daughter, received the program in English and taught it to her daughter in English. However, she had some difficulties with the English language. She was literate in Armharic and could speak (but nor read or write) Somali. Her daughter's first language was English and she *'complained'* that she did not understand her mother when she tried to explain things in the Somali language. Her daughter was attending an Islamic school which taught partly in English and partly in Arabic.

Table 11

Language use in the program

Home: main language	Group meetings: main language	Parent/Home Tutor sessions: main language	Parent/child sessions: main language
Vietnamese (7)	Vietnamese (7)	Vietnamese (7)	Vietnamese (3) English (3) Vietnamese/English (1)*
Somali (7)	Somali (7)	Somali (7)	Somali (6) English (1)
Cantonese (4)**	Vietnamese (4)	English (4)	Cantonese (3) English (1)
Hmong (4)	Hmong (3) English (1)	Hmong (2) English (1) Hmong/English (1)	Hmong/English (3)* Hmong (1)
Turkish (3)	Turkish (3)	English with Turkish translations (3)	Turkish (2) English (1)
Thai and English (50/50) (1)	English (1)	English	Thai and English (1)*
Spanish (1)	English (1)	English (1)	English (1)
English (6)***	English (6)	English (6)	English (6)

*Indicates that English and the family's first languages were used to a similar degree
** Three of these four families also spoke some Vietnamese, with Vietnam being their country of origin
*** The parent of two of these children spoke Eritrean as a first language and the parent of one spoke Armharic as a first language, but the main language used at home was English

The complexity of the language issues for HIPPY delivery in relation to parents having different lengths of residence can be illustrated in relation to the three Turkish-speaking families. In two of the Turkish-speaking families, the fathers had been in Australia considerably longer than their spouses and had better English than their spouses. However, it was the mothers who delivered the program to their children and little use had been made of the father's English ability. In the third Turkish-speaking family, the mother had come to Australia as a child, had her

schooling in Australian schools and spoke English very well. However, the family spoke Turkish at home because the father spoke little English, and therefore the child had little English before beginning HIPPY.

The third Coordinator made a distinction between the Vietnamese and Somali-speaking groups, in terms of the demand placed upon them to speak English in their day-to-day lives, as follows.

It's [group meetings] mainly in Vietnamese. They [families] feel quite comfortable with that. There doesn't seem to be the degree of anxiety that some of the Somali families feel when their English is not very good. I think it is because when they go out they have to speak English, when they go shopping for example. Whereas the Vietnamese families, when they go out, there is a whole [Vietnamese] community where they don't have to speak English if they don't want to.

8.2.5.3 Program adaptations to deal with language diversity

The main approach to dealing with the diversity of families' languages was the employment of bilingual Home Tutors, proficient in families' first languages and English, and the organisation of group meetings into single language groups wherever possible (based upon the observations of the researcher and the comments of the third Coordinator). However, the program accepted a number of language groups in excess of the number who could be provided with bilingual Home Tutors or could be incorporated in a single language group using their first language. The translations of story books, provided towards the end of the first year of the program, in 1999, were also restricted to the two most common languages, Vietnamese and Somali, on the basis that the expense could not be justified for the small numbers in the other language groups. These translations were pasted in the story books so that parents had both English and other language version on the same page. At the same time, Vietnamese and Somali-speaking families were provided with audio tapes of the story books in English and in their language.

There were seven families for whom there was no available Home Tutor in their first language. The parents in five of these families reported that they spoke English *'not well'* and for the other two it was *'well'*. This included four Cantonese-speaking families, a Thai-speaking family, a Spanish-speaking family and an Armharic-speaking (and Somali-speaking family) who completed the first year of the program in the Fitzroy location. Overall, these parents said they managed to understand and provide the program to their children, despite difficulties with the English language. When further asked how they managed this, several identified that role

playing the lesson material with the Home Tutor meant that they knew what to do and they knew some English words and used other family members to help.

Three of the four Cantonese-speaking mothers said, in their research interviews after completing the program, that speaking some Vietnamese assisted them to communicate with the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor in group meetings and home visits and hence to understand the program. The Cantonese-speaking mother, with no Vietnamese language, explained how she managed with the language issue through another mother in the program interpreting for her in the Vietnamese-speaking group meetings of parents, and through making use of a Cantonese-English dictionary. These arrangements were observed by the researcher in the group meeting and were further confirmed in the interview with the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor. The mother who received the interpretation assistance explained.

> *The [Home] Tutor is a Vietnamese-speaking person, but I don't speak Vietnamese and also the group speaks Vietnamese. But I know a person [in the program] who is of Vietnamese extraction but also speaks Cantonese. So we speak Cantonese together. I also had the materials beforehand [from the Home Tutor] and I am able to look through the dictionary. So it [language] doesn't present a lot of difficulty...* (Cantonese-speaking mother)

8.2.5.4 Parents' views on language issues

Thematic content analysis of parent interviews who said they had difficulties with English (parents of 25 children), whether speaking it *'not well'* or *'well'*, revealed that this was usually one of the major reasons for joining the program. It was also an area where they felt the program had been successful for their children, and sometimes for themselves. Parents also reported that the difficulties they experienced with their lack of English in doing HIPPY were relatively minor, with no participant feeling that it interfered greatly with the value of the program.

Parents' improvement of English ability over the life of the program was, in parental accounts, partly due to involvement in the program itself, and partly for other reasons such as undertaking English classes. Some parents reported that they found the English less difficult by the second year of the program.

Parents' experience of the language issue can best be considered in terms of the three groupings of (a) those who spoke English *'very well'* and who had no difficulties with language (parents of 6 children), (b) those who spoke English either *'well'* or *'not well'* but had a bilingual Home Tutor (parents of 18 children) in their own language, and (c) those (parents of 7 children) who spoke English *'well'* or *'not well'*, with no Home Tutor in their own language.

The only critical comments from those who spoke English *'very well'* were some of the Americanism, already discussed.

Those with a Home Tutor in their own language, and who did not speak English *'very well'*, reported that the use of both their own language and English, and role playing the lesson largely overcame problems in understanding English. Several said that even when they did not know the English words, they could remember what to do in the lesson from their child because they had practiced it with the Home Tutor. They also said that the translations provided in the story books (in both English and in their own language) and the audio tapes of stories in both English and their own language (Vietnamese and Somali only) helped them to understand the stories and talk them over with their children. Two Vietnamese-speaking parents commented on what they saw as limitations in the audio tapes of stories. One comment was that the Vietnamese translation was too literary and both commented that the child preferred the mother to read the stories.

None of these parents reported difficulties with the fact that the activity sheets were in English. One of these parents commented on her experience with the language issue within the program.

> *English is not our native language so we found that if it [a story book] was totally in English there would be some paragraphs that we would not be able to understand... The English on the [activity] sheets wasn't a problem at all. Just in the books there would be some paragraphs that we would not be able to understand [without the English translation].* (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

A common concern for a number of Vietnamese-speaking families was their difficulty in pronouncing the ends of words, and their fear that their children would learn this habit from them. This was also a concern for the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor with her own child. The comments of two other parents demonstrate this.

> *I am confident in Vietnamese and Vietnamese is my first language, so I prefer to read [to my son] in Vietnamese. Then my son wants me to read in English, but my pronunciation is not proper, so I ask my older son to read in English. He speaks properly. I don't want my [younger] son to copy me.* (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

> *The problem is my English pronunciation. It isn't very good, so I don't dare teach him English. So we help him with his knowledge and awareness rather than helping him with his English. I ask [older daughter's name] to help him with his English. With the [audio]*

tapes she didn't need to help him any longer, we just pressed the button and the tape played. (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

It was the third group, without a Home Tutor in their own language, who reported the greatest difficulties. These parents and their Home Tutors used a combination of strategies to deal with these communication problems. These included spending long periods in teaching the lesson with their child, some assistance from an older child, enlisting a friend in the program to interpret, looking at HIPPY material prior to the home visit and using a dictionary to help translate unknown English words. All these parents said, when asked, that translations of the stories and audio tapes would have been very helpful.

A Cantonese-speaking mother explained her difficulty.

I think the difficulty for me is understanding English. There are some instructions I do not understand, but then my child understands and I ask the child to explain to me. After the explanation I would think about it and use a [Cantonese/English] dictionary to find out what the instruction in English is. It's quite difficult for me... I think I can overcome the English problems by using the dictionary or by asking. (Cantonese-speaking mother)

The Amharic-speaking mother, who also spoke Somali but whose daughter's Tutor's first language was English, would also have liked to do the program with the other Somali families. In contrast, the Spanish-speaking father said that he had been offered the program in Spanish but had declined because he wanted to improve his own and his son's English.

Parental views on the importance of learning English were illustrated in two extremes, in the attitudes of two families who completed the full two years of the program. One Cantonese-speaking mother with very little English saw the learning of English as the most valuable part of the program for her daughter and herself. In contrast, a Vietnamese-speaking father who also spoke very little English said that the family view was that the program should be conducted in Vietnamese, that the teaching of English should be left to the school, and the important thing that the program taught was concepts. Interestingly, both children scored highly in assessments of their abilities as part of this research, that is, in the teacher assessment and testing by researcher reported in Chapter 9.

8.2.6   Cultural issues

This study did not set out to examine families' specific cultural practices or beliefs. Rather, the key issue for the research and for program implementation was the extent to which the program was delivered in a way that was culturally acceptable for families while retaining

the program features which were likely to make it effective. Parents reported that they had no particular difficulties with the way the program was delivered here, despite the fact that it was different to their experience of education.

Four aspects of program implementation were identified by the third Coordinator and Home Tutors, and further confirmed in observations by the researcher, as relevant to making the program culturally acceptable to families.

One was the engagement of Home Tutors from the same culture (and language) as parents. As noted in the later discussion of in-house training in Section 8.2.8 below, the Coordinator was able to ask the advice of Home Tutors on how to provide the lesson material in a culturally acceptable way. Parents' comments on their experience of the major aspects of the program delivery reported in this chapter also indicate that overall the program was able to achieve this successfully.

A second relevant feature was the responsiveness of the program to the language situation of families. The value placed on participants' first language can itself be seen as an affirmation of people's culture. In a largely Vietnamese-speaking group meeting attended by the researcher and the third Coordinator in the first year of the program for these families, one of the Cantonese-speaking mothers said with considerable frustration in her voice that her own language was *'rubbish'*. The third Coordinator replied that her own language and culture were very important and were valued by the program.

A third way the program pursued cultural acceptability was the use of group meetings which provided a forum for parents to discuss the program, to gain additional information, especially about their child's education in Australia, and to raise any issues of concern. The third Coordinator felt that a common language and culture formed a bond between parents and this was an important aspect of these meetings.

I believe it's different walking into a room and speaking your own language ... I think that in a culturally specific group other than English there is a sort of bond anyway. There has to be because they are still in a foreign country no matter how comfortable they are here.

The fourth aspect of HIPPY facilitating cultural acceptability was the use of role play, the method by which the weekly lessons were practised in the weekly in-service training with Home Tutors, and which were conveyed by Home Tutors to parents and then by parents to their children. All parents interviewed said that the use of role play worked well, though the researcher was unable to draw out explanations for this other than that they had no difficulty with it or that they enjoyed the process of learning this way. The lack of comments by parents on

initial difficulties might be explained by the length of time for parents between starting HIPPY and being interviewed (between 14 to 21 months). One father in the program said that he had initial difficulties in playing the role of the child and deliberately making mistakes, but then overcame this problem.

One parent compared this way of teaching with her different experiences of education in her own country of origin (China).

The most important thing I can learn is the teaching method of the Home Tutor because it is more interesting for the children. I am making a comparison with the traditional Chinese teaching method, which is to write things on the blackboard, and the students would seek the information. But with this program they are playing, they are involved in the activities and this makes it interesting for the children... If I were to teach my child by myself without the program I would be at a loss. The traditional Chinese way of teaching is rather rigid but this program makes the children think a lot. (Cantonese-speaking mother)

Home Tutors were similarly positive about the use of role play with parents but were more likely to identify the initial difficulty they had in using the method, either with their own child or in teaching other parents. The Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor commented.

I am from Vietnam; in my culture I never do that, the [HIPPY] activity. We never learn from our dad. When I say to the [HIPPY] parents you may have to do that, they say 'ohhhhh, it's a shame, I can't do that'. They're shy. Many many times they practice before they get familiar with some activities.

In some instances it was difficult for the researcher to differentiate cultural from other influences on the families' use of the program. One instance was the practice of older children in Hmong-speaking families delivering part or, in one case, all of the lesson. This was identified by the third Coordinator of HIPPY as a cultural practice of delegating responsibility, which was in conflict with the program approach of the parent delivering the lesson. The Coordinator commented on the tension between program expectations and cultural practice.

So that cultural tradition at times obviously at times outweighed the expectations that Coordinators have that the Hmong Home Tutor do it in a certain way. Their culture was more important.

However, the researcher feels that the extent of this practice with two of the Hmong-speaking group also appeared to be at least partly due to the more casual way in which Hmong-

speaking Home Tutors delivered the program to parents to whom they were related. The involvement of other older children in other families, to give the meaning of particular English words or to provide correct English pronunciation, was identified by parents as a language rather than a cultural issue.

A second example of possible cultural influence was the lack of attendance, and late arrival, at meetings by Somali families. Both Somali-speaking Home Tutors and the third Coordinator felt that it was due, at least partly, to a cultural disregard for doing things at set times. An anecdote from the program illustrates the issue. Late arrivals at group meetings were considered to be such a regular part of the behaviour of the group that a local service provider, in organising a meeting of Somali speaking parents in North Melbourne (attended by the researcher), deliberately gave them a meeting time one hour earlier than the actual meeting time. This was on the basis that the families would be late and therefore on time. The result was that several mothers turned up at the earlier time (and then left), several turned up on time, others arrived late and others did not arrive at all.

The third Coordinator disagreed that the cultural factor was the only one operating here. She said that the pattern of poor attendance was at least partly because of the unsuitability of the two meeting places. One was being in a large open space which was not particularly welcoming. The other was in a Maternal and Child Health Centre at the base of the high rise flats where four of the seven Somali-speaking families lived. The Coordinator said that parents may have been in the habit of using this centre on a *'drop in'* basis and continued this practice in HIPPY. Improved attendance at group meetings by Somali-speaking families in a more suitable meeting space in later intakes confirmed that the issue was not simply a cultural one. The Coordinator commented on this later pattern of attendance.

Attendance [at group meetings) is more regular [than before], but there are still issues with time. They don't arrive on the dot. But they really like the facility; it enables a lot more to be done. It's a big room so we've started making a banner. That would be next to impossible to do in North Melbourne because of the lack of appropriate space.

For some parents, expectations of educational processes were different to those provided by HIPPY. Some of them commented on respect for the teacher, the lack of parental involvement in their child's education, very large class sizes by Australian standards and the use of rote learning. The difference between the HIPPY approach and their own experiences of education was a reason a small number of parents had some initial difficulty with role play, but they came to prefer the HIPPY way of teaching and learning.

A difference noted by the researcher when testing children was the apparently greater self-confidence of the Somali-speaking children in completing the assessment task compared with Vietnamese and Cantonese-speaking children. The latter group often appeared to be reluctant to complete a task unless they were sure they knew the answer, whilst the Somali-speaking children appeared to cheerfully attempt answers without worrying about being wrong. The third Coordinator said that Home Tutors had identified similar differences in attitudes to learning between these two groups of children.

In summary, the program was generally delivered overall by all accounts, in a way which was culturally acceptable for the participating families. The two major examples of tensions were the engagement of older children in delivering the lesson and difficulties with group attendance and punctuality for Somali-speaking families. The Coordinator commented, as a response to the researcher's feedback on this issue, towards the end of the two year program for this second intake of families, that the program needed to accept the practice of older children's involvement and work out ways of supporting rather than ignoring that involvement.

8.2.7   Program delivery system

In commenting on the process of implementation in interviews, both parents and HIPPY staff conveyed information and reflections on the detail of how the program was delivered. Researcher observations complemented the thematic content analysis of interview material. Four general program features thus emerged as important, and worthy of consideration and comment, namely parent lesson delivery, home visiting by the Home Tutor to deliver the lesson, group meetings of parents and in-house training of Home Tutors.

8.2.7.1   Parent lesson delivery

As described in Section 4.3.5.1 and set out in the Coordinator's Manual (Lombard et al., 1999), the standard expectation of parents was for them to spend at least fifteen minutes per day with the child to provide the lesson, five days per week (Monday to Friday) during school terms, for 30 weeks across the year.

From a HIPPY staff point of view, the parent- child sessions were probably the least understood aspect of the program, given that no staff members were usually present. However, Home Tutors discussed children's progress with the parents and this feedback was a feature of the in-house training sessions as discussed in Section 8.2.8.7 below. The main source of information in this research on parental delivery of the lesson was from the parents themselves, supplemented by researcher observations of four parent-child lessons.

The delivery of the lessons from parent to child is discussed below in relation to variations from the model program, concerning the length and timing of lessons and the impact upon the lesson of the presence of older and younger children in the family being present.

8.2.7.1.1   Length and timing of lessons

Many of the parents found it difficult to identify how much time the lessons took on average, often saying that it varied. The lowest estimate of time was 15 minutes per session whilst the highest was over an hour. The four parent-child sessions attended by the researcher ranged from 20 minutes to 40 minutes.

From parents' comments on the length of lessons, known participation periods and other variations in participation, it is possible to calculate a range of times which parents would have spent with their children in teaching the lesson material. The identified range was between a low of 25 hours and a high of 300 hours of instruction per child. These figures were calculated on the following basis. At the lower end was an example of a parent who completed only one year of the program. It was assumed conservatively that this parent completed only 100 of the 150 daily lessons which would have been the normal first year quota, and spent on average the minimum of 15 minutes per lesson. At the upper end was the example of a parent who said she completed all 300 daily lessons and spent on average one hour or more per lesson.

Two of the parents who spent a longer time on the lessons than recommended in the program model commented.

[The lessons took] about an hour because she [the child] enjoyed them. Sometimes there were 21 pages and there were some activities where she has to stick things, glue things. (Turkish-speaking mother)

[The lessons would take] about half an hour. Sometimes it would take more because we still had to play the games. (Turkish-speaking mother)

Another variation was the timing of the lessons. The majority said they delivered them in a standard way five afternoons per week after school. Others used a five-day format which included weekends. The parent who taught her nephew mainly conducted the HIPPY activities on weekends, when her nephew was visiting, though at other times she encouraged her nephew's family day carer to do the lessons after school.

Two parents' comments on this timing issue are provided as illustrations of how family circumstances and children's preferences affected the timing of lessons. The first comment is from a mother who also did lessons whilst on an overseas trip.

She (daughter) always wanted to do the whole thing, so we would sometimes do two weeks' work in a week. (Turkish-speaking mother)

Another parent organised it over three evenings in order to suit her paid work commitments, and on occasions, had undertaken all the week's lessons on one evening.

With this program you are [supposed] to study every day for five days. But I can only help him [son] with the program for three nights because the other four nights I have to work. So when I teach him on those three nights I want to split up the program for over the five days. He doesn't agree. He wants to study the whole five lessons on the one night because it's very easy for him [in the second year of the program]. (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

8.2.7.1.2   Impact of siblings on lessons

As noted in Table 6 on page 101, one-third of families (11) had children younger than the child participating in HIPPY and over half (18) had older children. The two main patterns to emerge concerning the impact of siblings on program delivery were for older children to assist in delivering the lesson and for younger children to interfere.

All parents with children younger than the child doing HIPPY said that the younger child caused some difficulties in their providing the lesson, as well in Home Tutor-parent sessions. Some parents indicated that it was a major problem, whilst others indicated that it was more minor. It was difficult to gain an exact sense of the degree of disruption, because parents also said that it varied. It appeared to be a more of a major issue in larger families, for example in the Somali and Hmong-speaking families. The first Somali-speaking Home Tutor estimated that it lead to a loss of about a third of the potential learning.

Parents identified various strategies to minimise this disruption from younger children. These included waiting for a younger child to go to sleep or providing the younger child with activities to keep him or her occupied, or involving an older child or (more rarely) the other parent to keep the child occupied.

For example, in a family with two children, where the younger child's disruption was relatively easily dealt with, the parent commented.

It [having younger child] did sometimes make it difficult [to do the lesson], but we usually did it once I put him to sleep, so usually he wasn't interfering with it. He would go to sleep and straight away my daughter would say 'lets do the homework' because she knew it, whenever she asked for it [the HIPPY lesson], I would say 'wait until he goes to sleep'. (English-speaking mother).

Another mother commented on having a three-year-old and a baby.

He (three-year old) was OK about it. I'd give him a colouring in book or something to do, or he would sit next to me and see what his brother was doing... It was more difficult with her [the baby]. (Hmong-speaking parent)

In two-thirds of the families with an older child (12), the parent interviewed indicated that an older child had assisted in the delivery of the lesson. This most commonly involved assistance with understanding particular English words. In the case of Vietnamese-speaking families, it usually also involved the correct pronunciation of English words. In one of these families, the father said it was to assist the older child rather than the child enrolled in HIPPY. As mentioned in Section 8.2.7.2.3 below, in the most extreme case it emerged in the interview in one Hmong-speaking family (both parents and children present) that the 13 year-old daughter was the sole provider of the lesson to her sibling. The following quotation from another parent illustrates this feature.

I let my daughter——, she is 13 and my other daughter is 8 years old—take over HIPPY if I wasn't there. They understood everything, so they taught him [child in HIPPY] everything. They said he finished in half an hour, how he did, he did well, everything is done. They were teaching him. It was good. (Spanish-speaking father)

The third Somali-speaking Home Tutor provided an exception to the general helpfulness of older children in assisting with HIPPY lessons in commenting on the resentment of some older children.

Families experienced other siblings fighting. Their children said 'mum, why are you doing this activity with——, why is he so special, why not me, why can't I do this activity with you'?

Both the disruptive influence of younger children and the helpfulness of older children are illustrated in the following excerpts from the researcher's notes of a parent-child session with a Somali-speaking family. The lesson took place in a high rise flat in North Melbourne. Present at this session were the researcher, the mother, the 5-year-old son enrolled in HIPPY, a 13-year-old daughter, and a three-year-old son. The father was absent. There was also a baby but he was asleep. The lesson material is from Week 26 in the first year of the program, but because of the late start of these families it is in their second year. The researcher's notes of this meeting are

organised as a series of entries with the starting time of each entry to indicate the passage of time.

4.22pm The TV is on in the background, an older daughter is threatening the three-year-old boy that he will be put in his room if he does not behave. The mother says it is time to listen and learn. The three-year old and five-year-old boys start fighting.

4.26 The mother reads pages 16 and 17 of the book in English.

4.31 The three-year-old wanders in and grabs the mother and the lesson material, which the mother retrieves, and the child then wanders off to a different area of the lounge room. The mother asks the five-year-old a question in Somali, he responds with something, which apparently is not related to the story. The mother points to the story and repeats the question.

4.34 The mother reads some more of the story, this time in Somali, the five-year-old's attention wanders, mother notices this and says something to him in Somali, and he starts to pay attention.

4.38 The mother starts to cut out the train level crossing bars on the activity sheet, the mother insists that he does it, and he asks for his mother's help part of the way through the task, she comments to the researcher that the five-year-old will say 'I'm the goodest one'. The three-year-old takes the glue that the five-year-old is about to use.

4.41 The five-year-old finishes cutting the level crossing bars. He says that he wants to watch TV and the mother says 'later'. He insists that he glues the crossing bars and the mother assists. He places a level crossing bar on the page, moving it several times to ensure that it is parallel with the other three already glued in place.

4.47 The mother asks the son what is the picture (of a saw). He guesses 'scissors' and 'knife'. His 13-year-old sister clarifies that it is a saw when the mother and five-year-old are uncertain as to what it should be called. The mother draws along the dotted line on the page. The three-year-old wanders by, chatting and laughing, and is ignored. The sister brings me a cup of coffee.

4.49 The five-year-old finishes tracing the outline of a hammer, starts tracing the outline of a saw with a different coloured (green) pen. He then finishes tracing the saw, he asks his mother's advice about what colour pen to use for tracing the screwdriver, and she points to a red pen. She asks him to say the names of the three tools. After doing this he places the scissors on a picture of scissors and says 'same'.

4.54 The mother says the lesson is over. The five-year-old insists on doing some more drawing.

In the observation of this and three other parent-child sessions, the researcher noted that the children mostly appeared to enjoy the sessions. They appeared to have no major difficulties with the materials and the activities as they were taught.

8.2.7.1.3   Children and the lesson

The former Director of HIPPY International has commented in a number of public forums attended by the researcher that the international experience of the program is that once children have become involved in HIPPY they will demand the lessons from the parents. Whilst parents were not asked a direct interview question on this issue, a number of parents commented on their children being a motivating factor in their continuing involvement in the program. Once the pattern of lessons had been established, their child began to ask for them. The children's enjoyment of the lessons was commonly reported by parents. Three comments are provided as illustrations.

She (daughter) kept pushing, asking me to do things together, like 'Mum let's do this together, Mum, let's do this together'. (Turkish-speaking mother)

First, he just wanted to watch television, wanted to play nintendo, but I said to him, you have to study sometime, so 10 minutes, sometimes every day. He said 'OK, I will do that'. At first it was a bit hard because he didn't want to concentrate, but I said 'no, you have to do it and then you can do whatever you want to'. So I push him to do it, but later he said by himself 'OK, I want to turn off the television and I want to learn now, can you teach me?' So I said 'I am busy', but I said 'yes, of course', but sometimes when I was busy I couldn't do it. (Spanish-speaking father)

He [son] always loved it [HIPPY lessons] and still does. He loves doing the work. (English-speaking mother)

8.2.7.2   Home visiting

Home visits by the Home Tutor were the major way in which the program was delivered to parents, even more significant than in the standard program model because of the poor attendance at group meetings by some parents (reported later in this Chapter in Section 8.2.7.3.1). The present section commences with an example of a Home Tutor-parent session, then reports on home visiting in relation to variations from the ideal program model, and parents' views of home visiting.

8.2.7.2.1 Example of a home visit

This hour long lesson with the Home Tutor took place with the same family in the same location as for the parent to child lesson discussed in Section 8.2.7.1.2 above. Again it was related to Week 26 in the first year of HIPPY. The third Somali-speaking Home Tutor, the researcher, the mother, the three-year-old son and the baby were present. The baby was not asleep, as was the case for the parent-child session reported above. Both the 13-year-old daughter and the child enrolled in HIPPY were at school.

The researcher's notes of this session illustrate the disruptions of younger children and the almost effortless way in which the Home Tutor deals with these disruptions; in a sense providing a model for the parent to follow.

10.37am We all sit down. The mother is feeding her baby; her three-year-old son is clambering over her.

10.40 The Home Tutor organises the three-year-old to read a book, the three-year-old calls out something to the Home Tutor in Somali. The Home Tutor reads the HIPPY story in both English and Somali.

10.44 The three-year old stands on the chair that mother is sitting on and cuddles his mother, the baby makes lots of noise. The Home Tutor goes through the lesson instructions in English and there is a discussion of them between the Home Tutor and mother in Somali. The three-year-old taps the Home Tutor on the shoulder, she ignores him, then gives him a pen and paper, and he falls off the chair.

10.50 The mother goes to the kitchen to make the adults a cup of coffee.

10.55 The lesson resumes. The Home Tutor comments in English about the three-year-old wanting attention. The mother says something in response in Somali. The baby is put on the floor. The three-year-old lies on the couch drinking a bottle of milk and then gets up and clings to his mother. The Home Tutor continues the lesson in English, mother says highlighted words in English: 'before', 'in front of'. The Home Tutor corrects the mother's pronunciation of 'behind' in English. They go through the 'butterfly' exercise.

11.02. The Home Tutor puts out the pictures, the baby grabs at the pictures and then starts crying. The lesson continues…

8.2.7.2.2   Variations in home visiting practices

Although home visiting of parents by Home Tutors was initially organised as a fairly standardised approach in line with the program model, staff and parents reported a considerable number of variations in the practices.

The most common variation was additional home visits because of parents' lack of attendance at group meetings. When a parent did not attend a group meeting, the family received an additional home visit, planned as a half hour home visit rather than the usual one-hour. Non-attendance at group meetings was very common for Somali-speaking and Turkish-speaking families and for other individual families because of distance or other commitments, such as English lessons or paid work.

Another variation was that four Home Tutors who were parents with a child in this second intake learned the lesson material through the weekly in-service training session with the HIPPY Coordinator. Normally they would do the lesson with their own child before teaching the other parents. In an observation of the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor providing the week's lesson to a parent, the Home Tutor proudly showed the parent her child's own, brightly coloured-in work, and used her experience of doing the lesson with her own child as a stimulus to the discussion of how the parent could do the lesson with her own son. The Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor commented.

> *When the other parents saw my daughter's work, they can see the results and can expect what their children can do. So that's one thing, there's another thing. It's also a necessity because my daughter has achieved something, she has done this, she has improved, so I want to show it. You have to show off so that they can have something to strive for, so [they can see] that their children can also be as good at that.*

Two other parents switched their home visits to a centre-based lesson conducted jointly with their Home Tutor. The origin of this arrangement was the need to alter a home visiting arrangement with one of the HIPPY fathers, because the husband of the particular female Home Tutors was unhappy with her visiting a male participant at his home. Both participants said they found this centre-based arrangement convenient, and one commented that it was more convenient than the home visit because the arrangement was for the morning rather than the evening.

Other substantial variations in delivering the lesson involved the geographic location of the parent-Home Tutor sessions. Two Vietnamese-speaking families moved away from Fitzroy for the second year of the program, one family (mother, father and child) driving for about 30

minutes each way to attend the Home Tutor's own home, the other mother driving a shorter distance to visit her own mother who lived in Fitzroy, at whose home the lesson was conducted. In yet another case, the Vietnamese-speaking parent who provided the program to her son and nephew lived in another suburb of Melbourne from the beginning of her participation in the program. She had only a small number of home visits, picked up the lesson material from the HIPPY Office in Fitzroy and relied on occasional phone conversations with the Home Tutor when she needed assistance.

These last two variations involved the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor who lacked private transport and found public transport too time-consuming to be practicable. The use of phone calls between home visits to clarify lesson material was mentioned by other parents, though it did not appear to have been a regular practice with most parents. One of the parents who made phone calls to the Home Tutor explained this arrangement.

The difficult parts [of the HIPPY lessons] were not that many. If I had any problems I rang [Home Tutor's name] and over the phone she explained them. The [lesson] instructions were in upper case so I could easily read and understand them. (Turkish-speaking mother)

The third Somali-speaking Home Tutor explained a way she used of ensuring that mothers completed the lessons correctly, which highlighted the importance of understanding their community and the value of persistence.

I give the parents [a set of] five lessons [to do with their children] each week. After I have finished the parents are supposed to take responsibility. The next week I cannot really be sure that the lessons have been understood and carried out as it supposed to be. Sometimes they say I should take the lessons with their child because they are home helping their children. I say 'it doesn't go like that, it doesn't work that way'. So sometimes I give the same lesson I did last week. I don't give the same lesson exactly, but I wait until they [parents] are finished, until they do their job. (Third Somali-speaking Home Tutor)

Towards the end of the first year of the research, in 1999, the third Coordinator introduced a monthly individual supervision with Home Tutors, in addition to the usual weekly training session (in accordance with standard program practice, and further discussed in Section 8.2.8.14 below). The Coordinator reported that the introduction of one-to-one monthly supervisory sessions led to new information emerging, including two variations in the delivery at the lesson at the home visit. She discovered that the Hmong-speaking Home Tutor was regularly

conducting lessons with children, rather than through the parents. It was also revealed that the English-speaking Home Tutor not doing the full role play with one of the parents (confirmed by the parent to the Coordinator when she did a home visit because the Home Tutor was unavailable, with the parent commenting *'Good, now I will get a full hour')*. Overall, the introduction of these one-to-one sessions with Home Tutors provided an opportunity for the third Coordinator to ensure greater consistency in program delivery.

An additional issue identified by Home Tutors in the interview was being aware of things happening in the home and being unsure if they should become involved in things affecting the children more generally. This required the program to work out how to separate out the core business of children's learning from other personal/family issues that parents might talk over with a Home Tutor. According to the third Coordinator, the program relied on the development of a strong trust relationship between the Home Tutor and the parent, which inevitably led to the sharing of confidences. At another level, Home Tutors were not trained to deal with difficult personal or family issues and they were encouraged by the Coordinator to bring these issues back to her to decide on how they should be handled.

8.2.7.2.3   Home Tutors providing lessons to children

From interviews with parents, the practice variation of Home Tutors delivering at least some of the lesson material directly to children appeared to be fairly common, though the fact that a Home Tutor normally only visited the parent at home once a fortnight set a limit on this practice. It appeared to be most frequent with the Hmong-speaking families, with some families with the English-speaking Home Tutor and with at least one of the Turkish-speaking families. It did not appear to have occurred with the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor. This practice is likely to have been understated in research interviews because it was not within the program guidelines. It was not, for example, an issue raised by Home Tutors in research interviews. As noted in Section 8.2.7.2.2 above, it was identified by the Coordinator as an issue with Hmong-speaking families. In the case of the one child where the parent was not available for an interview, the child told the researcher that the Home Tutor did the lessons with him, not his mother. An example of the practice emerged in a parent interview.

I could follow what (Home Tutor's name) was saying to my daughter. I had no problems there. (Turkish-speaking mother)

Several parents said that they wanted the Home Tutors to conduct the lessons directly with their child, usually on the basis they felt their child would learn better from a Home Tutor than from themselves. Whether this was translated into practice appeared to depend on the Home

Tutor's response to this pressure from parents. The researcher's impression was that this pressure was most difficult to resist when there was a close friendship between the parent and the Home Tutor.

8.2.7.2.4   Parents' views of home visiting

All parents said that they found the home visit to be a convenient arrangement. Some explained that this was because they did not need to leave home to have the lesson. Several parents with younger children made the point that it was particularly difficult to go out with young children. As with some other aspects of the program which parents reported as satisfactory, the researcher found it difficult to get some parents to elaborate on their reasons.

One of the Home Tutors commented on what she saw as the value of home visiting.

The thing that really captures it is the Home Tutor coming to your place. It is very different. You don't find that anywhere in Australia. It's private, you pay for it, it's very economic, it's excellent in a financial way. So when you hear, Home tutor and you read it, like wow!... a Home Tutor teaching me! So it really is different in that kind of sense. The activities are the same maybe like school, a similarity there, the Home Tutor makes it more special I think. (Turkish-speaking Home Tutor)

Two mothers identified problems with home visiting. One mother had a young child who interrupted the session while another said she did not find the educational material easy to understand in the home lesson and found it easier to understand in group meetings. Other parental comments on home visiting are provided in Section 8.2.7.3.3.1 below, in response to a question in which they were asked to compare home visits with group meetings.

8.2.7.3   Group meetings of parents

As noted in Section 4.3.5.3, group meetings were initially introduced into HIPPY to enable parents to have a better understanding of the program and their role in it. In the present study these meetings were organised around language backgrounds, with one mixed cultural group. In addition the Vietnamese-speaking group included three participants who spoke Cantonese. The Home Tutor of that language group facilitated each group. The four groupings were a mostly Vietnamese-speaking group, a Somali-speaking group, a Hmong-speaking group and a mixed language group.

The mixed group was conducted jointly by the Turkish and English-speaking Home Tutors. The Turkish-speaking Home Tutor reported that she provided translations into Turkish for two of

the mothers who spoke English *'not well'*, though these parents also reported that they rarely attended the group meetings.

8.2.7.3.1 Attendance at group meetings

Patterns of attendance at meetings are presented in Table 12, where the number of meetings planned for parents in each year is contrasted with actual patterns of attendance. Parents identified the number of group meetings they attended in research interviews. As group meetings were not, as is a standard practice in HIPPY, instituted until after completion of the first 12 weeks or so of the program, the number of planned group meetings was 9 for the first year and 15 for the second year. Children did not usually attend these meetings and the program provided child care when needed.

Table 12

Attendance at group meetings by parents

Year of program	Planned number of meetings	Number of meetings attended
First year (parents of 33 children)	9	Range: 1 to 9 Mean: 4 Median: 5
Second year (parents of 13 children)	15	Range 0 to 15 Mean: 9 Median: 15

On average, families enrolled in the program only attended about half the planned group meetings in the first year and three-fifths of meetings in the second year. This low attendance was due to fewer than expected numbers of meetings being held for some groups and families and parents failing to attend planned meetings.

Those who completed the two years of the program were more likely than those who completed only 12 months to attend all or most of the meetings available in both the first and second year. There were two family exceptions to this high level of attendance by those who completed the two-year of the program. These missed meetings were reported by parents in the second year of the program and were related to a change of residence for one parent to another locality and English classes commitments for another.

The Somali, Hmong and Turkish-speaking families were least likely attend meetings over the one year of the program they completed, with respective means being three, two and two meetings. All three Somali-speaking Tutors said they were frustrated at not being able to get their families to attend meetings and attributed this to the mothers being busy with young children and to a cultural issue of not usually doing things at specific times. As noted earlier, the

third program Coordinator also felt that the two meeting venues used were somewhat unsuitable and reported better attendance with the 2001 intake of Somali-speaking families in a more welcoming venue.

Other non-attendance at meetings for all families was related to conflicting commitments (paid work, English classes or other studies) or not living locally. Parents commented on the importance of being within walking distance of group meetings, sometimes indicating that they could not otherwise have attended. For example, two of the Somali-speaking families lived in a neighbouring suburb, but some distance away, and they said they found the travel too difficult (they did not have cars).

8.2.7.3.2   Nature of group interaction

The researcher attended group meetings with the mostly Vietnamese-speaking group (two meetings), the mixed group (two meetings), the Somali group (four meetings) and a separate research meeting with two of the three Turkish-speaking families. The higher number of meetings with the Somali-speaking group was due to their late start into the program, which meant that the researcher was able to negotiate earlier contact with this group than others. The Hmong-speaking group meetings had been abandoned by the time the researcher had contact with these families, though the researcher did attended a zoo excursion with this group, organised by HIPPY staff, which provided an informal opportunity to meet and interact with these families.

From the perspective of the researcher, the nature of the group interaction was different for the three groups. These same differences were also reported by the third HIPPY Coordinator.

8.2.7.3.2.1   Somali-speaking group

The meetings with Somali-speaking families were, as observed by the researcher, friendly and focused on the lesson material. However, there was little sense of continuity as the composition of the group changed from meeting to meeting. On two occasions, no parents other than the Home Tutor attended. The two Somali-speaking families living in a neighbouring suburb only attended two meetings, and on both occasions the program provided them with transport.

The second Somali-speaking Home Tutor made the following comment on the relationships between Somali-speaking families living in the North Melbourne area, which highlighted the importance of the sense of community amongst families.

They're living in the same block [of high rise, public rental housing flats], they visit each other, sometimes they don't have time to visit each other, but when they come together,

they will talk, some talk too much. Usually you [in Australia] talk in a very nice polite way. In our country, no, they're very critical, they always tell you 'what have you done, this is terrible, you have done this bad thing'. They always joke. [Q. Do they take it seriously?] No, no, no, because they know each other, that's it. Because they always do that to each other, therefore they don't care.

8.2.7.3.2.2   Vietnamese-speaking group

These meetings were well attended, appeared to the researcher to be very focused on the lesson material, all parents appeared to actively participate and laughter was common. As the meetings attended were mostly conducted in Vietnamese, the content of much of the discussion was unknown to the researcher. However, it was possible to follow the structure and some of part the meaning as a large part of the meeting dealt with a particular lesson.

8.2.7.2.3.2.3   Mixed group of families

In the third (mixed group) run jointly by the English and Turkish-speaking Home Tutors, the nature of the interaction was observed by the researcher to follow the pattern of providing an individual lesson to parents in turns, rather than developing a sense of the group working together. The third Coordinator described this group as more formal in its approach, in contrast to the Vietnamese-speaking and Somali-speaking groups. She suggested that a difference was that the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor and the Somali-speaking Home Tutor were part of the specific local cultural community. She commented as follows.

I think that the English-speaking Home Tutor's focus is more on the content [in the group meetings], and probably unconsciously the other Home Tutors relate in a way that just facilitates a different atmosphere... There's more a feeling of connectedness in the cultural specific group.

8.2.7.3.3   Parents' views of meetings

All parents said that the meetings were useful to them, including those who only attended a small number. When asked about what they gained from meetings, half of those interviewed identified the value of learning from other parents through discussion of their children's progress in HIPPY and overall development. The following comment is an illustration of this theme.

I learnt a lot from the other parents about the children's psychology. For example, they relate to me how they have dealt with similar situations. So when we talk we share experiences and I learnt good things from the other parents and vice versa. (Vietnamese-speaking father)

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One mother made the additional comment that, through this process of interaction with other parents, the standard of parents' teaching improved.

> *I think these meetings are good because parents share their experiences and they talk about these problems. Although I might not face the same problems, it helps me to understand what problems there might be and we all try to help one another. In that way I think it helps us to improve our standard of teaching our children.* (Cantonese-speaking mother, attended most group meetings)

Other themes emerging from parents' comments emphasised the value of group meetings in learning from the Coordinator about community resources, such as libraries and toy libraries, and being able to ask questions about the program. A few families identified difficulties with group meetings associated with language difficulties or simply feeling awkward in groups. One mother felt that participation in group meetings had led to her overcoming a serious psychological problem of lacking the confidence to go out. The fact that she discovered that she had met the Home Tutor at school assisted her in developing a trust relationship with her.

Of the three fathers involved in groups, one said he had no difficulty in being the only male in his group (Vietnamese group), on the basis that *'men and women were equal'*. Another mentioned initial difficulties which were quickly resolved (mixed group, English speaking) and the third attended only four of the meetings because of work commitments, but said he enjoyed the group meetings (mixed group, Spanish-speaking). The mothers made no comments about having fathers attend group meetings.

8.2.7.3.3.1   Home visiting and group meetings compared

Another approach to obtaining parents' views of group meetings and home visiting was to ask parents to compare them. An obvious point of difference, noted by one of the mothers, was that home visiting was more flexible in terms of the time it took place. The mother said that as an arrangement between two people it was more easily changed than the time of a group meeting. Another difference was that group meetings required parents to leave home, sometimes with young children.

The majority of parents reported that they valued both group meetings and home visits for reasons discussed above and did not express a preference. The following comments illustrate the views of people who valued both group meetings and home visits.

> *At the moment we have a group program and a one to one home visit. I think that works out very, very well. I like to have the group program where we can communicate and exchange ideas and the one to one is not bad either.* (Cantonese-speaking mother)

Well for the home visits, we only spoke about one specific subject or a certain topic, whereas in the group visits we were able to learn about other people's children. Other people told me what their children were like or they introduced me to other things in society [libraries and toy library]. (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

I think it is not much different [group meetings and home visits]. Meeting other people [in group meetings] was more fun in that way [than home visits], but it is convenient for the Home Tutor to come here [mother's flat]. (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

However, ten parents did express a preference. Seven preferred home visits and gave varied reasons. Some of their comments were couched in terms of difficulties with group meetings. These included that they found them too difficult to attend, felt awkward in group sessions, and had a language problem in groups. Positive reasons for preferring home visiting were that they were able to organise home visits at a more convenient time than group meetings, preferred their one to one nature, and were not embarrassed by their mistakes.

The parent who said it was too difficult to attend group meetings lived in a neighbouring suburb, did not have access to a car, and had two children under four. She only attended only two meetings. She commented as follows.

It is a big difference when you have to take the children and go there, and move everything. When somebody comes [to your] home it helps you. (Somali-speaking mother)

Three parents said they preferred group meetings on the basis that they were more interesting, provided more than the specific lesson material, and provided child care for a younger child so the mother could concentrate and learn more about child development.

The mother who found the group meeting more interesting explained.

I guess I found the group more interesting because you'd get different opinions from mothers or fathers who were doing the program. You know that you can ask questions and we'd all have a say of what we thought.

8.2.8 In-house training of Home Tutors

The following description and analysis of in-house training is based on attendance by the researcher at 10 sessions with Home Tutors and the third Coordinator over the two years of the program, as well as information which emerged in interviews with staff.

Home Tutors attended a weekly training session with the Coordinator. The Coordinator reported that the main focus of these sessions was to review and practise the HIPPY lesson for the week ahead. Other items discussed included employment and administrative issues and sometimes sessions included guests with an interest in the program. The usual pattern, as observed by the researcher, was to spend the first part of the session on the lessons for children enrolled in the first year of the program followed by the lessons for children enrolled in the second year. In the first year of this study, the training involved the second year of lessons for the first intake of families and the first year for the second intake. In the second year of this study, it involved the second year lessons for the second intake of families and the first year for the third intake. The researcher usually only attended the session relevant to the second intake.

The Somali-speaking Home Tutor did not initially attend these group in-service training sessions. This was because this Home Tutor was teaching parents a different lesson each week to that being taught by other Home Tutors, as the program for the Somali-speaking families commenced in August, 1999, rather than in March 1999. Instead, the Coordinator provided an individual training session for the Somali-speaking Home Tutor. In the second year the third Coordinator included the Somali-speaking Home Tutor in the weekly group Home Tutor in-house training sessions, as well as providing some additional individual training. This was on the basis that she felt that the Tutor was missing out on the value of being connected with the other Home Tutors.

These weekly training sessions included coverage of the program elements identified in an earlier discussion of the HIPPY model (Section 4.3), such as the teaching of a range of concepts and encouraging children's learning and confidence in themselves as learners. They also covered other issues discussed in this Chapter, such as language and culture. The issues noted by the researcher in observations of the sessions are discussed below in terms of (a) the weekly lesson, (b) adapting the lesson content, (c) using local materials, (d) role play, (e) language, (f) culture, (g) checking children's progress and parental difficulties, (h) dealing with mistakes, (i) learning concepts and skills, (j) unfamiliar words, (k) repetition, and (l) pronunciation and expressive reading. Other issues discussed are: group versus individual training of Home Tutors, parent-child interaction outside normal lesson times, and other benefits for Home Tutors.

The researcher observed a strong sense of camaraderie amongst the Home Tutors and the Coordinator, often a sense of fun, and also a sense of belonging to something worthwhile. It is easy to understand how this sense of purpose and enjoyment might have positive effects on the way the Home Tutor practiced the lessons with the parents.

8.2.8.1 Structure of the weekly lesson and the training

The focus of each session was on the lesson that Home Tutors needed to role play for the next week with parents, when the Coordinator and Home Tutors took turns to play the role of parent and child. This simple focus on the weekly task appeared to provide the basis for quickly integrating new Home Tutors into the program. In the way the training was organised in the program model a Home Tutor could begin training one week and commence delivery the next, though more training was usually provided.

In each session, the group used the Activity Sheets as the guide to delivery of the lesson. The Coordinator made the point in a number of the sessions observed by the researcher that Home Tutors should use the wording in the Activity Sheets. For example in one session (Week 18, first year of the program), the Hmong and Turkish-speaking Home Tutors were respectively taking the role of child and parent. In an exercise in which the child's palm is touched by a crayon and a sharpened pencil, the question to be asked by the parent of the child was *'which hurts, the pencil or the crayon'*. Instead, the Turkish-speaking Home Tutor paraphrased this in a different way whereby the meaning was less clear. The Coordinator guided *'We say exactly what is on the sheet'*.

8.2.8.2 Adapting the lesson content

There were a number of adaptations of the material provided in the activity sheet made by the Coordinator. These mainly involved relatively minor word changes. In one exercise (Week 18, first year of the program) there is a picture of an older woman with a walking stick with the caption *'grandma is looking for her cane'* (as part of teaching spatial concepts). The Coordinator recommended that Home Tutors say to parents *'In Israel, many families are extended and have older relatives with canes. Ask parents what other examples they can think of'*.

In another exercise (Week 12, first year of the program), there was a written reference to *'preschools'* in the activity sheet. One of the Home Tutors suggested *'We might use 'kinder''*. (In research interviews with parents, the word 'kinder' was commonly used for preschools, as an abbreviation of 'kindergarten', which is the official term used in Victoria for preschool).

In a third exercise (Week 24, first year of the program) there was a sentence on the activity sheet (as part of a discussion of a story) as follows: *'Yes it is strange to see ducks crossing on the crosswalk'*. The Coordinator commented: *'We don't use 'crosswalk'*. In the ensuing discussion it was agreed to change the sentence to *'Yes, it is strange to see ducks walking on a crossing'*. The Home Tutors made the wording change on their copy of the activity sheet.

In another exercise using different shapes (week 12, first year of the program), there was a line on the activity sheet, which read *'look for more stars'*. The Coordinator commented: *'This is confusing as the child is only asked to look, move on to the next question'*. The next question required the child to complete a task: *'find a yellow star'*. In the same exercise there was an instruction for the child to *'stack the stars on this star'*. One Home Tutor expressed her concern that the child would not understand the word *'stack'*. The Coordinator suggested that they change the wording to *'put all the'* and also that there is a phrase *'on top of'* which is missing. The revised sentence then read: *'Put all the stars on top of this star'*.

On one occasion, there was an error in the wording of a sentence on an activity sheet *'Even if it was hard she give up'* should have read *'... Even if it was hard she would not give up'*. The Coordinator said to the Home Tutors that they needed *to 'Change this on the parent training sheet'*.

There were also a number of occasions when the Coordinator encouraged the Home Tutors to suggest additional activities for children, using the materials provided. In one exercise (Week 24, first year of the program), children had to cut out pictures of ducks and place them in the bigger picture. The Coordinator said *'What else might you do? You might do a counting exercise'*. The Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor then said *'Some children ask how many [ducks]'*?

8.2.8.3   Using local materials

Some of the materials, such as cut out shapes, were provided in the materials purchased from HIPPY in the United States. However, other materials used were those either available in the families' home or inexpensive materials which can be purchased locally.

In one exercise (Week 12, first year of the program), the child had to discriminate between containers which contain food and those that do not, and similarly containers that hold water and those that do not. In discussing which containers to use, the Coordinator said *'We have some cans in store, but most of the things should be got from home. Think of the families you work with. Try to get the mothers to use things in their own home'*.

In helping children to understand grid shapes, there was an exercise (Week 18, first year of the program) asking the child to place short sticks along different lines of a given shape, for example in the shape of the square. The Coordinator told the Home Tutors to use the icy pole sticks provided, and for the shorter lines to break the icy pole sticks in half.

8.2.8.4   Role play

The focus in the training sessions was on role playing the material in the most effective way. It was the central method used in all training sessions attended by the researcher and, reportedly, in all others. When there was a discussion on how to present material this was followed by role playing of how to do it. An example is provided.

In one session (Week 12, first year of the program) the question to the child on the Activity Sheet was *'What treasure would you want to find in the brown bag'*?, with the further instruction to the parent to *'Write down the child's answer'*. The Home Tutor playing the role of the child did not know how to respond to this question. The Coordinator said that *'Role play is a method of engaging the child'*. She went on to say that if the child did not respond you could ask *'Would you like lollies? Then write down what the child says'*. (The word 'lollies' was used as a way of prompting the child to further thought, rather than as a reward, as no lollies were provided as part of the exercise).

8.2.8.5   Language in the training

The training sessions observed by the researcher were conducted in English, and this was the usual practice. The issue of language was discussed on a number of occasions, with the Coordinator encouraging Home Tutors to combine English and their families' home language in a way that parents could understand. It was pointed out that it was acceptable for the home visits to be conducted in the home language. On a number of occasions the Coordinator expressed an interest in the different languages by asking Home Tutors for the equivalent of an English word in their own first language. She would then repeat these words, attempting to memorise them.

One exercise illustrates the difficulties of doing the lesson material with the parent totally in the home language. The exercise (Week 24, first year of the program) involved rhyming words such as *'fish'* and *'dish'*, as part of a *'same and different'* exercise, where the point was being made that rhyming words are different even though they sound similar. The exercise would lose its meaning if translated into another language, where the translated words would not rhyme. The Coordinator asked *'Would parents be able to say these words'*? The Home Tutors all said *'Yes'*.

8.2.8.6   Culture

On a number of occasions, the Coordinator asked Home Tutors whether there were any cultural sensitivity which might affect an aspect of the lesson. For example, in a discussion of a counting exercise which involved the pointing of fingers, the Coordinator asked the Home Tutors if pointing was considered rude in their cultures. They all said it was and this was

removed from the exercise. On a number of occasions the Coordinator asked whether something in a story would be familiar to families, given their different cultural backgrounds, and whether there was some alteration that would make it easier for them to understand. Home Tutors noted any changes on their copy of the activity sheet. The issue of adaptation of this implementation of HIPPY to respond to cultural differences is reported on in Section 8.2.6 above.

8.2.8.7   Checking children's progress and any parental difficulties

The way the program is delivered limited the contact the Coordinator had with parents and children, accentuated in this case because of the third Coordinator's lack of involvement in recruitment of families. Home Tutors also have limited contact with the children in terms of program implementation, except in a small number of instances where Home Tutors deviated from the ideal program model and taught children directly. However, in the training sessions attended by the researcher, the Coordinator maintained a focus on children's and parents' experience of the program. The following examples provide illustrations of this.

In one session (Week 16, first year of the program), the Coordinator asked the Home Tutors what parents had said about how children liked the lessons. Some parents had said that children liked the lessons, some found the tasks too easy and some liked gluing things. In another session (Week 18, first year of the program), the Coordinator described an exercise where children were asked to identify a number of shapes, such as circles, squares and stars, and then colour them in, in three different colours. She asked *'Are any of your children not able to do it'*. The Home Tutors replied *'No'* and one added that *'They do it easy'*.

In another exercise (Week 24, first year of the program), the Coordinator asked Home Tutors how the children were progressing with tracing the outline of figures (in this case a car and a teddy bear). One of the Home Tutors said *'They are all doing very well'*. The other Home Tutors nodded their heads in agreement. In the same lesson, in an exercise where children had to trace the outlines of a set of clothes (with their finger), the Coordinator further explored this issue. She asked *'Are most able to follow the lines or are they going outside?'* One Home Tutor said *'Some outside'*. The Home Tutors then agreed that parents had told them that most children were able to trace on the line.

It was also observed by the researcher to be a common practice that, when working through the lesson material with Home Tutors, the Coordinator would raise concerns about children's understanding of a word or phrase in the activity sheet. Some examples were provided in Section 8.2.8.2 above.

On other occasions, the Coordinator checked on whether parents were having difficulties with any particular type of exercise. For example, in an exercise in which a picture had to be cut

into pieces and reconstructed, the Coordinator asked *'Are most of your parents able to do these ones'?* The Home Tutors replied *'Yes'*.

8.2.8.8   Dealing with mistakes

Another approach, presented in the Coordinator's manual (Lombard et al., 1999), and observed by the researcher on five occasions in training sessions, was for the Coordinator to initiate a role play of the child giving a wrong answer to a question. She would usually ask the Home Tutor who was playing the child to deliberately make a mistake and then the group would practice and discuss the correct responses. Two examples illustrate this process.

In one session (Week 16, first year of the program), there was a game of concentration in which pairs of the same card needed to be matched, where a group of cards were placed face down and then turned over. The Coordinator said *"Do not say 'no' when the child makes a mistake. Help the child to work out on the right answer"*. The group went on to discuss alternative responses to saying *'No'*, such as *'Do these two look the same'? 'Are they different'*?

On another occasion (Week 12, first year of the program), the exercise involved a sheet of paper with a series of different shaped blocks set in a larger square. Children had to cut out pictures of different size blocks at the bottom of the sheet and then match these with the picture of blocks set within the square. The Coordinator said *'What do you do when the child places them in the wrong place?* She went on to say that Home Tutors should ask *'same and different' and 'bigger or smaller' [questions]*. Members of the group then role played this approach.

8.2.8.9   Highlighting learning concepts and skills

It was observed by the researcher to be a common practice of the Coordinator to point out to Home Tutors the particular concepts or skills which were being taught to the children as part of a particular exercise. The series of examples of this process given below relate to spatial concepts, sorting, visual discrimination, hand eye coordination, logical thinking, counting, recall (memory), hand eye coordination, fine motor skills, recognising the human figure, auditory discrimination, new words and comprehension.

a) In one lesson (Week 18, first year of the program); the group role played an activity which involved hiding an object while the child has his hands over his eyes. Parent and child then reverse roles with the child hiding the object. The Coordinator commented *'Children like this because they do it, they are in control, and they do what we do to them. This [exercise] teaches spatial concepts'*.

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b) In an exercise (Week 24, first year of the program) in which children have to cut out pictures of six animals and sort them into three pairs (two dogs, two rabbits and two chickens), the Coordinator explained *The children are learning sorting and visual discrimination'*.

c) In one exercise (Week 12, first year of the program), there was a short board game where children spin a spinner then move the indicated number of spaces in an eight places game. There are pictures on each place with items that children could be expected to understand (for example, a father reading to his son who is sitting on his lap, a telephone and a television set). The Coordinator asked *'What kind of learning'?* The Home tutors identified *'counting', 'recall' and 'on top of'.* The Coordinator added *'hand eye coordination'*.

d) When cutting out a child's figure (Week 12, first year of the program), the Coordinator asked *'What skills is the child learning that will be helpful at school?* She then went on to identify *'recognising human figures, which pieces fit together, and hand eye coordination through cutting'*.

e) In this exercise (Week 24, first year of the program) children were asked to sort out pictures of animals according to whether they are eating or sleeping. The Coordinator said *'This is about logical thinking'*.

f) In another exercise (Week 12, first year of the program), Home Tutors were provided with leaves and the group discussed ways that these can be distinguished from each other. One of the Home Tutors divided her leaves into big and small ones. The Coordinator then asked whether there are any other ways of dividing the leaves, stating that there were *'no right answers'.* She suggested *'colour'* as another way. One Home Tutor suggested *'weight'.* The Coordinator responded that children were unlikely to do this as most leaves were light. The Home Tutor then clarified that she was referring to stones (which the group was sorting earlier in the exercise). The Coordinator commented that it is easy to *'discriminate between stones and leaves by touch and size.*

g) In the discussion of a story book (Week 9, second year of the program), the Coordinator asked Home Tutors to *'highlight new words on the activity sheet or words we want parents to use in new ways'.* The Coordinator asked in relation to the story *'What are the children learning"?* She then answered her own question, saying *'comprehension...it is also good for the child's imagination'*.

h) Another exercise (Week 2, year one of the program) involved playing a game called *'finish my rhyme'.* The Coordinator said *'This is about auditory discrimination skills. Tell the parents that'.* In a later exercise from the same training session, the Coordinator asked *'What are they learning'?* One of the Home Tutors responded, saying *'auditory discrimination'.* The Coordinator then remarked *'Rhyming words are very good for practising this'*.

8.2.8.10 Pronunciation and expressive reading

In reading stories, the Coordinator corrected pronunciation of English words by Home Tutors, which they would then practice aloud. In one session the Coordinator emphasised the importance of expressive reading and modelled it (Week 24, first year of the program). The Coordinator said *'Show lots of expression. How you read to the parents is how parents read to the child; the more expression, the more the child will get out of it'.*

8.2.8.11 Unfamiliar words

In the course of the training session, words were sometimes identified that Home Tutors did not know and that parents or children might not know. For example, in one exercise, the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor did not know what a *'toffee apple'* was (an apple coated with clear sugary syrup, on a stick). This was explained to the Home Tutors and the researcher later heard the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor explain the meaning to a parent in a Home Tutor-parent training session. In another exercise the word *'hen'* is used. The suggestion from a Home Tutor was that the children were more likely to know the word *'chicken'*, so this was used instead.

On another occasion the word 'unusually' was introduced as part of an exercise (Week 9, second year of the program). The Coordinator said *'As this is a new word, say it slowly'.*

8.2.8.12 Repetition

The Coordinator identified to Home Tutors the value of repetition to aid children's learning. This included several examples already discussed, including the approach of giving children incorrect responses on a number of occasions, repeated identification by the Coordinator of the skills that are being taught and repetition of unfamiliar words. Another example which illustrates this process was an exercise in which a girl called Rita walked down five different kinds of paths. The Coordinator advised *'Get the child to tell the parent which paths Rita is on, on several occasions'.*

8.2.8.13 Parent-child interaction outside lesson times

Home tutors were also encouraged to suggest to parents that they do activities outside the normal lesson time. For example, in an exercise involving a woman hiding a broom to identify the concept of 'behind' (Week 24, first year of the program), the Coordinator said *'remind parents to use this one any time during the day'.*

8.2.8.14 Group in-house training contrasted with supervisory sessions

Towards the end of the first year, the third Coordinator introduced monthly supervision sessions for Home Tutors, in addition to the in-house training sessions. These supervision sessions are part of standard operating procedure in the Coordinator's Manual (Lombard et al., 1999) and the Coordinator became aware in her initial discussion with Home Tutors (towards the end of the first half of the year) that they had not yet been introduced into the program in Australia. The Coordinator reported that Home Tutors expressed an interest in having these sessions. These were organised as a mix of both individual and group sessions.

In contrast to the weekly training sessions, these sessions focused on difficulties and issues for individual Home Tutors in carrying out the program, rather than in learning the weekly lesson material. The Coordinator commented upon this difference in her second research interview.

> *What emerged was more about the personal impact of aspects of the program and stories about some of the families. They wouldn't ask me what to do but they just wanted me to know.*

The Coordinator also noted that there was positive feedback from the Home Tutors on the group supervisory sessions. The Home Tutors were reassured that, regardless of their language group, they all experienced similar frustrations, such as parents being late for group meetings or not being home for a prearranged home visit. She commented that this was part of realising that the problem was not due to any inadequacy of the individual Home Tutors, but a common problem they could work on together.

8.2.9 Completing the program

Presented below are parental views on completing their participation in the program. It was felt that this provided an important point of reflection for what the program had meant to them.

8.2.9.1 Parents leaving the program after one year

The parents of the 13 children who attended the program in Fitzroy and left the program after the first year were asked why they had left and how they felt about having left.

One parent said she left the program because of the child's lengthy travelling time to school; she left 6.45am, returned between 5 to 5.30pm, when she was too tired even to complete homework. Another parent stated that TAFE English courses and employment made her too busy. A major reason for another parent was that she moved a considerable distance away, so she

could not get the lessons in the second year. The mother added that she felt guilty about not continuing.

Another woman with a younger child (18 months old) experienced further difficulty when she broke her arm. She added that she regretted leaving the program as saw her son's *'love of learning die'* when he stopped doing HIPPY. In one family, the mother and child were victims of domestic violence and moved on a number of occasions. The program lost contact with the family, as did the researcher and the child's initial school. Yet another mother (with her son), ceased to visit her sister on weekends. The sister (the child's aunt) had provided the lesson.

Of the four Hmong-speaking families interviewed, two parents said they would have liked to have continued into the second year, but no Hmong-speaking Home Tutor was available. One parent gave a combination of reasons, namely that it stopped when she had a baby and that it was not worth continuing to work in her role as a Hmong-speaking Home Tutor with so few families, and there was no other Home Tutor offered in second year. For the other Hmong-speaking parent the main reason given was that no Home Tutor was offered. She said that she would have preferred an English-speaking Home Tutor who would do the lessons directly with her child, but not at her home as she had too many children there. The researcher followed up this issue with the program Coordinator who said that she had believed that this family would only continue in the second year of the program with a Hmong-speaking Home Tutor.

The parent of twins gave two reasons for ceasing participation. She said she was very busy looking for part-time work and she saw the purpose of HIPPY as preparing her children for school which it had done successfully. Finally, another parent said she always saw HIPPY as a program to prepare her child for school which she said it had done, with her child settled in school. The mother had also completed the first year of program only with her younger child as part of the first intake of families. The mother said she was also busy with paid work.

The Turkish-speaking Home Tutor commented that when one of the Turkish women left the program this was a factor in the other two leaving.

In summary, parents reported a complex range of reasons for not continuing with the program into the second year. These included being too busy because of younger children, English classes or paid work; seeing the second year of the program as less crucial for school; difficulties in remaining involved after moving our of the local area; not being offered a Home Tutor in their own language; family violence and related accommodation moves which meant losing contact with the program; and long travelling times for the child to attend school leaving the child too tired to complete the HIPPY lessons.

8.2.9.2   Parents' comments on completing the program

The parents of the other 20 children who completed as much of the program as they were offered were similarly asked their feelings on completing the program.

Parents were evenly divided upon the issue of whether the program was finishing at the right point of time, or whether it was going to leave a gap in the activities they could do with their children.

Parents who felt that the program was the right length of time thought that their children would have more homework at school once HIPPY was over, and the program had achieved its purpose of preparation of the child for school. The following three comments illustrate the views of parents who felt the program was the right length of time.

> *I find that two years is enough, because the HIPPY program prepares my child for Prep [Grade] and she has got some kind of boost [at school], which helps with her learning ...* (Vietnamese-speaking father)

> *My child will be in Grade 1 soon and I think it is a good time that the program is finished. Because when he is in Grade 1 there will be more school work for him and more demand.* (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

> *My child has grown out of needing it this year (2001). When they are at kinder[garten] and Prep [Grade] they need it.* (Somali-speaking mother)

The following comments illustrate the concerns of parents who felt that completing HIPPY left a gap in their lives, in terms of missing learning English and having to organise other things to do with their children.

> *I will have nothing to do with my son, so I need to find something to spend time on every night. I need to start thinking about finding something.* (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

> *I feel sad, I want the program to continue. I will teach him some things to replace the program, because I can see that his direction is going upwards and I don't want to stop the momentum. I will get some books to teach him maths and to teach him English.* (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

> *Well I think there would be a difference because the [home] work would not be done as systematically as when we have got the program and I wouldn't be spending as much*

time with [daughter's name], with homework, because I might not be able to understand what the work is involved and that's why I wouldn't be involved as much. (Cantonese-speaking parent)

8.2.10 Experience of first and second years of the program

HIPPY was designed in Israel as a preschool program to target parental educational expectations for children approximately of four and five years. In Australia (and New Zealand) this period includes the first year of school. Therefore there is an interest in any positive or negative features of this noted by participants.

The third HIPPY Coordinator explained that one of the debates when she attended a HIPPY forum in New Zealand was whether the program should be shorter on the basis that it was designed as a preschool program. She commented.

At the New Zealand Conference the majority of Coordinators were saying that that Year 5 [second year of the program] is a bit boring and [first Hmong-speaking Home Tutor's name) said the same thing. It's Year 4 [first year of the program] where all the concepts are introduced and the range of activities is a lot more extensive and so children are doing different things every week. Whereas in Year 5 there are some activities that are repeated over and over again ... the Year 5 tutors [Home tutors] were saying: 'yes, it is a bit repetitive'. There was a very long discussion in New Zealand about whether the program should be reduced to 18 months. Other people said we should have two groups and allow one group to do two lessons per week to keep moving on up, whilst the other group stays in the same HIPPY structure in terms of time.

The parents of 20 children who were involved in HIPPY during their child's first year of compulsory schooling were asked in the research interview about any differences between the first and second year of the program. There was a follow up question about any clash between doing HIPPY and the child completing any school homework. This was partly a means for discussion of the program in more detail. A broader research interest was in the parents' comments on the implications of running a program, designed as a preschool program, in the first year of compulsory schooling.

The question about any differences between the first and second year of the program was less relevant to the seven Somali-speaking families as they undertook most of the program in the second year and therefore had little basis for comparison. Only two of these parents commented. One said that it became increasingly difficult to do the program in the second year because her child had long travelling times to and from school (similar to the other parent who attended

HIPPY in the Fitzroy location and who withdrew from the program in the second year). The other comment was from the third Somali-speaking Home Tutor, who said that the materials became too easy because they were designed for younger children.

Of the 13 families who completed the two years of the program, most (10) felt there was a difference between the first and second year of the program, whilst 3 felt there was no difference. Four parents said the material was too easy in the second year and 2 of these also commented that the material was too difficult in the first year. One of these parents added that her child was less interested, probably because of school, while another added that although the material was too easy her son was not bored. The seven other responses emphasised contextual factors rather than the relation of the materials to the child's development. Three of these parents said that it was harder to deliver the program in the second year; two said this was because of their child's homework; whilst another parent said that her son found it challenging to learn the alphabet. This last mother was also doing the first year of the program with her four-year-old which made it more stressful for her. Three further parents said the material was more relevant in the second year because it was similar to what the child was learning at school. One of these parents added that her child was equally enthusiastic about doing HIPPY in both years.

Parents were asked whether homework clashed with HIPPY lessons in the second year of the program. No parent felt that homework interfered in a major way with the HIPPY lesson. Some parents said that their child had little or no homework, so it was not an issue. Others said that their children did have homework, but they dealt with it by setting different times for homework and the HIPPY lesson or delaying the HIPPY lesson to the next day. One parent said her child had lost some of her interest in doing the lessons because she had homework from school, but regained her enthusiasm when she was told that this was the last year in which she would be able to do HIPPY.

The following comments illustrate parents' views on the impact of children's homework for the HIPPY lessons.

> *Of course it is more difficult [to do the HIPPY lessons] because she has a reader, a book that she brings home from school that she has to read. There is no difference [in doing HIPPY]. I know her English isn't good so I push her a lot.* (Cantonese-speaking parent)

> *There is no problem because I set the [study] program for my children at 4.00 pm when they come home from school. They have to start doing their homework. He [son] does his homework and then HIPPY.* (Vietnamese-speaking parent)

I don't think there is any problem with her doing the HIPPY program and her doing her homework because I am very flexible. I don't want to force her to do too much homework. If she has too much homework and she doesn't want to do homework that's OK. So the day she doesn't have any homework we do HIPPY. (Vietnamese-speaking father)

8.2.11 Localism in the program

Where parents lived in relation to where the program was offered emerged as an important issue at a number of levels. There were practical difficulties identified by the third Coordinator in managing the program at two locations. Home Tutors had difficulties in home visiting families in locations not close to where they themselves lived. These difficulties lead to the English-speaking Home Tutor resigning halfway through the second year of the program. It also led to the second Somali Home Tutor withdrawing from working with families in the North Melbourne area. Distance also caused difficulties for the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor, who commented as follows.

Last year there was one family from Fitzroy and they moved out to Richmond. I had to travel up there. My Coordinator told me: 'It's up to you if you want to travel there'. It's a bit far for me...Because she (mother) is so keen; she loves the program, so that is why I did my best to travel to her'.

Some parents found it difficult to attend group meetings when they were held outside their own local area. The Coordinator also identified distance as a problem and then extended it into considering the broader issue of the importance of localism to community development. She commented.

Practically, if someone isn't home, either it means the Home Tutor has to come to the office and hang around for an hour until the next home visit, or they have to make a decision to go home which might take them an hour and a half by public transport, or come in another day, which they probably won't do, so the chances of the family falling behind are greater. And it possibly has an effect upon whether the family will attend the next group meeting because they are not up to the same week. But also it gets back to this issue of connnectedness. So if the Home Tutor runs into the family [because she lives locally] when they are doing their shopping or picking up the children from school, there is a whole range of things to talk about... However, it's more than localism, we want the Home Tutor to be part of that community, because HIPPY is meant to be a long-term community development program, so we need to be looking at how the Home Tutor can be a vehicle or tool for developing that community... Now that is going to work best if the Home Tutor is part of that community and not someone from outside.

The most common relevant comment from parents related to the ease of attending group meetings within walking distance of where they lived (25 families). Three of the families, without motor vehicles, said that they would not have attended if they had been unable to walk to the meetings. Two other parents commented on a Home Tutor's unreliability in home visiting in the months prior to her resignation, which problem they ascribed to distance and travelling time.

There were families who were not living close to where the group meetings were held from the beginning of the program. Two of these five families only attended four meetings in North Melbourne between them and said that they only came when transport had been provided, because of the inconvenience. The other three families said they had cars and travelling into Fitzroy was not a problem, although location for two of these families presented a problem for their Home Tutor. Of the six families who moved away from the HIPPY area, four subsequently withdrew from the program. One ceased to come to the group meetings but drove to the Home Tutor's house for the individual lesson whilst the other family drove to Fitzroy for both the individual sessions (at her mother's home) and for the group meetings.

In brief, the program was best run in the one local area with Home Tutors and families living in close proximity to each other.

8.2.12 Researcher as participant observer

Three potential benefits of participant observation as a research method were identified in Section 7.2.3.1 above, namely a grounded understanding of the implementation through the researcher's long-term relationships with stakeholders, improved access to stakeholders for research purposes and as a form of data verification. It was also identified that it was important to understand any impact the researcher had on the program implementation itself. Ignoring the familiar was identified as a potential difficulty. These issues are discussed in turn.

As a reflection of the researcher, the value of participant observation was evident in interviews with stakeholders, such as parents and HIPPY staff, where it was possible to ground much of the discussion in events or comments directly known to the researcher. This allowed for more in-depth discussions of issues and at times lead to the identification of the issues themselves.

Two potential communication difficulties became evident, namely being English-speaking in a largely non-English speaking group of parents and being male in a predominately female implementation of HIPPY (staff and parents). Being English-speaking meant the researcher relied on formal interpreting services in research interviews with most of the parents and on the good will of Home Tutors on other occasions to provide explanations of what was

happening when participants spoke a language other then English (such as in group meetings of parents). The in-house training sessions were, however, conducted in English. It was also, from the researcher's observation, a normal practice by HIPPY staff in meetings to check that all participants understood what was being said, especially when participants were known to have difficulties with the languages being used. There were also often non-verbal cues to help the researcher to understand what was happening, such as Activity Sheets in English when the lessons were being role played. Being a male did not appear, from the perspective of HIPPY staff, to adversely influence the acceptability of the researcher as a participant observer, or to preclude his invitation into family homes.

Again, as a reflection of the researcher, the development of longer term relationships with parents increased the likelihood of obtaining interviews. The example of the four Hmong-speaking parents is provided below. The approach taken was to build a relationship of trust, by making initial contacts with parents through attendance at group meetings. As this was not possible with the Hmong-speaking group, where the parents had ceased to attend meetings, the researcher attended a day trip to the zoo with these families organised by the program. In comparing notes with the researcher for the first implementation of HIPPY in Australia (Grady, forthcoming), this appeared to have resulted in interviews with two parents who would otherwise have declined. As a form of data validation, the use of participant observation substantially increased the confidence in which conclusions could be made about program implementation. The highly, positive views of HIPPY staff and parents on the program in interviews with the researcher, for example, were confirmed in other contexts, such as discussions in parent groups, training sessions of HIPPY staff and in more informal gatherings of participants. Variations in how Home Tutors adapted delivery of the lessons in home visits and how parents then undertook the lesson with their child could be directly observed and understood in greater depth.

The researcher asked the third Coordinator of HIPPY for her observations of the impact of the researcher on the program. She said in her view it was positive, but minor, for families in the second implementation of HIPPY. She said that she could not identify any negative consequences for the program of the researcher's involvement. This appeared to be related to the careful way in which access to the program by the researcher was negotiated. This was on the explicit basis that the researcher's contact with Home Tutors, other parents and children should not have any adverse effects on program delivery. This had been a formal part of the initial negotiations with HIPPY staff to take part in the research.

The third Coordinator also said that the Home Tutors viewed the researcher's involvement in a positive light. This appeared to be related to the building of relationships over a period of time, initially through attendance at training sessions on a regular basis, and later in

research interviews and attendance at group meetings of parents. A point of potential conflict with Home Tutors was in gaining access to parents. Conflict was avoided by always asking and taking the advice of Home Tutors on how best to contact families.

The third Coordinator said that the research had added some status to the program for Home Tutors and parents, on the basis that resources were allocated through a university to evaluate the program. One of the Somali-speaking Home Tutors made this point explicitly with the families with whom she was working.

A potential influence on the program was the formal and informal feedback by the researcher to the third Coordinator, mostly in the second half of the program following observation of Home Tutor-parent and parent-child sessions and interviews with parents. This feedback was too late in the program to have lead to any significant program alteration for this second intake of families. The issues raised by the researcher, such as interference of younger children in program delivery, were ones of which the Coordinator was already aware. However she commented that because the feedback was in writing she had to report on how she had respond to the issues, which made the feedback more influential.

It has been noted in Section 8.2.3.3.3 that the researcher obtained brief responses from many of the parents in response to the interview question about their relationship with their Home Tutor. The question can be asked whether the lack of further probing by the researcher was an example of ignoring the familiar. It was certainly true that from observations of the program the researcher had built a picture of the nature of the relationships between Home Tutors and parents. As familiar territory there was, as a reflection of the researcher, a reduced drive to explore the issue further with parents. However, it was also partly the result of a conscious approach (outlined in Section 7.2.3.2) to conduct interviews so as to allow them to be as much interviewee-led as was consistent with the research purposes, through allowing parents to decide what they wanted to talk about. In relation to the minor responses of most parents to an interview question about the use of role play, an additional explanation was the delay between when the practice was introduced to parents and when they were asked about it (as noted in Section 8.2.6 above).

In summary, participant observation added depth in understanding program implementation and greater surety to the study's conclusions. It appeared to have a direct positive, but minor, impact on the program itself.

8.3   Concluding comment

This evaluation of the process of the second implementation of HIPPY in Australia revealed that it was not only well received by stakeholders, but that implementation of the main

elements of the standardised program was possible. The program was perceived by local providers of educational and other services to be relevant to the educational difficulties faced by children living locally, especially those from different language and cultural backgrounds. A number of these services also assisted in the recruitment of families into the program.

However, as noted in this Chapter, there were considerable detailed adaptations of the program to local circumstances, such as adaptations to the diverse languages and cultures of participating families. Other program implementation issues, such as resignation of the second HIPPY Coordinator, had a considerable impact on the program offered to families. An important organisational issue was the aid to recruitment of families into HIPPY because of the good reputation of the Brotherhood of St Laurence in the local community and its established networks with local providers of early childhood services.

The generally positive comments of parents on this implementation of HIPPY are viewed as a true indication of their views and experiences. This was supported by data collected (and presented) from interviews with other stakeholders and from participant observation of the program. Despite the positive views, a number of participants also articulated concerns as detailed in this Chapter.

The generally positive views of stakeholders and observations of program implementation might reasonably lead to an expectation that the program would have positive effects for children and parents. Data concerning the effects of this implementation of HIPPY are provided in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER 9

RESULTS: PROGRAM EFFECTS

The data presented in this chapter are concerned with the effects of the program on children and parents. As noted in Chapter 6, effects for children can be regarded as program outcomes, where the hypothesis being tested is that children's involvement in HIPPY will have lead to improvement in areas such as literacy abilities, and in school adjustment and performance more generally. This hypothesis is directly assessed through the comments of parents involved in HIPPY and a range of direct testing and teacher assessments, at two points in time, and involves the use of a Comparison Group. Further confirmation of evidence of program outcomes is sought through an analysis of parents' comments on the effects of the program on them. These effects are seen as intermediary between the program processes and outcomes which would be expected in a program that successfully improved children's scholastic progress.

9.1 Child outcomes

Child outcomes from program participation are presented in terms of parental assessment, direct researcher testing and teacher assessment.

9.1.1 Parental assessment of children's progress

Parents involved in providing the HIPPY lessons to their children were asked at the end of the two years of the program (towards the end of 2000 or early 2001) to describe what they believed their children had gained through the program. They were asked to rate their children's progress in the second year of schooling (the year after the completion of the two year HIPPY program) and to state whether they believed participation in HIPPY had assisted their children at school. Their comments in interviews were tape recorded verbatim and analysed and summarised as indicated in Section 7.3. The qualitative data are presented below in the following order: parents' assessments of what their children gained through HIPPY, of how their children were progressing at school in relation to other children, and then of the program's contribution to their children's progress at school.

9.1.1.1   What children gained

Parental comments are summarised in Table 13. As most parents made multiple comments, the number of responses exceeds the number of participants.

Table 13

Parental statements of gains made by children through HIPPY

Category of gains	Number of responses*
HIPPY materials/activities specific total	44
Colours, colouring in pictures	15
Identifying shapes (for example, circles and triangles)	7
Drawing	6
Using same and different (concepts)	4
Painting	3
Cutting out of shapes and figures	3
Spatial concepts (for example, behind and under)	2
Puzzles	1
Animal names	1
How to hold a pen	1
Patterns	1
Literacy related total	38
English	19
Reading	10
Writing	5
Comprehension of stories	3
Literacy	1
Orientation to learning total	20
Increased self confidence in learning	5
More interested in learning	3
Listens better	3
Improved memory	3
More inquisitive	1
Harder working, more patient	1
Able to concentrate	1
More interested in reading	1
Completes tasks	1
Does homework	1
Mathematics related total	5
Numbers	2
Counting	2
Mathematics	1
Other total	2
Lots of things	1
Well behaved, sits quietly	1
Total number of responses	109

* Number of children = 32, as one parent not available for interview

The three major categories in which parents identified gains for their children were in terms of skills involved in HIPPY activities, literacy-related gains (principally in English) and a more positive orientation to learning. Only five parents identified mathematics related activities.

The following quotations from parents provide examples of more wide-ranging comments on what their child had learnt in the program, including their child's learning of English.

> *Well, the drawings, how to paint and how to draw, how to cut things, reading because I was reading to him all the time, and the memorising. I read the books to him and he has to memorise sometimes. I say 'do you remember such and such' and he says 'yes I remember', and you have cards and you cover them and he has to match them, he was doing quite well with those.* (Spanish-speaking father)

> *I think my daughter has matured very well since she has started the program. She's better than other students. She's able to listen to the teacher, she's able to concentrate. She doesn't act like a baby, she's more prepared than other students, while others her age, under five years old, still you know they are attached to mothers and they feel emotional and cry. My daughter understands the value of education. She has strong passion to study.* (First Somali-speaking Home Tutor)

> *Well [HIPPY helped] with her language and her drawing. There was a continuation. She learnt English from the program and then she goes to school and speaks English and learns English there because we are not able to help her a lot at home [with English].* (Cantonese-speaking mother)

9.1.1.2   Children's progress at school

There were two types of complementary parental data on children's progress at school. These were a rating by HIPPY parents on how their children were progressing at school on a three-point scale and a commentary by them on how HIPPY had or had not assisted their children's progress.

9.1.1.2.1   Parental rating

When interviewed, HIPPY parents were asked: *'In comparison with other children, would you say that your child was doing worse than average, average or better than average'*. The results are presented in Table 14.

Table 14
Parental rating of children's progress at the end of the second year of schooling

Parental rating	Number of children*
Worse than average	2
Average	14
Better than average	8
Don't know	7
Not interviewed	1
Total	32**

* For the purpose of consistency, number of children is used rather than number of parents, as noted earlier they are slightly different numbers
** The parent of one child was not available for interview

Two-thirds of the children were, according to their parents, progressing at school at a level of average or better than average compared with other children. About one-third said they did not know.

Comments from parents indicated that their understanding of how their children were progressing educationally relied upon different sources. These included comparison with other children in their child's class (through discussions with the school teacher), with other children in HIPPY, with friends' children of the same age and with older siblings' progress at school.

An illustration of a parent's comparison of her older child's progress at school compared to her son who was enrolled in HIPPY was as follows.

> *I have two children and at the moment [older daughter's name] is enrolled in Grade four. When she was in Grade 1 she wasn't one of the good students. I had to work very hard with her, it made me very tired. I had to stop work so I could spend time in the evenings to help her... I also had to ask tutors to come to the house to teach her...But with [son's name] he has his lessons and he just needs to spend 15 to 20 minutes on the lessons [per day] and he can do them. He has a very solid foundation so that it will help him when he progresses further in the school...* (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

An illustration of a father comparing his child's progress with other children he knew was as follows.

I have noticed that my child has improved and that there is a gap in terms of improvement between my child and my friends' children who have not participated in the HIPPY program. (Vietnamese-speaking father)

The following comment is from a mother who said that her son was doing 'better than average'.

After HIPPY he is doing better at school, because I ask his teacher in the interview and he say 'yes, he's OK', the teacher say they have no concern about him, he knew his numbers at the beginning of the year, he could count to 20. (Vietnamese-speaking parent)

Two parents made the point that although their child was making average, or worse than average, progress at school, they believed that this progress was higher than it would otherwise have been without HIPPY. The following comment illustrates this.

*Well, considering that we were newcomers [to Australia] and we came from a non-English speaking background environment, at least she is compatible with the other children at school and she is not much worse than them, and that is a big relief to us. (*Cantonese-speaking mother)

9.1.1.2.2 Parental assessment of HIPPY's contribution

When subsequently asked directly whether they thought that HIPPY had influenced their children's progress at school, all but two parents said that the program had helped their child at school, with most (25 out of 29) saying that it had helped *'a lot.* The other four parents (out of 29) indicated that saying that *'a lot'* would overstate the influence of the program. One parent was unsure and the aunt who provided the program to her nephew did not know.

Parents were asked what it was about HIPPY that they thought had made this difference. Parents' responses emphasised the importance of children's familiarity with educational activities at school through their similarity to those provided in HIPPY, improved English and general cognitive gains. A small number of parents

identified what they saw as the long-term educational benefits of their children's participation in HIPPY. The following comments illustrate these themes.

One parent, who was also the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor, commented on the advantages for children doing HIPPY compared with not doing HIPPY.

With the kids who do not go to this program, I think they have difficulty understanding what the teacher wants them to do. To take a simple thing, if the teacher says 'can you draw this picture', it would take them a long time to understand. But with those who already go to the program, because they have already done most activities, they know what the teacher expects from them and they can do it quicker, they can understand more.

The following two comments emphasised how children were able to learn more quickly at school.

There were similar activities at school so they [what she learnt in HIPPY] helped her a lot. I believe that if she hadn't learnt these things beforehand she wouldn't have known them as quickly. (Turkish-speaking mother)

Things that he learnt in the [HIPPY] program helped him to observe quickly and understand quickly. (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

A third mother made the connections between HIPPY and learning more quickly at school and increased confidence and self-esteem.

I think that having spent time with me and learning things at home in the program, and then going to school, and then to be able to quickly understand what is going on at school, it let him feel more confident, more self esteem. He would be able to stand up and say: 'I know this and I know that' and he can speak up. (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

A number of parents saw their child's improved English as the key reason for their child doing better at school by the end of their first year of schooling.

It [HIPPY] just make her jump over the English barrier and then go into the mainstream with the other children. [Hmong-speaking mother]

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The [HIPPY] program has helped my child understand instructions at school. Because she's familiar with the learning environment she can listen to the teacher better... and she can take initiative in learning. I think my child settles better into the learning environment because of the things she learnt in HIPPY. Because at home we don't speak English and there's a lot of difference between the Chinese and English language. If she is going to a learning environment where everybody only speaks English, she might not be able to settle in very quickly, but with HIPPY, this has helped her a lot. (Cantonese-speaking mother)

In contrast, two of the Vietnamese-speaking parents saw general cognitive gains as more important than learning English, though parents' lack of English was still a concern for them. This viewpoint echoes the comments of early childhood educators, reported earlier, that children will be able to learn English adequately at school.

The most important thing is the knowledge that he receives and his awareness. It improves his brain. Whereas with English every child is the same, when they go to school they pick up English. (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

Because we only speak Vietnamese at home, we didn't think that she would be able to cope well at school. Even though she might not know it in English, she has the concept in Vietnamese and they will teach her English at school. So let's say 'the tiger', she know that it's a tiger, so she has the concept. (Vietnamese-speaking father, although the mother provided the lesson material to the child)

Two parents made comments about what they saw as the longer-term educational benefits of the program for their child.

Maybe it will help her because she had a good start [at school] on this program already. So it probably carries over to the later years. She will probably remember that when I was young I learnt the basic principles already. (Hmong-speaking mother)

I think it will help him [son] in the long-term, because he has the basic knowledge, with HIPPY, it provides the foundation for him. (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

9.1.2   Researcher testing and teacher assessment of children's abilities

To test the hypothesis that involvement in HIPPY led to children being more successful at school, assessments of children in HIPPY were compared with those of a matched Comparison Group. The data is reported in three parts. It begins with an examination of the degree of matching of the children in HIPPY and the Comparison Group. This is a prerequisite in attributing any differences between the two groups to the HIPPY intervention. This is followed by an analysis of the scores for the assessments used, principally between children in the HIPPY Group (HG) and Comparison Group (CG), to test whether children in HIPPY outperformed children in the Comparison Group. There is then an investigation of differences in scores among children in HIPPY according to their main patterns of participation in the program, outlined in the previous chapter, to test whether abilities as assessed varied with intensity of involvement in the program. Thirdly, there is an examination of whether any differences in scores between children in the HG and CG can be attributed to the HIPPY program.

The nine assessments (seven different research instruments) and the timing of their use are presented in Section 7.2.3.3 above, and a summary of these assessments are presented in Table 15 on page 169 below.

As planned, teacher assessments were sought at the same time as the direct testing of children, midway through the second year of the program and midway through the year following the completion of the two year program. Assessment of children occurred towards the middle of the year for both years and there was about 12 months between assessments. In practice, the assessments were collected within a three-month period in each year. Thus some children were tested slightly earlier than others. These assessments are discussed in more detail in Section 6.3.2.3.

9.1.2.1 Matching HIPPY and Comparison Group children and families

Differences between the HG and the CG were examined by calculating the chi

Table 15
Nine assessments of children in 2000 and 2001

Assessment tool	Administered by	Timing
FIRST ROUND ASSESSMENTS		
Who am I?	Researcher	mid 2000
The Literacy Baseline Test	Researcher	mid 2000
The Behavioural Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) rating scale	Classroom teacher	mid 2000
The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading	Classroom teacher	mid 2000
SECOND ROUND ASSESSMENTS		
The Primary Reading Test	Researcher	mid 2001
I can do maths …	Researcher	mid 2001
The Behavioural Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) rating scale	Classroom teacher	mid 2001
The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading	Classroom teacher	mid 2001
The Gumpel Readiness Inventory	Classroom teacher	mid 2001

square statistic for categorical data and conducting independent t tests for interval data on the following characteristics:

a) age of children in months;

b) gender of children;

c) education level of parents by year level completed;

d) coming from a non-English speaking background;

e) English ability of parents on a self, three-point, rating;

f) proportion of parents born in Australia and overseas;

g) length of residence in Australia in years for both the parent delivering HIPPY and the other parent in two-parent families;

h) number of children in families; and

i) being a sole parent or two-parent family.

There were no statistical differences between the two groups on any of these characteristics. There were, however, some differences in the ethnic composition. The characteristics of the two groups are compared in Tables 23, 24, 25 and 26 in Appendix VII.

The two groups of children were also compared on class size in the first and second years of compulsory schooling, using the independent samples t test. Children in the HIPPY group were in larger classes in the first year (a mean of 27 for children in HIPPY compared with a mean of 24 for the non-HIPPY group) with no statistically significant differences in class size between the two groups in the second year.

Measures of the developmental level of children in the two groups were limited to that provided through *Who Am I?* since the Brotherhood of St Laurence ethics process placed a restriction on the amount of time spent testing children. However, there were a number of indications that development for all children was in the normal range. All children attended four-year-old kindergarten and progressed to Prep Grade and then Grade 1. All participant children were able to comprehend the nature of the direct assessments of their abilities and to participate successfully in testing. In the researcher's two contacts with the school, few of these children were identified by their teachers as have any kind of learning difficulties. The exceptions are discussed below.

There were issues about the developmental level of four children. The parent of one of the children who completed two years of HIPPY raised concerns that her child was experiencing learning difficulties in the first year of school (a point also made by the child's teacher in Prep Grade), with these concerns lessened by the second year. This child was included in the present study. A child who completed some of the HIPPY materials was excluded from the present study on the basis of being about a year younger than the target age for the HIPPY program and attending four-year-old preschool in the second year of the program rather than the first. This child found most of the tasks in direct testing beyond his ability. Two potential participant children in the Comparison Group were excluded on the basis of having special learning needs, one identified in the first round of assessments and the other identified in the second round of assessments.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations in the matching process of the two groups. Children in the two groups attended different schools and different kindergartens. The effects on learning of these different experiences are not controlled for in this study. There was no testing of children's abilities prior to entering into HIPPY, with the first test of abilities being in the second year of the program (about halfway through the first year of schooling). This was not an initial design fault of the study, but the practical result of delayed access of the researcher to the HIPPPY

families related to changes in the HIPPY personnel. Such testing would have provided greater certainty about the degree of matching of the initial abilities of both sets of children.

At one level, the two groups can be said to have been well-matched, particularly in the important areas of age, gender, educational levels of parents, coming from a non-English speaking background, English ability of parents, length of residence of families in Australia, number of children in families and proportions of two-parent and sole parent families. At another level, there are some important caveats on the degree of this matching of the two groups, especially related to lack of pre-testing on IQ and the possible impacts of different learning environments in preschool and school. In essence, this means that some confidence can be had in comparing the abilities of the two groups as a measure of program outcomes. However, the study would not want to rely alone on this data alone.

9.1.2.2   Comparison of assessment scores

As outlined in Chapter 7, it was assumed that if the program had been effective for this intake of children into HIPPY they would score more highly than non-HIPPY children on the assessment measures used. Differences in scores between the two groups at the first and second round of assessments and in changes between these two points were therefore examined. Also examined was whether one or two years' participation in HIPPY was associated with differences in scores.

The statistical significance of any differences in scores between children in the HG and CG was tested, using the independent samples t test. The dependent variables were the scores on the assessments and the independent variable was group identity (Comparison Group or HIPPY Group). Table 16 on page 172 presents the results of these analyses, and indicates whether the assessment were conducted in the first year (2000), or second year (2001), of children's schooling.

With the exception of the Behavioural Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) rating scale, the assessments demonstrated consistently and significantly higher scores for children in the HG compared with children in the CG in both the first and second round of assessments, that is both during the second year of HIPPY and in the year after the conclusion of HIPPY.

9.1.2.3   Comparison of assessment scores with normative scores

Comparison of assessment scores with normative scores for Australian children are of interest in this study, as part of confirming the underlying rationale for provision of HIPPY, that is, educational under achievement, as well as for confirming the hypothesis that HIPPY improves children's educational achievement. Thus it would be expected that children in the Comparison Group who were selected on the basis of being educationally disadvantaged would have lower scores than those for children in studies which established Australian norms for the same assessments. Further, if HIPPY were an effective intervention it might be expected that children enrolled in HIPPY would have, following the intervention, scores close to the normative values. The scores on the assessments for children in the present study are compared with those in Australian studies in Table 17 on page 174. It is important to

Table 16

Comparison of mean scores on assessments administered

Assessment tool	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
FIRST ROUND ASSESSMENTS (2000)			
Who am I?	HG 33	34.0*	5.0
	CG 33	30.9	4.4
The Literacy Baseline Test	HG 33	18.6*	6.4
	CG 33	14.8	6.1
The Behavioural Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) rating scale	HG 33	53.1	11.4
	CG 33	57.0	12.5
The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading	HG 33	19.4*	7.9
	CG 33	13.2	8.2
SECOND ROUND ASSESSMENTS (2001)			
The Primary Reading Test	HG 32	35.8*	5.5
	CG 33	31.0	6.2
I can do maths ...	HG 32	19.2**	3.7
	CG 33	15.4	3.7
The Behavioural Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) rating scale	HG 32	59.5	11.1
	CG 33	54.5	9.7
The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading	HG 32	31.2*	9.1
	CG 33	25.4	8.1
The Gumpel Readiness Inventory	HG 32	12.2*	4.1
	CG 33	10.2	3.8

* p<.05 ** p<.01

note that the sample size is too small in the Australian validation of the Gumpel Readiness Inventory (115 children) to claim that the scores represent normative scores for Australian children.

In the first round of assessments, the two trends for children in the HG were to either score close to the Australian study scores (2 out of 4 measures) or significantly below (2 out of 4). The main trend for children in the CG was to perform significantly below the normative scores (3 out of 4). In the second round of assessments the main trend was for children in the HG to perform close to the Australian study scores (4 out of 5) and for children in the CG to perform significantly below (4 out of 5).

9.1.2.4 Differences in scores between first and second round assessments

In terms of the study's hypothesis outlined in the study plan, the effectiveness of the program would be indicated by either the maintenance or widening of the differences in scores between children in the HG and CG, between the first and second round. Thus maintenance of higher scores for children in the HG would indicate that the positive effects of the intervention were being maintained. Larger differences in the second round of assessments would indicate an increasing impact of the program.

Differences between the two groups in degree of change over time were examined in terms of differences in scores obtained in the first and second round. The assessments used were the researcher's testing of children's literacy abilities, the *Literacy Baseline Test* and the *Primary Reading Test*, the two teacher assessments at both points of time, the *ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading,* and the *BASE rating scale.*

Three new variables were calculated for the three matched pairs of assessments, representing the difference in scores between the first and second round. These formed the new dependent variables, while the independent variable was group identity (CG or HG). Table 18 on page 175 presents the results of the independent samples t tests in respect of each dependent variable.

Table 18 demonstrates that no significant differences emerged for the two groups in respect of the two sets of literacy-based measures. However, there was a significant change in academic self esteem for children, with scores for children in the HG increasing and those for children in the CG decreasing.

Table 17

Comparison of mean scores on nine assessments with scores from other Australian studies (AS)+

Assessment tool	Age on assessment	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
FIRST ROUND ASSESSMENTS				
Who am I?	5:8	HG 33	34.0	5.0
	5:6	CG 33***	30.9	4.4
	5:11	AS 241	33.7	4.4
The Literacy Baseline Test	5:8	HG 33***	18.6	6.4
	5:6	CG 33***	14.8	6.1
	5:9	AS 898	27.5	7.8
The Behavioural Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) rating scale	5:8	HG 33	53.1	11.4
	5:6	CG 33	57.0	12.5
	MA++	AS 1097	56.7	11.7
The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading	5:8	HG 33***	19.4	7.9
	5:6	CG 33***	13.2	8.2
	6:2	AS 1240	26.5	8.3
SECOND ROUND ASSESSMENTS				
The Primary Reading Test	6:7	HG 32	35.8	5.5
	6:6	CG 33*	31.0	6.2
	6:2-6.7	AS 312	35.0	8.6
I can do maths …	6:7	HG 32	19.2	3.7
	6:6	CG 33***	15.4	3.7
	6:9	AS 910	20.4	3.6
The Behavioural Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) rating scale	6:7	HG 32	59.5	11.1
	6:6	CG 33	54.5	9.7
	MA++	AS 1066	57.6	11.7
The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading	6:7	HG 32***	31.2	9.1
	6:6	CG 33***	25.4	8.1
	7:2	AS 1067	35.7	8.2
The Gumpel Readiness Inventory	6:7	HG 32	12.2	4.1
	6:6	CG 33	10.2*	3.8
	6:7	AS 115	11.8	4.4

*p< .05 *** p<.001

+ The sources for the Australian study scores are as follows: Who am I? (deLemos & Doig, 1999), The Literacy Baseline Test (deLemos, 2000), The Behavioural Academic Self-Esteem (BASE) rating scale (de lemos, 1999), The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading (ACER unpublished data), The Primary Reading Test (deLemos, 1996) I can do maths … (Doig & DeLemos, 2000), The Gumpel Readiness Inventory (Moussa, Fan, & Dean, 1999). ++ Multi-ages

Table 18

Comparison of differences in the mean scores on three sets of matched measures, between the first and second round

Matched assessment tools	Number	Mean difference in scores between first and second round	Standard Deviation
The Literacy Baseline Test (first round) and Primary Reading Test (second round)	HG 33 CG 33	25.1* 25.6*	12.9 16.1
The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading (first round)	HG 33 CG 33	11.5 12.2	9.4 6.8
The Behavioural Academic Self-esteem (BASE) rating scale (first and second round)	HG 33 CG 33	+5.7** -2.4**	8.7 12.0

* scores converted to a percentage for purposes of comparison
** $p< .05$,
'+' and '−' signs indicate that the differences in the scores are in different directions, with scores increasing for children in the HG and decreasing for children in the CG

9.1.2.5 Assessment scores and different patterns of participation in HIPPY

In Chapter 8 different patterns of participation were noted in HIPPY (Section 8.2.2.1). The simplest one related to whether children completed one (20 children) or two years (13 children) of the program. It was of interest to extend the planned data analysis to compare outcomes for these two sub-groups. This was because higher scores for children completing two years of the program than for children completing one year of the program, would add weight, other things being equal, to the finding that HIPPY was associated with improved educational performance. This would be on the basis that those children who participated longer would have improved educational performance. On the other hand, no differences in scores between the groups would lend support to the view that HIPPY, designed as preschool program, would be as effective as a one-year preschool program in Australia.

9.1.2.5.1 One versus two years of participation

Set out in Table 19 on page 176 are the results of the analysis of the scores on the various child outcome assessments for children in the HG and CG. ANOVA was implemented, together with post hoc tests using the Scheffe statistic, to assess the direction of any significant relationships. Australian study scores for each of these

assessments, previously presented in Table 17 above, are also included in Table 19 for comparison purposes.

Table 19

Comparison of mean scores on nine assessments according to one and two year patterns of participation in HIPPY and with normative scores from other Australian studies (AS)+

Assessment tool	Number		Mean	Significantly different Relationships++	Standard Deviation
FIRST ROUND ASSESSMENTS					
Who am I?	1.HG two years	13	36.5	1-3**	6.3
	2.HG one year	20	32.5		3.3
	3.CG	33	30.9		4.4
	AS	241	33.7	1* 3***	4.4
The Literacy Baseline Test	1.HG two years	13	21.8	1-3**	6.9
	2.HG one year	20	16.4		5.3
	3.CG	33	14.8		6.1
	AS	898	27.5	1*2*** 3***	7.8
The Behavioural Academic Self-esteem (BASE) rating scale	1.HG two years	13	57.3		11.6
	2.HG one year	20	50.7		10.7
	3.CG	33	57.0		12.5
	AS	1097	56.7	2*	11.7
The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading	1.HG two years	13	19.8	2-3*	7.6
	2.HG one year	20	19.2		8.3
	3.CG	33	13.2		8.2
	AS	1240	26.5	1***2***3***	8.3
SECOND ROUND ASSESSMENTS					
The Primary Reading Test	1.HG two years	13	37.9	1-3*	7.6
	2.HG one year	19	34.3		8.3
	3.CG	33	31.0		6.2
	AS	312	35.0	3*	8.6
I can do maths ...	1.HG two years	13	21.6	1-2**	4.2
	2.HG one year	19	17.7	1-3**	3.9
	3.CG	33	15.4		3.7
	AS	910	20.4	2***3***	3.6
The Behavioural Academic Self-esteem (BASE) rating scale	1.HG two years	13	66.1	1-2*	9.1
	2.HG one year	20	55.6	1-3**	10.3
	3.CG	33	54.5		9.7
	AS	1066	57.6	1*	11.7
The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading	1.HG two years	13	35.8	1-2*	8.6
	2.HG one year	20	28.8	1-3**	8.2
	3.CG	33	25.4		8.1
	AS	1067	35.7	2***3***	8.2
The Gumpel Readiness Inventory	1.HG two years	13	13.5	1-3*	4.2
	2.HG one year	20	11.3		3.9
	3.CG	33	10.2		3.8
	AS	115	11.8	1*	

* p<.05 ** p<.01 ***p<.001 +Sources of AS scores are those provided in Table 17 on page 171 above. ++ Statistically significant relationships are indicated amongst the three groups (HG two years, HG one year and CG), for example, 1-3* indicates a significant relationship at the p<.05 level between the scores of the HG two years and the CG. Statistically significant relationships are also indicated for each of these three groups in comparison with Australian study (AS) scores, for example, 1* indicates a significant relationship at the p<.05 level between HG two years and AS scores.

There were significant overall group differences in all assessments other than in the first round assessment for academic self esteem. The main trend when examining differences between the three groups on each assessment, was for significantly higher scores for those completing two years of HIPPY compared with those in the CG (7 out of 9).

In comparing the scores for those completing two years of the program with Australian study scores for the same assessments, the main trend was for similar scores (4 out of 8), and an even division for both significantly higher and lower scores (2 out of 4 for both). In comparing scores for those completing one year of HIPPY with normative scores, the main trend was for significantly lower scores (5 out of 8), while three scores were similar.

9.1.2.5.2   Two different patterns of one year participation

The second difference in patterns of participation in the program, noted in Chapter 8, was for the 20 children who completed about one year of the program over a different time frame. The 13 children at the Fitzroy centre commenced the program at the beginning of the first year, 1999 and left after one year. Seven children at the North Melbourne centre commenced the program late in the first year and completed about one year of the program (all that was offered to them) mostly in the second year (2000). Differences in children's assessment scores between the two groups might indicate, other things being equal, that differences in program implementation had a direct impact on what children learnt from the program.

Table 20 on page 178 presents the results using independent samples t tests, where the dependent variables are the assessment scores and the independent variable was the group identity (two different patterns of one-year participation in the program).

9.1.2.6   Correlations between measures and internal reliability of scales

The research interest in this data related to whether the measures were correlated in the presented study, as would be expected given that they measure similar domains. Correlations between the nine assessments, including the two repeated measures, are presented in Table 21, on page 180.

As would be expected, all but one of the measures were significantly correlated. The one exception was the low correlation between the *ACER Teacher*

Table 20

Comparison of mean scores on nine assessments according to two different patterns of one-year participation in HIPPY

Assessment tool	Number and group identification		Mean	Standard Deviation
FIRST ROUND ASSESSMENTS				
Who am I?	Fitzroy	13	32.9	3.3
	North Melb.	7	31.6	3.5
The Literacy Baseline Test	Fitzroy	13	16.3	4.7
	North Melb.	7	17.0	5.7
The Behavioural Academic Self-esteem (BASE) rating scale	Fitzroy	13	50.7	10.1
	North Melb.	7	49.6	12.4
The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading	Fitzroy	13	19.3	2.6
	North Melb.	7	18.9	2.6
SECOND ROUND ASSESSMENTS				
The Primary Reading Test	Fitzroy	12	35.6	3.7
	North Melb.	7	32.3	9.5
I can do maths ...	Fitzroy	12	17.8	3.1
	North Melb.	7	17.3	4.5
The Behavioural Academic Self-esteem (BASE) rating scale	Fitzroy	12	54.5	10.3
	North Melb.	7	56.0	11.2
The ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading	Fitzroy	12	29.0	5.7
	North Melb.	7	26.6	11.7
The Gumpel Readiness Inventory	Fitzroy	12	11.9	3.9
	North Melb.	7	10.4	4.0

Assessment of Progress in Reading in the first round and the *Behavioural Academic Self-esteem* (BASE) rating scale in the second round. The strongest relationship was between the scores on two measures at time two: the *Behavioural Academic Self-esteem (BASE)* rating scale and the *Gumpel Readiness Inventory*, both of which include aspects of classroom behaviour. At both the first and second round there was also a strong relationship between the two measures of literacy ability, that is the researcher administered test with the child and the teacher assessment.

In the five assessments which involved scales, analysis was undertaken to assess whether the spread of scores for each assessment indicated internal reliability, using the statistic of Cronbachs Alpha, where scores on this statistic of above .70 indicate acceptable levels of internal reliability (Aron & Aron, 1994). The results were as follows:

a) *Who am I?* (.80);

b) *Behavioural Academic Self-esteem (BASE) rating scale (twice)* (.93 & .92);

c) *Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading (twice)* (.94 & .94); and

d) *Gumpel Readiness Inventory* (.93).

These results indicate acceptable levels of internal reliability. There were no significant differences between the two groups on any of the measures.

9.2 Effects on parents

Parents were asked in the research interviews about any program effects on themselves in terms of personal gains, changes in parent-child relationships and changes in their engagement with their children's education. Parental comments in these three areas were analysed to identify common themes and are summarised below.

9.2.1 Parental gains

When parents were asked what they had gained from participating in HIPPY, most (25) identified some gain which they were able to describe. Six parents identified more than one gain. In summary, the major gains identified by parents were:

- improved English language (19);
- improved communication with child's teacher (11); and
- other responses (3).

Most parents who said that they had improved their English indicated that the program had assisted in a minor way only. Several indicated that they had also learnt English through participation in TAFE English classes and this had been more helpful (with two exceptions), on the basis that these classes concentrated on teaching English. However, two parents emphasised the greater importance of learning English through HIPPY, saying that this was the main thing that they and their child would miss (after completing the two-year program).

Table 21   Correlations between scores on nine assessments of children

Assessment	Who Am I?	Literacy baseline	BASE Composite (time one)	BASE Composite (time two)	Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading (time one)	Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading (time two)	Gumpel Readiness Inventory	Primary Reading Test	I can do maths...
Who Am I?	1.00								
Literacy baseline	.52**	1.00							
BASE Composite (time one)	.48**	.50**	1.00						
BASE Composite (time two)	.43	.42**	.50**	1.00					
Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading (time one)	.38**	.64**	.43**	.21	1.00				
Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading (time two)	.47**	.59**	.35**	.62**	.57**	1.00			
Gumpel Readiness Inventory	.37**	.47**	.47**	.74**	.31*	.56**	1.00		
Primary Reading Test	.44**	.57**	.40**	.54**	.52**	.61**	.49**	1.00	
I can do maths...	.42**	.56**	.25*	.46**	.57**	.60**	.38**	.62**	1.00

P<.01, ** p<.05

Eleven parents identified gains which were related to improved communication with the child's school. Five of these parents specifically related this to their improved English, while the other six related it to their greater involvement in the child's education.

One mother reported that the program helped her to overcome feelings of social isolation. Another explained its benefits in terms of the child's progress: *'If we can teach her and she makes progress we are happy'.* (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

As might have been expected from the intensive in-house training, and employment opportunities provided to Home Tutors, the parents who were Home Tutors reported making the largest personal gains through participation in HIPPY. The following explanation is from the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor in terms of growth in self-confidence.

> *I am very shy, but thanks to the program I have more confidence now. I walk outside and can really talk to people. Firstly, because working with my daughter increased my confidence and once I got that confidence I can go to others, I teach other kids and work with other parents and I feel more confident as well.*

9.2.2   Parent-child relationships

Based upon the finding of the evaluation of the first intake of families into HIPPY (Grady, forthcoming; where participating parents felt closer to their children as a result of delivering the HIPPY lessons) parents were directly asked whether involvement in HIPPY had led to changes in their relationship with their child. The researcher also checked whether parents felt that their relationship with the child was closer. In four families, parents indicated that they did not understand the question and a specific prompt was used as follows: *'in research on HIPPY some parents say it has led to a closer relationship, and some say it has not. Which is true for you'?*

In summary: parents of 21 children identified a closer relationship with their child and 11 identified other types of changes. Reported changes are outlined below.

9.2.2.1 Closer relationship

The parents of 21 children said that they had developed a closer relationship with their child. Three of these parents qualified this by adding that the relationship

was *'much closer'*, while two made the point that they had always had a close relationship and that it was now *'a bit closer'*. The following comments provide illustrations of the depth of this change from a parental and Home Tutor perspective, and show that they occurred for different language/cultural groups represented in the program. A common theme in these comments was that the closer relationship developed as a result of the concentrated time that parents and children spent together doing the lesson.

> *In the past my daughter used to complain that I don't know English, but now she sees me as a teacher. She know I understand a lot of things and so her parent is not so bad. I think the program helps me build up a role model for my child. She understands that as a parent I too am serious in learning and set a good example for her. That has helped our relationship and, because we spend time to learn together our relationship became closer.* (Cantonese-speaking mother)

> *[Before HIPPY] we [mother and daughter] didn't do things together. She would go and play in her room. I wanted to watch television and she wanted to play or she wanted me to take her out and I would say 'no'... I had psychological problems ... I was always angry; I just wanted to be alone... But with this [HIPPY] we were doing things together and it made her more confident in me. Before she would say 'Mum' but she wouldn't say 'Mummy, which is like 'darling' you know, but she began saying things like that to me.* (Turkish-speaking mother)

> *I guess caring and understanding your child more because you spend more time with them. You send your child to school or kinder and that's it. You don't do stuff at home with your child. Here HIPPY provides things where it's an activity. It's fun and [you do it] whatever time you want.* (Turkish-speaking Home Tutor)

> *I think that we have built up a very close relationship because I spend time with my daughter, doing work with her, therefore the relationship between myself and my daughter is very positive.* (Vietnamese-speaking father)

> *I think it is true to say that relationships get stronger. I myself work, and a lot of parents work, and they don't see their child very much. Most of the time they [the*

children] are at kinder[garten] or school. So then to spend that time [in HIPPY] with the child would help a lot to establish the parent and child relationship. (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

It helped me to communicate with my daughter. We had something that we were doing to together. Before that, we didn't have nothing. She was playing with her dolls and I was doing my normal job at home. But now we have something in common and she really loves it. (English-speaking Home Tutor)

A Somali-speaking Home Tutor confirmed these benefits for the Somali-speaking families.

They [parents] enjoy it because they play with their children, it's meant to be a bit of fun. They will do activities with the children, which is good for the children. There will be a good linkage between parents and children. (Second Somali-speaking Home Tutor)

9.2.2.2 Other changes

Parents of eleven children said that the program had not led to a closer relationship with their children, though some of their comments indicate improvements in the nature of the relationship. Parents of nine of these children went on to report on the changes they felt had occurred in their relationship with their child. Two parents said that they had always been close to their child and did not add to this. The following comments were made:

a) talked more about practical things;

b) extended range of joint activities, child more inquisitive and interested in learning;

c) do more interactionally, less television, delay house cleaning to do lessons (with twins);

d) changed interaction, mother now reads to child;

e) changed communication, mother used to scream at child about what child did not know;

f) less television, father proud of being able to teach his son;

g) better understanding of child, improved relationship; and

h) better understanding of her child's strengths and weaknesses in education.

Three of these parents who made more extensive comments explained as follows.

It was a precious time we had, to talk more about things, but the closeness we always had. (Spanish-speaking father)

It improved our relationship. As a mother with three children you've always got work to do in the house. But you know that you've got that half an hour or 20 minutes a day you have to sit with your child. Otherwise, you can skip that and say 'I guess I won't sit with him and do any activity... (English-speaking mother)

At least we have a thing that we can work on together; we can learn English together and do some drawing together, so we can communicate with each other. (Cantonese-speaking mother)

9.2.3 Parental engagement in their children's education

When asking parents what they had received from the program, the researcher also checked with them whether there was any change in their involvement in the child's education as a result of their involvement in HIPPY, including any changes in their relationship to the child's school teacher. Parental comments were analysed for themes and are summarise below in relation to preschools, schools and education more generally.

9.2.3.1 Relationships with preschools

According to the third Coordinator, it was an explicit part of the HIPPY program that parents were to be encouraged to send their child to preschools. All children in HIPPY attended preschools (as did children in the Comparison Group), though it is unknown whether any attended because of encouragement by HIPPY staff. As discussed in Section 7.2.4.2 and Section 8.2.2.4, a number of HIPPY and Comparison Group families were recruited through preschools in which children were already enrolled.

Parents were not asked direct questions of their experiences of preschool, but five volunteered comments when asked whether their children had attended. There was a common theme identified in their comments. Parents were critical that children seemed mainly *'to play'* at preschool and contrasted their positive experiences of

HIPPY where their children were taught things that were helpful at school. The following comments illustrate this point of view.

> *When she was in kinder [garten] she seemed to play there, to play games, rather than learning. But now, because I think the program offered at school is a bit higher than HIPPY program, so when she has to do the HIPPY activities she does the activities quite easily.* (Vietnamese-speaking father)

> *The HIPPY program teaches my children to have more knowledge before they started school, how to write, how to paint, learn 'different and same'. It teaches in more detail than kinder [garten]. At kinder [garten] there's a lot of children and not all the children get what they teach.* (Thai-speaking mother)

9.2.3.2   Relationship with schools and education

As noted in Section 9.2.1 above, a third of parents (11) said that their involvement in HIPPY had led to changes in relationships with their children's teacher. However, most parents gave some indication during their interview that they had a changed understanding of education in Australia and increased involvement in the child's education. One parent explained this in terms of the lack of contact between parents and schools and how HIPPY changed her expectations about what her child was doing at school.

> *I don't think I would have an understanding of the school system, how it works and what they do, if I wasn't involved in HIPPY. The only times we go to school is in a group meeting, and that's once a year, and when we get a progress report [on our child]. We really don't get a chance to observe what the children do, children in action. If I didn't go through the HIPPY program, I would simply have sent my child to Prep [Grade] thinking 'OK, this is Prep, they are going to sing songs and play games and that would have been my expectation [from mother's experience of education in Turkey]. Now that I am more involved, I have higher expectations, so I know how and where I can continue. This is my first child going through the school system ...* (Turkish-speaking mother)

Other comments were made in the same vein.

> *I think it has helped me to understand the school system more. Before I was involved in the HIPPY program I didn't know much about the Australian education system, but now I ask my child what she has learnt at school and I would ask her to repeat what she has learnt at school and that way I understand the school system better.* (Cantonese-speaking mother)

> *All the teachers there know that I am doing this program for my daughter and I am happy to do this at home. In a way it also helped my daughter's relationship with the teachers there because from what I teach her at home she always go to school and reports what she has been working with me on. So the teacher knows what we have been doing and also that helps.* (Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor)

Other parents reflected upon the difficulties for them in engaging in their child's education. Again these comments echoed those of early childhood providers of services of educational and other services (Section 8.1.2 above).

> *Education is mostly the responsibility of the teacher. It should be more or less equally [for parents and teachers], but because we don't know the language, when the children come home we just tell them to 'keep study, keep study', but we don't know what they have to study.* (Hmong-speaking mother)

> *I am very happy with the program because if she had not participated in the program she would have gone straight into kinder [garten] and she would have been struggling. We don't know how to teach her. With this program we have paper and material and we know how to teach her.* (Vietnamese-speaking mother)

> *I think many people like myself are not aware. Sometimes people say 'I don't want to bother with these programs; it's a waste of time'. But when you start doing it I think it's good. I was so happy that my child was learning a lot from this [program] because I didn't know how to teach him, how to do things with*

him and what to teach him. But everything was in the [HIPPY] papers and it was beautiful. (Spanish-speaking father)

As a reflection of the researcher (recorded as a diary entry), parents whose child was making satisfactory progress at school had a more positive relationship with their children's teacher than did those whose children who were not making such progress. This was true even for those parents who said HIPPY had not affected their relationship with their child's teacher. As one parent said in her research interview, at least she had *'not been called up to the school'* which had happened to her friends when their children were not doing well.

9.3   Summary of findings concerning program effects

In short, parents reported that their children had made gains which they believed had helped them at school. These were in the areas of HIPPY activities, in literacy development and in an improved orientation towards learning. Their children were also found to have made greater gains on a range of school and learning related assessments than children in a well-matched non-HIPPY Comparison Group. More time spent on HIPPY was related to higher scores, where those who completed two years out performed those who completed only one year of the program.

In the first round of assessments children in HIPPY were scoring either at a similar level (2 out of 4) or below (2 out of 4) in comparison with those in other Australian studies (normative scores). Children in the Comparison Group scored significantly below these normative scores (3 out of 4). By the second round of assessments, there was a clear trend for children in HIPPY to reach similar score levels to those established in Australian studies (4 out of 5) and for children in the Comparison Group to have significantly lower scores (4 out of 5). All but one of the Australian study scores in this second round of assessment were normative scores.

Parents reported learning some skills, especially in English, though these tended to be minor except where the parents were also Home Tutors in the program. The two major changes for parents were an improved and usually closer relationship with the HIPPY child and an increased engagement with their children's education. The latter gain sometimes included improved communication with the child's school, but more commonly related to changed expectations and understanding of education in Australia and more direct involvement with the child in his or her education.

CHAPTER 10

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In order to provide a context for the interpretation of the findings, this chapter begins with an assessment of the strengths and limitations of the present study. It then discusses the data reported in Chapters 8 and 9 (on program implementation and program effects), focusing on the research questions posed in the introductory chapter and further discussed in Chapter 6. This discussion includes comparison of these findings with relevant knowledge of HIPPY through the review of the program evaluation literature reported in Chapter 4. It also considers possible links between outcomes and program processes. The Chapter concludes with a discussion of the research findings in relation to the early childhood education for disadvantaged children literature reviewed in Chapter 3. The final chapter of this thesis then discusses the findings in the broader theoretical and practical contexts reviewed in Chapters 2 and 5.

10.1   Assessing strengths and limitations of research method

The strengths and limitations of the research method can be considered at two levels, those that are inherent to the methods used and those which relate to the actual conduct of those methods. These two themes are entwined in the following discussion. Ultimately, the view is taken that the positive findings on the value of HIPPY in this implementation are robust. This is based upon the combined findings from the three sets of data collected, which are seen as superseding the imperfections of each type of data collection.

10.1.1   Strengths of the study

In relation to program processes, this study gathered data in a more detailed way than has been usual in evaluations of HIPPY published to date. This was done in order to understand how the program was implemented and which aspects were or were not significant in furthering the purpose of the program. Such an understanding of processes and their links with outcomes was recommended (see Section 7.1.1) as an important aspect of realistic evaluation approaches (Pawson & Tilley, 1997), is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's (1986; 1991) view of the complexity of influences, as well as in fourth generation evaluation approaches (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) and in wider educational research (Cazden, 1972). Fourth generational approaches have also identified the importance of multiple stakeholder viewpoints, pursued in the present study, and McGuiness and Wadsworth (1992) have argued that groups directly affected by the intervention (parents in the present study) should be regarded as central or critical stakeholders.

The approach taken to assessing program outcomes can also be considered a strength of the present study, despite some limitations in the regime of the research and teacher assessment of children's abilities further discussed in Section 10.1.2 below. The study made effective use of three different, but complementary, data sources. There were direct researcher and teacher assessment of children's abilities, and the value of these assessments were further strengthened by undertaking them at two points of time and by comparing results for children in HIPPY with a non-HIPPY Group. The combination of qualitative and quantitative data and a quasi-experimental approach was a strength. This approach provided the benefits of triangulation for providing a robust picture of program outcomes. Rather than viewing parents purely as objects of the study, appropriate credence was given to parents' assessment of program outcomes for their children.

There were also good reasons for believing that children in the HIPPY and Comparison groups had similar educational prospects without the HIPPY intervention. Positively, they were well matched in terms of a range of personal and family characteristics which can be considered to influence educational performance. All parents also reported that their children attended four-year-old preschool and primary school. As well, children appeared to be functioning within the normal range of development, based upon the fact that they progressed in the usual way through preschool to Prep Grade to Grade 1 during the period of the study. Two potential participants in the Comparison Group were excluded on the basis that they were found to have special learning needs.

The selection of assessment instruments for which there were Australian data strengthened the conclusions that could be drawn from the assessment scores of children.

10.1.2   Limitations of the study

The small number of participants in the present study would caution against too large a claim being made about the likely future success of the program in Australia based upon these findings alone. The scale of the study also meant that the numbers in the different language/cultural groups were too small to yield useful analysis among the groups of differences in scores of the assessments of children's abilities.

For reasons discussed in Section 8.2.3.1.2, it was not practicable to pre-assess children before they entered into HIPPY and simultaneously assess children in the Comparison Group. This lack of baseline data reduced the certainty that differences between scores between the two groups was due to the intervention, rather than on an initial difference in abilities. The influences of different school and preschools environments were also not controlled for in this study.

The quasi-experimental, rather than experimental, nature of the research represented to some extent a conflict between ideal research design and ethical issues. The non-provision of the service to participants in a Comparison Group is always an ethical concern in considering the provision of assistance to disadvantaged families. However, the concern is deepened when this non-provision is organised on a random basis as part of an experimental research design.

While the particular direct tests of children's abilities were appropriate to the present study's purposes, a practical and ethical limitation was that direct testing of children was limited to about 20 minutes for each child in each round of assessments, as a direction from the Brotherhood of St Laurence's Human Research Ethics Committee. Additional time would have allowed for an assessment of these children's overall intellectual level for comparison between the two groups. It would also have allowed a testing of children's mathematical ability in the first round of assessments for comparison with the testing of mathematical ability undertaken in the second round of assessments.

Consistent with most of the evaluation studies of HIPPY published so far, assessment of children in this study was short-term (about 6 months after the completion of the two-year program). The extent to which involvement in HIPPY has longer term outcomes for these children is unknown at this stage, though it is an important issue in considering the effectiveness of the program.

There is a more general caution in interpreting results of any developmental research. Given the myriad and complex influences on people's lives, clearly conceptualised by Bronfenbrenner (1986; 1991), it is important not to over claim for the certainty of any findings. In using relatively simple data collection approaches to capturing complex influences, there is always a degree of uncertainty about attributing effects to a single cause.

10.2   Program implementation

Considerable variations in how HIPPY has been implemented internationally suggest the importance of not assuming that all implementations of HIPPY are the same. As noted in Section 4.4.1.2, the programs in Turkey (Kagitcibasi, 1996) and the Netherlands (Eldering & Vedder, 1993) involved significant adaptation of the program and there has been considerable adaptation of the program across sites in the United States (Third Coordinator, personal communication, 2001).

As noted in the introductory Chapter, one of the study's aims was to explore how an understanding of program implementation might generate an understanding of the relationship between implementation processes and any identified program effects. Two main research questions, which drove the data collection to allow exploration of this issue, were identified.

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a) How was the standardised program implemented?

b) What were the experiences and views of the direct participants and other stakeholders of the implemented program?

The description of program implementation presented in Chapter 8 shows that, overall, HIPPY staff very carefully followed the main elements of the ideal program model (Lombard et al., 1999). It demonstrated Lombard's (1994) assertion that HIPPY provides a comprehensive set structure for implementation. This included engagement with local providers of services to this group of families, the consistent use of the set materials and activities (purchased from HIPPY in the United States), the selection of Home Tutors from among parents participating in the program, the weekly in-house training of Home Tutors, the use of alternating home visits and group meetings, and the use of role play as the method of learning and teaching at all levels.

However, the detailed examination of the program in practice also highlighted considerable variations in implementation across most aspects of the model. This included adaptation of the materials and the activities, the response to multiple cultures and languages and aspects of the delivery system such as parental delivery of the lesson to their child (timing, length, and language), home visiting patterns and group meetings.

Lombard (1994) also claimed that there was flexibility in the program to respond to local needs. The main illustration of the program's adaptability in the present study related to the inclusion of people from a range of language and cultural backgrounds, and a number of changes made to the program to deal with this.

The presentation of the data on program implementation also painted a picture from the perspective of the major stakeholders. This picture was a positive one from the perspective of parents, program staff and local early childhood educators and other service providers. Consistent with the experience of other HIPPY evaluations and the claims of the program's founder, the program emerged as highly relevant to family interest in the child's education and to the system of early childhood education in preschools and primary schools. The program evaluated in the present study was implemented in a way that was sensitive and responsive to the different situations of families. This is a feature one would expect of most successful HIPPY program implementations, given its family focussed nature. This feature has not, however, often been well documented in other studies.

It would be expected from the accounts of stakeholders in the present study that the program would have positive effects for children. This was found to be the case in an examination of program effects in Chapter 9. However, twenty of these children did not

complete the full two-year program. This included the 13 children and their families who only completed the first year of the program in Fitzroy and the seven families in North Melbourne who were offered a shorter program. Positive results were still found for these twenty children, but these were of lesser magnitude than for those who completed the full two years of HIPPY.

The patterns of parents leaving the program had some similarities to those outlined in two United States studies of program implementation (Baker & Roth, 1997). There was a small group of families who showed an initial interest in the program but who left in the first few weeks, when they actually experienced the time commitment involved, and another group that left after the first 12 months. Two of the reasons for attrition provided in the United States studies were also found in this study. Parents of three children said that the program had sufficiently prepared the child for school and other parents left because they moved to another area or there were competing study or work commitments. However, the reasons parents gave in this study covered a wider range than this, and were more specific and were sometimes multiple. As noted in Section 8.2.9, this included caring responsibilities for younger children, not being offered a Home Tutor in their own language, and travelling times to school making the child too tired to do the lesson. There were also parents of three children who viewed HIPPY as a one year peschool program and withdrew after the first year. This greater range and complexity may have been due to the different sources of data, namely direct feedback from parents in the present study compared to program staff feedback in the United States studies. The other major reason for high program attrition identified in other evaluation studies of HIPPY was extreme family disadvantage (Adams et al., 1993; Barhava-Montieth et al., 1999). This was only true for the one family in the present study where the mother and child were the subject of domestic violence.

10.3   Program effects

The second major set of data related to the two other major research questions.

a) What were the outcomes for children participating in the program, particularly in relation to the program goal of improving school success, as determined by parents, teachers and direct testing?

b) What were the outcomes for parents participating in the program?

The findings in relation to these two questions have been noted in 10.2 above as positive outcomes. These are now discussed in more detail.

10.3.1   Effects for children

As noted in Section 4.4.4.1, HIPPY has demonstrated its capacity to improve the educational success of children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Baker et al., 1999; Burgon et al, 1997; Kagitcibasi, 1996; Lombard, 1994). However, neutral results in other studies (Baker et al., 1999; Adams et al., 1992) have demonstrated that it cannot be assumed that all HIPPY programs will deliver improved academic results for children. Further, the high attrition rates from some HIPPY implementations, discussed above, would suggest that HIPPY does not suit all families.

The measures to compare how children were progressing academically in the present study related to general development, literacy and numeracy abilities, and academic self-esteem and behaviour in class. These were recorded midway through the first and second years of compulsory schooling.

As noted in Section 9.1.1, parents identified skills and abilities which their children learnt through their participation in the program and believed that these had helped their children at school. As noted earlier, parents were in a good position to understand the direct impact of the program on their children and whether it helped them at school. There were additional reasons for believing that the program had made a difference in their children's academic performance in terms of the data collected. HIPPY children in the program scored significantly higher than children in the Comparison Group on all measures except the *BASE scale*. In addition, children completing two years of the program received higher scores than those completing only one year on all assessments (significantly higher in three of the five second round assessments). In relation to children in the Comparison Group, children in HIPPY also maintained a significant lead in scores by the second round of assessments on the two sets of literacy measures, and had significantly improved their scores on the measure of academic self-esteem. Lastly, by the second round of assessments, children in HIPPY were scoring at a similar level to children in other Australian studies (with one exception) while children in the Comparison Group were scoring significantly below these levels. All of these instances, except for the *Gumpel Readiness Inventory*, provided normative Australian scores for the assessments.

The positive findings of the present study on program outcomes for children are consistent with the findings of a number of other studies of HIPPY. As noted in Section 4.4.4.1, it has been usual practice to assess children's abilities using standardised measures of children's numeracy and literacy development and adjustment to school. These methods are commonly used in studies in the countries in which HIPPY operates. This has had the added potential benefit of allowing comparison of scores in the study with expected (normative) scores for children of the same age group. The present study utilised this approach. However, a major difference between the present study and other published evaluation studies of HIPPY was the

detailed analysis of parental reports of what their children had gained through involvement in the program.

10.3.2 Effects for parents

Although the main focus in the HIPPY evaluation literature has been on outcomes for children, a number of studies have identified positive effects for participating parents. These have included improvements in parental child rearing practices, parent-child relationships and educational gains for parents (Barhava-Monteith et al., 1999; Grady, forthcoming; Kagiticbasi et al., 1998). Such parental gains in HIPPY, and home visiting programs more generally, have been seen as a likely indicator that there will be positive gains for children (Davis & Kugelmass, 1974; Gomby, 1999).

The findings of the present study on parental effects are consistent with the positive findings of other studies referred to above. The main parental effects reported in the present study, in Section 9.2, were in relation to improved English, increased engagement in their children's education and improved relationships with their children. These gains can be viewed as increasing the likelihood that the positive education results for children in HIPPY were due to families' involvement in HIPPY.

It is understandable that parents and children who spend a considerable period of time on a joint activity which they both enjoy will have some level of a changed, and closer, relationship. This was a key finding in terms of parental effects for this second intake of families, and has also been reported as a major finding in the evaluation of the program for the first intake of families (Grady, forthcoming). It is also understandable that the educational nature of the activity would engender increased parental confidence in becoming engaged in their child's education, especially when reinforced in discussion in group meetings with other parents and program staff. In some cases, an improved English ability of parents through their involvement in the program also improved their communication with their child's school teacher.

The improved relationships between parents and their children, allied with the increased engagement of parents in their children's education, might be expected to have positive longer term educational benefits for their children, but this was not assessed in the present study.

10.3.3 Program outcomes assessed

If HIPPY were an effective education program for the 33 children in this intake of families, then it would be expected that this would be reflected both in the qualitative and quantitative data collected. This process of triangulation was described earlier as increasing the certainty of findings through agreement on two or more imperfect sets of measures.

The strongest evidence presented for the positive impact of HIPPY was in parental accounts of what their children learnt, their assessment of the effectiveness of the program in improving the children's scholastic progress, and some intermediary family effects. The parents' viewpoints were supported in the analysis of quantitative data, which showed higher scores for children in the HG compared with children in the CG. This difference was either sustained or increased over time.

Overall, analysis of both qualitative data and quantitative data supported the contention that involvement in HIPPY led to improved numeracy and literacy skills, and academic performance more generally.

10.4   Understanding relationships between process and outcomes

The foregoing conclusions and the data upon which they rest provide a basis for considering possible relationships between program implementation and the overall positive program effects which were found. This analysis relies heavily on the comments of parents and HIPPY staff on the detail of program implementation, and is supplemented by the researcher's observations. Where available, the following discussion draws upon multiple sources of information for purposes of verification. Parent and HIPPY staff sources are acknowledged, and where the researcher making an informed interpretation or judgement of the data, this is indicated.

The question can be asked as to whether HIPPY provides a deficit model? The finding is that it does not provide a deficit view because it explicitly acknowledges that parents want their child to succeed in education as a passport to a better future and, with some support, parents achieve this through their own efforts. In essence, the expert and the family view coincide for those families who decide to participate in HIPPY. Thus it is not professionals deciding what the problem is, but rather participating parents and professionals agreeing. While in a sense HIPPY provides the solution, parents are responsible for delivering it. In this process of providing the program for their children, parents also help shape it in ways relevant to their personal, family cultural circumstances. Interestingly, HIPPY is largely silent on ultimate causes around educational disadvantage. It does not blame parents nor the does it provide a critique of education systems for failing to meet the needs of disadvantaged families. It tends, pragmatically, to treat the education system as a form of social fact that has a major impact on children's life chances and has developed a system for helping (some) educationally disadvantaged children (through the direct efforts of their parents) to better succeed in that system.

Overall, the data suggest the importance of successful implementation at a number of different levels, discussed below in terms of contextual factors, program features and the program delivery system. Contextual factors were identified throughout the research process. Program features and the delivery system follow the headings used in the examination of the ideal HIPPY model in Section 4.3.

10.4.1 Contextual factors

Two contextual factors are discussed below, namely the use of locality and service networks and family structure.

10.4.1.1 Use of locality and service networks

HIPPY is devised as a program to be developed in local communities. Again, little attention is paid in the published program literature about the nature of these communities, apart from how it relates to the characteristics of participants, the nature of usual educational provision, and where extreme family disadvantage and high mobility leads to high attrition rates from the program (for example, Adams et al, 1993; Burgon et al., 1997; Lombard, 1994).

The siting of the program in two public rental housing estates provided ready access to families in the target group. They were mostly from non-English speaking backgrounds and had access to stable and affordable housing. It is a feature of settlement patterns in some inner Melbourne localities that new immigrant communities from a wide range of language and cultural backgrounds are living in high rise public housing estates. The importance of providing HIPPY within the one locality emerged as an important issue to successful implementation. The third Coordinator identified an additional effort made to run the program on two sites. Parents, Home Tutors and the third Coordinator all identified participation difficulties for families who did not live within walking distance of the Centres. They also identified difficulties in organising home visits when Home Tutors did not live in the same area as the families with whom they were working.

According to the Line Manager, the Brotherhood of St Laurence's good reputation, local networks and service expertise in early childhood facilitated the establishment of the program. This was especially true when making initial contact with local providers of services to young children and their families. The Brotherhood's early childhood staff were in regular contact with other providers of services and were able to explain the new program, when it began in 1998. Several families were referred to HIPPY through other Brotherhood programs.

The recruitment of families for the Fitzroy location was easier, according to the first Coordinator, because it represented the second intake, rather than first intake, of families into the

program. This meant that local service providers were better geared to referring families, and there were longer standing networks in local communities through parents and Home Tutors acting as recruiters of families. This was reflected in the sources of recruitment of families identified by parents in their research interviews. Conversely, the recruitment of families in the second (North Melbourne) location was, according to the third Coordinator and Line Manager, more difficult because it involved a new ethnic/language group in a new location in which the auspice organisation had no services or existing networks. They also considered that these problems were exacerbated by the timing of the resignation of the second Coordinator.

10.4.1.2   Family structure

In the present study, parents and Home Tutors identified older children as an important source of assistance in providing the lesson, a point also observed by the researcher in a home visit with a Somali-speaking family. Only within one of the Hmong-speaking families was this carried to the extreme where all parental involvement ceased. Parents and Home Tutors identified younger children as a source of disruption, sometimes minor and sometimes major. Again this was observed by the researcher in a home visit with a Somali-speaking family. Sole parents did not appear to have been highly disadvantaged, in comparison with two-parent families, in terms of direct delivery of lesson material. This was because the involvement of the second parent in two-parent families in HIPPY appeared to have been minor. Comparable data was not available from other studies of HIPPY on this issue.

10.4.2   Program features

Several features of the program itself, namely international support, appropriateness of HIPPY materials, working with language and cultural issues and adult-child interactions, were highlighted in the findings as facilitating the program's positive outcomes.

10.4.2.1   HIPPY International support

The international arrangements between HIPPY International (based in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and providers of HIPPY in other countries is a fundamental aspect of the program. However, little critical attention is paid in the literature to the effects of these arrangements.

In the present study, these arrangements included the familiarisation program sessions in Israel, the provision of the Coordinator's Manual (Lombard et al., 1999) and detailed lesson material, the delivery structure, the annual visits of the Director of HIPPY International, the

ongoing two-way of exchange of information between staff in the Australian program and HIPPY International and, to a lesser extent, with HIPPY program staff in New Zealand.

The first and third Coordinator and the program's Line Manager commented that the international franchise arrangements made the program relatively easy to implement. The ongoing practical support provided through HIPPY International was particularly important. This was also the belief of the former Director of HIPPY International (research interview, 1999). The opportunity for the first and third Coordinators to visit programs and receive advice from HIPPY program staff in New Zealand was identified by them and by the Line Manager as an important additional source of support in implementing the program.

10.4.2.2   Appropriateness of HIPPY materials

Lombard (1997) asserted that the materials needed to be appropriate to the developmental age of participating children, attractive to them, require no special equipment to be available in families' homes and make sense to the parent. Again, this aspect is not examined in any detail in the evaluation literature reviewed in Chapter 4.

Parents reported that the materials were easy to work with, with some minor exceptions discussed in Section 8.2.4. They also reported that their children were usually able to understand them and enjoyed the lessons. As noted in Section 8.2.7.2.1, there were no apparent difficulties with the use of materials in the four Home Tutor-parent and four parent-child sessions observed by the researcher. As noted in Section 8.2.8.3, there was a focus in the in-house training sessions in ensuring that the Home Tutors provided the lesson materials or that the required materials were available in the family home. These findings are consistent with Lombard's (1997) claims.

An additional criterion for selecting materials and activities has been their likely contribution to school success, with the activities strongly related to literacy and numeracy skills which are core elements in school curricula (Lombard, 1994). These skill areas for children were assessed in the present study, and it is a reasonable inference that the educational nature of the materials and associated activities contributed significantly to the positive effects identified for children.

10.4.2.3   Working with language issues

As noted in Section 4.3.3, the language approach favoured by the founder of the program was the provision of the program in the official language of the country, on the pragmatic basis that this is the language of schools in which children either succeed or fail. As also noted, an alternative approach, such as in the Dutch HIPPY experiment, was to translate the program into minority languages (Eldering & Vedder, 1993). In response to the multi-language environment

in which the program evaluated here was implemented, the approach was to provide the program in both the families' first language for most families and English, but to de-emphasise the need to use English, leaving it to the parents and Home Tutors to decide upon the appropriate mix of languages. This approach was not evaluated in previous HIPPY literature reviewed in Chapter 4.

Despite the consequent complexity of language issues in this implementation, and the difficulties with English for the majority of families, the program was able to be provided in ways which parents reported as working well for them. From parents' and HIPPY staff comments, the main strategy that explained this was the use of bilingual Home Tutors, for four of the language groups, and flexibility in how much of the program was taught in English and how much in the parents' first language. The use of translations and audio tapes of stories augmented this for the two main language groups. For the others, parents and Home Tutors identified a range of helpful strategies which were developed. These included principally the involvement of older children by parents, but also occasionally the involvement of their spouse or friend to assist, having another parent in the program to act as interpreter, the provision of lesson material to the parent prior to the lesson and the use of a dictionary for translation. From parents' comments and the researcher's observation of four Home Tutor-parent sessions and four parent-child sessions, the provision of program Activity Sheets only in English appeared to present no major barriers to engaging in the program for parents, because role play made the material easy to understand and repeat with their children even when they had difficulties with the English words. As a reflection of the researcher, the use of role play with other strategies discussed above, is likely to have assisted the small number of parents who indicated they had more general literacy problems to deal with in the program delivery to their children.

The central importance of proficiency in the English language to most of the parents in this study provides support to the value of providing programs which include opportunities for children and their parents to learn the official language of the country. The value of the use of bilingual Home Tutors, common in implementations of HIPPY, is also supported by this study's findings.

However, this research also illustrated some of the limitations of HIPPY in teaching language. The English ability of Home Tutors varied, a point not lost on other participating parents who were concerned that their children learnt English correctly. The extent to which parents were able to learn the program in English also varied considerably and changed over the period of the program for some. As pointed out by a few parents who were also doing English classes, these classes are better placed than HIPPY to teach English as this is this is their sole focus. The position developed by staff in the Brotherhood of St Laurence program, that it was not centrally concerned with teaching English, appeared to be the correct one in the light of these

issues. The value of having story books and audio tapes of story books in both the families' first language and in English was also emphasised by HIPPY parents and staff.

Another language issue which emerged in the third Coordinator's comments was whether the program was about teaching the child English or was concerned with the child's cognitive development. One parent who did the program totally in Vietnamese saw the program as teaching his child concepts, with teaching English being a task left to the school. In contrast, most parents felt that improving the child's English, and sometimes their own, was an important aspect of the program. The third Coordinator's perspective was that the child's cognitive development was more important; the focus on language ensured that parents understood the program well enough to provide it to their children.

The experience of this study show that when the program is developed in multi-language settings it needs to make different types of adaptations from those reported in communities where families all speak the same language. This research provides a case study of a program generally successful in adapting the basic program model to a multi-language community.

10.4.2.4   Working with cultural issues

The program was developed in Israel to work with people from new immigrant cultures, as part of a process of integrating them into that society. Working with people from different cultures has continued to be the practice of HIPPY internationally, and an important issue has been how to deliver the program in ways which are culturally appropriate (Adams et al., 1992; Burgon et al, 1997; Eldering & Vedder; Lombard, 1994).

A wide mix of cultures is a feature of contemporary Australian society, particularly evident in a number of inner Melbourne localities such as Fitzroy and North Melbourne where there is major provision of public rental housing provided in high rise flats. The program was developed and delivered in ways that parents from a very wide range of backgrounds found to be culturally acceptable, though not without tensions. For example, for partly cultural reasons, Somali-speaking parents did not keep to appointment times and this was an ongoing problem because of the need for families to link into home visits and group meetings at arranged times. From the comments of parents and HIPPY staff, the cultural adaptability of the program appeared to be partly explained partly by the appointment of Home Tutors from the same cultural backgrounds as most of the families. From the observations of the researcher, it was further operationalised in the system of in-house training of Home Tutors, where there were checks and adjustments on the cultural acceptability of lesson material to families.

The cultural acceptability of the program to parents was consistent with Lombard's (1994) claim for the program generally. As noted however in Section 4.4.1.2, problems with the

cultural acceptability of HIPPY appeared to arise when parents were ambivalent about whether they want their children to succeed in the dominant culture (Burgon et al., 1997; Eldering & Vedder, 1993). Parents in the present study reported being very committed to their children becoming a successful part of Australian society, so this difficulty did not arise. The two key points of unresolved tensions related to cultural differences to emerge from the research were the difficulties in getting Somali-speaking families to be present on time at group meetings and (sometimes) for home visits, and the extensive use of older children to help parents deliver the lesson in some families.

10.4.3   Program delivery system

The role of the program delivery system in facilitating positive outcomes is discussed below, in relation to parent-child interactions, HIPPY staff roles, in-house training sessions, role play, home visits, and group meetings.

10.4.3.1   Parent-child interactions

HIPPY is devised as a program to be delivered by parents. The rationale for this has included the generally high level of parental motivation for their children to succeed in education, the universality of the affection of the parent-child bond and the need for empowerment in adults (Lombard, 1994). As noted in other evaluation studies of HIPPY, high levels of parental interest in furthering their children's education, improvements in parent-child relationships as a result of involvement in the program and parents' satisfaction with their enhanced role as their child's teacher have been reported (Grady, forthcoming; Kagitcibasi, 1996). These findings were replicated in the present study, as discussed in Section 10.3.2 above.

Most of the adult-child interactions in the present study were through parents. However, as noted in Section 8.2.7.2.2, there were examples of Home Tutors doing lesson activities directly with children. As also noted in Section 8.2.7.1.2, it was also common for older children to be part deliverers of the lesson to their siblings, and one older child was the sole deliverer. Several parents indicated that they wanted the Home Tutor to conduct the program directly with their child.

Although parents had difficulty in reporting the exact amount of time spent with their children in lessons, they estimated it ranged anywhere between 25 and 300 hours. In contrast, preschool and early primary school education is provided in group settings, which appeared to provide limited opportunities for a similar level of intensive adult-child communication. This appeared to be even more so in larger classes (from the researcher's observation in visits to schools and in several informal comments to the researcher by children's teachers).

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The program relies ultimately on both parental relationships with their children and children's engagement with the materials. These two aspects emerge in this research, and other research on HIPPY (Lombard, 1994), as related to the universality of the parent-child bond and the value of materials and skills taught, particularly when materials and skill areas are selected for their relevance to what is taught in schools. The relationship between the parent and child is thus the vehicle for the child learning skills and developing self confidence in learning that will improve school success.

HIPPY aims to promote academic self esteem by providing the child with tasks that he or she can successfully complete and for which attention and praise is forthcoming from parents. As noted earlier, there is also a specific emphasis on never telling a child that he or she is wrong. Instead the focus is on challenging them to re-think their answer until they get it right. Evidence of the positive impact of HIPPY on children's self esteem was supported in this study by data showing an increase on this measure between the first and second round of assessments (for children in HIPPY).

10.4.3.2   HIPPY staff roles

Lombard (1994) argued that most of the success or lack of it in particular implementations of HIPPY rests with the Coordinator's role. Home Tutors also play a key role within the program as deliverers of the program to parents. Lombard also emphasised that the use of paraprofessionals fosters good communication, minimises the element of threat in a home visiting situation and serves as role models of involvement of parents in their children's education. As well as the general lack of examination of process issues in the HIPPY program evaluation literature, there is little empirical data on these roles.

The Coordinator's position emerged as a significant one in the success of the program examined in the present study. This is best illustrated by the difficulties caused by the resignation of the second Coordinator. As reported by the Line Manager, the effect of this was to reduce the number of participants in the program for the second intake, to further delay the program for the families in the North Melbourne location and to delay the researcher's access to the Home Tutors and families. According to the Line Manager, and the researcher's own observations, important qualities of the Coordinator position included the ability to work with disadvantaged families from a range of different language and cultural backgrounds, to deliver HIPPY as a training package with the Home Tutors and to plan the establishment of a new program with both local and international lines of accountability. Communication within the auspice organisation and with local organisations was also important.

A conclusion of the researcher was that the method of selection and training of Home Tutors meant these positions were more interchangeable than that of the Coordinator. This was most strongly indicated by the very few problems identified by parents in changes of Home Tutors. From the researcher's observation of in-house training of Home Tutors, the main explanations for this greater interchangeability appeared to be this system of weekly training, with its focus on the next lesson and the simplicity of the role playing method, which allowed the program to quickly incorporate new Home Tutors into the program. The replacement of the English-speaking Home Tutor by the Turkish-speaker was facilitated by an already established relationship between the parents and this Home Tutor through the group meetings. The integration of the third Somali-speaking Home Tutor into the program was again assisted by the fact that the mother was already a parent in the program, who knew the other mothers and lived locally.

This greater interchangeability of Home Tutors, in comparison with the Coordinator position, did not mean that the differing abilities and qualities of the Home Tutors had no influence on process. The fact that changes in Home Tutors could cause difficulties when not well implemented was indicated by frustration expressed by two parents when the home visiting arrangements broke down for a brief period (associated with staff turnover). In other studies, change in Home Tutors has been cited as one of the reasons for parents leaving the program (Baker & Roth, 1997). The third Coordinator made the point that it is unusual for Home Tutors to stay beyond the two years they are involved as parents of a HIPPY child in the program, and in the present study a number stayed considerably less time. Again, the researcher was unable to find published research on patterns of employment for Home Tutors in HIPPY.

As noted by one of the Home Tutors for the second intake, who was also a parent in the first intake, a strong element of the parent-Home Tutor relationship was that of trust. The fact that parents reported few difficulties in their relationship with their Home Tutors was one indication that this relationship was generally working well. A small number of parents made positive comments on their relationship with their Home Tutor. In the observation of four Home Tutor-parent sessions by the researcher, the Home Tutor was clearly accepted in the family home and had good communication with family members.

The Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor's approach was the closest of any of the Home Tutors to the procedures set out in the Coordinator's manual (Lombard et al., 1999). From the parents' comments on her careful and very organised method of operating, the researcher concluded that this was probably a factor in retaining some of the families, since the Vietnamese group lost fewer families at the half-way point.

The Line Manager noted that her position provided important continuity for the program when there were changes in Coordinator personnel. However, she also commented that continuity was similarly provided by the first Coordinator extending her employment longer than intended. There was also ongoing support for the program at senior levels in the Brotherhood of St Laurence, despite the decision of the Brotherhood to rely on external funding for this particular intake of families into the program.

10.4.3.3   In-house training of Home Tutors

The system of weekly in-house training, allied to the use of role play, was devised as a method of supporting paraprofessionals with no previous training (Lombard, 1994). The published HIPPY evaluation literature reviewed in Chapter 4 provided no examination of this process.

This study provides a critical illustration of how the system of in-house training meshed with other aspects of the program. The researcher attended 10 weekly training sessions led and facilitated by the third Coordinator, and noted that this system fulfilled its planned purpose of operationalising the program to a group of Home Tutors, who were then ready to deliver the program to parents. Critical issues in the conduct of these sessions were identified from these observations. These included the focus on the weekly lesson, minor adaptations of lesson material, the use of local materials, discussing ways of dealing with issues of language and culture, the use of role play, feedback on how parents and children were progressing, the identification of the skills which children were learning, and the importance of repetition. The success of these processes was further reflected in parents' positive comments on these aspects of the program. According to the third Coordinator, the introduction of monthly supervisory sessions further strengthened communication between the Coordinator and Home Tutors and probably led to some improvements in program implementation. It enabled the identification of the more personal issues in families which Home Tutors had to deal with and some program implementation variations that were affecting program quality. From the researcher's observation, this system also allowed for the ready incorporation of new Home Tutors into the program.

Lombard (1994) argued that the relationship between the Coordinator and Home Tutors, mainly developed through the weekly training, was an important one to the program's success. In terms of the program's structure, the significance of this relationship is understandable. The Home Tutor delivers the lesson to parents and an important part of the quality of that delivery relates to the Home Tutors' grasp of the lesson material and its underlying purposes. This links directly to the quality of the support and supervision provided by the Coordinator. Overall, what

most impressed the researcher in his observations of the in-house training was the highly detailed focus on how best to deliver the lesson, on what the children were learning in terms of skills and concepts, as well as the sense of good will and camaraderie within which this learning took place.

10.4.3.4 Role play method

Role play is the basic technique for teaching HIPPY activities in the in-house training of Home Tutors, Home Tutor-parent sessions and parent-child sessions. Lombard (1994) saw it as a particularly appropriate way for teaching disadvantaged parents how to teach, because of its experiential and action-oriented nature. It is not well researched in the HIPPY evaluation literature.

Parents said that they had no difficulties with the use of role play, with some commenting that it was an easy way of learning the material. This included situations where parents had difficulty with English yet needed to use Activity Sheets which were provided in English only. The researcher observed that role play provided a method of in-house training of Home Tutors which quickly incorporated new staff into the program. Some parents stated that this approach was very different from what they had experienced themselves in their own education, but that they were able to adapt to it and see it as an appropriate and enjoyable way to teach their children. They may have been less likely to identify initial difficulties because interviews were conducted at the end of the program. Overall, these findings are consistent with Lombard's (1994) claim for the value of role play.

10.4.3.5 Home visiting

A rationale for home visiting in HIPPY and other programs is that this approach is an effective one for changing family processes which may maintain disadvantage and is also a convenient one for parents (Gomby, 1999; Lombard 1994). Given its prevalence as a general aspect of a range of programs for disadvantaged families, the exact nature of the home visiting process has been surprisingly little studied.

Home visiting emerged in the present study as a convenient way of delivering the program from the parents' perspective, especially for those with younger children, who found it difficult to go out. Home visiting also was seen to be a more reliable way of engaging with parents than group meetings, where involvement for many of the families was more sporadic. This was related to the other commitments of parents, such as paid work and English classes, travelling time, and the difficulty of changing group meeting times. For the Somali-speaking families it was also related to different cultural practices. The difficulties in setting group

meeting times to suit all families can be contrasted with the relative ease of changing home visiting times when there are only two people (parent and Home Tutor) to be considered.

Overall this finding on the acceptability of home visiting is consistent with those of other studies of HIPPY, and home visiting programs generally; that is, that parents find home visiting a convenient method of program delivery (Lombard, 1994; Vimpani et al., 1996).

10.4.3.6   Group meetings

Group meetings were introduced into HIPPY to enable parents to articulate their role as successful educators of their children (Lombard, 1994). Though not studied in detail in the HIPPY literature, small group participation has also been identified more generally as an important element of an empowering approach to working with disadvantaged families (Gilley, 2001; Lombard, 1994).

From the parents' perspective in the present study, group meetings provided an important opportunity to learn from other parents through discussion of their children's progress in HIPPY, even for those who attended only a small number of meetings. It appears to have enriched parents' understanding of the program and to have increased the quality of parent-child lessons, through ideas gained from other parents. This communication appears to have been particularly strong in groups organised around a particular language and culture.

The findings of parents' views on the enriching experience of group meetings lends support to Lombard's (1994) rationale for group meetings as a complement to the use of home visiting.

10.4.4 Crucial factors in successful implementation of HIPPY

One way of distinguishing the relative importance of the interacting factors which explain program outcomes is to identify those which were crucial to the program and those which facilitated its delivery, but appeared to be less crucial. Three single factors can be suggested as particularly important to the program's success, on the basis that it could be reasonably concluded that the program would not have operated in a useful way without their influence.

One crucial factor was the existence of the program model and the support provided through the international arrangements. This finding lends support to the views expressed by the founder of HIPPY and former Director of HIPPY International, reported in Section 5.2.3, on the value of the system for supporting the development of new programs. Without this system, there would have been no program.

A second crucial factor can be considered to be the motivation of parents to initially engage with the program, combined with sufficient family stability to make the substantial commitment of time and energy required of them. Thus there needed to be a group of families with children who fitted the eligibility criteria of having a strong commitment to their child's education without necessarily an understanding of how to further it. This mirrors the insight of the founder of the program, reported in Section 4.1, that a broader context in which HIPPY operates is that of a problem in a social gap, where parents have high but potentially unrealistic educational expectations for their children and themselves. This in turn provides the motivation for the parents to participate. Another factor in the successful engagement of families in HIPPY was that families had sufficient financial, housing and emotional stability to participate in the program for at least a year, and sometimes two years. Even changes in location of parents sometimes meant the withdrawal of some families from the program. Severe family disadvantage and mobility have been identified as a factor in high attrition rates in a number of implemented HIPPY programs (Adams et al., 1992; Barhava-Monteith et al., 1999).

A third crucial factor was the abilities and commitment of the first and third Coordinators. They held the program together in the difficult establishment phase at the different levels of planning, training Home Tutors and responding to the needs of a linguistically and culturally diverse group of disadvantaged families. Without the quality of their leadership the program could well have failed. As noted in Section 4.1, Lombard argued that research has indicated that the Coordinator's performance explains most of the success or failure of HIPPY programs. While this claim may be overstating the point, the Coordinator's role did appear to be critical.

As discussed above, a number of other factors facilitated the program delivery and affected the longer-term shape of the program, though the program may well have succeeded without them (at least in the short-term). Whether these factors become critical to the national development of the program in Australia in the longer term remains to be seen. Further powerful factors in this study appeared to be the auspice organisation's existing expertise and services in the early childhood area, its involvement in a network of services, its expertise in and commitment to research, and its fundraising capacity. Another important factor was Victoria University's commitment to evaluating the program, which may have made a useful (though perhaps not major) impact on program quality, through ongoing researcher feedback to the program.

At the service delivery level, the capacity and commitment of Home Tutors, the quality of in-service training of Home Tutors and the importance of localism were all important issues. If the program for the second intake of families had relied only on home visiting, the original

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way in which the program was organised in Israel, then parents would have missed out on input from other parents in group meetings and the quality of the program would have been poorer. This is partly based upon what parents said they gained from these meetings. If it had relied upon a group meeting approach only then it is likely that a much smaller number of parents would have maintained a major involvement in the program, as low as one-third of the parents of the 33 children. This is reflected in the patterns of attendance at group meetings and the barriers to more regular attendance identified by parents and HIPPY staff.

In terms of the limited understanding about the nature of unsuccessful implementations of HIPPY from previous evaluations, several points of comparison with the present study can be made. Overall, the participant families in the present study were not so disadvantaged and/or mobile that they could not participate. Parents were also not ambivalent about their children succeeding in the dominant culture, so they were definitively and positively oriented to the program. An attrition rate of about 40 per cent (13 out of 33 children not completing all the program which was offered) was not unusually high for HIPPY programs (Adam et al., 1992; Burgon et al.1997) or for home visiting programs more generally (Daro & Harding, 1999). Difficulties in the implementation of the program in the North Melbourne location might in part be expected as this was a program in a new location with a new language/cultural group. This accords with the views held by the founder of the program (Lombard, personal communication, 1997).

10.5   Other research questions

As noted in Sections 1.2 and 6.1.2, the study posed four more specific questions that related to the possible future development of HIPPY in Australia.

a) Is HIPPY more successful for some groups of educationally disadvantaged families than others?

b) What are the implications of providing HIPPY programs in the multi-cultural context of Australia?

c) What are the implications of running the second year of the HIPPY program in the child's first year of schooling?

d) What are the lessons for future evaluations of HIPPY in Australia?

Answers to these questions have not been suggested by previous overseas reports of HIPPY. The findings are now discussed in relation to each of these questions.

10.5.1   Groups of families suited to HIPPY

The program was implemented taking a narrow definition of child educational disadvantage (parents with Year 12 or less of education). However, this evaluation identified that issues of language, culture and income were part of a broader notion of disadvantage for families. Indeed, this study has most to say about the suitability of the program to groups from a diverse range of cultures and language within a host culture. As noted in Chapter 4, most other HIPPY programs evaluated in previous research dealt either with people from the dominant language group in the country or from the one minority language group (Lombard, 1994).

Overall, the present study demonstrated that HIPPY has the capacity to be successfully implemented in Australia with families from multiple non-English speaking backgrounds. The three parents delivering the program from English-speaking backgrounds provided an indication that the program can work for them in a setting where most of the families were from different language and cultural backgrounds. Program staff, with the active involvement of parents, successfully adapted the basic program model to be relevant to children in families from a diverse range of language and cultural backgrounds. Both parents themselves and local providers of services considered parents had high aspirations for their children's education, but prior to HIPPY did not know how to become more involved. The program was seen to be highly relevant to parents' concerns about their children's unmet educational needs.

It was striking that Vietnamese-speaking families were the group most likely to complete the program. This appeared to be linked to a number of factors. They were the second intake of Vietnamese-speaking families into HIPPY, and the Vietnamese-speaking Home Tutor for the first intake of families had selected the Home Tutor for the second intake and supported her work. This Home Tutor was particularly conscientious in carrying out the program in the prescribed way and was also highly responsive to families' different situations. The families may also have been more comfortable than other non-English speaking families in the program in using their own language because they had the option of using it in their everyday lives outside the home (for example in shopping). They, along with the Somali-speaking families, had the children's stories translated into their own language with audio tapes also in both languages.

The other language groups had less involvement and their children appeared to gain less from the program. For the Somali-speaking families, this related to the facts that it was the first program with this group, that there was a longer delay in commencing program implementation because of changes in staff in the Coordinator's position and that it was in a new location. In addition the meeting space was not ideal, two of the families and the second Somali-speaking Home Tutor did not live locally, and there were families with younger children which made

program implementation more difficult. Lastly, there was a conflict between the Somali families' traditional way of dealing with time and the demands of the program for punctuality. The improved program delivery with later intakes of Somali families (reported by the Coordinator) suggests that the implementation of a program with a new group in a new location, and changes in staff in Coordinator personnel, were the most important factors.

For the four Hmong-speaking families, the main reason for not completing the two years of the program appears to have been the small number of participants from this community. This meant that the program was not offered in the second year. Other factors related to families being split between two locations, the program not coming to terms with the traditional approach of delegating responsibility of young children to older siblings and family relationships (two of the Home Tutors and another one of the participating families being sisters).

Only one of the Turkish-speaking parents receiving the program was a recent arrival to Australia. The interaction for all three Turkish-speaking mothers with their Home Tutor appears to have been strengthened by their relationship with her. Meetings were held at the Tutor's home and friendships developed among the three women. However this seems to have also led to lower participation in the group meetings. Further, when one of the families withdrew the other two also withdrew.

The small number of parents from English-speaking backgrounds limits any conclusion about the particular issues facing the program in working with this group in Australia. However, the three English-speaking parents, and the other five parents who spoke English 'very well', all reported that the program was relevant and important to them. Evaluations of programs established in other areas with Australian-born families will provide important data for the program's development in Australia with native English speakers.

This study illustrates that HIPPY is suited to families where parents have a strong interest in their child's education and a concern that their child may not achieve as highly as they are capable of. Parents probably otherwise would not participate in the program. However, once parents are engaged, the program has demonstrated that it has a developed a system for retaining and building upon this initial interest. Thus the reasons for families remaining involved appear to become increasingly tied to the positive experiences associated with the different program elements, such as the development of closer parent-child relationships and children's requests for lessons. Differences in intensity of parental motivation may partly explain why some of the 13 families left the program after 12 months whilst others stayed. However, parents' reasons for leaving were more complex than simple lack of interest or motivation. The lack of knowledge for most of the parents in the present study on how to support their child's education, detailed in parents' and local service providers' comments, suggests that parental motivation alone is

insufficient to promote these children's success at school. In other words, it is highly likely that involvement in the program, rather than parental motivation per se, which leads to positive educational outcomes for children.

10.5.2   Providing HIPPY in a multi-cultural context

Having demonstrated that the program can be successfully delivered in an Australian multi-cultural context, one might ask what lessons can be taken from the present study on how best to achieve this. Cultural and language issues are closely linked together and need to continue to be seen as two sides of the same coin. However, given the literacy base of the program, the language needs of parents must be given primary consideration. Issues of cultural sensitivities need to taken into account in the process of in-house training and supervision of Home Tutors who are close to the culture of other families.

Given the importance placed upon employing bilingual Home Tutors by many of the parents (and HIPPY staff), and the difficulties for parents where this was not the case, there is value in considering restricting entry to the program to those groups where this resource can be provided. This could be usefully extended to ensuring that all parents are provided with story books in both English and the parents' first language, and bilingual audio tapes of the stories. The parents valued these arrangements when present and reported difficulties when not in place.

As noted in Section 4.1, HIPPY in Israel was supported by the Government as part of an attempt to successfully integrate new and diverse communities into Israeli society (Lombard, 1994). There were indications in parents' comments in the present study of the value of HIPPY to settlement into a new country. Many of the parents indicated that not only was language a difficulty, but in addition they did not understand how education worked in Australia. The linking of parents with more knowledgeable parents (Home Tutors) from their own communities, who themselves were learning more about Australian institutions in their own training in the program, has obvious value in improving parental understanding of their new country. As noted by several parents, the group meetings also provided a forum where parents' understanding could be further enriched by questioning the Coordinator or guests invited to these meetings.

10.5.3   HIPPY as complementing the first year of school

HIPPY was developed as a preschool program in Israel, where children do not start school until they are six years of age (Lombard, 1994). The HIPPY materials are designed for four and five-year-olds, which in turn relates to children's general intellectual development. This was the reason that the second program was in the first year of compulsory schooling in Australia. In this study, parents of three of the children interpreted the program as a preschool

one and felt that the second year was unnecessary.

No significant operational difficulties were noted in terms of the program operating in the first year of schooling. As noted by the third Coordinator, the materials and activities in the second year of the program are largely repetitive of the concepts and activities introduced in the first year. There were concerns expressed by the third Coordinator and several Home Tutors that the materials and activities in the second year of the program were at times too easy, boring and repetitive.

However, parents of the 20 children reported that children undertaking HIPPY in their first year of school were willing to complete the lessons while attending school, with most being equally enthusiastic in both years. There was some conflict with doing HIPPY activities and homework, but these were usually minor and easily resolved. A small number of parents felt that the material in the second year was more relevant than the first year, because of similarities with what their children were learning at school. Others were concerned about what would replace HIPPY when the program finished. Most of the parents who withdrew after the first year said they would have liked to have had a second year of the program. This suggests there were no major difficulties for these families in providing the second year of the program in their children's first year of school.

The repetitive nature of the second year of HIPPY materials and activities lends itself to relatively easily developing one and two year modules of the program or some other combination. The fact that half the families attending the program in the Fitzroy location withdrew after the first year suggests that a one year program may attract some families who would be either unable or unwilling to complete a two-year program (without the stress or guilt of being seen to 'drop out' of the program). The Hmong-speaking families were a special case here as they were not offered the program in the second year. The fact that some families found the material too easy or too difficult in the second year also suggests some value in having accelerated or decelerated program modules.

The balance of evidence produced in the present study is, however, in favour of running a two-year program. Children who completed two years, rather than one year of the program, performed better on the researcher and teacher administered assessments. It is a reasonable conclusion that this difference can be substantially attributed to the different length of involvement, possibly due to the consolidation of the skills and conceptual understanding provided in a longer program. This is supported in the research findings from several studies of HIPPY that a higher intensity of involvement in HIPPY is related to more positive results for children (Baker et al., 1999; Eldering & Vedder, 1993)

10.5.4 Lessons for future evaluations

One of the limitations identified in HIPPY evaluation efforts in other countries to date has been the lack of any systematic approach, since relatively few implementations of HIPPY have been evaluated. At a national level, there are also benefits in ensuring that all programs are evaluated within a common framework in terms of the kinds of research questions posed in the present study. Further evidence that the program is able to achieve its goal of assisting children from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds is essential for justifying ongoing funding. An understanding of which children and families gain most from HIPPY will allow for improved targeting of families who might take part in the program. Improved knowledge of the relationship between program processes and program outcomes would enable further development and refinement of program implementation.

It is evident from the development of HIPPY in Australia, as well as overseas, that there will usually be different levels of resources for evaluating individual programs. A common evaluation framework for the program nationally might usefully identify data that all programs could collect without any additional outlay of research resources. This could include the following common elements, collected in a standardised way:

a) demographic data on families, to establish what kinds of families the program is attempting to serve;

b) assessment of the program by parents;

c) assessments of children's development in terms of initial abilities upon entering the program and abilities both during and at the end of the program; and

d) ongoing monitoring of program implementation processes.

A second level of evaluation might be to identify issues and questions of both individual program and general interest which could be undertaken with additional research resources. This would make the research relevant to the individual program provider as well as to contribute to the development of the program overall. It should include more in depth qualitative data from parents and Home Tutors, as well as feedback from children's teachers at preschools and schools.

A third level would be to undertake a major national evaluation study when HIPPY numbers across programs are sufficiently high to more clearly define the value of the program. Such a study should be quasi-experimental in nature, and might usefully consider comparison with other intervention programs. As in the present study, it should include different sources of assessments

to provide the benefits of triangulation, namely parental, teacher and direct assessment of children.

The present findings strongly suggest that a major focus in future studies should be on the experiences and views of parents. They are major players in this program and are arguably in the best position to report on lesson implementation and family change due to participation in the program and they are an important source of information on the value of the program for their children's education. Their experiences and views seemed to have been undervalued in most other evaluation studies of HIPPY.

A number of conclusions can also be drawn from the findings of the present study about the usefulness to future evaluations of HIPPY of the different research instruments used.

The *Who Am I?* test showed its relevance in this study. It differentiated children's abilities, was easy to administer, there are Australian normative data for comparison purposes, and it is well supported through the Australian Council of Educational Research (ACER). It is age appropriate for assessing children close to the point of entry into HIPPY and half way through the program where children enter school. A more advanced version of the assessment tool being developed by ACER might be used to assess children at the end of the program.

The *Literacy Baseline Test*, the *ACER Teacher Assessment of Progress in Reading* and *I can do maths* ... have similar advantages to *Who Am I?* and can be considered as appropriate measures of children's abilities at the relevant ages.

The *Gumpel Readiness Inventory* assesses similar abilities to that of the *BASE Scale*, with which it was highly correlated in this study, and is shorter than the *BASE Scale*. It has an additional advantage in that it is being considered as a measure to be used in HIPPY evaluations internationally and would thus allow for comparison across all HIPPY programs. It would be useful in future studies.

This study did not tap into children's own direct accounts of HIPPY for reasons outlined in Section 7.2.3.1. However, further investigation of research methods of obtaining direct feedback from children are warranted in future evaluations of HIPPY as a potential additional source of information.

10.6   Early childhood education for disadvantaged children

The findings of the present study are now further considered in relation to the underlying rationale for early childhood education programs identified in Section 3.1, namely addressing disadvantage and recognising the importance of the early years. This is followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to attempts to explain positive educational gains for children in other evaluation studies of early intervention.

10.6.1 Addressing educational disadvantage

The relationship between low socio-economic status (SES) and poorer educational outcomes is well established (Amato, 1987; Kagan, 1979; Smith & Carmichael, 1992). Also well established is that these disadvantages are exacerbated for low SES families in Australia when parents and children have poor English ability (Considine & Zappala, 2002; Taylor & Macdonald, 1998). On the basis of the low SES status and non-English speaking backgrounds of families in this study, it would be expected that as a group the children in both the HIPPY and non-HIPPY group would, without additional assistance, perform more poorly at school than other Australian children. This was illustrated in scores of the children in the Comparison Group who performed significantly below average Australian standards.

The nature of educational disadvantage was a major theme in this study. Parental concerns about their children's educational prospects also played an important role. The most significant initial factor in parents becoming involved in HIPPY was its relevance to their desire to enhance their child's education. From local service providers' and from parents' own accounts, the parents were highly motivated but did not know how to improve their children's education until HIPPY provided them with that knowledge and opportunity.

The third Coordinator and one of the parents argued, quite reasonably, that immigration to a new country and the change that that entails, combined with lack of parental and child skills in English, constituted a significant educational disadvantage, even for parents who had tertiary qualifications in their country of origin.

The exact nature of how family disadvantages translate into poorer educational outcomes is poorly understood and an issue of ongoing debate (Amato, 1987; Tizard & Hughes, 1986). The explanation that most resonated with this study's findings was the initial inability of families to support their high expectations for their children's education (Brown & Foster, 1983; Lombard, 1994). This was combined with particular issues concerning a lack of understanding of the educational system and how to support their children in it. Providers of local services expressed the view that the lack of background experience in mainstream culture for many of these children made it difficult for them to make sense of what they learnt at school.

A further issue for families in this study was the extent to which lack of English ability was an educational disadvantage. Parents' difficulties with English language appeared to have served as a hindrance to children's educational prospects, because of the inability of parents to understand and interpret to the child the nature of the broader culture outside the family home.

10.6.2   The importance of early learning for overall development

The importance for later development of learning in the early years has been a strong claim from developmentalists (Fleer, 2002; McCain & Mustard, 1999). While this was not tested in the present study, what four and five-year-old children were able to gain through their involvement in HIPPY in this study does illustrate children's capacity to learn at this early age. Children appeared to be keen to learn when provided with age appropriate stimulating activities delivered by the parent, and they clearly benefited from such activities.

There is also supporting evidence of the strong links between early and long-term educational disadvantage (Hobbs, 1975; Keogh et al., 1986; Karoly et al., 1998). On this basis, it would be expected that children in the Comparison Group would be likely to continue to perform relatively poorly at school whilst children in HIPPY would have better long-term educational prospects.

However, as noted in the earlier literature review it is also important to not overstate the importance of learning in the early years. Effects of early stimulation on brain development are yet to be clarified through empirical studies, although the adverse effects of severe deprivation have been verified (Bruer, 1999). There is also evidence that later educational interventions with children can be effective in enhancing development (Flint et al,, 1974; Peterson, 1994). Perhaps the best results for children are to be found from good quality early intervention followed by high quality schooling experiences (Reynolds & Temple, 1998). Thus the ongoing contexts in which children in the present study learn have important implications for their longer term educational achievement and it would be unreasonable and inaccurate to rest all claims for these children's future educational prospects on whether or not they received HIPPY.

10.6.3   Explanations of evaluation findings

The present research constitutes a case study of a good quality intervention with demonstrated short-term benefits, especially for those who completed the full two years of the program. In this sense, the findings support the replicability of HIPPY in Australia. The same goals as set for the international program appear to be relevant to Australian families. Parents identified that they did want their child to succeed in education, but often lacked the means to do it. They also found HIPPY to be a helpful way to do it.

This implementation of HIPY also fits well with the general features of good quality programs identified in Section 3.2.3. These include starting the program early in the child's life, being intensive over a substantial period of time, having high adult-child ratios and adequate training and supervision of staff, providing services to both parents and children, empowering

parents, and working in partnership with other services (McLoughlin & Nargorcka, 2000). The intervention also provides an illustration of a two-year program producing better outcomes than a one-year intervention. The program could be seen as empowering for families on the basis that it engaged parents in their direct interests, their child's education, and used a small group process for the articulation and thinking through of issues.

In common with other home visiting programs, HIPPY showed a relatively high drop out rate from completion of the program as offered (13 out of 33 families left). Nethertheless, the HIPPY model was found to be a strong one in this well implemented program. It required parents who were very motivated to help their children to succeed in their education and who had sufficient financial, housing and emotional stability to remain involved. Major benefits for children were linked to a two year involvement. Family differences in language and culture appeared to present no barrier to success in the program, and recent immigration appeared to have formed an important part of parental motivation to participate. Improvements in parent-child relationships, a finding of the present study, have been identified as an indicating that positive program outcomes for children are likely (Gomby, 1999).

There were some distinct advantages in bringing in this international model into Australia in terms of the program's structure, its provision of educational materials and lessons and the support and practice wisdom provided by the international body. The scope for program adaptability to the local context appeared to be part of the reason for the success of the program implementation. The disadvantages tended to be on the periphery, such as the inappropriateness of using United States based texts (which are being addressed). However, it is too early in the program in Australia to make a final judgement on this issue in relation to HIPPY, nor can this research advise on the issue of bringing in of overseas models more generally.

Nevertheless, a number of caveats arise in considering the longer term viability of HIPPY in Australia. The number of participating families was small. Even here, over one-third of the families used only about half of the program that was offered, suggesting that two years may be too great an effort for substantial numbers of families. HIPPY does require a substantial commitment of time and energy from parents and it may never be appropriate for those who lack the emotional and financial/housing stability. Moreover, it worked in this evaluation with parents who were motivated and who had time to be involved in their child's education,. This evaluation says nothing about engaging other groupings of parents. Lastly, it is beyond the terms of this research to assess the value of HIPPY over other locally developed educational programs.

The findings from this study are further considered in a broader theoretical and service context in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 11

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS IN A THEORETICAL AND SERVICES CONTEXT

This chapter discusses the present study's findings in relation to the theoretical and Australian services contexts identified in earlier chapters. It includes the further development of the conceptual model of how HIPPY works proposed by Baker et al. (1999).

A consideration of theoretical and practical contexts is used to enhance understanding of the findings of the present study and highlight areas where it would be helpful to have an improved theoretical understanding of how children learn.

11.1 The theoretical context

As noted in Section 6.2, theories about how children learn can provide further insights into how early childhood education programs such as HIPPY can best perform.

While children's thinking naturally proceeds from simpler to more complex forms with maturation, intellectual development has been considered to be not purely a biological process, but dependent upon environmental stimulation (Gray, 1987; Vygotsky, 1962; Tizard & Hughes, 1986). The importance of intensive adult-child relationships in early learning (Gray, 1987; Vygotsky, 1962) is illustrated in this research. In HIPPY, a program which supported one to one adult-child learning relationships, children made significant educational gains.

It is a truism to note that parents are children's first teachers. This research provides an illustration of a program which consciously augmented parents' capacity to undertake this role in a way in which they were engaged with the child's ongoing education outside the home. The success of the exercise was indicated both in assessment of gains in children's abilities and in parents' identification of improved relationships with their children. An additional factor was as improved engagement with the children's education.

The importance of intensive adult-child relationships to learning in the early years also offers an explanation of the limitations of programs in preschools and in the first few years of primary schooling which attempt to overcome early childhood educational disadvantage. The size of the group of children in both preschools and schools restricts the capacity of teachers to provide intensive communication with individual children, and the teacher-child communication

difficulties are exacerbated where there are barriers of language and culture (Lombard, 1994; Tizard & Hughes, 1986).

Involvement of families in HIPPY in the present study appears to have narrowed what Brown and Foster (1983) refer to as the gap between the culture of the school and home. This occurred through improving parents and children's English ability, increasing parents' understanding of the education system in Australia and increasing parents' direct involvement in their children's learning.

At a different level, theory concerning multi-cultural issues is also relevant. Culture is a dynamic process rather than an unchanging set of behaviours and beliefs, especially for recent immigrant groups who have a strong interest in succeeding in the new environment (Bryam et al., 1994). Perhaps the greatest value of a program such as HIPPY is that it provides an opportunity for parents to better promote success for their children in one of the major institutional systems in Australia, the education system. This important point of improved engagement for families also points to the potential value of HIPPY for overseas born families with young children in their resettlement process in Australia. In terms of its program elements, HIPPY can be seen as being particularly responsive to cultural differences in an ongoing way. It employs workers from these different cultures and it builds on cultural adaptation to the program through its weekly in-house training systems. This understanding of the role of cultural issues in HIPPY also provides an explanation why implementations have been less successful with families who are ambivalent about the values of the mainstream culture (Eldering & Vedder, 1993; Burgon et al, 1997).

Acquisition of a second language has been identified as a potential stimulus to children's cognitive development, but there is uncertainty about the best way of teaching a second language. This uncertainty has focused upon whether children need to become competent in their own language before learning a second language (Cummins & Swain, 1986; McKay et al., 1997). The general conclusion from research into this issue has been that the degree of competence in home language required is difficult to define, as it ultimately depends upon family and community contexts (Cummins, 1984a). This has obvious implications for how language diversity is best dealt with in early childhood education, in the sense of whether education is best delivered in the minority or mainstream language.

Instead of opting exclusively for either English or the parents' home language, HIPPY in the present study provided a variable mixture of both. This highly responsive approach to the

difficult issue of second language acquisition allowed many of the families to determine the appropriate levels of English and home language for themselves. This flexibility may partly explain the success of the program with a linguistically diverse group of families.

At a broader level, Bronfenbrenner's (1986; 1991) ecological theory offers a way of conceptualising the forces which impinge on children in this study in more complex ways than simple looking at included children, family circumstances or cultural factors. In Vygotsky's (1962) terms, it is the historical child participating in a transferring of culture. The mediating elements between broader societal forces and the family which can be identified in this study include the effects of locality and the effects of belonging (for most of the families) to a network of people from the same language/cultural group. Another manifestation of these broader influences, the services context, is now discussed.

11.2 Services context

As noted in Section 6.2, the nature of the services and income support provided to families was considered to be potentially important for understanding aspects of program implementation and its future development in Australia. The auspice organisation and the evaluator were part of this practical context.

Australian society provides a social support system to families of universal and targeted services, and income payments for parents who are not in paid work or are in very low-paid work. This system of support was evident in the lives of families in both the HIPPY and non-HIPPY groups and made it possible for the former to participate successfully. Families in HIPPY had sufficient financial, housing and emotional stability to take part in the program. Financial support for these families included low-paid work, government provisions of income support and subsidised public rental housing. When HIPPY families moved location during this study it was usually part of a conscious decision in the direction of improvement, rather than a forced move.

The existence of a locally strong system of health, welfare and education services in inner Melbourne (Gilley, 1994; Gilley & Taylor, 1995) also meant that the program evaluated here could operate successfully without needing to provide these additional kinds of support services to families as part of the program. This contrasted with the situation in the United States where a much poorer general system of services required Head Start programs to provide direct non-educational assistance so that families could better participate in educational activities (Ochiltree, 1999). The task of HIPPY in the present study was rather to ensure that families were

linked in to existing services when appropriate. The importance of this was highlighted by the findings of other local research that some low income families were missing out on these services in the early years (Gilley, 1993; Taylor, 1997). For example, in the present study it was confirmed that HIPPY staff checked that parents had enrolled their four-year-olds in preschool and were linked to primary schools. HIPPY emerged as an important additional form of assistance targeted at disadvantaged families, who were linked into a generally good system of universal provision (Harris, 1990).

The strong network of services in early childhood provided important support for the introduction of the program, especially in terms of assistance in recruitment of families. In the longer term, the cooperation of these agencies in supporting the program would appear to be an essential ingredient, not only in recommending the program to families, but also in developing joint and reinforcing activities with these other services. From the comments of these local providers, and their role as recruiters of families, the program had successfully enlisted this cooperation.

There has been an increased interest in recent years in early childhood education targeted at disadvantaged children in Australia (Fleer, 2002), although this interest has yet to be translated into any major funding commitments by government. At this early stage of development HIPPY is still mostly reliant on private funding sources. Government funding at the Victorian State level is problematic, as different government departments in the State of Victoria are responsible for preschool and schools. This complicates the process of seeking government financial support for HIPPY, as it requires working with senior levels of both departments. In addition there is a funding crisis for four-year-old preschools in Victoria. This may mean a higher Government spending priority on preschools than on targeted programs such as HIPPY on the basis that preschools are a universal service to families with young children (Kirby & Harper, 2001).

At the Federal level, a barrier to financial support for HIPPY, and other programs with similar purposes, is the current priority given to the provision of child care. Here the focus is on the employment needs of families rather the unmet educational needs of young children. Further, the historical (and artificial) division between providing child care and education services in the early childhood years in Australia allows these services to be compartmentalised, rather than integrated in the conceptualisation of government policies.

Consideration of the nature and role of education in Australia emphasises the potential importance of early childhood education in terms of promoting equality of opportunity; what

some have termed a level playing field. Children who start school at a disadvantage are likely to continue to underachieve throughout their schooling, with educational failure linked in the longer term to poorer employment and income earning capacity outcomes (Travers, 2000). A more integrated governmental approach to policy and funding responsibilities in the early childhood area is needed in order to enhance the educational possibilities for disadvantaged children.

11.3   The role of HIPPY and its future contribution

The role of HIPPY is further considered in Figure 7 on page 223, which builds upon the conceptual model of HIPPY of Baker et al. (1999, see Figure 2 on page 30).

Viewing Figure 7 from left to right, the model takes it's starting point as the ideal program model, namely that provided by Lombard et al. (1999, outlined in Section 4.3). This leads to an amended implementation which may vary considerably from that envisaged in the standard model. In this study the response to the multi-language/cultural context was a major area of adaptation. As with Baker et al.'s (1999) model, participation in the program leads to changes in the family environment and the child acquiring specific skills and becoming a more confident learner which in turn lead to higher school performance outcomes. Figure 7 then draws upon the evidence from other studies of the link between early school performance to later educational and broader outcomes to complete the causal chain (for example, Travers, 2000), although later outcomes were not tested in the present study.

Figure 7 then adds other influences on the program to Baker et al.'s (1999) conceptual model, acknowledging that any implementation of HIPPY is helpfully considered as more than an interaction between a program model and families.

The nature of the process by which adults teach children was identified in the work of Vygostky (1962) as operating in the child's Zone of Proximal Development, and elaborated in the work of others such as Gray (1987). However, these processes are still poorly understood. Intensive case studies of the process by which adults teach their young children would have value in increasing understanding of and improving methods for teaching in HIPPY and other early childhood education programs.

The processes by which family disadvantages are translated into poorer educational outcomes for children are similarly little understood, despite the insights reviewed earlier. These processes are further complicated by issues posed by the different mix of cultural and language backgrounds which are a major aspect of multi-cultural Australia.

Figure 7. Elaborated conceptual framework of HIPPY

HIPPY International involvement

Auspice organisation

Services and support systems/ local communities

Standard program model

Amended program implemented

Home learning environment
- parent as teacher
- family literacy

Child school readiness skills and learning confidence

Child school performance outcomes

Longer term numeracy and literacy skills, education and employment outcomes

More needs to be understood about the nature of these processes if equality of educational opportunity is ever to become an achievable national goal. The development of HIPPY in Australia would gain from and contribute to further insights here and contribute to such a goal.

Bronfenbrenner's (1986; 1991) emphasis on the importance of macro and micro systematic influences, and the influence of period and place, provide an important basis for considering the relevance of the present study results to the future of HIPPY in Australia. It can be expected that the influences identified in this study's findings will inevitably be different in evaluations of future implementations of HIPPY. Families with different language and cultural circumstances will become involved in the program, there will be changes in the provision of other services to families and HIPPY processes will evolve and change. The program as evaluated in this study has demonstrated its adaptive capacity to the multi-cultural context of Australia at the beginning of the new century. The test of its future value will be in the sensitivity and relevance with which it is responsive to future change.

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APPENDIX I

RESEARCH DIARY EXTRACTS

Example one: 12 March 1999

Met with the Brotherhood of St Laurence Line Manager, HIPPY program, with the following issues discussed.

a) Second Coordinator has resigned. This puts the program in a vulnerable position because of her established relationships with mothers she's recruiting for the intake this year. It will delay the program by at least several weeks.

b) The first Coordinator to increase her hours to cover both first and second intake until full-time coordinator appointed. The advertisement is in Saturday's Age 13 March 1999, with interview for Friday week 26 March 1999.

c) My meeting with Home Tutors will be after the coordinator is appointed in an unspecified number of week's time.

Example two: 25 May 1999

Meeting with Home Tutors for the first time. The purpose of this meeting is to provide a brief introduction to the research and to allow the home tutors to ask any questions. In discussion with the third Coordinator, we thought it would take about 15 minutes of their time. It was planned that they will discuss my coming to their meeting in mid June, either for the whole meeting or the last part depending on how they feel, on the principle that the research should not have an adverse impact on the program. I indicated my preference for as much contact with the program as possible and thus for me to attend the whole meeting. Met seven home tutors, all very friendly and enthusiastic. All but one will be working with the new intake only and two will be working on both the first and second intake.

Example three: 14 September 1999

Attended another training session of the Home Tutors. However the coordinator was sick and the Home Tutors decided to spend their time on year 5 material only so I didn't stay for that. I did however encourage them to do something, suggesting that they were competent to do it themselves. I got some feedback later from the Line Manager that this encouragement had been much appreciated and the home tutors had appreciated it.

Example four: 4 November 1999

    Went to a zoo trip attended by Hmong-speaking parents and 13 children, most of them 4 and 5 year olds in the program, and including the four Hmong-speaking children in my research. I got to meet them, to know their names and met their parents. I think I developed some rapport with the parents, they know who I am. I also believe I established better communication with the third Coordinator as we worked together, mainly helping out with directions at the zoo as I've been there quite often with my own children. The trip also reminded me of how different the Hmong-speaking families are in terms of the way they look, their language and presumably also the way they think about things, which are issues I need to explore.

Example five: 6 March 2000

    Spoke to one of the three volunteers with the HIPPY program. I found this a very interesting interview, especially as she had worked at the Fitzroy Primary School in the late 60s and had identified the same issues for immigrant children then as for the children in HIPPY, except she was talking about Greek and Italian families and now it's Vietnamese and Somali families and Hmong-speaking families. The main issue for her was the cultural gap between home and school. She had some interesting insights into what made the program work, things she felt the program had to offer for families from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Example six: 15 November 2000

    Interviews with parents proceeding slowly but in a satisfactory matter. The use of interpreters has improved the depth at which questions can be explored with parents with limited English ability. The method of recording responses was developed to include notes of discussion, a summary of main points immediately after the interview, the completion of a set form to cover demographic, immigration, language, and patterns of participation in HIPPY issues, and verbatim transcripts of the interviews from audio tapes.

APPENDIX II

ISSUES COVERED IN SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The main groups of stakeholders were: HIPPY staff, other Brotherhood of St Laurence

staff, local providers of services and parents (see interview guide in Appendix III).

The two main points covered in interviews with participants were as follows.

a) What has been your contact with HIPPY?

b) What are your views of HIPPY?

The points to be covered were those selected from the following list, according to interviewee's involvement in the program in the two areas of understood aspects of the program and potential effects brought about by involvement in the program.

Understood aspects of the program

a) Parents delivering the lesson

b) Home visiting

c) Group meetings

d) Enrichment activities

e) Nature of educational materials

f) Recruitment of families

g) Two year program

h) First and second years

i) Localism

j) Role play

k) Language and culture

l) Role of coordinator

m) International linkages

n) Brotherhood of St Laurence involved

o) Home tutor from similar background

p) Role of other children/ only child

q) Role of spouse

Potential effects of program for child

a) Better at school

b) More confident

c) Improved English

d) Better concepts

e) Problem solving

f) Reading

g) Fine motor skills

h) Everyday life

i) Any negatives

j) Other

Potential effects of the program for parent

a) Improved English

b) More comfortable in Australia

c) Made friends with other families

d) Sense of loss in program ending

Potential effects of the program for parent-child relationship

a) Improved relationship

b) Child helps at home

c) Child more responsive

d) Parent involved in child's learning/home work/ pride of parent

e) More time together/sharing

f) Any negatives

Parent-school relationship

a) More knowledgeable of school system

b) More involved in school

c) More confident in dealing with school

APPENDIX III

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN ENROLLED IN HIPPY

Preamble

The purpose of the research is to get an understanding of HIPPY, what works and doesn't work in HIPPY and how it works. So we are not looking for just a good story about HIPPY but we want to understand HIPPY from all points of view

Questions

1. How did you first hear about HIPPY?
2. Why did you decide to do HIPPY?

3. What have you liked best about HIPPY?
4. What have you got out of it? (CHECK: improved English, more knowledge of Australian education/schools, changed relationship with child's teacher, more self confidence)
5. What did your child like best about HIPPY?
6. What has your child got out of it? (CHECK: is child doing better at school, more self confident, helps more at home)
7. In comparison with other children, would you say that your child at school was doing:
8. worse than average;
9. average; or
10. better than average.

11. Have there been parts of the program you have found difficult?
12. What ones?
13. In what way? (CHECK: whether HIPPY role-play approach was in line with their cultural expectations of education)

14. Has HIPPY changed your relationship with your child in any way?
15. In what way? (CHECK: whether parent would describe the relationship as improved, closer? If difficulty understanding question, say: 'in research on HIPPY some parents say it has led to a closer relationship, and some say it has not. Which is true for you'?)

16. How did you feel about the Home Tutor visiting your home?

17. Did you like it?

18. In what way?

19. Did it cause any difficulties?

20. In what way?

21. What did you think about the group meetings?

22. What did you like best? (CHECK: socialise with other parents, exchange views on the program with other parents, other activities such as enrichment activities, zoo trips etc)

23. Were there any difficulties with it?

24. Were you able to attend on a regular basis? If not, what were the difficulties here?

25. How would you compare group meetings with home visits?

26. Which was better? Why?

27. Tell me about doing the lessons with your child?

28. What did you like best?

29. What did you think of the materials and activities? (CHECK: too easy or too hard?)

30. What do you think of the way the lessons are taught (ie role play)

31. Were there any difficulties for you? CHECK: younger children demanding attention, older children jealous and interrupting.

32. Did anyone in your family help with the lessons?

33. Who helped? How did they help? How important was that help? (CHECK: whether older children and older children helped?)

34. What do you think of the $1 per week charge for HIPPY materials?

FOR PEOPLE FROM NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING BACKGROUNDS

35. Did you have difficulties with the English language? (PROMPT: Was it a problem having the activities in English?)

36. What were these difficulties? How did they affect you?

37. How much did you speak to your Home Tutor in English and how much in your own language. How much did you speak to your child in English and how much in your own language? (CHECK: if this changed during program.)

FOR THE 20 FAMILIES WHO COMPLETED SOME LESSONS IN BOTH THE
FIRST AND SECOND YEAR OF THE PROGRAM

38. Was the second year different from the first year of the program?

39. In what ways?

40. Was it harder or easier to do the lessons with your child?

41. What was the effect of your child being at school and doing HIPPY?

42. How did it fit in with your child's homework?

43. Did your child have the same level of interest/enthusiasm for the lessons?

44. How well do you think your child is doing at school?

ON COMPLETING THE PROGRAM

45. How did you feel about completing HIPPY? (CHECK: parents and children's
reaction, whether parents felt it was the right length of time or will leave gap in their
lives.)

FOR PARENTS WHO DID NOT COMPLETE THE OFFERRED PROGRAM

46. Why did you leave the program?

47. How did you feel about that? (CHECK: how child felt about it?)

48.What do you think of he $1 per week charge for HIPPY lessons?

49. Is there anything else you would like to say about HIPPY?

Table 22

Parental data collection form

ID NO.	
Date of birth of child	
Gender of child	
Name of parent interviewed/gender/age	
Two parent family or sole parent	
Name of other parent/gender/age	
Number of children	
Name of any other children/ages	
Name of older child if helps deliver lesson	
Location of parents/ whether moved in two years	
Mother's education level	
Father's education level	
Mother's language(s)	
Mother speaks English	Very well/ well/ not well/ not at all
Father speaks English	Very well/ well/ not well/ not at all
Mother's years in Australia/Country of origin	
Father's years in Australia/Country of origin	
Child's primary school/ contact details	
Child's teacher's name	
Number of children in class	
Type of school	Catholic/ State/ Muslim/ Other
Same school next year, or change school	
Attended kindergarten?	
For families enrolled in HIPPY ONLY	
Number of HIPPY lessons completed by child	
Month/year of last lesson	
Number of group meetings attended?	
Name of Home Tutor(s)/ for which periods	

APPENDIX IV

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW AND INTERVIEW SUMMARY WITH ONE
OF THE PARENTS OF A CHILD ENROLLED IN HIPPY

Interview No. 1: Cantonese Interpreter, 9 November, 2000

Researcher	The purpose of the research is to get an understanding of HIPPY, what works and doesn't work in HIPPY and how it works. So we are not looking for just a good story about HIPPY but we want to understand HIPPY from all points of view which is why we are doing the interviews with the parents. Could you just tell me first of all about how you first heard about HIPPY?
Parent	I received some information in the mailbox and I telephoned here to express my interest in the program.
Researcher	And why did you make the phone call? Why did you decide for find out more?
Parent	Because we came from non-English background and it is hard for us to teach our children and so I am very interested in institutions which will help to teach our children.
Researcher	So if you had been in Hong Kong or another Cantonese speaking country, do you think you would have gotten involved in HIPPY or was it mainly because it was the language difference?
Parent	I think even if I am in my own country I would still be interested to join in programs like HIPPY because I am not a teacher myself and I do know how to teach my children and I understand that small children they are very curious and very keen to learn.
Researcher	Thank you. Speaking about your experience in HIPPY, what have you liked best about it?
Parent	I think the reading program because of the language problem, I think that the reading program helped my daughter a great deal.
Researcher	Helped her to read English do you mean?
Parent	Yes, reading in English and also the program has helped my daughter to cultivate an interest in what she is reading and it helps her to understand what the book said and if it's not for the program then she might just be reading without doing the activities and she might not be able to make connections about the things.
Researcher	Is this because in the HIPPY program you read the story but then you talk about the story with your child?
Parent	Yes, with the program I can now talk more to my child and it's improved our communication. We not only talk about the daily activities at home but we talk about learning as well.
Researcher	OK. Is there anything else that you child has gotten out of HIPPY apart from the reading and the learning from the reading?
Parent	She's now more interested in learning. Before she joined the program she's only interested in playing but now that she knows that learning is good I think it is good for her to cultivate this interest in learning since she's young.
Researcher	Good. Now what have you got out of the program yourself?
Parent	I learn English myself. I think the program helps me build up a role model for my child and my child now sees me as a teacher and she understands that as a parent I too am serious in learning and set a good example for her.
Researcher	Good. Do you think in the program you child has learnt, her involvement in the program has made a difference in terms of how she goes at school?
Parent	I think it has made a great difference.
Researcher	In what way?
Parent	The program has helped my child understand instructions at school and because

	she's familiar with the learning environment she can listen to the teacher better and she settles in better, because she is familiar with the learning environment that's why she can take initiative in learning. I think my child settles better in the school environment because of the things she has learnt in HIPPY. Because at home we don't speak English and there's a lot of differences between the Chinese and English language. If she is going to a learning environment which everybody only speaks English, she might not be about to settle in very quickly but with HIPPY that has helped her a lot.
Researcher	How well do you think your child is going at school? Would you say she is doing better than average or about average or worse than average in terms of the other children in the class?
Parent	I think better than average.
Researcher	I did the testing with your daughter and I thought she was doing better than average at school too.
Parent	With reading the school has different levels and for Prep it was level 10 but my daughter is now at level 21 or 22.
Researcher	What do you think she likes best in HIPPY?
Parent	I think she likes the reading part most. Now she would pick up a book to read and she enjoys the activities too. Like the one which she pretends to be a frog and jump. She also enjoys the programs where we take turns to do things.
Researcher	OK. When you said there were a lot of things that you like about HIPPY and she likes about HIPPY, is there any part of the program where you have had difficulty with?
Parent	I think the difficulties is in understanding English for me and there are also parts in the program which might be too easy for my daughter and I have to give her a push to join in those activities.
Researcher	With the English, how difficult has it been for example the instructions are in English, aren't they, how hard has that been?
Parent	There are some instructions that I don't understand but then my child understands and I ask the child to explain to me and after the explanation I would think about it, if that's alright for me then use a dictionary to find out what the instruction is in English. It's quite difficult for me.
Researcher	Yes, would you say that the language problems you have been able to overcome or have there been times when it's been too hard?
Parent	I think I can overcome the language problems, either by using the dictionary or by asking.
Researcher	Is there anyone else that helps with the lessons besides yourself?
Parent	No
Researcher	Not at the moment, OK. Your daughter is your only child, isn't she, I just wanted to check. Do you think that the HIPPY program and doing HIPPY with your daughter, has changed your relationship with her in any way?
Parent	In the past my daughter used to complain that I didn't know English but now she sees me as a teacher and she understands that I too know a lot of things and so her parent is not bad and that has helped our relationship and because we spend time to learn together our relationship became close and now she understands that her parent is great but in the past complains that I didn't know English and I would say that I know Chinese, do you know Chinese?
Researcher	Has involvement in HIPPY helped your relationship with your child's school?
Parent	I think if has just helped me to understand the school system more. Before I was

	involved in the HIPPY program I didn't know anything about the Australian education system, but now I would ask my child what she has learnt at school and I would ask her to repeat what she has learnt at school and in that way I understand the school system better.
Researcher	When you were doing HIPPY did you visit the school before? No? Right. So it's mainly through talking to your daughter that you learnt about the school? OK, thank you. I just wanted to go back to the question of language, when you do the HIPPY lessons with your daughter do you, like when you are doing the reading, do you do that mainly in Cantonese or mainly in English or a mixture?
Parent	Mainly in English. If my daughter asks me a question I would sometimes try to explain to her in Chinese if she didn't understand my Chinese explanation then I would use an English dictionary and read out the explanation in English to her and ask her whether she understands or not. Sometimes I myself would not understand what is said in the dictionary but my daughter did so I let it go.
Researcher	And is the Home Tutor lesson with you in English or mainly in Cantonese?
Parent	Because my Home Tutor doesn't speak Chinese that's why the training is in English.
Researcher	OK, thank you. You were talking about the changes in relationship with your daughter, does that make any difference also about what she does in the house and how she does things, does she help you more in the house now because of this change in the relationship. Some of the mothers in the first intake of HIPPY said that their children were now helping more because of HIPPY or was there no change for you in that way?
Parent	In my case, there is not much change because my daughter is my only child so it is always been bad if I ask her to do something, most of the time she will do it.
Researcher	I now want to ask you some questions about particular bits of HIPPY and what your views on them are and starting off with the home tutor visiting your home. How did you feel about the Home Tutor visit your home?
Parent	Quite good. For me it doesn't matter whether the Home Tutor came to our place or we go to the home tutor's place. The most important thing is that I can learn the teaching method from the Home Tutor.
Researcher	Right, so in the teaching method which they use as role play, how have you found that?
Parent	Because it is more interesting for the children.
Researcher	Why?
Parent	I was making comparison with the traditional Chinese teaching method which is to write things on the blackboard and the students would seek the information but with this program they are playing, involve in the activities and that makes it more interesting for the children. Sometimes the children may not want to listen to their parents and if there's a home tutor then there is something new for them.
Researcher	What you were saying about how it is different, the way of learning in HIPPY to the traditional way, was that hard for you in the beginning to teach in that way because it was different?
Parent	It's not too hard for me because I think I can follow the instructions and with the information provided I can manage. If I were to teach my child by myself without the program I would be at a loss and the traditional Chinese way of teaching is rather rigid but this program makes the children think a lot.
Researcher	OK, thank you. Now talking about the group meetings in the program, they attend a group every other week, with the other parents, what do you think of the

	group meetings, how have you found the group meetings?
Parent	I think these meetings are good because parents share their experiences and they talk about their problems, although I might not face the same problems it helps me to understand what problems there might be and we all try to help one another to solve the problem and in that way I think it helps us to improve our standard of teaching our children and we learn together.
Researcher	OK thank you. When you did the group meetings, did you also do some enrichment activities like trips or visiting other places?
Parent	Yes, that has been organised last year when my daughter was four before she entered the Prep, there would be meetings of parents to visit different schools.
Researcher	And did you go onto any of those?
Parent	Not on that occasion because at that time I had to attend an English class myself but if I were free I think it is good to attend these activities because it helps the parents to understand the school system better.
Researcher	You say then about doing English class, could you tell me a bit about the English classes you do and did you become involved in any of the English classes because of HIPPY or was it something else, some other reason you got involved?
Parent	I've been learning English even before I joined the HIPPY program because I was aware of that my English standards are not that good. The mainly difficulties in learning English I find is the understanding and the speaking part and also I think when I try to understand English in the Chinese way of thinking that creates difficulty but with the program it helps us to understand English in the English way and it helps me.
Researcher	How much has HIPPY helped with English and how much is it the English classes, I mean is it 70% English classes and 30% HIPPY or how much?
Parent	I think the HIPPY classes helped me more than 90% because I find the program easy to learn and for example in the book then I would understand everything except maybe for a paragraph or a few words so I find that to be easier then the English class because what is taught in the English class it might not be easy to understand and sometimes I don't remember what has been taught.
Researcher	Is it helpful in the reading that you have the English and the Cantonese together? In the books what they have is they have the English and then they have the translation. Not in Chinese, in the other languages. Good. Would it be helpful to have that?
Parent	In a way yes because I don't have to use the dictionary, but I find in my case using the dictionary would actually help me more because the words that are in the program are simple and they are useful and I think without the translation in the book it would help a parent more.
Researcher	And with the instructions would it be helpful for you to have the instructions in Cantonese as well as English or Cantonese instead of English?
Parent	I think that it's good to have both Cantonese and English instruction but I don't think it is a good idea to have the Cantonese instructions only.
Researcher	Why is that?
Parent	Because if the instructions are only in Cantonese then only the parent would understand the instructions. It's not good for the child because if the child can only understand Cantonese then that wouldn't help them to learn English at school.
Researcher	Now changing a bit, I wanted for ask you a few questions about the first year of the program versus the second year of the program. So in the first year your

	daughter was in kindergarten and in the second year she was in school. Was it different doing it the second year because she was in school and she had homework and things like that?
Parent	Not much different I would say except that maybe in the first year my daughter is more patient and more keen in the program. In the second year she is not as patient maybe because of the homework that she has to do and sometime I was trying to read the instructions and she would say let me read it and she's not following the steps as closely as in the first year. But now that she knows that this is the last year of the program she became unhappy because she wants to continue with this program and sometimes she would ask me to, if she could do the Home Tutor homework.
Researcher	So how do you feel about the program ending?
Parent	I would like it to continue if possible.
Researcher	So what sort of gaps does it leave in terms of the things you do with your daughter?
Parent	What do you mean?
Researcher	What I was trying to get out was you were saying how you would like HIPPY to continue and how your daughter has asked if it can continue. I am trying to understand since HIPPY won't be happening next year, I am trying to understand what gap or what will be missing from not doing HIPPY. I mean for example do you do your homework with your daughter, is that similar or is it different?
Parent	Well I think there would be a difference because the work would not be done as systematically as when we have got the program and I wouldn't be spending as much time with my daughter, with homework, because I might not be able to understand what the work is involved and that's why I wouldn't be involved as much.
Researcher	Would you feel confident enough now to talk to the teacher about those sorts of issues to help you to help your child do the homework?
Parent	I think I can manage to talk to the teacher but it wouldn't be as systematic as HIPPY. I would expect that I would tell her to do her homework by herself and occasionally I would work with her according to what the teacher has taught me.
Researcher	Coming back to attitudes towards teacher, some people have said to me that it's a cultural view amongst Chinese people and Vietnamese people and even Somali people, that the job of teaching is the teacher's job and not the parent's job and therefore I know what you were saying before that now you see it as your job and your daughter sees it as you as a teacher, but do you still have, do you personally have that view with the school, that it's the teacher's job at the school or do you see it as a shared job, do you have that cultural view I suppose is what I am asking.
Parent	I think it's a shared job and I think parents should tell the teacher to teach the children. It's true sometimes that the child will not listen to the parents at home especially when we came from a non-English background, children might sometimes say that, oh you didn't know about this, you don't know about that, but if I didn't supervise the children to do their homework at home it would not be good for them, it's not good for the children to think that it's alright for them to not do their homework, for them not to know anything, well because their parents can survive without knowing that they can survive as well, it's not good for them to think in that way.
Researcher	Thank you. Is there anything else that you would like to say about HIPPY and the program?

Parent	I think it's a good program in general but maybe there are parts that would be too easy for the children and that's where the children would get a bit impatient.
Researcher	Thank you. Now I just want to tell you what's planned in the research now is that I would go back to the school next year and do a couple more tests with Christine and teacher assessment, I just wanted to check whether that is OK with you?
Parent	It's OK, no problem.
Researcher	Just to totally finish up, one thing is I wanted to, we have a form which I have some information for each of the parents and there is just a couple of questions I wanted to ask if that's OK and one is whether you have moved in the two years that you have been in HIPPY or whether you have stayed in the same place?
Parent	In the same place.
Researcher	OK, you are quite close aren't you to HIPPY office? Has that been important being close?
Parent	For me the distance is not a big issue because I think the program is good and I think it is important for me to be informed and I would try my best to attend except when I had to work or ....
Researcher	OK, I just wondered if you would be able to tell me what you think your level of English is now in terms of your ability to teach English. Would you say that you could read English very well, well, not well? Not well, OK. And in terms of your ability to speak English would you say you speak English very well, well, not well? OK. And you read Cantonese don't you? Any other languages or mainly Cantonese?
Parent	Chinese.
Researcher	Mandarin? OK. And how long have you been in Australia for?
Parent	More than 7 years now.
Researcher	And you came from?
Parent	China
Researcher	Good, that's it. Thank you.

Summary of interview by researcher

Mother had heard about the program through a letter in her letter box. She said that she became involved because she was worried about her lack of English and how this might affect her child's education. She wanted institutional assistance to help with her child's education.

She felt that the program had helped her with her own English. She was enrolled in English classes before and during HIPPY but HIPPY was much more helpful in learning English than classes because it was provided in a context she could understand. Overall mother rated her ability to speak English as 'not well'.

In her relationship with her daughter, she feels it has made their relationship a closer one. Her daughter used to criticise her for not speaking English but through HIPPY she learnt that her mother had important knowledge which she could pass on. Her daughter is not more helpful around the house because of HIPPY. The mother commented that as an only daughter she would expect Christine to help when asked.

She felt that her daughter enjoyed reading the most, particularly talking about the stories. She felt that HIPPY taught children to think. It was less rigid than traditional Chinese education which was about a teacher standing in front of a class and writing on a blackboard. She said that her daughter was doing better at school because of her involvement in HIPPY. This related to her improved English, her interest and confidence in learning and being able to concentrate on what the teacher was teaching. She was doing better than average in class.

The mother said that she now had a better understanding of education in Australia through talking with her daughter about what happens in class.

She was comfortable with the Home Tutor visiting her house but felt that the important issue was the learning that took place rather than where it happened. She felt that the method of doing the lessons, role play, worked well.

She enjoyed the group meetings mainly because of the opportunity it gave parents to share information about what their children were doing and how the lessons were going.

The HIPPY instructions were in English as were the books (no Cantonese translations) as were the training sessions as her home tutor had no Cantonese or Mandarin. Overall she felt she manage all right despite having problems with English. She was able to use an English-Cantonese dictionary to translate some words and at

other times her daughter would know what the words meant. She felt it would have been helpful to have the instructions and the books in both English and Cantonese, but felt that having them in Cantonese only would not be good as it would discourage the learning of English.

Her daughter was more enthusiastic about HIPPY in the first year than in second year where she was at school and had homework. However when she learnt that HIPPY would be finishing this year she became more enthusiastic about doing the lesson and has said that she wanted them to continue next year.

The mother is involved in her child's homework and this will continue. However the mother felt it was harder with homework to know what she should be doing with her daughter. She said that it will be her daughter's responsibility to do her homework and she would only help her sometimes. When asked the mother said she would have the confidence to talk over issues with her child's teacher.

Apart from her difficulty with language, the mother's other criticism was that some of the HIPPY material was too easy for her daughter.

APPENDIX V

EXPLANATORY LETTER TO HIPPY PARENTS (ENGLISH VERSION)

Dear parent,

As you know, the aim of HIPPY is to help children do better at school by assisting you as the teacher of your child.

Part of the reason for starting the HIPPY program which you are part of is to see if it works well for families. If it does the Brotherhood of St Laurence will be expanding the program to help other families in a similar position to you. For this reason, Victoria University is helping the Brotherhood of St Laurence to evaluate the program, to see if it works well for children and their families.

We would like you to take part in the research so that other families may be helped.

As part of the research, we would like to talk to you about your experience of the project. Sometimes that might be part of a group discussion with other parents. Sometimes it might be an individual interview. Each time we will ask your permission. We would also like your permission to tape interviews or group discussions. We think that taking part in the research will be fun, but if you feel uncomfortable at any stage, please let us know and we can talk it over. You always have the right to withdraw from the research and this will not affect the help you get from HIPPY.

We would like your child to take part in some tests of his or her reading and other abilities. We will tell you more about these later on, and if you want to know the results of these rests, we can give them to you and explain what they mean. Children usually enjoy taking part in these tests, but if you decide you do not want your child to take part, that is your right and again it will not affect the help you receive.

All the information you give will be kept confidential. We will not tell other people your name or use your name in any report.

This explanation is provided in your own home language. If at any time you want to talk about the research and your want an interpreter please let us know and we will organise one for you.

Consent form attached.

Yours sincerely

Tim Gilley

APPENDIX VI

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE AND CONSENT FORM FOR ALL PARENTS (ENGLISH VERSION)

We would like to invite you to take part in a study of the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters. The purpose of this research is to understand how well the program works and whether it should be expanded to help other families with young children in a similar position to yourself.

I

of

certify that I am at least 17 years old* and that I an voluntarily giving my consent in the experiment being conducted at Victoria University of Technology by Tim Gilley.

I certify that the objectives of the experiment, together with any risks to me associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the experiment, have been fully explained to me and that I consent to participation involving the use of these procedures.

Procedures

Participation in group discussions	Yes	No
Participation in individual interviews	Yes	No
My child's involvement in a number of tests and reading and other abilities	Yes	No
Taping of interviews and group discussions	Yes	No

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand I can withdraw at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed..............

Witness other than experimenter............ Date...........

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher (Name: Tim Gilley, Phone: 9365 2686). If you have any queries about the way you have been treated you may contact the Secretary, University Research Ethics Committee, Victoria University of Technology, PO Box 14428 MC, Melbourne, 8001 (Telephone no: 9688 4710).

APPENDIX VII

COMPARING CHARACTERISTICS OF FAMILIES IN HIPPY WITH COMPARISON GROUP FAMILIES

Table 23

Comparison of general demographic data of families participating in second intake of HIPPY with Comparison Group families

Characteristic	Children in HIPPY*	Children in Comparison group
Education level of parent delivering program#		
Year 6 or less	4	8
Year 7-10	11	14
Year 11-12	14	10
Year 15**	3	1
Age of parent#		
24-30	10	8
31-40	17	21
41-50	5	4
>50	1	0
Sole parent or two parent family+		
Sole parent family	10	8
Two-parent family	23	25
Number of dependent children#		
One child	8	4
Two children	11	11
Three children	6	8
Four children	4	6
Five children	4	2
Mean number of children	3	3
Children: gender+		
Male	15	17
Female	18	16
Children's mean age#		
First year of school (first round assessments)	5yrs 8mths	5yrs 6 mths
Second year of school (second round assessments)	6yrs 8mths	6yrs 6 mths

* Numbers refer to children rather than parents

** Indicates a three-year tertiary qualification

+ Indicates that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups using the chi square statistic (for categorical data)

# Indicates that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups using independent t tests (for interval data, see Table 25 on page 259)

Table 24

Comparison of immigration and language data of families participating in second intake of HIPPY with Comparison Group families

Characteristic	Parent delivering HIPPY group*	Parent in Comparison group*
Country of birth		
Vietnam	9	13
Somalia	7	8
Laos	4	0
Turkey	3	9
Australia	3	3
Ethiopia	3	0
China	2	0
Chile	1	0
Thailand	1	0
First main language of parent		
Vietnamese	7	13
Somali	7	9
Hmong	4	0
Cantonese	4	0
English	3	3
Turkish	3	8
Eritrean	2	0
Thai	1	0
Armharic	1	0
Spanish	1	0
Birthplace and years in Australia (in year 2000)	**Years in Australia**	**Years in Australia**
Born in Australia	3	3
Not born in Australia#	30	30
Range	2-20 years	1-22 years
Mean	9 years	10 years
English as a second language+		
English as a first language	3	3
English as a second, third or fourth language	30	30
Speaks English+		
Very well	8	7
Well	9	9
Not well	16	17
Not at all	0	0

* Numbers refer to children rather than parents.
+ Indicates that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups using the chi square statistic (for categorical data)
# Indicates that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups using independent t tests (for interval data, see Table 25 on page 259)

Table 25

Comparison of means on selected characteristics of families participating in second intake of HIPPY with Comparison Group families

Characteristic	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age of children at first round of assessments	HG 33	5:8	3.3
	CG 33	5:6	4.1
Age of children at second round of assessments	HG 32	6:8	2.9
	CG 33	6:6	3.8
Number of dependent children	HG 33	2.6	1.4
	CG 33	3.0	1.6
Education level of parent delivering the program*	HG 32	9.7	3.7
	CG 33	9.1	2.5
	HG 33	1.7	0.4
	CG 33	1.7	0.4
Age of parent delivering program**	HG 33	33.8	6.8
	CG 33	33.9	4.7
	HG 33	1.2	0.4
	CG 33	1.3	0.5
	HG 33	1.9	0.3
	CG 33	1.8	0.4
Length of residence in Australia for overseas born parents	HG 30	9.6	4.3
	CG 30	10	4.6

* Two approaches were used in this analysis. The top calculation was based on the number of years of education. The bottom calculation was based upon assigning parents into primary education only (value of 1) or secondary or higher education (value of 2) .

** Three approaches were used in this analysis. The top calculation was based on the number of years of education. The middle calculation was based upon assigning parents into two groups: 30 years of age or under (value of 1) and over 30 years of age (value of 2). The third calculation was based upon assigning parents into 40 years of age or under (value of 1) and over 40 years of age (value of 2).

Table 26

Comparison of means on selected characteristics of families participating in HIPPY for one year (OY) with families participating in HIPPY for two years (TY)

Characteristic	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age of children at first round of assessments	OY 13 TY 20	5:9 5:8	3.5 3.2
Age of children at second round of assessments	OY 13 TY 19	6:9 6:7	2.9 3.8
Number of dependent children	OY 13 TY 20	2.3 2.8	1.2 1.3
Education level of parent delivering the program*	OY 13 TY 20 OY 13 TY 20	9.7 9.1 1.8 1.7	3.7 2.5 0.4 0.5
Age of parent delivering program	OY 13 TY 20	35.9 32.5	7.5 5.7
Length of residence in Australia for overseas born parents	OY 13 TY 20	9.1 10.0	4.1 4.7

*Two approaches were used in this analysis. The top calculation was based on the number of years of education. The bottom calculation was based upon assigning parents into primary education only (value of 1) or secondary/ higher education (value of 2).